

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY WE BEGIN TO LOOK AT THE NEXT SECTION OF COLOSSIANS, ~ 1:21-23, ~ A very brief paragraph.

▶▶ In **verse 20**, ~ Paul talked about reconciliation. ~ But he did it in a very general and brief way. ⇨⇨ **Let's pick it up in verse 19.**

▷▷ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ~ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, ~ whether on earth or in heaven, ~ making peace by the blood of his cross. ⇨⇨ **Notice the general nature of this.**

▶▶ In **verses 21-23**, ~ he expands on this theme of reconciliation.

▷▷ And he does it in a very personal and specific way. ~ He speaks to believers personally.

↳↳ He goes from the general, ~ "all things," ~ to ~ "you." ~ I.e., ~ each believer.

▷▷ He says, ~ "Once ~ [i.e., ~ Formerly] ~ you were alienated and hostile in your minds, ~ as evident by your evil actions.

↳↳ "you" is plural in the Greek text. ~ Explain

↳↳ But it would apply to each and every believer.

▷▷ So he's speaking to all believers on a personal level. ~ And he's reminding each believer ~ of our own personal reconciliation to God.

▷▷ He reviews for us our own spiritual experience and situation. **⇩⇩ 1/13**

PAUL BEGINS THIS REVIEW ~ WITH OUR PRE-RECONCILIATION CONDITION. ~~
verse 21.

AND THIS IS WHAT WE'LL FOCUS ON TODAY. ~~ WHAT WE WERE ~ PRIOR TO salvation.

▶▶ And we're going to split **verse 21** into three parts.

VERSE 21a. ~~ ONCE ~ [I.E., ~ FORMERLY] ~ YOU WERE ALIENATED, ~ PAUL SAYS.

THE WORD "ONCE" ~ CONNECTS TO VERSE 20.

▶▶ So, ~ in vv. 20-21, ~ Paul is saying, ~ "Through his Son, ~ God reconciled to himself all things, ~ making peace by the blood of his cross. ~~ But here's the picture of you, ~ believer, ~ before being reconciled. ~~~ You were alienated."

▶▶ And of course, ~ the one who we were alienated from was God.

▷▷ The NIV translation of **verse 21a** ~ brings out the meaning quite well here.

▷▷ **Once ~ [or, ~ Formerly] ~ you were alienated from God.**

IN VERSE 21a, ~ PAUL IS BASICALLY SAYING TO BELIEVERS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ each of you, ~ before you became believers, ~ were alienated from God.

▶▶ Paul makes it very personal and includes every believer.

▶▶ Each one of us, ~ personally, ~ were separated from God prior to our salvation. ⇨⇨
Extremely important to understand.

▶▶ In our unsaved condition, ~ there was a complete absence ~ of any contact between us and God. ⇨⇨ **Unsaved may think they have. ~~ But in reality ~ they don't. ¶¶ 2/13**

NOW, ~ HERE IS SOMETHING THAT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE.

▶▶ Our alienation from God ~ began in our mother's womb.

▶▶ More specifically, ~ it began at the second of conception.

▷▷ We do not become alienated by behavior or thought.

▷▷ We are by nature ~ separated from God.

▶▶ In Ps. 51:5, ~ David wrote, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Behold, ~ I was brought forth in iniquity, ~ and in sin ~ did my mother conceive me.

▷▷ David was not suggesting that his mother was committing sine, ~ like adultery, ~ here.

▷▷ His focus was not actually on his mother but on himself.

▷▷ Ps. 51 confession ⇔⇔ Focus on himself ~ not his mother.

▷▷ The verse could be translated as, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Look, ~ I was guilty of sin from birth, ~ a sinner ~ the moment my mother conceived me.

▷▷ David's point here ~ is that ~ he entered the world a sinner by nature ~ long before he became one in action.

▷▷ And notice exactly what David says.

↳↳ a sinner ~ the moment my mother conceived me. ¶¶ 3/13

▷▷ We see that David traced his sinfulness all the way back to the moment he came into existence.

▷▷ We are lost and separated from God ~ the moment we come into existence.

IT IS ALSO TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND ~ THAT ALL UNBELIEVERS are separated from God.

▶▶ There is no such thing as an innocent unbeliever.

▶▶ And ~ all unbelievers will suffer separation from God for eternity ~~ unless they receive the reconciliation provided by Jesus.

▶▶ But here's a warning. ⇨⇨ The offer of reconciliation with God through Christ ~ is good for this life only.

▷▷ As Paul says elsewhere, ~ "Behold, ~ now is the acceptable time; ~~ behold, ~ now is the day of salvation!"

▷▷ And as the author of Hebrews says, ~ "each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment."

▷▷ The offer of reconciliation with God through Christ ~ is good for this life only.

PAUL CONTINUES WITH HIS REVIEW OF OUR PRE-RECONCILIATION CONDITION.

IN VERSE 21b, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ formerly ~ you were "hostile in your minds."

▶▶ The sentence continues here, ~ so God is the one we were hostile in mind toward.

▶▶ "hostile in your minds." ~~ I.e., ~ hostile toward God in thought and attitude. ⇩⇩ 4/13

▶▶ The phrase, ~ "hostile in your minds," ~~~ is a hard-hitting way of saying that at the heart of each one of us there is an inbred hostility to God.

▶▶ Before we trusted Christ, ~ our entire way of thinking was contrary to God's.

▶▶ There is an inward bent in all humanity ~ to hate the law of God, ~ to hate the revelation of the character of God, ~ to hate the truth of the gospel.

▷▷ Don't believe me? ⇨⇨ Just bring up the name of Jesus

▶▶ The human mind opposes the mind of God, ~ sets up a rival kingdom, ~ and organizes an active rebellion against the divine Ruler.

▶▶ In Rom. 8:7, ~ Paul writes, ~ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; ~ it does not submit to God's law, ~ nor can it do so (NIV).

▷▷ It cannot submit to God's law ~ because the mind is the seat of indwelling sin and is in permanent revolt against him.

▷▷ The unregenerate human mind ~ instinctively recognizes in God's law ~ the danger of judgment, ~ and thus prefers willful ignorance.

▷▷ People will come up with all sorts of ways to explain God and judgment away.

↳↳ This is one reason why evolution is so popular

▷▷ The unregenerate human mind ~ instinctively recognizes in God's law ~ the danger of judgment, ~ and thus prefers willful ignorance.

PAUL CONTINUES WITH HIS REVIEW OF OUR UNSAVED CONDITION IN VS. 21c.

FOR CONTEXT, ~ WE'LL START WITH THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 21. ⇩⇩ 5/13

▶▶ Once ~ [i.e., ~ Formerly] ~ you were alienated and hostile in your minds, ~ as evident by your evil actions.

▶▶ Paul explains here ~ our hostility toward God was evident ~ by our evil behavior.

SOME TRANSLATIONS READ ~ "BECAUSE OF" ~ OR ~ "BY" ~ EVIL BEHAVIOR.

▶▶ While this is one way to interpret and translate it, ~ it's not the best way.

▷▷ That is so ~ because each of these readings seem to make our sins ~ the cause of our hostility toward God.

▶▶ TPID, ~ from outward appearance ~ these translations that say "by" or "because of," ~ ↴↴

▷▷ could possibly cause someone to mistakenly assume ~ that our sinning causes our hostility toward God.

I THINK WE CAN SAFELY SAY THAT OUR SINNING ~ MAKES OUR HOSTILITY TOWARD God worse.

▶▶ I.e., ~ we're doubly hostile toward God. ~~ Start out hostile ~ & goes down hill

▶▶ But our sinning ~ does not cause our hostility toward God.

▶▶ Sin begins in the heart ~ and manifests itself in overt deeds.

SCRIPTURE IS CLEAR ON THIS.

▶▶ Jesus shows that sin begins in the heart.

▷▷ You have heard that it was said, ~ 'You shall not commit adultery.' ~~ But I say to you ~ that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent ~ has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ~~ Matt. 5:27-28 ↴↴ 6/13

▶▶ Jesus shows us this in his discussion on what defiles a person, ~ recorded in [Matt. 15:10-20](#),

▷▷ And you can read the whole passage later for the full context.

▷▷ Jesus says this in [verses 19-20a](#).

↳↳ For out of the heart come ~ evil thoughts, ~ murder, ~ adultery, ~ sexual immorality, ~ theft, ~ false witness, ~ slander. ~~ These are what defile a person.

▶▶ And James weighs in on this as well.

▷▷ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ~~ Then desire when it has conceived ~ gives birth to sin, ~ and sin ~ when it is fully grown ~ brings forth death. ~~ James 1:14-15

▷▷ Notice the progression ~ and where it all starts.

UNBELIEVERS ARE NOT INWARDLY HOSTILE TOWARD GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR outward acts of sins.

▶▶ They commit sins ~ because they are inwardly hostile toward God.

▶▶ TPID, ~ we are not sinners because we sin. ~~ We sin ~ because we are sinners.

ANOTHER AND MORE APPROPRIATE MEANING OF THE GREEK TEXT IN VIEW HERE, ~ 77

▶▶ is that our sinful behavior ~ gave evidence that we were hostile toward God. 77 7/13

▶▶ And that's why I used the translation I did.

▷▷ Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds, ~ as evident by your evil actions.

▶▶ Our evil actions ~ revealed our hostility toward God.

▶▶ TPID, ~ our sinful acts were ~ the outward expression ~ of our inward enmity toward God.

NOW, ~ WE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME ON THAT, ~ BUT PURPOSEFULLY SO.

▶▶ It is extremely important that you understand this.

▶▶ And again, ~ it is my responsibility as an expository preacher/teacher ~~ to help you understand the Bible ~ correctly ~ and ~ as fully as possible.

▶▶ I hope you never make the mistake of thinking, ~ "This is boring. ~~ Why do I need to know these things?"

▶▶ And it is every believer's responsibility ~ to understand the Bible correctly ~ and as fully as possible.

OK, ~ TO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FOREST FOR THE TREES, ~ ¶¶

IN THIS NEXT PARAGRAPH, ~ COL. 1:21-23, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ Paul is reviewing for us ~ our own personal ~ spiritual experience and situation.

▶▶ And he begins this review ~ by taking us on a trip down memory lane.

▷▷ He reminds us of the way we were before we were saved. ¶¶ 8/13

▷▷ Before we became believers, ~ we were alienated from God and hostile in mind toward him.

↳↳ And our evil deeds revealed that hostility.

▶▶ But it's a very short trip down memory lane here in Colossians.

PAUL GIVES A MUCH FULLER TREATMENT OF OUR UNSAVED CONDITION OVER IN Eph. 2.

TPID, ~ HE TAKES US ON A LONGER TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE.

▶▶ And I think we would do well in reviewing some of that, ~ in order to get a fuller picture of our unsaved condition.

▶▶ I'll just highlight three points of Paul's review of our unsaved state there.

▷▷ This will get you started ~~ and then you can trace the rest of Paul's review on your own.

ONE POINT PAUL MAKES IN EPH. 2 IS THAT ~ IN OUR UNSAVED STATE, ~ WE "WERE by nature children of wrath." ~~ Eph. 2:3b

▶▶ Now, ~ being a child of wrath is not a way of speaking about someone's ill temper.

▷▷ Paul is not saying that, ~ when were unsaved, ~ we were wrathful or angry children.

▶▶ Greek word for "of wrath" here ~ should be understood as "destined for wrath."

▷▷ I.e., ~ prior to salvation, ~ we were headed straight for God's wrath.

▶▶ The whole phrase "children of wrath" ~ was a saying that meant ~ those who were subject to, ~ deserving of, ~ and destined for ~ wrath. **⇓⇓ 9/13**

▷▷ And in the context of Eph. 2, ~ "wrath" refers to God's wrath.

▷▷ Notice especially ~ the phrase "deserving of." ~ Not deserve

▶▶ In our natural, ~ or unsaved, ~ condition, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul says ~ we were subject to, ~ deserving of, ~ and destined for ~ a horrifying and terrible eternity.

ANOTHER POINT IN EPH. 2 THAT PAUL MAKES IS THAT ~ IN OUR UNSAVED STATE.

▶▶ We had ~ "no hope."

▶▶ Paul is talking about biblical hope here.

▶▶ Recall from previous studies, ~ that biblical hope has an objective and a subjective meaning.

▶▶ The objective meaning ~ is that the believer's hope ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is the totality of what God has promised the believer at the end of this age ~ and in the life to come.

▷▷ Which includes the promise of Jesus' second coming, ~ God's promise of our resurrection and glorification, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the inheritance that we obtained through Jesus, ~ and God's promise of a new universe.

▷▷ And every part of this hope that we have ~ is 100%, ~ absolutely guaranteed to be fulfilled. ¶¶ 10/13

▶▶ The subjective meaning of the believer's hope is that it is an attitude of expectancy, ~ which is actually a result of the reality of the hope that comes from the totality of what God has promised.

▷▷ The certainty of God's promises to believers for the future ~ ¶¶

↳ ↳ produces within us ~ a confident expectation ~ of the fulfillment of all that God has promised.

▶▶ Paul says ~ we had none of this prior to salvation.

▷▷ We had no promise of a glorious future ~ and therefore no confident expectation of a glorious future.

▷▷ For the believer, ~ life leads to a greater, ~ awesome life.

▷▷ When we were unsaved, ~ life was leading to despair, ~ discouragement, ~ depression, ~ uncertainty for the future, ~ a fear of death, ~ and death itself.

▷▷ What a horrible condition we were in.

▷▷ What a horrible condition those who are still separated from Christ are in.

AND THE THIRD AND FINAL POINT FROM PAUL'S REVIEW IN EPH. 2 OF OUR UNSAVED condition.

▶▶ Paul says ~ we were "without God in the world."

▶▶ Paul does not mean that we were necessarily atheists.

▶▶ The word translated as ~ "without God" ~ refers to not having a relationship with the one true God. ¶¶ 11/13

▶▶ We were living in this world without a relationship with the one true God.

▶▶ Think through some of the things that meant.

▷▷ We did not have Him guiding us, ~ blessing us, ~ or helping us.

▷▷ We did not have His friendship. ~~ We did not have Him to turn to in times of trouble.

▷▷ We did not have His word steering us through this sin-darkened world.

▶▶ How tragic.

▶▶ And how tragic ~ for those who still do not have a relationship with the one true God.

CONCLUSION.

NOW, ~ WHY WOULD PAUL, ~ IN TWO PLACES NO LESS, ~ TAKE US ON A TRIP DOWN memory lane?

▶▶ Certainly not to make us feel guilty or to drag us down.

▶▶ Rather, ~ no doubt Paul wants us to never forget our unsaved condition, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in order ~ that we develop a greater appreciation for our salvation and its accompanying blessings; ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ in order for us ~ ¶¶

→→ to come to a greater appreciation for the great things God has done for us ~~ and for how He has had mercy on us. ¶¶ 12/13

▶▶ Remembering the way we were ~ will help prevent us from failing to appreciate Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

▶▶ Remembering the way we were ~ will help us begin to truly grasp and appreciate the infinite depth of God's love for us.

▶▶ And remembering the way we were ~ will guard us against spiritual pride.

▷▷ Because it will remind us of two things.

↳↳ 1st, ~ none of us ~ were saved because we were great people. ~~ Quite the contrary.

↳↳ And the second thing remembering the way we were will remind us of: ~~ none of us ~ could get ourselves out of our spiritually dead predicament.

MY . . . , ~~ GOD SAVED US BY HIS GRACE.

▶▶ Eph. 2:4-10

▶▶ To God be the glory, ~ great things He hath done; ~~ So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

▷▷ Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, ~ And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

LET'S PRAY 13/13