

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Reconciliation

Introduction

One of the verses evangelists use in the preaching of the gospel is: “Be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20). It carries a glorious truth and God alone knows how many have been saved through its message. From it there has been presented:

- a) Man’s ruin and need for reconciliation with God.
- b) God’s redemption through Christ as the only means for reconciliation.
- c) The blessedness of knowing in this life the assurance of the reconciliation with God which can never be broken.

On this theme there is a very important observation which is, there can never be reconciliation between parties in any situation if:

- a) Both parties are not genuinely interested in reconciliation. If only one party is desirous to be reconciled, there will be no reconciliation.
- b) That which caused the fracture is not honestly faced by the offending party, dealt with and removed to the satisfaction of the offended. Without such there will never be peace between the parties. Furthermore, the satisfaction must be righteously administered.

The truth of reconciliation is illustrated by three different Greek words dealing with the religious, secular, and political/physical world. The main fact being that all three words indicate the restoring to a previous condition, to the restoration to that which was once enjoyed but through whatever means was broken. Within our context of reconciliation of the sinner with God, this leads to several questions:

- a) Why does an individual need to be reconciled to God?
- b) Why and how did God provide the foundation for reconciliation?
- c) How can an individual be reconciled to God?

Why Does An Individual Need To Be Reconciled to God?

When God created man and woman, Adam and Eve, they were created to have happy fellowship with God, and in the words of the catechism, “To enjoy Him forever”. They were wonderful days. Adam had the responsibility of being a gentleman farmer, enjoying the delightfulness of the beauty of God’s beautiful creation, eating the most delicious fruits and enjoying the excitement of discovering of new fragrances, textures, and tastes. The highest delight was the fellowship he had with God who came in the cool of the day and they would talk together and enjoy each other’s company, man just enjoying God. I have no doubt God would lead Adam to see and do things he had never considered before. It was a delightful experience until one day he made a fateful decision.

In an unsuspecting way Satan, with the subtleness of a snake, approached Eve. He was not threatening but rather pleasant, and having presented himself to Eve he initiated a conversation with the words: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1). He was not disagreeing with God for God had said: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16-17). Instead of turning from him Eve in her answer added to what the Lord had said, for God had said: "Thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen 2:17), but Eve added: "neither shall ye touch it" (Gen. 3:3). Then Satan, while not calling God a liar, he certainly intimated it, for God had told Adam that if he ate of the tree then: "Thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Now Satan told Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Eve then took the fruit and: "did eat, and gave also unto her husband" (Gen. 3:6) and he also ate the fruit. What had they done? They had:

- a) Acted independently of God
- b) Fellowshiped with Satan
- c) Were dissatisfied with God's placement for them and wanted to be like God
- d) Disobeyed God, and at that fateful moment they were aware their fellowship with God was broken. Their consciences were awakened and they knew God would come in the cool of the evening. Instinctively and immediately they did their best to hide by sowing fig leaves together, but that did not calm their consciences so they hid themselves among the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:7-8).

From that single act of disobedience all their children, all humanity, was born out of fellowship with God. Each individual inherited the "sin" gene. It was not their fault, it was not something they could repent of for one can only repent of what they do, not what they are by birth. For example, how could I repent for being Irish? If restoration to fellowship with God was achieved it had to be outside of the religious, social, fraternal merits of themselves. It was God who they had broken fellowship with and it was their responsibility to repent and do whatever was necessary to restore that fellowship. The problem was and is, man can do absolutely nothing to restore the fellowship! The consequence was, not only was man left without strength to help himself (Rom. 5:6), and even while alive the individual lives: "Having no hope, and without God" (Eph. 2:12), and beyond death he is assured of an eternity banished from God. Each individual we see, hear, or think of is by birth separated from God, and there is not a thing they can do. No religious ceremonies can help, neither baptism, partaking of communion, last rites, or doing penance on any level. The reality is there is nothing the individual can do to restore fellowship with God. God's final comment on man's need for reconciliation is: "You were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21).

Why and How Did God Provide The Foundation For Reconciliation?

The Motive

- a) The fundamental reason which moved God to provide reconciliation is "love". Deep, caring, unselfish love for others. It was not a "do this and I will do that" sort of love, neither was it a "because you have done this or that" sort of love. It was love that loved when we were totally opposed to all He is and does, ever ready to take every blessing but wanting nothing to do with Him. The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6-8)

The Man

- a) God provided reconciliation through the man Jesus whose entire life was lived in perfect fellowship with God, a man who was in every way the delight of the heart of God. On the cross at Calvary God forsook Him and from the depths of His soul He cried: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). The curse of God man was under was borne by Christ. He became a curse, or we could say He bore the curse I was under by God (Gal. 3:13).
- b) The way of reconciliation was secured by God through Christ, and speaking of the work of God Paul wrote: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him (Christ) to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:20). Again, as the scriptures of truth make plain, it is through the work of Christ alone man can be reconciled: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5:10)

The Forsaking by God

- a) What is meant by Christ being "God forsaken"?
 - i) The scriptures are full of truths which are beyond comprehension. We can know what the words mean, we can know the contexts, but the depth of the truths are beyond us. Indeed, we can say that there is no angelic mind can comprehend them, depths of truths which only God can fully appreciate. For instance, it

is easy to read the following verses but there comes a point when we simply bow to the infiniteness of the glory of them.

1. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19)
2. "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" (Col. 1:21-22)
3. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6)
4. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21)
5. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)

The Substitutionary Work of The Lord

- a) On the cross of Calvary, during the three hours of darkness the greatest work time and eternity will ever know was accomplished when God laid down the foundation by which it could be preached: "God . . . hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19).
- b) On the cross, the Lord became the substitute for all who would accept Him as such. He swapped places for the individual and endured the penalty by being "forsaken by God". One might even say, He suffered my Hell for me, all that I deserved of being forsaken by God for all eternity He endured. Then when the full penalty for my sins was borne by Him and He had exhausted the full judgment of God, He cried: "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). The work was over, the reconciliation of man with God was now possible, the only thing that remained was for the individual to accept the substitutionary finished work of Christ for reconciliation. Reconciliation with God is not man depending on what he or she can do but what Christ did two thousand years ago.

How Can An Individual Be Reconciled To God?

There are several steps the individual must take to secure salvation. They are:

- a) Listen to the pleadings of one who is reconciled. Paul was such and He pleaded: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20); and understanding there might not be another opportunity for: "Behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2)
- b) Recognize this as a solemn deliberate response as when one makes an official commitment.
 - i) Step 1 - A confession of personal guilt and inability to do anything to achieve reconciliation, that I am a guilty hell deserving sinner.
 - ii) Step 2 - The acknowledging that reconciliation is available only through Christ and His finished work on the cross.
 - iii) Step 3 - The conscious, from the heart, acceptance of Christ as Saviour

This is a work of faith: "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . . it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8); and while there will be no feelings of euphoria, there will be the knowledge that your sins are gone and the individual is reconciled to God.

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