

Shunning the “-Tions”: Reconciliation

November 9, 1989, a day to remember, a day that changed the lives of millions of people. On this day in history, the Berlin Wall opened, and the wall began to tumble down. After twenty-eight years of tension, the Iron Curtain melted into history.

On a hill called Mt. Calvary, God removed the wall that stood between Him and mankind, a wall built by us when we sinned against Him. A wall that shut God out of our lives.

Genesis 3 tells the illicit story of our rebellion. Conned by Satan, our ancestors brought death to a world of new life ([Genesis 3:6](#); [Romans 5:12](#)). Through the death of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, new life comes to us ([Romans 5:15](#)). The debt is paid ([Ephesians 2:14-17](#); [Colossians 1:19-23](#)). We are free from captivity. Praise God, we are free! Free to fellowship with God. Free to reconcile our differences with God and with one another. Free from the ball and chain of sin and death. Free! Redeemed, Regenerated, Adopted and Reconciled. We are free!

The question on the hearts of people worldwide is, “How can I make things right between me and God, and between myself and others?” Keeping in mind that God reconciled us to Himself, we have the answer to that question. When it comes to God, we try to be good. We try to do nice things for others. We try to live unselfishly. All of this is to no avail. Our sin still separates us from God.

“How can I make things right between me and God?” To answer the question, **YOU can’t make things right between you and God.** What you could not do, God did through His Son Jesus Christ. He reconciled us through Christ.

The Gallery of Leviticus

The Old Testament provides a gallery of snapshots that look forward to the moving picture of Christ’s life. In that gallery we find a section marked “Sacrifices.” In that section we find displays of pictures of the Burnt Offerings, Sin Offerings and Peace Offerings. That last display holds our attention, Peace Offerings. These pictures show us scenes revealing the essence of reconciliation.

Leviticus 3:1-17 details the activities needed to bring peace to the believer, peace from God through God’s prescribed system of sacrifice. The person seeking peace may bring an unblemished male or female animal from the herd, flock or goats. After laying his hands on the animal, he slaughters the animal and the priests throw the blood against the altar. The worshiper sacrifices all the fat covering the entrails, the kidneys with their fat and the liver.

What does all this mean? By placing his hands on the animal, the worshiper vicariously shows that he is one with the sacrifice. When the worshiper slaughters the animal the priests throw the blood at the altar. Bring that forward to the time of Jesus and the

As iron sharpens iron,
so a person sharpens his friends.
-- Solomon

altar becomes the cross ([Colossians 1:20](#)) upon which Christ was crucified. The fat stands for the best part of life which we give over to God. In Jewish culture different parts of the body represented different features. In this case, the kidneys signify the seat of desire. Hence, a worshiper sacrificed his desires to bring about peace with God. We might entitle this picture “My Desires in Exchange for His Will.”

The Picture of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24)

A son comes to his father and demands that the father give each of his sons their inheritance, now. The son is saying to the father, “Father, I wish you were dead so I could get your money.” Upon receiving his inheritance, the younger son runs off and squanders his wealth. In the end, the son can only find work feeding pigs. For a Jewish boy to feed pigs was lower than a disgrace. Finally, the boy comes to his senses and returns home.

Daily, keeping watch for the boy, the father sees him at a distance. Gathering his robes about his waist, with a heart of compassion the father runs to meet the boy. An old man running was a disgrace, but the father cared nothing for what people thought. His son was returning. With open arms, the father engulfs his son kissing him on the neck. Between sobs while he clutches his father’s robes and buries his face in their softness, the son blurts out, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son” (Luke 15:21). But the father, joyously weeping, commands his servants, saying, “Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:22-24).

Reconciliation takes place before the eyes of the community. Father and son are huddled together again. The enmity that existed between the son and the father no longer exists. The son is at home, again. He was lost, but is now found.

If you are looking for a picture to hang on the inside of your home’s entryway, a picture that your children will notice, then buy a print of Rembrandt’s *The Prodigal Son*.

The Frame Around the Pictures

Fours paragraphs from the Pauline epistles frame these two pictures ([Romans 5:1-11](#); [2 Corinthians 5:16-21](#); [Ephesians 2:14-17](#); [Colossians 1:19-23](#)). Each contributes ideas to help us see reconciliation presented in the Epistles. The pictures of the peace offering, and the reconciled father and son sit inside a frame of these reconciliation concepts.

- Peace and grace from God come through Jesus Christ ([Romans 5:1-2](#)).
 - Peace has been preached to us who are far off and those who are near ([Ephesians 2:17](#)).
- While we were enemies,
 - God reconciled us ([Romans 5:10](#); [Colossians 1:20](#))
 - through Christ ([Romans 5:11](#); [2 Corinthians 5:18](#))
 - by his death on the cross ([Ephesians 2:16](#))
 - dying at the right time for the ungodly ([Romans 5:6](#); [Colossians 1:22](#)).
- God’s love is shown to us through Christ’s death ([Romans 5:8](#)).

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- Christ was made to be sin to reconcile us to God ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).
- In Christ, we are a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).
- We have been reconciled with one another through Christ. The walls that divided people groups have been broken down ([Ephesians 2:14](#)).
- We have received a ministry of reconciliation ([2 Corinthians 5:18](#)).
- We have a message of reconciliation ([2 Corinthians 5:19-20](#)). Peace has been preached to us who are far off and those who are near ([Ephesians 2:17](#)).

Peter's words to the Christians living as aliens in an antagonistic world tells us where we came from and where we should set our course of direction.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
(1 Peter 2:24-25)

Let us walk before our Lord as His children: redeemed, regenerated, adopted and reconciled.