

Problems Resolved by Reconciliation: Character of God & Position in Adam; Ryrie's Summation of Reconciliation; Why Universal Peace Is Impossible

18. The problem of the **character of God** is resolved by **propitiation**. The character of God is made up of various attributes that define Who and what God is and none of these attributes can be compromised. If man is to be restored to a right relationship with God then His righteousness and justice must be satisfied. The Greek word for "satisfaction" is **ἱλαστήριον, hilastērion** and means literally "mercy seat."
19. Mercy seat is an Old Testament term referring to the golden covering of the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle and temple: כַּפֹּרֶת **kapporeth**. It was upon this covering that the blood of the sacrificial animal was sprinkled by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Inside the ark were three items that depicted the sins of the Israelites: the Mosaic tablets of the Law, Aaron's rod that budded, and an urn of manna.
20. The Shekinah Glory resided above the *kapporeth* between two cherubs that represented His righteousness and justice. As all three looked down their view of the symbols of Israel's sins was prevented by the presence of the *kapporeth* which was covered with the blood of the innocent substitutionary sacrifice. Since the sacrifice represented the future work of Messiah on the cross, then righteousness and justice were satisfied. The New Testament word for this satisfaction is *hilastērion*: propitiation.

1 John 2:2 - He [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation [ἱλασμός, hilosmos] for our sins and not for ours only but also for the entire world.

21. The problem of our **position in Adam** is resolved by our **position in Christ**. We are born as a child of Adam who was fallen and from whom we inherited our sinful nature. This means we were born condemned, spiritually dead, and totally depraved. This problem is rectified at salvation by the baptism of the Holy Spirit which places us in union with Christ. This is also referred to as positional truth or residence in the top circle. The believer positionally in Christ can never be removed from the top circle. This emphasizes the imputation of eternal life which is among eight other things we share with Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:17 - If anyone is in Christ [current positional truth: at salvation, we are baptized into the resurrected Christ and possess all the things He possesses: righteousness, eternal life, sonship, heirship, royalty, priesthood, election, destiny, and sanctification], he is a new creature [κτίζω, *ktizō*: a new spiritual species: trichotomous and part of the body of Christ on earth and with a resurrection body in the future]; the old things [ἀρχαῖος, *archaios*: ancient: from ἀρχή, *archē*: origin or beginning; refers to original sin and the imputation of it to every person at selection resulting in spiritual death (Romans 5:12)] have come to an end; behold, a new thing has come [a new spiritual species].

22. In addition to *eirēnē* there are two other New Testament words that refer to reconciliation.
23. The first is **καταλλάσσω, *katallassō***: to reconcile: the act of Christ taking upon Himself our sin and becoming our substitute.
24. A summary of our approach to the meaning of *eirēnē* is applied to *katallassō* by:

Zodhiates, Spiros (gen. ed.). The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1992), 836:

A relationship of peace with mankind is established which was hitherto prevented by the demands of His justice. In *katallassō*, God is the subject, man is the object. *Katallassō* implies God has laid aside or withdrawn His wrath [propitiation].

25. There is a stronger word for this idea in **ἀποκαταλλάσσω, *apokatallassō***. It also means “to reconcile.” The prefix **ἀπό, *apo*** indicates “separation from one status to another.” The original status is enmity and the new status is peace: reconciliation with God.

Ephesians 2:16 - That He might reconcile [ἀποκαταλλάσσω, *apokatallassō*] them both [**Jews and Gentiles**] to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity [ἐχθρός, *echthros*: removal of the barrier between sinful man and perfect God].

26. We conclude our look at reconciliation by turning to Dr. Charles C. Ryrie for a summary statement:

Ryrie, Charles C. Basic Theology. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 294:

The Provision and Application of Reconciliation. God's provision of reconciliation is universal. Because of the death of Christ the position of the world has changed—people were now able to be saved. But that alone saves no one, for the ministry of reconciliation must be faithfully discharged by proclaiming the Gospel message. When an individual believes, then he receives the reconciliation God provided in Christ's death (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

The world has been reconciled, but people need to be reconciled. The universal reconciliation changes the position of the world from an unsalvable condition to a salvable one. Individual reconciliation through faith actually brings that reconciliation in the individual's life and changes the position of the individual from unsaved to saved. Then, and only then, are sins forgiven, though they were paid for on the cross.

Man "has been reconciled with God because the reconciliation by God of sinful men to Himself, effected once and for all *in Christ*, has lasting effects. It is not applicable merely to one period or to one group of people, but to all the world. Whenever the *word of reconciliation* is proclaimed by those to whom God has committed it, and whenever it is appropriated by an individual sinner, whoever and wherever he may happen to be, that person is reconciled by God to Himself, and his reconciliation means that God no longer *imputes* to him his *trespasses*; i.e., He no longer counts his sins against him" (R.V.G. Tasker, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958], p. 89).

To summarize: the need for reconciliation lies in God's enmity against sinful mankind. God took the initiative and reconciled the world to Himself. This was done by the death of Christ, and that provision changed the world into a savable position before God. Yet though the world has been reconciled, man needs to be reconciled by changing his position about Christ. Then, and only then, is his condition before God changed.

- 64) The peace of reconciliation establishes harmony with God and makes possible harmony among men. When the message of reconciliation with God is rejected it confirms that person's enmity with God and makes it impossible for him to be at peace with those who are reconciled.
- 65) PRINCIPLE: The angelic conflict is a continuous campaign that rages between the forces of God and the forces of Lucifer. Its individual battles are engaged between angels and demons, angels and unbelievers, demons and believers, believers and unbelievers.
- 66) There can be no harmony between these opposing factions until both parties are at harmony with God. That all of those who are at enmity with God will not do what is required to be reconciled means that this world will be plagued with conflict until the Second Advent of Christ.
- 67) This conflict can be expressed by one individual toward another or by a group of people in opposition toward another group. The latter would include those of differing ideologies, morals, cultures, religions, and ethnicity. An example of this is provided by our Lord's instructions to the seventy in Luke 10.