

Colossians 1:20-21.

"Hosanna in the highest," cried those who went before and came after Jesus as he rode that donkey into Jerusalem. Save us was their plea. They acknowledged Jesus as coming in the name of the Lord; bless it be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest. They seem to have been filled with joy and Jesus was at the centre of their hope and expectation that day. However, they do not appear to have been thinking of their own personal condition before God. The expectation looks to have been for a national restoration of the kingdom of David. Even Jesus's closest disciples had not understood the purpose of his ministry. When Jesus had explained, **Mat 16:21**, "how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." We see Peter's reaction, **v22** "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." But Jesus rode into Jerusalem because he had come to make reconciliation. It was the central purpose of his life and ministry. We see this set out clearly in **Col 1:20-21** where the apostle moves on from proving the pre-eminence of Christ to explain reconciliation as it applied to the believers at Colosse.

1. Reconciliation is Needed because of our natural condition

Reconciliation between man and God is needed because we are not born into this world holy and pure, we do not grow up to be truly loving in all that we say and do. Just listen to Paul's description of the saints at Colossae, you, **v21**, "were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works." On the day that Adam rebelled and sinned against the Lord God we all became alienated from God. He is our federal head. **Rm 5:12** "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Our natural sinfulness is evident for all to see. At Colossae they were from a background which was foreign to the revelation which God had given to the Jewish people, but even in Jerusalem we see that the hopes and expectations as Jesus rode in were replaced just a few days later by cries of **Mk 15:14** "Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him." The religious leaders and those who listened to them showed themselves to be alienated from God. The miracles and truth which Jesus taught was despised. This is true of everyone as we see clearly set out in **Rm 1:18-21**. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. ²⁰For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Our natural desires are not for the friendship and glory of God. We are enemies of God in our minds. We have an attitude of mind which is opposed to God, his law and his glory. That explains why our world gets in such a mess.

If you as a child or young person have a love for Jesus and his word, this is of God's grace and mercy. Samuel was very blessed to have a mother of faith, Hannah is one of the greatest examples in Scripture. She loved the Lord and she loved her son. Timothy was like that too, for we read that, **2 Tim 3:15** "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." He was blessed with a godly mother and grandmother. Not everyone has had that gracious blessing. Many have to confess to years of rebellion against what God says. God's moral law describes perfect love, but yet we think we know better. We don't, we are merely rebelling against our creator. **Prov 14:12** "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death." The world in which we live has a great deal of chaos and hurt in it because of the rebellion of individual people. Remember, **Prov 13:15** "the way of transgressors is hard" We are born as children of wrath. We need reconciliation with God.

2. Reconciled in the body of Christ's flesh through death.

Paul reminded them of their natural condition, but what a change Jesus has brought. Notice how carefully the apostle sets this out. Jesus did not die as an example of love and patience under suffering. He did not die as a martyr for a holy cause, no, in the body of his flesh he died to reconcile us to God. It was **v20** “through the blood of his cross” that he made peace for us. He, **Heb 1:3** “himself purged our sins.” It is important to note that Jesus died bodily. Early in the history of the church there were false teachers who said that Christ was only spirit, and so he only seemed to die on the cross. Today we have our Muslim neighbours, many of whom believe that Jesus did not die on the cross at all, that there was a switch and someone else died in his place. Scripture is, however, quite clear about this, the Holy Spirit has left us no room for doubt. Christ bodily hung on that cross, his actual blood was shed, he died as the perfect unblemished sacrifice to reconcile his people to God. He is, **Jn 1:29** “The lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are foundational facts of the gospel. We must never shy away from proclaiming them. They are the grounds of our hope, of our reconciliation with God. What joy there is when someone repents and believes, Jesus gave us a great illustration of this with the prodigal son. **Lk 15:18** “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,” his father welcomed him with the best robe and a feast. That is being reconciled.

3. Christ died that you might be holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight.

Reading this, I was reminded of the parable of the wedding guests which Jesus taught. We read that the servants were sent out to invite guests. **Mat 22:10** “Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.” Coming in off the street their clothing is unacceptable. Sadly we are told of one guest who did not see the need for a wedding garment, he was cast out. The wedding garment speaks to us of the righteousness of Christ. Wearing that we are welcomed to the feast. **Isa 61:10** “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.” This is what Christ has done for his own. We were alienated, hostile, with wicked minds, evil actions following. But then Christ died to reconcile. If we repent and believe, we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We are made acceptable in his sight. Think of the access we have with boldness at the throne of grace today, but this passage is undoubtedly looking forward to the glory of heaven. Jesus is coming again to receive his own onto himself. All whose faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ will be welcomed into heaven because of the reconciliation which Christ has made by the blood of his cross. **Rm 8:33-34** “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. ³⁴Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” What about you? Are you trusting in Jesus? Have you repented and believed? Do you know the wonder of this reconciliation with your creator, the acceptance of coming before your heavenly Father in prayer? I pray that you will have no sense of peace if you have not. Nothing is more important than being reconciled to God. Look to the death of Christ, see the wonder of his resurrection and cry out, “Hosanna” Save me.