

EXPOSITORY TEACHING ON THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

MESSAGE SIX: THE SUPREME WORK OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:19-22

- ❖ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...

INTRODUCTION:

From vs. 15-18, we have seen the Supremacy of Christ. Now, from vs. 19-22, we will look at the Supreme Work of Christ for us.

1. THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST JESUS

Scripture: “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” (**Col. 1:19, ESV**)

- “For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.” (NASB)
- ❖ “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” (**Col. 2:9**)

Gnostics: Christ is one of the divine manifestations of God, not the fullness. Even Hindus say Christ is one of the embodiments of God, along with Rama and Krishna...etc. But the Scripture says Jesus Christ is the fullness (completeness) of God. In other words, He is the complete revelation of God. There is none beside Him.

Note: The emphasis of Paul is on the complete manifestation of God through Christ's incarnation. Remember, Gnostics despise the sanctity of physical matter.

The incarnation of Christ is crucial to man's salvation. There is no salvation without it.

- His coming on earth must be physical
- His suffering must be physical
- His blood must be physical
- His death must be physical
- His resurrection must be physical

Scriptures:

- ❖ **Philippians 2:5-8**, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being

found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

- ❖ **Hebrews 2:14-17**, “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”
- ❖ **1 John 4:2-3**, “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This [i.e., the denial that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh] is the spirit of the antichrist.”

How is Christ existing at present?

- ❖ “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells (present tense) bodily.” (**Col. 2:9**)

Sam Storms: The fullness of deity did not merely dwell in Christ in bodily form in the past, or for a momentary season in human history. The fullness of deity even now continues to dwell in him bodily, says Paul.

2. THE RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST JESUS

1. What is reconciliation? **Max Anders**, “Reconciliation is the removal of hostility and the restoring of friendly relations to parties who have been at war.”¹

2. What kind of people were we before reconciliation?

- ❖ “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds” (Col. 1:21).

Alienated: separated from God because of sin

Hostile in mind: Enemies of God, since our thoughts and attitudes were against the standards of God.

Doing evil deeds: What we are in our mind is what we do in action.

Therefore, it is the kind of people like us, separated and hostile in mind, that God reconciled us to himself.

- ❖ **Romans 5:6-11**, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died

¹ Max Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*, pg. 284

for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Some think, “Man committed sin against God, and since God was angry, Christ came to bring reconciliation between God and man.”

Observe, God Himself reconciled us to Himself through Christ Jesus.

- ❖ **Col. 1:19-20**, “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him (Christ) to reconcile to himself (God) all things.”
- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**, “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

3. In what areas did God reconcile us to Himself?

- i. Reconciliation in our relationship with God (since we were alienated)
- ii. Reconciled our minds (thoughts) to the thoughts of God (since we were hostile in mind)

Note: Sometimes I see the hostility in mind still pervades even after becoming a Christ.

- God’s Word says, “Submit to your husbands”, a Christian wife says, “No.”
 - God’s Word says, “Don’t be harsh with your wives,” but a Christian husband says, “No.”
 - God’s Word says to church, “Forgive one another,” but a Christian brother or sister says, “No.”
 - God’s Word says, “Don’t lust other women and men,” but a Christian brother or sister says, “No.”
 - Don’t entertain thoughts and attitudes against the Word of God. Don’t be hostile in mind.
- iii. Reconciled our actions to the ways of God (since we were doing evil deeds)

In today’s modern gospel, this reconciliation is missing. There is emphasis on healings, miracles, blessings, and solving of personal problems.

4. How did God reconcile us to Himself through Christ? The price for reconciliation was exceptionally costly.

- ❖ “Making peace by the blood of his cross” (**Col. 1:20b**).
- ❖ “he (Christ) has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death” (**Col. 1:22**).

It cost God the life of His beloved Son, Christ Jesus, to reconcile us to Himself. This shows how serious is sin in the sight of God and costly the price for reconciliation.

5. What is reconciliation of all things, whether on earth or in heaven?

- ❖ **Concern:** “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (**Col. 1:19-20**).

Caution: “reconcile to himself all things” does not mean, “all will eventually be saved.” Universalism is a false doctrine.

Sin has not only brought curse upon man but also upon the entire creation (Gen. 3:17-18, “Curse is the ground because of you.” Even in Rom. 8:19-22, “the whole creation has been groaning in the pains of child birth until now.” And we are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21). Not only we are a new creation in Christ, the whole physical creation will be renewed. All this happens because God has reconciled to Himself all things.)

After studying much on this text, on which there are various interpretations, I subscribe to the interpretation that this reconciliation of all things speaks about cosmic reconciliation.

R. C. Sproul:

In Christ, God will “reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (Col. 1:20). Paul is not advocating a universalism whereby all people will be saved. Instead, he is teaching that cosmic reconciliation is the final end of our Savior’s work. Adam’s fall ruined humanity’s fellowship with our Creator, but it also “broke” the cosmos: people began hating each other, animals were set against us and other animals, pests and disease entered the picture, and even nature was thrown into upheaval — weather, earthquakes, and more now cause death and destruction. Christ’s work fixes all this as well, and creation will one day no longer groan for its rescue (Rom. 8:18–23).

3. OUR PERFECTION BY CHRIST JESUS

1. What is the purpose of reconciliation? Not simply to make us *happy*. No just to go *heaven*.

A. W. Pink, “The nature of Christ’s salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day evangelist. He announces a Savior from hell rather than a Savior from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of Fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness.”

- ❖ **Col. 1:21-22**, “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,”
- ❖ **Ephesians 1:4**, “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.” (not for yourself, not for others, but before HIM)
- **Holy:** Separated unto God and set apart from sin
- **Blameless:** without spot or sin
- **Above reproach:** free from accusation
- ❖ **Romans 8:33**, “Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.”

Three phases of holiness:

i. Positional: Perfect standing before God through faith in Christ Jesus.

ii. Progressive: Character and conduct being conformed to Christlikeness.

iii. Complete or final sanctification: Enter into eternal glory without sinful nature and with complete perfection (both in position and action).

Point: Knowing our perfect position in Christ Jesus and longing for our final glorification in heaven, we must pursue to live a holy life in the present age.

Illustration: It comes from R C Sproul in his classic book *Holiness*. “Luther used a simple analogy to explain it. He described the condition of a patient who was mortally ill. The doctor proclaimed that he had medicine that would surely cure the man. The instant the medicine was administered, the doctor declared that the patient was well. At that instant the patient was still sick, but as soon as the medicine passed his lips and entered his body the patient began to get well. So it is with our reconciliation and justification. As soon as we truly believe, that very instant we start to get better; the process of becoming pure and holy is underway and its future completion is certain.”

SUMMARY:

1. THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST JESUS

2. THE RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST JESUS

3. OUR PERFECTION BY CHRIST JESUS

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What is the meaning of “Incarnation of Christ”?
2. Why is it necessary for Christ to come in flesh in order to secure salvation for us?
3. How does Christ exist at present? Support this with Scripture.
4. What is the meaning of “Reconciliation”?
5. What kind of people were we before trusting in Christ?
6. What did it cost God to reconcile us to Himself?
7. In what way did Christ reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven?
8. What is the purpose of reconciliation?
9. What is your position in Christ in the phase of holiness?
10. What is your progressive condition in Christ in the phase of holiness?
11. What is your final state in Christ in the phase of holiness?
12. How did this message encourage you in your Christian life?
13. Do you have any questions?