

So Great Salvation

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Chapter Nine

BROUGHT INTO HARMONY WITH GOD

In sinning, as previously pointed out, the first man listened to the tempter. He yielded himself to the influence and power of Satan and so mankind became subject to his power. Because of this condition, GOD in saving man must deliver him from the power of darkness. Furthermore, it was seen that, in sinning, man violated GOD's law, became guilty and came under the sentence of death. It was therefore also necessary for GOD to redeem him from the curse of the law and from under the law.

There is one more thing that happened when man sinned. In considering the subject of sin it was seen that because GOD created man, all that man was and all that he had came from GOD. Therefore, man's proper attitude toward GOD was one of complete dependence upon Him. Man's sin consisted in a declaration of independence of GOD and dependence upon self. This attitude taken by man was nothing less than a rebellion against GOD and His sovereignty, or government, over man, including His provision for man. When any group of people declares its independence of a government under which they have lived, it is a rebellion. If and when they are able to establish their independence and exist as a separate government then their action partakes of the nature of a revolution. Man has never been able to establish an independent existence apart from GOD. There are some who think and act as though they can do this very thing, but as long as man cannot exist without GOD's sunshine, His air and His rain, man cannot claim to be independent of GOD. All independence of GOD by man, then, is and must be in the nature of a rebellion against Him. The rebel human race was in need of reconciling.

In listening to the tempter's words, as has already been said, man became subject to him. Thus man became alienated from GOD and an enemy to Him. Herein also was need for reconciliation.

After Adam and his wife sinned "**And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself**" (Genesis 3:8-10).

A change had taken place within Adam. He had become estranged from GOD. He had alienated himself from Him. Fear of GOD had taken the place of love, confidence and trust. Instead of drawing near to GOD he drew away from Him. By his sin Adam became far off from GOD. Friendship with GOD with accompanying communion, companionship, fellowship and intimacy were lost and replaced by enmity and estrangement.

As Adam passed his sinful nature onto his posterity so also with it he passed along the state of alienation from GOD and the feeling of fear of Him.

One need not go far to find evidence that mankind is still in that estranged relationship to GOD. The evidence of man's fear for GOD can be multiplied a thousand-fold. Every effort on the part of man to appease GOD and every effort to do something to gain GOD's favor is a witness to man's alienation from Him. Every fear of death and a judgment to come testifies to the broken harmony between GOD and man.

This state of alienation of all men from GOD requires a special work on the part of GOD on behalf of man. Redemption from under the law and from the penalty of the broken law made it possible for GOD to justify man so that in the sight of His law man was counted as perfectly righteous. But to be right with GOD on a strictly legal basis does not necessarily mean to be on intimate terms with Him.

If one of two persons who are very friendly with each other commits some illegal act whereby he harms his friend, it is possible that the legal aspects of the act be settled without bringing the two back into a state of friendship. They may forever remain alienated from each other. In addition to a legal settlement there must be brought about a reconciliation between them. So also, even though man has been redeemed from the penalty of the law and is reckoned as perfectly righteous in the sight of the law, he also needs to be

reconciled to GOD as a part of GOD's work of restoring that which was lost to man by Adam's sin. Reconciliation, then, is an important part of salvation.

GOD's work of reconciliation is a work on behalf of man. When two men are to be reconciled to each other it is possible, in fact probable, that there is something wrong in each that needs to be corrected. They are reconciled to each other. Not so in the case of reconciliation of man to GOD. Man is out of harmony with GOD and only he needs to be reconciled. "**God was in Christ (on the Cross) reconciling the world (mankind) unto himself**" (II Corinthians 5:19).

To reconcile means to cause to be friendly again; to restore to friendship; to bring back to harmony; to cause to be no longer at variance. It was man that broke the friendship with GOD. Man, by sinning, became a discordant note in GOD's universe. That which is in man that brought about the discord and the alienation from GOD must be dealt with. And that is just what GOD does in reconciling man to Himself, for "**God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**" (II Corinthians 5:19).

In justification, which is because of redemption, man's trespasses are considered as a violation of GOD's law and are forgiven because JESUS CHRIST paid the penalty on the Cross and man is restored to a righteous standing before GOD's law. In reconciliation GOD deals with the trespasses of man as that which expressed man's rebellion against His authority, in fact, against His government, including His provision for man.

That which caused man to fear GOD, to hide from Him, to be at enmity with Him and out of harmony with Him, is not counted against man. That which constituted rebellion is considered as though it had not taken place.

The awfulness of the separation and alienation of man from GOD by sin is best understood by considering the cost at which GOD brought about reconciliation. It was by nothing less than the death of the Son of GOD. It is said that ". . . **when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son**" (Romans 5:10). Again, "**And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death**" (Colossians 1:21-22)

The penalty for rebellion against a human government is death. That was well-known by Benjamin Franklin when he said, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." So also the penalty for rebellion against GOD is death. Therefore when CHRIST died on the cross to reconcile

man to GOD, He died there in man's place as a rebel.

When the Jewish leaders brought JESUS before Pilate they charged that He had been found perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He was king (Luke 23:1-2). All of these are acts of sedition, or rebellion, and it was on these charges that JESUS was tried. Pilate after having examined JESUS said to the Jews, ". . . **Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) . . . And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will"** (Luke 23:14-19, 24-25). He Who had not committed rebellion died as a rebel and he who had committed rebellion was set free and that only because JESUS died. Had JESUS not died, Barabbas would have been crucified. But Barabbas was not alone in gaining his freedom through the death of JESUS. JESUS, by the grace of GOD, tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9) and that was in order that the creature, man, who had made insurrection against GOD, might become reconciled to Him.

Sometimes men are called upon to make their peace with GOD. There is nothing in the Bible on which to base that appeal. In fact it contradicts the statements that "**he (CHRIST) is our peace**" and that He in His flesh has abolished the enmity and so made peace (Ephesians 2:14-15). Man cannot make his peace with GOD, all he can do is to accept the peace that has been made on his behalf by JESUS CHRIST on the Cross and which is freely offered by GOD. Reconciliation is a work of GOD and of Him alone.

Through reconciliation man enters from a state of enmity against GOD into a state of peace with Him. When the Son of GOD was born as a babe in Bethlehem, the angels proclaimed "**on earth peace**" (Luke 2:14). This meant that He who was then born should reconcile man to GOD.

Those who have become reconciled to GOD instead of being far off are made nigh to GOD. They have access by the SPIRIT to the FATHER. The feeling of fear for GOD is replaced with one of love and confidence in Him. They are "**no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the**

saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). To be of the household of GOD means that all the goodness and omnipotence of GOD is available unto them.

Though man cannot make his peace with GOD he must by an act of his will accept the peace that JESUS CHRIST has made for him. GOD, through the death of JESUS CHRIST, removed that which caused the enmity and alienation, but each individual person must change his own attitude toward GOD. He cannot maintain his rebellious attitude and become reconciled to GOD. Paul, the apostle, said, ". . . **we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God**" (II Corinthians 5:20). Only as man is willing to surrender his dependence upon himself and his independence of GOD can he become reconciled to GOD.

~ end of chapter 9 ~
