

### Reconciliation

#### Romans 3:25

Justification, righteousness, redemption, imputation and propitiation all come into play when it come to God's plan for our salvation. When we are justified, we are declared righteous through imputation; God putting our sins on Jesus Christ, and Him putting His righteousness upon us. This was all made possible because Jesus Christ was willing to pay the price of our redemption, redeeming us from our sins and making us slaves to righteousness. This was the only way that the Father could be satisfied, or propitiated, so that He would accept us into the Body of Christ.

Notice that it was God who initialized every one of these activities in order to clear the path for our salvation. We are unable to justify ourselves, to make ourselves righteous or to propitiate the Father. We could never pay the price for our redemption, not even the smallest part in getting ourselves right with God. Even shedding our own blood for our own sins could pay nothing toward the redemption price that needed to be paid to retrieve us from the shackles of sin that imprisons every natural born human. Man is unable to do anything good enough to change his guilt to innocence and free himself from sin.

#### Reconciliation

Another important word, that describes how God made it possible for us to come to Him, is reconciliation. Although this word is first found in Paul's writings in Romans 5:10, the idea of reconciliation is first contained in Romans 3:23—26. To reconcile means to restore fellowship. It seems obvious that if Paul speaks of the need for reconciliation, that there had to be a break in fellowship between God and man. Both Colossians 1:21 and Romans 5:10 make it clear that we are born as enemies with God. Ever since Adam sinned, mankind has been estranged from God. The close relationship that Adam and Eve had with God was broken as soon as Adam disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. In order for a relationship to be mended, a step of reconciliation must be initiated. Unlike the terms we have studied in past lessons, reconciliation can only be complete when both parties come to an agreement to mend their relationship. Justification, redemption and propitiation were all accomplished by the Father through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Reconciliation, however, was instigated by God, but will only be completed after we accept His offer to reconcile.

Unlike man to man reconciliation, God to man reconciliation was made possible because God initialized the process. We would never even think about reaching up to God to reconcile with Him since we are, in the natural man, totally devoid of anything Godly or spiritual. We are unable to reach out to Him because we are devoid of any desired to do so (Romans 8:5—8). This means the first step of reconciliation needed to be completed by God in order to make it possible for any of us to reciprocate. God took the first step of reconciliation with mankind by sending His Son to pay the price of redemption through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10).

Jesus Christ's death reconciled all things unto the Father (2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20). The whole creation was affected by Adam's sin, and only God will be able to set things right again. He will eradicate sin by destroying, then reforming the heaven and the earth (Romans 8:22; 2 Peter 3:10—13; Revelation 21:1—2). The curse of sin and death will finally be lifted. Before this happens, even in the Millennial Kingdom, death continues as evidence that sin has not yet been dealt with (Isaiah 65:20—22).

## **Not universalism**

Some people misunderstand the concept of reconciliation being a two-way street. When one party extends an offer to reconcile, it takes the other party to accept that offer in order for reconciliation to have occurred. This is important because some will read Colossians 1:20, see that Christ has reconciled the whole world to the Father, and come away with the understanding that everyone will be saved (universalism). They will often use 1 Timothy 2:1—7, that God desires for all men be saved, to bolster their argument. Yes, God does want all men to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, but His reconciling work on the cross is not the vehicle to attain eternal life, it is the pathway unto salvation. Christ's reconciling work on the cross does not bring us to our destination, but it makes the way to God possible. Scripture makes it absolutely clear that God set up the plan of salvation and that man needs to accept that offer by believing what God has said. In this dispensation, all that is required of us is to believe in the Person of Jesus Christ and in His work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:1—4). As soon as a person transfers their complete trust to Jesus Christ for their salvation, then they receive eternal life. Those who trust in Jesus Christ, and add in their own works, really haven't fully believed in Jesus Christ and they will remain lost. With this understanding of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:16—21 makes a lot of sense, that as God's ambassadors, we proclaim that people need to be reconciled to Him. If reconciliation had already happened, there would be no need for us to plead for people to be reconciled.

## **Human reconciliation?**

Another passage that some people misinterpret is Ephesians 2:15—17. The main theme of this passage is God's work of reconciliation, for the Gentiles and well as for the Jews, in this Dispensation of Grace. In times past, the Mosaic Law divided these two groups from each other. The Gentiles were cut off from the blessings being given to Israel (Ephesians 2:11—12). But now, Gentiles are able to come to God as freely as any Jew because of Jesus Christ's work on the cross. He reconciled all people to God. Those who accept this offer of reconciliation are brought together into one group called the Church, the Body of Christ. All who are in the Body of Christ are now in a state of peace with each other.

Some people focus on two people groups being reconciled with each other. This cheapens God's work of reconciliation. The peace between the people groups was made possible because the Law that was dividing them by keeping the Gentiles out, was broken down through Jesus Christ. Gentiles are no longer being kept outside of the way of salvation (Ephesians 2:14—15). Peace is also the natural result of becoming a member of the Body of Christ where there is no Jew or Gentile, bond of free, male or female (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28). The passage in Ephesians 2 is not about reconciliation between two groups of people, but between mankind and God through Jesus Christ. Seeing it any other way takes the focus off of God and places it upon man, something many churches are embracing today. Verse 16 makes it abundantly clear that we were reconciled unto God, not unto each other.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit [www.MidActsTruths.com](http://www.MidActsTruths.com)