

Chapter 8

Reconciliation of the All

Adding to the *subjection of the all* is the *reconciliation of the all*—without doubt, one of the most important tenets of the good news and at the heart of God's plan.

Reconciliation means "to make friendly again or win over to a friendly attitude; to bring two parties into harmony or peace with each other."

By definition, *reconciliation* means that a peace deal has been struck on the part of all that were once at odds or at war with each other. However, reconciliation requires a process by which all parties come to terms of peace, and generally, this process must start with one of the parties making the first move. In other words, one party must be willing to raise the white flag of peace in order for the other party to respond, whether favorably or unfavorably. Obviously, if one rejects the deal and keeps shooting, so to speak, there is no peace.

This first step of reconciliation is called *conciliation*, which is exactly what Paul explains in relation to God, the world, and His ambassadors.

(18) Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, (19) 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. (20) For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!" (21) 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 5:18-21 CLV)

In the above verses, most translations use the word *reconciliation*, but the editor of the *Concordant Literal New Testament* (CLV) points out that it is important to make a distinction between *conciliate* (or, *conciliation*) and *reconcile* (or, *reconciliation*).

The Greek word *allassō* means "to make different, to change." From this root word are derived two other words: *katallassō*, which is translated into the verb *conciliate* [noun form *katallagê*, translated as *conciliation*]; and *apokatallassō*, which is translated into the verb *reconcile*.

The words *conciliate* and *conciliation* are probably foreign to most people, since these words are seldom used in common conversation; but they are vital words in understanding God's plan for the world.

Conciliate means "to win over; soothe the anger of; make friendly; placate" and "to gain by friendly acts."

This is the first part of a peace agreement. When two parties are at war with each other, they are enemies. If one party makes peace with the other, then that party *conciliates* with the other, and there is *conciliation*. Thus, *conciliation* refers to one side of a peace deal; that is, one party is at peace with another, but it does not follow that the other party has made peace with the one that has made peace.

For a peace deal to be valid, both parties must be at peace with each other. When both parties have entered into peace with each other, it is called *reconciliation*. Thus, the word *reconciliation* means that both parties are in harmony and at peace with one another. It is a mutual peace agreement. Each party has to make peace (**to be conciliated**) with the other in order to come into a mutual peace (**to be reconciled**).

As an aside, in a previous chapter, the point was made that *re* implies a second order. In this case, it speaks to the meaning of reconciliation; it takes two to have true peace and this peace comes about in God's second order established through His Son.

In the case of the world that has been at war with God, God was the first to call for peace. In other words, conciliation starts with God alone. Paul explains.

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. (Romans 5:10 CLV)

Looking throughout the entire history of humanity, when all of us were dead in our trespasses and sin, Christ died! This is where conciliation starts. The peace treaty starts at the cross. Mankind was incapable of entering into a peace treaty with God. Can you imagine what it would be like if mankind wanted to be at peace with God, but He did not want to be at peace with mankind? It is a sad commentary on our day that many seem to project our heavenly Father as one who refuses to be at peace with most of humanity, as if He were an angry, vengeful god in the image of carnal man. **God is love**, and He demonstrates His love, for **He first loved us!**

It starts with God who in Christ is not reckoning our offenses to us, for God's Son died for our sins. In other words, God is not keeping a ledger of our transgressions committed against Him because His Son took away all our sin for us.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB)

This is exactly why Paul could declare: **God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them.**

God has waved the white flag of peace. Through Christ Jesus, the entire world, which means all of us, have been conciliated to God, and God is not counting our offenses against us. Do you grasp the greatness of these words? He is not counting *your* offenses against you!

Consider how a paraphrased version reads: **That is, that God was in Christ making peace between the world and himself, not putting their sins to their account, and having given to us the preaching of this news of peace** (2 Corinthians 5:19 BBE).

Here is the very heart of conciliation, making peace, and this is the message that we, as believers, are to be proclaiming to the world that remains an enemy of the cross. God has made peace with the world because of His Son, because of the **LORD JESUS!**

After all, as our Lord Jesus reminds us: **God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son** (John 3:16). The CLV reads: **For thus God loves the world so that He gives His only-begotten Son.**

Do we think that God's love somehow dried up 2,000 years ago? Never! God loved the world then, and He loves the world today. Again, God is love. How can He stop loving and still be God? He must love for that is His very character; it is who He is.

This means that God's peace treaty is still in force for the whole world, none excluded.

Therefore, let us not think that God has given up or that conciliation is a thing of the past, for it is an ever-present peace agreement that will continue until the consummation of the eons and beyond. In fact, it is God's plan not only to conciliate the world to Himself but to be reconciled with all in the heavens and on the earth. Ultimately, there will be a mutual peace with all in heaven and on the earth. God fully intends to have reconciliation with ALL. How do we know? Paul tells us so.

(16) For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. (17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (19) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, (20) and through Him to reconcile [apokatallassō] all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:16-20 NASB [added])

The word *reconciliation* is used by Paul to stress that, ultimately, all humanity and all creation will be reconciled to God, that is, all will be at peace with God and God will be at peace with all. This is the purpose of the ages, so that God may be all in all new. Why? Because all of God's enemies, all of mankind, have been conciliated to God, and one day, all will be made alive in Christ!

Take special note of the word *all* in the above verses.

All things is the Greek *ta panta* or *the all*. But how inclusive is *the all* in Paul's teaching? Are there things excluded from *the all*? How can there be? According to Paul, *the all* was created by God's beloved Son, and then he defines *the all* for us. It includes all things in the heavens and on the

earth, both visible and invisible, including thrones or dominions. Five times Paul uses the phrase *all things*, as if to make sure that we get the point.

Simply, Paul brings everything created, whether visible or invisible, into the creative genius of the Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Is all humanity included in *the all*? Is mankind part of creation? Of course, the answer is affirmative on both counts. Then, how can anyone be excluded from God's plan to reconcile all things, *the all*, to Himself? How can anyone be left out of God's peace? Are we to say that only believers from our present eon are included and the rest of humanity that do not believe is excluded?

Paul makes no differentiation between the believer and the unbeliever of our eon. *The all* includes all mankind regardless of their condition. Why? Because the cross is an absolute, 100% success in the salvation of all mankind, not all at the same time or in the same manner, but all eventually, and all through God's Son.

The last chapter covered the subjection of all enemies under the feet of Christ. Simply, these enemies of God, which are the rebellious nations [*ethnos*] of our present age, must be conciliated to God. How is God going to do this? He will do it through His Son who will subject all things under His feet. He alone will bring the nations to the point of *conciliation* with God so that all things will be *reconciled* to Himself. This is the glory of the blood of His cross. Peace with all!

If, through Paul, God declares that He not only has *conciliated the world to Himself* but also *plans to reconcile the all to Himself* because He has made peace through the blood of His cross, do we somehow think He is not going to accomplish this to His glory? Do we have any right or any basis of fact to state it is not going to happen? One would have to be blind to God's word to believe otherwise, or one would have to redefine *all* as something less than the whole or to reject that *all* is a comprehensive word.

Let us not waver in the truth; God fully intends to bring about the reconciliation of all.

Some physicists describe the universe as if it were a stringed instrument. Today, there is discord in this great stringed instrument, but one day God will bring it fully back into tune.

A day is coming when all creation will be in harmony with God; all creation, which all humans are a part of, will be at peace, barring none.

"My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." (John 14:27)

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension.... (Philippians 4:7)

The Ultimate Purpose of God (complete book)