

## The Reconciliation of All Things in Christ

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One of the most powerful metaphors of salvation in Scripture is the concept of reconciliation. Reconciliation is chiefly a Pauline idea, as Paul is the only author in the New Testament who used the καταλλάσσω word group to speak of reconciliation in a redemptive context.<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation in a salvific sense refers to God's work in which He acts out of His love to bring about harmonious relations between Himself and others.<sup>2</sup> This work of reconciliation is necessary because of the disruption that sin has caused in the relationship between God and His creation.<sup>3</sup> God reconciles through Jesus Christ, on the basis of His work (Rom. 5:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).<sup>4</sup>

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Scripture makes it clear that all believers, those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, are reconciled to God. Romans 5:10 states that those who are reconciled were reconciled by Christ's death while they were enemies, and being reconciled they will be saved by Christ's life. Those who are saved by Christ's life are the same people as those who have been justified by Christ's blood (v. 9).<sup>5</sup> Colossians 1:22 states that those who are reconciled through Christ's death have been reconciled so that they will be presented as holy, blameless, and beyond reproach before Christ at the judgment, and this will happen only to believers.<sup>6</sup>

In addition Scripture also presents the concept of reconciliation in universal terms. Second Corinthians 5:19 states that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." This raises the question of who is included in the term "world." Colossians 1:20 goes even further and states that God reconciled all things to Himself through Christ, "whether things on earth or things in heaven."

This concept of universal reconciliation raises the question of what exactly it means to say that all things are reconciled to God. Is everyone reconciled through Christ'...

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