

5. THE WORD OF THE CONCILIATION

One of the most profound, and yet lost, truths of Scripture is the conciliation of God, which is uniquely found in the writings of Paul, the apostle of the nations. The body of Christ is called to be ambassadors for Christ in taking *the word of the conciliation* to the nations. It is the message of God's love.

So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new! Yet all is of **God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ**, and is giving us **the dispensation of the conciliation**, how that God was in Christ, **conciliating the world** to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us **the word of the conciliation**. For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "**Be conciliated to God!**" For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him. (2 Corinthians 5.17-21 cv)

How can we be ambassadors for Christ if we do not have the word of the conciliation in us, that is, written on our hearts? Unfortunately, this word is not taught from the pulpits of Christendom in our day. It is safe to state that many have not even heard of this word. They may have heard of reconciliation, but today this word is most often used in reference to making peace with others and not in reference to making peace with God.

The word of the conciliation declares to all mankind: "*Be conciliated to God.*"

Now, let us consider the word of the conciliation, and to do this we need to lay a foundation upon which to build.

They are without excuse.

First, we need to see that mankind can try to deny that there is a God, but God has placed within everyone the evidence that He exists. All are without excuse.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because **that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them**. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse**. (Romans 1.18-20 NASB)

God is the Creator of all! All mankind needs to do is look at the creation; look at the mountains and the rolling seas; look at a rabbit with a cotton tail; look at a

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new-born baby; look at the amazing body in which mankind lives—can anyone truthfully say that there is no God? We live in bodies that are so intricate with parts that are very specialized and that work together. The human body is a community made up of a multitude of living cells that all work together without us even knowing what they are doing. Consider the intricacy of the eye; light enters the eye and is converted to impulses that are conveyed to the brain where an image is perceived. Yet all of this is accomplished in a body which is 80% water. It is truly remarkable.

We look around us and see all sorts of man-made objects that are a marvel to behold. Who cannot marvel at a rocket propelling into space or at how a computer is able to do so much for us today?

None of these inventions of man happened by chance. They did not grow out of some sort of chaos, going from chaos to order. They started out as an assortment of materials that man had to put together after he planned what they were to look like and what they were to do when built. If no one ever touched them, they would remain as separate parts with no functionality.

Then how can mankind look at the universe, the earth on which we live and the bodies which we occupy and say that there is no God? Our order comes from a God of order, a creative Genius beyond comprehension.

None are right before God.

Mankind was created not only to see and know God in His creation but to be in His image and to walk before God, living in communion with Him, knowing His Divine love and ruling with God over His creation.

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule. (Genesis 1.26 NASB)

However, the first man, Adam, disobeyed God, and when he did, the process of death entered all mankind. In the day that you disobey, *to die shall you be dying*, was the word from God to Adam. Death passed through into all mankind, and Adam's race became a dying race, a race of sinners. The ration (wage, allowance) of sin is death.

The proof that death is the ration of sin is in the fact that *all* die (state of unconsciousness where we know nothing [Ecclesiastes 9.5]), and their bodies return to the dust of the earth. In fact, every living thing on earth faces death. Even creation itself groans in its slavery to corruption. Earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, famine, pestilence, to name a few, are proof.

God's assessment of mankind is this—*all* have sinned, that is, all have failed to meet God's righteous demand. No one is right before God.

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“There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3.10-18 NASB)

All mankind die (go into a state of unconsciousness), and their bodies return to the soil. To mankind, death is a hopeless tomb. No one, not one single person is able to come alive and rise out of the grave by his own power, never to die again! This is the hopeless lot of man. But there is good news of a great hope! Man's failure is according to God's plan and God Himself has provided the remedy. We could say that God alone is responsible for mankind.

God has conciliated the world—His enemies.

God has allowed man to fail, even required it, so that all mankind would know His love. To know *love*, we need the contrast of *hate*. To know *good*, we need the contrast of *evil*. To know *light*, we need the contrast of *dark*. To know *righteousness*, we need the contrast of *sin*. Man's greatest failure is for God's greatest glory! This is the wisdom of God.

Since God Himself is responsible for mankind's fate, man is not responsible for his own salvation. A sinner cannot save himself from sin and death. A sinner has no righteousness or rightness to stand before God. A sinner can do nothing to please a righteous, holy God. A sinner cannot find favor and peace with God on his own merits or works. A sinner cannot overcome death. A sinner is an enemy of God who deserves the wrath or indignation of God, but never an eternal torture chamber called hell!

The fact of the matter is that in His love, God has shut up *all* in disobedience that He might show mercy to *all* (Romans 11.32 NASB). *All* is an inclusive word, which means that none are left out. God's heart is to show mercy to *all* mankind, without exception. No one is excluded from His mercy, even the vilest and most corrupt sinner. Simply, God has provided the way for *all*, all of His enemies, to be at peace with Him.

There is good news. God is not angry with mankind and does not desire mankind to suffer the fate of death forever. Mankind is not His enemy. After all, we are commanded to love our enemies (Matthew 5.44). Will God not do likewise? He wills that all be saved (1 Timothy 2.4). He has made peace with mankind, and one day death will be no more.

God has ***conciliated*** the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them (2 Corinthians 5.19 cv). This is the grace and mercy of God. The word

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conciliated means “to win over, to soothe the anger of, to gain favor.” In other words, God Himself has made peace with His enemies. He is not angry with mankind. God has made peace with all, and He is calling all mankind to be at peace with Him.

In order for mankind to be conciliated to God (peace with God), it is important to understand how God conciliated mankind to Himself (peace with mankind); how He has brought favor and peace to mankind and ultimately has overcome the mighty power of death. God has accomplished this great act of love in, through and by His Son.

God's Son empties Himself to die.

The most profound act of love in all the universe is that God sent His Son to this earth to take on the form of man and to be nailed to a cross by mankind that He created, and to shed His blood and die as if He were the foulest of sinners, although He never knew nor ever committed sin. The wrath of God fell upon His Son to pay for the sin of the world. The *Just* died for the unjust! He died for the sin of the world. The *Righteous* became sin and died that mankind might become the righteousness of God in Him. He is the *Savior* of the world and His name is *Jesus!*

The sinner may be most repugnant and offensive, but today God does not reckon these offenses against him or her. God is not holding man's sins against him, for Christ died for man's sins. No sinner could die for the sin of the world. Everyone born of Adam's race is disqualified from shedding their own blood for the sin of the world. But *One* who was not a sinner died for *all* the sin of the world! This is what God's Son has done so that God can be at peace with mankind. He has done *all* the work necessary to conciliate mankind to God, and God wants *mankind* to know His peace *today*.

Who, [Jesus] being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father. (Philippians 2.6-11 cv)

Yet all is of God, **Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ.** (2 Corinthians 5.18 cv)

Being enemies, **we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son.** (Romans 5.10 cv)

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Do you grasp the greatness of these words? All of us were enemies of God; and yet while we were still enemies, in His love for mankind, God sent His Son to die for us and conciliate us to Himself through Christ. *Today*, God is not at war with mankind; He is at peace.

This Jesus God raises.

The good news does not stop at this point, for if Jesus had remained in the grave, there would have been no conciliation. After all, every human dies and goes into the grave. However, Jesus did not remain in the grave, i.e., remain dead. After three days, God resurrected Him from among the dead as the first man to ever overcome death and the grave! He conquered death, never to be subjected to it again. It has no power over Him. Jesus' resurrection is proof that His death was acceptable to God.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter declared what he and others had witnessed.

“Men! Brethren! Allow me to say to you with boldness concerning the patriarch David, that he deceases also and was entombed, and his tomb is among us until this day. Being, then, inherently, a prophet, and having perceived that God swears to him with an oath, out of the fruit of his loin to seat One on his throne, perceiving this before, he speaks concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither forsaken in the unseen, nor was His flesh acquainted with decay. This Jesus God raises, of Whom we all are witnesses.” (Acts 2.29-32 cv)

Jesus is the Christ, which means the “Anointed,” and which declares Him to be the Son of the living God.

If Christ was not roused (raised) from among the dead, then *conciliation* is a hoax, the salvation of mankind is impossible, death is an eternal tomb and mankind has no hope. As Paul, the apostle for the nations (gentiles), declared: “*Now, if Christ has not been roused, vain is your faith—you are still in your sins!*” (1 Corinthians 15.17 cv).

The good news is that He was roused (raised) from among the dead and many were witnesses of this fact. However, not only was He roused from among the dead, but He also ascended back to God in heaven.

He [the Son of God] who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. (Ephesians 4.10 NASB)

Christ is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father.

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Saved by grace through faith.

Mankind has been conciliated to God through Christ, but how does the individual come into the benefit of the conciliation of God, that is, come into the place of knowing this peace? The sinner must be saved by grace through faith. *Grace* can mean "to bestow a benefit on one who deserves judgment." Christ took the judgment we all deserve when He died on the cross for each one of us. Now, all we must do is believe God. It is very simple. There is no work for anyone to do. There is absolutely nothing anyone can do, except simply believe that...

Christ died for our sins [the sin of the whole world; past, present and future] according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that He was **raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, and that **He appeared** to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time [witnessed by many as proof that the grave could not hold Him, after which He ascended back to heaven].... (1 Corinthians 15.3-6 NASB [added by writer])

The good news is that although He was buried, He was raised from among the dead after three days. Jesus being raised from among the dead means that His death for all mankind was acceptable to God.

Believing in Jesus means believing in what He did for us sinners and putting our trust in this work that He did, trusting Him.

What did He do? He died for *all* (past, present and future) our sins. He took our place as a sinner and the judgment of God fell upon Him as if He were the sinner, although He never sinned. He laid down His life and shed His blood on a cross for all mankind! He became our righteousness before God. Once saved, we will never face the wrath of God.

Our salvation is guaranteed by the fact that God raised His Son from among the dead. All anyone must do is agree with God! The word is: **Believe, and you shall be saved!** Put your trust in the One who died for you! It is God's gift to you.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2.8-9 NASB)

Jesus, the Son of God.

Before moving on to more of the good news, it is important to make sure that we truly know who Jesus is, for many false teachings have gone forth regarding Jesus. Let us be clear that Jesus is the Son of God who is the visible image of the invisible God.

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If mankind wants to *see* God, they must see *God's Son*. If mankind wants to *know* God, they must know *God's Son*. If mankind wants to be *saved* from death, they must see that Christ is *the Way*, the only way. If mankind wants to be *justified* before God, they must accept the One who is *Just*. If mankind wants to be *reconciled* to God, they must see that peace has been made through *the blood of His cross*. If mankind wants *life*, they must see that Christ is *the Life*.

Jesus was not just a good man who somehow managed to live a good life. Many religions of the world accept Jesus as a good man, a philosopher, a prophet, a teacher, a moralist and many other things, but they deny that He is the Son of God. Others believe He is the Son of God, but that He was never Man and He never died. He only took on a body and faked being a man. They say that He shed His body when He ascended. Others believe that Jesus was born a man, but not as God's Son, and somehow He attained to godliness and sonship to become a god and God's Son. Some believe that Jesus' body is still in the grave, that He was never resurrected. All these thoughts are *false* and all who hold these views are *deceived*.

Jesus was born of a virgin and His name was *Immanuel*, which translated means, "*God with us*" (Matthew 1.23). The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and the power of the Most High over-shadowed her.

Jesus declared that as the Son of God, He came forth from God the Father, who sent Him to this earth. He had a glory with the Father before the world was. He was one with the Father (John 10.30; 17.5, 8, 18, 22). Jesus declared that He existed before Abraham was born about 2,000 years earlier (John 8.58).

He is the Creator of mankind who took on the form of His creation, becoming the Second Man, the last Adam (John 1.3; 1 Corinthians 15.45-47; Hebrews 1.2). He is the exact image and representation of the invisible God (Colossians 1.15; Hebrews 1.3). He is the Word of God and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God (John 1.1-2 NASB).

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him (John 1.9-10 NASB).

The world was made through Him and He upholds or holds all things together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1.2, 3 NASB). Remove the power of the Son of God from the universe and all will disintegrate.

There is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (1 Corinthians 8.6 NASB)

He commanded authority over the elements, the wind, the sea, the demons, and even unclean spirits (Mark 1.23-24; 3.11; 4.41). He changed water into wine,

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which required changing the very elements of life (John 2.1-11). Only the Creator could do this!

The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day demanded His death because *He made Himself out to be the Son of God* (John 19.7). To the Jewish people, one claiming to be *the Son of God* was making himself equal with God. They persecuted Jesus because He did many things on the Sabbath, including healing the sick. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, *making Himself equal with God* (John 5.17-18).

Jesus traveled from city to city, healing many and pardoning their sins. The question rang out: "*Who is able to pardon sins except God only?*" (Luke 5.21 cv).

Jesus' followers knew Him to be the Son of God. Peter declared to Jesus: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matthew 16.16 cv).

The Son of God gave His life by dying on a cross to save all mankind. For this reason, *we rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers* (1 Timothy 4.10 cv).

Do you know the Son of God?

The work is finished!

To know the Son what is a person to do? Simply believe what God says and give Him all the praise, honor and glory. Do not add anything to it or take anything away from it. No one can earn this place before God, for *Another* has earned it for all mankind.

When Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary, He cried out, "*It is finished!*" What did He mean? What was finished? Jesus finished the work demanded by God to conciliate *all things* to Himself and to save mankind. Sin demanded the wrath or indignation of God; however, there was only one remedy or work that was acceptable to God. In fact, there was one work that was demanded, and that was the death and shed blood of a perfect, sinless man. Jesus, as the Son of God, was that perfect Man, and He did all that was required for mankind and to meet God's righteous demand.

He did *ALL* the work. There is nothing that a sinner can do to be saved; and once saved, nothing can be done to cause one to lose salvation. Salvation is the gift of God, a gift purchased exclusively for mankind with God's own blood. What love! The sinner simply must believe what God has done, putting his trust in the finished work of Christ—His death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

To some people, this sounds too good to be true; but it is true. It is all about

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grace, which can be defined as “the enabling power of God apart from human merit.” No one deserves to be saved, but God in His mercy has made the way. It is by grace; and by His grace, God even gives the faith. He has enabled man to be saved by the work of *Another*, His Son. It is not on the basis of man’s works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Now if it is in grace, it is no longer out of works, else the grace is coming to be no longer grace. (Romans 11.6 *cv*)

Only Jesus and His work can save mankind! It is by grace!

Here is the really good news: Once one is saved, one is forever saved. There are good works to be done after one is saved, but they have absolutely nothing to do with salvation.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2.10 *NASB*)

Many preachers tell people they must do something to get saved. For example, they must repent; they must make Jesus Lord of their lives; they must change the course of their life; they must open the door of their heart and ask Jesus into their heart; they must confess with their mouth Jesus as Lord. These things have great value after one is saved but not in getting one saved. By the way, joining a church and sitting in a pew or on benches every week *cannot* and will *not* save anyone! Working up a sweat and a dust storm every Sunday dancing and singing along with others *cannot* and will *not* save anyone!

We are saved by grace through faith. What are sinners to do to be saved? Simply, believe; put their trust in Christ and His finished work. Let their boast be in Him.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5.21 *NASB*)

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1.30-31 *NASB*)

Just as there is no work on our part to be saved, there is no work on our part to remain saved. Many people make the big mistake of thinking that they must do something to remain saved. But think about it; if there is no work required to be saved but work to be done to remain saved, then salvation is not by grace.

Believers would live in constant fear of failing, never knowing whether or not they are truly saved. What a horrible existence this would be! It would be bondage of the worst kind. Fear not!

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We cannot save ourselves no matter what we do, no matter how hard we try, no matter how many good works we do. We cannot lose our salvation no matter what we do, no matter how little we try, no matter how many bad works we do, no matter how much failure we might have in our life. Of course, our life should be one of holiness and godliness, walking before God in the spirit; and this is possible because God gives us His spirit by which to live (Romans 5.5; 8.9, 11; Galatians 5.25; Ephesians 1.13).

As I see it, the one thing that is at stake after we are saved is which resurrection we will be in, the first or the second, and what rewards we will receive in the kingdom of Christ.

Only the Son of God can save us, and only He can keep us saved. The word of the conciliation declares: Believe; put your trust in the One who did all the work for your salvation by dying on the cross for you, and you shall be saved and remain saved.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** (Romans 5.6-8 NASB)

For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life. Yet not only so, but we are glorying also in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation. (Romans 5.10-11 cv)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)... (Ephesians 2.4-5 NASB)

Conciliation and salvation are about love, the love of God for mankind. Thus, God, who is love, loves *and keeps loving* the world of sinners because He gave His Son for the world! God calls mankind into a love relationship with Him. Once we believe, the door is wide open to commune with God, to come into the depths of His love for *us*, to know Him and to be at peace with Him. Today, He is not an angry God, no matter how difficult life might appear.

God is love, and His love is expressed in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Roused because of our justification—“Not Guilty!”

Christ's finished work resulted not only in *conciliation* but also in *justification*. The word *justify* means “to constitute or make one righteous.” This implies something far greater than forgiveness or pardon of sins and offenses, for these

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words imply that the guilt remains. However, to be justified means that one is not guilty of the sins and offenses. In fact, one who is justified is pronounced *not* guilty, just as if he had *never* committed one sin or offense against God or mankind.

Now it was not written because of him only, that it is reckoned to him, but because of us also, to whom it is about to be reckoned, who are believing on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, Who was given up because of our offenses, and **was roused because of our justifying.** (Romans 4.23-25 cv)

How is this possible? From God's view, when Christ died, we died. Simply, when Christ died, all mankind went into the grave with Him. He took all our sins and offenses into death and there they remain. Our old humanity was crucified together with Him that the body of sin may be nullified. In other words, mankind died with Christ that all might live through Christ's life.

Now if **we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall be living together with Him also**, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording it over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God. **Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.** (Romans 6.8-11 cv)

So then as through one transgression [Adam's sin] there resulted condemnation to all men ["guilty," death], even so through one act of righteousness [Christ's death] there resulted **justification of life to all men**. For as through the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many [all mankind] were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One [Christ] the many [all mankind] will be made righteous ["not guilty," life]. (Romans 5.18-19 NASB [added by writer])

Do you grasp the greatness of what God's Son accomplished through His death on the cross? The blood of His cross not only conciliated mankind to God, but Christ being roused from among the dead also resulted in mankind's justification. Christ was roused for our justifying. In other words, mankind's sins were left in the grave and when Christ was roused, God, the Judge of all, declared mankind "not guilty." The penalty for sin was paid for in full, and it was erased or blotted out completely through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God.

Many sinners are told that they must ask God to forgive them in order to be saved. But how can a sinner ask to be forgiven if God has already removed the sin and the just penalty of sin in His Son's death? Asking for forgiveness to be saved is denying the very meaning of Christ's death. Simply believe what Christ has done for all mankind, and that includes each and every one of us. He is the Savior of all mankind! He has saved all mankind and each of us who believe is called to

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believe and enter into the joy of knowing that God has removed the guilty sentence and has declared us justified in His sight, as if we never committed a sin. However, do *not* take this to mean that once we are saved, we are to persist in sin. Never!

What, then, shall we declare? **That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing? May it not be coming to that!** We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized [referring to Christ's death, not water baptism] into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life. (Romans 6.1-4 cv)

Yet where sin increases, grace superexceeds, that, even as Sin reigns in death, thus Grace also should be reigning through righteousness, for life eonian [life in the eons to come], through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Romans 5.20-21 cv)

We are commanded to put off the old humanity with its bad behavior and put on the new humanity which, in accord with God, is being created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ephesians 4.22-24).

Be conciliated.

All that has been presented so far speaks of God's action to remove all the barriers between Himself and mankind. It is all God's doing. All we must do is believe what God has done for us. However, there is one more important matter that needs to be stressed. God is at peace with us; however, He desires us to be at peace with Him.

Paul, the apostle of Christ, wrote: ***"We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!"***" (2 Corinthians 5.20 cv).

God has conciliated all mankind to Himself through His Son, but each one of us, individually, must be conciliated to God. Conciliation requires that both parties be in agreement or harmony, and when they are, they are mutually *reconciled*. In other words, we need to respond to God's grace and love, and be at peace with God.

Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. (Romans 5.1-2 cv)

Peace is a state of quietness, tranquility, without disturbance or agitation. We are to be in a place of rest in God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He

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loves us, that we can commune with Him in the spirit, that His grace will guide us through each day, and that one day we will come into the glory of God.

God is not satisfied with merely saving us and acquitting us of our sins. He desires our love and adoration. Reconciliation urges us into full and affectionate fellowship with Him and His Son. One day, all mankind will come into this glorious place; but the call today is to believe and be reconciled. Do not delay; enter into the joy of your Lord.

Through Him [God's Son], to **reconciled all** [all mankind] to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him [His Son], whether those on the earth or those in the heavens. (Colossians 1.20 cv)

A new creation in Christ.

Believers in the finished work of Christ are a new creation *in* Christ, who is the Head of an entirely new creation. Believers no longer belong to Adam's race. When Christ died on the cross, He took us with Him so that when He died, our old humanity in Adam died with Him. Further, the new creation is identified with the new heaven and the new earth of the last eon, *God's day*, when all is new. See Revelation 21.5.

So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is **a new creation**: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new! (2 Corinthians 5.17 cv)

You have died and **your life is hidden with Christ in God**. (Colossians 3.3 NASB)

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly **we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection**, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6.5-11 NASB)

It is no longer our life but Christ's life. Our whole life is to be dependent on the One who died for us. As Paul wrote: *I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me; but in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me* (Galatians 2.20 DNT).

Crucified with Christ is *the word* (message) *of the cross* that is foolishness to the world but the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Corinthians 1.18-25).

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The cross divides humanity, separating the old in Adam from the new in Christ. The cross wipes out all that was of the old humanity, for it was crucified with Christ. He took it into the grave and there it must remain. A new humanity has come forth, based on *the word of the cross* that has applied the cross to the old humanity, which has been crucified and rendered dead.

The body of Christ, the ecclesia.

Today, what is the new creation in Christ? It is the body of Christ. All who believe have been joined to Christ in the most intimate way. They are His body and He is their Head, and it is His body that is seated together among the *celestials* in Christ with every spiritual blessing among the celestials. There is nothing greater than being the body of Christ.

God's conciliation starts with the body of Christ, for this is where God first manifests His peace with mankind. He begins with the body.

The nations are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment, and **a joint body**, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel. (Ephesians 3.6 cv)

For **He is our Peace**, Who makes both one [believing Jew and gentile], and razes the central wall of the barrier (the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, **making peace**; and should be reconciling both in **one body** to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it. And, coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, for through Him we both have had access, in one spirit, to the Father. (Ephesians 2.14-18 cv)

Because God has first manifested His peace through the body of Christ, the believers are to *let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts, to which indeed they were called in one body; to be thankful* (Colossians 3.15), and to be reconciled to one another. This is mutual reconciliation!

The body of Christ is also *the ecclesia* (church, assembly), the called-out ones, called out of the world as a *celestial* people. *Christ is head over all things to the ecclesia, which is His body* (Ephesians 1.22-23). *Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Saviour of the body* (Ephesians 5.23). *And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first* (Colossians 1.18). The *ecclesia*, or what many call the *church*, is not a building or an institution but a people who are intimately joined to Christ.

The resurrection and the snatching away.

There is more. The believer's physical body is not exempt from decay and

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ultimately death. But death to a believer is like sleep. In fact, a believer falls asleep in Jesus; and one day all believers will be awakened at the same time and they, just like their Savior, will be resurrected from among the dead and snatched away, being transformed into conformity with the body of His glory, in the image of the Celestial One. ¹

To illustrate, when we go to sleep at night and we are sleeping soundly, we are unaware of our surroundings. We are simply unaware of all that is around us and that is going on in the world. Our body slows down and our soul is not aware of anything. It is asleep. When we wake in the morning, we are greeted by the sun. Falling asleep in Jesus is similar to this. Believers will awaken as if they had just gone to sleep a short time ago, even though it might have been as long as 2,000 years, and they will be greeted by the Son (Sun) of God, the Light of the world.

At physical death, a believer does *not* immediately go to heaven, as many believe, for the Bible declares that we *wait for His Son from heaven, whom He [God] raised from the dead* (1 Thessalonians 1.10 NASB).

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also **we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3.20-21 NASB)

(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, **in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class**: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15.20-24 cv)

Paul was given a revelation by the risen Lord Jesus Himself.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about **those who are asleep**, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede **those who have fallen asleep**. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to

¹ Those who die not believing in Jesus remain dead in the grave, waiting for the second resurrection and the great white throne judgment that will occur about 1,000 years later. They will face a second death but ultimately will be reconciled at the consummation of God's day.

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meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4.13-18 NASB)

This is a description of *the resurrection* and *the snatching away* of the believers. By the word of the Lord to Paul, those who belong to Christ, the saints, will one day be caught up into the air to meet the Lord. In these verses, Paul gave no indication of what transpires other than the resurrection and being snatched away. In another letter to believers, he proclaimed a secret.

Lo! a secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For **this corruptible must put on incorruption**, and **this mortal put on immortality**. Now, whenever this corruptible should be putting on incorruption and this mortal should be putting on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Swallowed up was Death by Victory. Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting? Now the sting of Death is sin, yet the power of sin is the law. Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15.51-57 cv)

With the snatching away, all who belong to Christ will be changed. Death will be swallowed up, and the believer will take on a *celestial* (heavenly), *spiritual* body that no longer is subject to death. The perishable or corrupt will put on the imperishable or incorruption. Mortality will put on immortality. Christ will transform the body of the believer's humble state into conformity with the body of His glory. They will be like Him.

The first man was out of the earth, soilish; **the second Man is the Lord out of heaven**. Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. **And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial**. (1 Corinthians 15.47-49 cv)

Today, our physical body is sown a perishable, mortal body that is restricted to this earth. Apart from wearing a space suit, man's body is not capable of living in the *celestial* realm. It is impossible, for our blood needs the oxygen from the earth's atmosphere and the food provided from the soil. The *celestial* body must be constituted for an entirely different environment.

Man's body has been sown in dishonor, but a believer's body will be raised in glory. In other words, the *celestial* body will be a body of *glory* that is capable of living unhindered in the *celestial* realm, in fact, living unhindered throughout God's entire universe, including on the earth. It is sown in *weakness* and *infirmity*; it is raised in *power*. It is sown a *soulish* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body (1 Corinthians 15.42-44).

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Think about the tremendous enormity of being reconciled to God. The *celestial* body will never experience pain, pestilence, famine, and death. The soul will never be anxious, depressed, or doubtful again. The life of the *celestial* body will be a perfect spiritual life, for it is a *spiritual* body, energized and governed by the spirit and no longer governed by the soul.

Today, believers suffer along with all mankind, for all face death; but believers are kept by the power of God, even in these mortal bodies, for a glory to be revealed when Christ comes to rescue His body.

Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us **a transcendently transcendent** [surpassing, excelling, extraordinary, supernatural] **eonian burden of glory....** (2 Corinthians 4.16-17 cv)

Oh, may the eyes of our heart be enlightened to see this great destiny for all who are reconciled to God in this day.

The eons.

To understand the resurrection more fully, it is helpful to know that God's purpose and plan is being worked out in periods of time called *eons* or *ages*. There were two eons before the one in which we live today, and Scripture reveals two eons to come, which progress toward the consummation of God's purpose and plan that He set before the disruption of the world (Genesis 1.2). Through the eons, God works *all things* according to *the counsel of His will* (Ephesians 1.11).

We live in what is called the wicked or evil eon in which man rules over man, administering his affairs apart from God. We could say without contradiction that the governments of our sinful world do not administer perfect righteousness and justice. This is *the day of Man*. The next eon is called *the day of the Lord*. Man will no longer rule supreme, for all rule will be given to Christ, the Son of Mankind, who will be crowned *the King of kings and the Lord of lords*. He will rule over the affairs of this earth with a rod of iron in righteousness and justice.

According to God's purpose and plan, 6,000 years or six 1,000-year days must be completed before the commencement of the millennial kingdom of Christ, which means this aspect of the kingdom will last for 1,000 years, the seventh 1,000-year day in the history of our current heaven and earth. God has set six days for man, followed by a seventh day or Sabbath rest in which God's King will rule with a rod of iron over the governments of this earth. We see this pattern set in the beginning of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) when God first restored this ruined earth in six days and rested on the seventh day (Genesis 1.2-2.4).

Following the seventh day is the last eon called *the day of God*, which we could call the eighth day and will last at least 1,000 years and probably much longer, for

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with God one day is like 1,000 years, and 1,000 years like one day (2 Peter 3.8). Then, the Son of God will rule from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the new Jerusalem, the dwelling of God in spirit (Ephesians 2.22), which comes down out of heaven when the old heaven and earth pass away and *all things* are new (Revelation 20.11; 21.1-2).

Through the coming eons, God's glory will shine forth in greater splendor until, finally, at the end of the eighth day, *all things*, including *all* mankind that suffered the second death (Revelation 20.14), will be fully and completely reconciled to God that He may be *all in all*.

Heading up all.

During the next two eons, believers will be glorified with *celestial, spiritual* bodies and will be with the Lord in the *celestial* and *physical* realm, no longer subject to death. Now, one might wonder what the believer will be doing. However, the proper question is, what will Christ be doing?

The next eon is when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11.15). This eon begins when Christ returns to this earth after being gone a long time to receive a kingdom. Christ's rule has one purpose, and it is to progressively sum up or head up or gather up *all* in Himself that God may be *All in all*. Christ will begin to subdue the heart of every enemy of God during the next two eons until, finally, death itself will be abolished.

For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever **He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power**. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him. Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, **that God may be All in all.** (1 Corinthians 15.22-28 cv)

The objective of Christ's rule is to head up *all things*, to reconcile *all things* to God so that God may be *All in all*. The next eon will not be an absolutely perfect time on earth, but it will be a continual increase of paradise as Christ begins to aggressively head up *all things*. The heading up will continue into the following eon when *all things* are new, until finally, at the consummation of *the day of God*, there no longer will be the need for the government of nations, for God will fill everything in His entire creation. He will be *in all* and He will *fill all*.

Paul was the one who was given revelation of this great fact, which he called a

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secret (that is now revealed).

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, **to head up all in the Christ**—both that in the heavens and that on the earth.... (Ephesians 1.8b-10 cv)

Paul included both things in the heavens and things upon the earth in this heading up. Now, let us add a few other verses to this one. In referring to this eon and the eon to come, Paul declared more of the secret.

[God] subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as **Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement** [filling up, completion] **of the One completing the all in all.** (Ephesians 1.22-23 cv)

[God] rouses [raises] us together [the ecclesia, the body of Christ] and seats us **together among the celestials** [in the heavenly places], in Christ Jesus, that, **in the oncoming eons** [ages], He should be displaying the transcendent [surpassing] riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2.6-7 cv)

To me [Paul], less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations [gentiles], and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons [ages] in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and **the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia**, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons [ages], which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord.... (Ephesians 3.8-11 cv)

All these verses mean that, in God's wisdom, the body of Christ has been chosen to be a co-worker with Christ in the heading up of *all*, especially the heading up of all in the heavens. Can you imagine a calling any greater than this? It is tremendous! Those who are reconciled to God in this eon, the body of Christ, will enter the *celestial* realm (physical as well) during the next eon to work alongside Christ as He heads up ***all things in heaven and on earth***. The body of Christ is the first to be headed up in Christ and will participate with Christ during the two oncoming eons in bringing *all* into subjection so that God will be *All in all*.

The body of Christ is on the leading edge of what God has begun to do in and through His Son. Spiritually speaking, believers are now seated among the *celestials*, but a day is coming when this great fact will be literally manifested for all the *celestial* creation to behold. Christ is coming again to receive His body to Himself to reign with Him over the *celestial* realm and the world. There is no higher calling, no greater honor than to be a new creation in Christ and to be included in the great work He is doing and will continue to do for the next two

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eons until He has reconciled *All* to God. Today, Christ is to be all until, finally, God Himself will be *All in all*.

Christ's death on the cross is an absolute, unfailing, glorious success!

The time is coming when death will be no more and *all* mankind will be saved, justified and reconciled, and brought into endless life.

“For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all” (Romans 11.32 cv). **Salvation to all!**

“Our Savior, God, Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth” (1 Timothy 2.3-4 cv). **Salvation to all!**

“We rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind” (1 Timothy 4.10 cv). **Salvation to all!**

“Through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also ... through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying” (Romans 5.18 cv). **Justification to all!**

“Through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross)” (Colossians 1.20 cv). **Reconciliation to all!**

“For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified [made alive]” (1 Corinthians 15.22 cv). **Life to all!**

At the consummation of all, *all things* will be truly reconciled to God. All this will be worked out during the next two eons, until finally, *all* is headed up, and then endless glory will begin.

CHRIST is coming again!

God has raised Christ from among the dead, He has ascended into heaven, and He is coming back to this earth very soon for all to see!

And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? **This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.**” (Acts 1.10-11 NASB)

It is time: “*Be conciliated to God!*” Be at peace with God, and then give Him all the praise, honor and glory. It is time for the body of Christ to have the word of the conciliation written on their hearts and to be ambassadors for Christ. This is in accord with the purpose of the eons.