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### Be Ye Reconciled to God!

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*Ouachita Baptist University*

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"BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD!"

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS  
NUMBER 21  
EPHESIANS 2:16-17

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EPHESIANS 2:16-17 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

The justice and righteousness of God was satisfied at the cross and therefore God was free to pour out on us his free salvation. It was a grace process all the way. All of our past sins were blotted out when we accepted Christ. He also made provision for our future sins and through confession we are able to stay in fellowship with him at all times. The barrier of sin was removed by Christ and man had nothing to do with removing the barrier. In those hours on the cross Christ paid the full price for our sins and the barrier between man and God came down.

EPHESIANS 2:16 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:" "That he might reconcile" is from "apokataallasso." "Apo" is the preposition of ultimate source. "Kata" is the preposition of norms and standards. The word "Allasso" means to change, to alter, to transform. So the word means that from the ultimate source of God, using his own character as the norm or standard, he changes us at the moment of salvation. Now none of these amazing things can be seen by the human eye. And remember this is the work of God and is never the work of man. He reconciles, he does the changing that takes place within us. God and God alone does this. We do nothing and he does it all in reconciliation. He took the initiative and he paid the full price for our sins. He did it all for both the Jews and the Gentiles, and salvation for each is exactly the same. The plan of salvation is the same for every man on the face of the earth from Adam down to the last individual that will ever live. This is grace in action and we need to orient our lives to grace and do it completely.

When an individual believes in Christ through faith, God, at that moment; does thirty-four things for that new believer, and all of them are grace gifts. None of the thirty-four things comes as a result of man's work, but as a direct gift from God. Salvation is based on the fact that he removed the barrier, he did the reconciling, and we did nothing. Yes, to be sure, we stepped across the line, we believed, but that act is a non-meritorious act and for it we receive no credit. All the credit goes to Him. So this word "reconcile" which is from "apokataallasso" means that he did it all. These changes all took place in an instant. At that moment God opened the door to you for perfect happiness, and this perfect happiness is based on knowledge of Bible doctrine. That's why we sing that missionary hymn that goes like this:

"I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;  
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;  
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,  
I'm here on business for my king.

This is the message that I bring,  
A message angels faint would sing:  
'Oh, be ye reconciled',  
Thus saith my Lord and King,  
'Oh, be ye reconciled to God'."

Reconciliation is a transformation. This verb is in the aorist tense and this means this transformation happened in an instant, in a moment of time. This is an occurrence in time, and God lifted that point out of time and says something like this to us--"Look at what I am going to do! I am going to pick that point of time up and lift it out of time and make it a memorial to my grace by causing it to last forever." So this is a point of time, lifted out of time and flung into timelessness. This means that salvation can never be altered by time or Satan and it lasts forever. The active voice of this verb means that God himself does the reconciling. And he does more for the believer in the church age than for any other believers of any other age. The reason he does more for those of us who live in the church age is caused by the intensification of the angelic conflict. When Christ sat down at the right hand of God, God said to him, "Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And Christ sat down and at that moment the intensification of the angelic conflict began. In that moment every believer became the target of Satan. Up to that time Christ had been the chief target, but now he is removed and seated at the right hand of God, so man became the chief target of Satan. The Devil stepped up his attack on man at that time. That is why God provides things for us that he did not provide for Abraham or for Moses or for David. We are in the intensification of the angelic conflict, and because of this we are given additional assets whereby to meet the onslaught. We are Satan's chief target today but he can't destroy us because we have been reconciled to God.

The subjunctive mood of this verb means reconciliation is potential to mankind and depends on whether one believes in Christ or not. The provision for salvation has been made. The price has been paid for man's sin, and everything has been made ready for man to enter the Kingdom. But man's participation in this reconciliation depends on man's free will. This subjunctive mood means that God recognizes the free will of man and will never force him to accept the reconciliation against his will.

"Both" here is a word used to refer to every man in the human race, both Jews and Gentiles. Reconciliation opens the door to God for every man in the whole human race. God has no prejudice in regard to people. All are included in the reconciliation plan. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, "He is not willing that any should perish..." We also read in 1 Cor. 15:22, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The words "in one body" brings us back to the church age. The church on earth is called the body. The body is being formed today as the solution to the angelic conflict. One of the thirty-four things done for us at the moment of salvation is that we are entered into union with Christ.

The words "by the cross" is "dia" plus the genitive and means "through the instrumentality of the cross." The cross must come before the crown. That's why we sing, "I must needs go home by the way of the cross, there's no other way but this."

The words "having slain" is an aorist, active, participle from "apokteino." Now this is not the usual word in Greek for death. The usual word for death is "apothenesko." This word "apokteino" refers to spiritual death rather than to physical death. When we read of the death of

Lazarus the word used for death was "apothenesko." He was dead, dead physically, and his sister said to Jesus, "By this time he stinketh." That's physical death. But this word "apokteino" refers to spiritual death. Christ died twice on the cross. He had both "apokteino" and "apothenesko" on the cross. So this refers to the spiritual death of Christ on the cross, the death for our sins. Christ did not die physically for us on the cross. We will die physically for ourselves, as he died physically for himself. But he died for us spiritually, a death that we could not accomplish for ourselves. So Christ died twice in order that we might be born twice, and it is our second birth that gives us salvation. Back in the Garden of Eden the Lord had warned Adam that if he ate of the forbidden fruit that "Dying, thou shalt die." That "dying" referred to spiritual death, which would take place long before physical death. Physical death is not the penalty for sin. Spiritual death is the penalty for sin. The word "enmity" refers to the barrier. The cross removed this barrier.

EPHESIANS 2:17 "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Here we have the concept of the example of our Lord.

"And came" is an aorist, active, participle and refers to the first advent of Christ, his first coming, his virgin birth. The emphasis of his first coming was "peace." But this is not referring to world peace or even to peace within the Christian's life. This is referring to peace between man and God, this is referring to reconciliation. The word "preached" is from "euaggelizo." "Eu" means to speak well and "aggelizo" means to announce. So this means to announce or to communicate something good. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit devised a plan and that plan was to share something good with every member of the whole human race. The plan was to share that something good with us through Bible doctrine. This is divine thinking. The plan was so devised, that God, through it, can share his perfect happiness with man forever and forever. It is a plan of grace and the grace starting place is the cross. So Christ came to announce good news, and the good news was peace.

This doesn't mean world peace or inner peace in the Christian's life, but it refers to peace between sinful man and a Holy God. All man can do to receive this peace is to have faith in Christ and accept the provision made for him at the cross. Any person in the universe can step over the barrier through faith in Jesus Christ and thereby appropriate this peace.

"To you which were afar off" refers to the Gentiles and "to them which were nigh" refers to the Jews. It is for both Jews and Gentiles, it is for every man in the world. But God will not violate man's privacy and his free will. God doesn't reach in your mind and twist you to positive signals. The decision must be made by the individual, on his own, without pressure from God or from anyone else.