

9. Reconciliation and Hope (1Q 2026 Christ in Philippians and Colossians)

Biblical material: Col. 1:21–29, Eph. 5:27, Eph. 3:17, Rom. 8:18, Eph. 1:7–10, Eph. 3:3–6, Prov. 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Quotes

- Christian faith is... basically about love and being loved and reconciliation. These things are so important, they're foundational and they can transform individuals, families. *Philip Yancey*
- Christians believe that there will be a Judgment Day at the end. And it is my belief that on that day justice will be done and there will be a reconciliation between those who have profoundly injured one another takes place. *Miroslav Volf*
- Here we see the infinite love of God, that He has been pleased to think of us poor creatures from everlasting and make it His work to reconcile us to Himself. And here is the foundation of the sweetness and comfort of all the mercies of God to those who are reconciled to Him: they are the fruits of the eternal love of God for us. *Jeremiah Burroughs*
- Look to the future with hope: trust in God; reconciliation is the fruit of inner change. *Pope Benedict XVI*
- Christian hope does not promise successful days to the rich and the strong, but resurrection and life to those who must exist in the shadows of death. Success is no name of God. Righteousness is. *Jürgen Moltmann*
- Paul did qualify his hopes for reconciliation: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18). Some people just shut down. We try, but they’re not open. So, it doesn’t depend on you or me at that point, not any more. We have to leave it with God. But so far as it does depend on us, we seek out a real experience of shalom with all, absolutely all, for the Lord’s sake. *Ray Ortlund*

Questions

How can we best define reconciliation from a Christian perspective? How to avoid the idea that God needs to be reconciled to us? How do reconciliation and hope relate to one another? How can we make the Christian hope real and not “pie-in-the-sky”? How does our future hope affect the way we live in the present? Can the issues raised in the great controversy be resolved through reconciliation?

Bible summary

Colossians 1:21–29 speaks of how God has worked to reconcile us. Jesus wants to make the church his own (see Ephesians 5:27). Christ lives in us as we trust in him (see Ephesians 3:17). “I’m convinced that what we suffer in the present is nothing compared to the future glory that will be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18, Our mission is to know Jesus as he truly is (see Ephesians 1:7–10). God’s “mystery” is now revealed in Jesus (see Ephesians 3:3–6). Prov. 14:12 explains there’s a way that seem right, but it leads to death. 2 Corinthians 5:21 states that Jesus experienced the consequences of sin so that we can have a character like that of God.

Comment

“Anyone who is in Christ is a new being—what was old is gone, the new has come! God did all this by changing us from enemies into friends through Christ. God gave us this same work of changing his enemies into his friends. For God was in Christ, bringing the world back from hostility to friendship with him, not counting anyone’s sins against them, and giving us this message to change his enemies into his friends. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God is pleading through us: ‘Please, won’t you come back and be God’s friend?’” 2 Corinthians 5:17-20. This is the “ministry of reconciliation” God has given to us.

For we are the ones with the problem, not God. He does not need to be reconciled to us—we are the ones who are in rebellion and hostile to God. We need to be convinced about God’s character of love, and be willing to trust him.

This is the reconciliation which God makes to bring us back to oneness to him: “God did all this by changing us from enemies into friends through Christ. God gave us this same work of changing his enemies into his friends. 2 Corinthians 5:18. Jesus worked to “completely reconcile both of them to God through the cross as if they were just one body, having destroyed our hostility towards each other.” Ephesians 2:16. “God was pleased to have his full nature live in him, and through him brought back everything in the universe to himself, since he made peace through the blood of his cross, through him reconciling all those on the earth and in heaven.” Colossians 1:19, 20. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Romans 5:10, 11 KJV—the only place in the KJV New Testament where the word *atonement* is used.

Receiving the atonement—by being reconciled to God as trusting friends instead of rebellious enemies. What is required for this true *at-one-ment* with God is not primarily forgiveness and pardon but healing and change. Only by being transformed can hostile rebels find a place in God’s presence—only by becoming God’s friendly children—at one with their heavenly Father.

Consequently we are ambassadors for Christ—every last one of us who are Christians. If this is so, what are we to do, and what are we to say? While we are very much in this world, how are we not “of” it? Does this mean some kind of haughty disengagement? Then what of the practical application—for the theory may seem clear, but in practice...

We are ambassadors for Christ because he has given us his message of reconciliation. So how do we explain what this message is, and how do we demonstrate it unless we become involved?

This is what brings us hope, as we look forward to the final resolution of the great controversy, the fulfillment of our hope in God. When it comes to hope in the New Testament, this is no vague anticipation. In the words of Thomas Cranmer’s *Book of Common Prayer* (used by the Church of England), we look forward to the “sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Ellen White Comments

Forgiveness, reconciliation with God, comes to us, not as a reward for our works, it is not bestowed because of the merit of sinful men, but it is a gift unto us, having in the spotless righteousness of Christ its foundation for bestowal. {Pr 298}

The peace spoken of by the great Teacher is larger and fuller than we have imagined. Christ is ready to do large things for us, to restore our natures by making us partakers of His divine nature. He waits to link our hearts with His heart of infinite love, in order that we may be fully reconciled to God; but it is our privilege to understand that God loves us as He loves His Son. When we believe in Christ as our personal Saviour, the peace of Christ is ours. The reconciliation provided for us in the atonement of Christ is the foundation of our peace; but gloomy feelings are no evidence that the promises of God are of no effect. You look at your feelings, and because your outlook is not all brightness, you begin to draw more closely the garment of heaviness about your soul. You look within yourself, and think that God is forsaking you. You are to look to Christ. In me, Christ says, ye shall have peace. Entering into communion with our Saviour, we enter the region of peace. {LHU 332}

Every one should seek to understand the great truths of the plan of salvation, that he may be ready to give an answer to every one who asks the reason of his hope... Your comprehension of the character of God will be deepened; and with the whole plan of salvation clearly defined in your mind, you will be better able to fulfill your divine commission. {RH April 24, 1888}