

The Doctrine of the Atonement of Christ – Part Two

The Death of Christ as a Reconciliation

The doctrine of reconciliation is taught in the New Testament using the word group which is derived from the Greek verb *allássō*, often meaning “to exchange” or “give in exchange” (Friberg #1147, BibleWorks). It thus gives rise to several other compound words with meanings rooted in the same concept. For example:

- 1) The word *diallássō* means to “change from enmity to friendship” or “reconcile” and is used only as a passive in the New Testament, meaning to “become reconciled” or to “make peace with someone” (Friberg #6323, BibleWorks).
- 2) The word *katallássō* again means to “change from enmity to friendship” or to “reconcile” (Friberg #15195, BibleWorks).
- 3) The word *apokatallássō* means to “transfer from one state to another quite different state; hence, of broken interpersonal relations [it means to] *reconcile*, [or to] *restore* (from enmity to favor)” (Friberg #2984, BibleWorks).

Matthew 5:23-24 (*diallássō*)

Romans 5:1-11 (*katallássō*) Recall 1:16-18; 2:5-9; 3:5, 23-25

As Douglas Moo has observed in his comments on verse 10:

The parallelism between this verse and verse 9 renders the differences between them all the more significant. Perhaps the most interesting is the substitution of “reconciled” for “justified.” Justification language is legal, law-court language, picturing the believer being declared innocent by the judge. Reconciliation language, on the other hand, comes from the world of personal relationships. “To reconcile” means to bring together, or make peace between, two estranged or hostile parties (cf. 1 Cor. 7:11). The language of reconciliation is seldom used in other religions because the relationship between human beings and the deity is not conceived there in the personal categories for which the language is appropriate. (NICNT, e-Sword)

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (*katallássō*)

Douglas Moo is again helpful when he writes that, “Reconciliation in Paul has two aspects, or ‘moments’: the accomplishment of reconciliation through Christ on the cross (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19: ‘in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself’) and the acceptance of that completed work by the believer (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20 b: ‘We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God’)” (NICNT commentary on Rom. 5:10, e-Sword).

Ephesians 2:11-16 (*apokatallássō*)

Colossians 1:19-22 (*apokatallássō*) See also Romans 8:19-21

Concerning Colossians 1:20, I think John MacArthur was on the right track when he wrote that, “This text does not teach that, as a result, all will believe; rather, it teaches that all will ultimately submit (cf. Phil. 2:9-11)” (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, e-Sword).