

Colossians 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Analysis

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. The Christ hymn climaxes with cosmic reconciliation. "Having made peace" (eirēnopoiēsas, εἰρηνοποιήσας) through dia tou haimatos tou staurou autou (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, "through the blood of his cross") specifies the peace treaty's cost. Reconciliation required blood sacrifice; peace came through substitutionary atonement, not negotiated compromise.

"To reconcile all things unto himself" (apokatallaxai ta panta eis auton, ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν) envisions universal restoration—not universal salvation of all individuals (Scripture clearly teaches eternal judgment) but restoration of cosmic order disrupted by sin. Creation groans under sin's curse (Romans 8:19-22); Christ's work will ultimately renew all things (Revelation 21:5).

The scope includes "things in earth, or things in heaven," suggesting even spiritual realms affected by Christ's reconciling work. Whether this means rebellious angels receive opportunity for reconciliation or that cosmic harmony is restored despite their exclusion remains debated. Clearly, Christ's cross has cosmic implications extending beyond individual salvation to universal renewal.

Historical Context

Ancient cosmology recognized cosmic disorder—natural disasters, disease, death—without clear explanation. Pagan religions offered various mythological accounts; Greek philosophy proposed impersonal solutions. Paul reveals that sin disrupted cosmic harmony, and Christ's cross provides comprehensive restoration. This elevates the gospel from mere personal therapy to cosmic rescue mission, engaging both individual hearts and universal renewal.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing the cross's cosmic significance prevent reducing the gospel to merely personal benefits?
2. What evidence of cosmic disorder (natural evil, suffering, death) reminds you of creation's need for Christ's reconciliation?
3. How should Christians relate to environmental stewardship in light of Christ's coming cosmic renewal?

Interlinear Text

καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτοῦ
And by him to reconcile G3588 all things unto him
G2532 G1223 G846 G604 G3956 G1519 G846

εἰρηνοποιήσας δι' τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ δι'
having made peace by the blood cross him by
G1517 G1223 G3588 G129 G3588 G4716 G846 G1223

αὐτοῦ εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ
him I say whether G3588 they be things in earth I say whether G3588
G846 G1535 G1909 G3588 G1093 G1535

ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
things in heaven
G1722 G3588 G3772

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 1:10 (Parallel theme): That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Hebrews 2:17 (Creation): Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Romans 5:1 (Peace): Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Philippians 2:10 (Parallel theme): That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;