CHAPTER EIGHT

SALVATION OF THE RECONCILED
(WITH A NOTE ON THE BACKGROUND OF PAUL’S
METAPHOR OF RECONCILIATION)*

1. The Context in Which the Metaphor
of Reconciliation Is Introduced

Paul uses the phrase “to be reconciled to someone” (καταλλάσσει/Βεβιαί τινι) in 1 Cor 7:11, admonishing the estranged wife not to remarry or to be reconciled to her husband. This particular use of the verb, to denote the change from enmity to friendship in an interpersonal relationship, is common in Greek and lexicographically well documented (cf. Spicq, 1.309–311, 2.262–266; BDAG, s.v.). This however, is not the case when the verb is used to denote a change in the relationship between humans and God. The latter use of the verb, of which Paul left us two (cf. 2 Cor 5:18–20; Rom 5:10) from a dozen known examples (cf. Sophokles Aj. 744; Plato Symp. 193b; 2 Macc 1:5; 5:20; 7:33; Philo Praem. 166; Josephus A.J. 6.143, 151; 7.153, 295; Jos. Asen. 11:18), is so rare that it can safely be regarded as a metaphorical mapping of non-religious terminology unto a religious domain. From which domain of language usage did Paul transfer the terminology to depict the changing relationship between humans and God? In order to answer this question, it is imperative to note the context in which Paul introduces the terminology in 2 Cor 5:18–20. It is almost communis opinio amongst exegetes that Paul defends his role towards the Corinthians in 2 Cor 5:11–6:2 (cf. amongst the more recent commentaries on the Greek text of 2 Cor, Gräßer 2002; Lambrecht 1998; Thrall 1994; Wolff 1989; Zeilinger 1997; the older expositions were treated in Breytenbach 1989). It is in this context that he depicts himself as acting as God’s ambassador (προσβέσχομεν), who offers reconciliatory change in the relationship between humankind and God. Before turning

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to the precise function of the metaphor of reconciliation in 2 Cor 5:18–20, it is advisable to have a good look at the lexical meaning and the use of the noun “reconciliation” and the verb “to reconcile”, in Greek respectively δι- or καταλλαγή κτλ. and δι- or καταλλάσσειν κτλ.

2. The Lexical Meaning of δι- or καταλλαγή κτλ. and δι- or καταλλάσσειν κτλ.1

To appreciate Paul’s use of the metaphor of reconciliation, it is necessary to know exactly what is meant by the word.2 Reconciliation (δι- or καταλλάσσειν κτλ.) means a change from enmity to friendship. The process results in peace and friendship. This is why Hesychius (s.v.) glosses the word καταλλαγή with εἰρήνη, φιλία. To reconcile is thus to make peace or friends. Hesychius consequently glosses ἀποκαταλλάξειν with φύλον ποιήσαι. In the same vein the Suda (s.v.) notes on διάλλαγη/εἰρήνη and then comments on διαλλαγῆναι τὸ δι’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ παρακληθῆναι καὶ φιλωθῆναι.

3. The Use of “Reconciliation” and “to Reconcile” in Hellenistic Greek3

It has become clear that everyday language use is metaphorically loaded (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Through the ages, people spoke about one thing in terms of another, transferring concepts from one | seman-

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1 For more detail, e.g. from Pollux’ Onomasticon, cf. Breytenbach (1989, 46–64). Constraints on Porter’s study (1994, 15) lead to the omission of διαλλάσσειν κτλ. Apart from καταλλάσσειν κτλ. he extensively documents the use of the bi-compositum ἀντικαταλλάσσειν κτλ., including some cases from the 2nd century BCE until the 2nd century CE that shed some light on Paul’s usage (e.g. Plutarch Ant. 19.3–4; Ps-Herodianus De prosodia catholica 3.1.108) (Porter 1994, 23–116). Overwhelmingly however, the verb refers to the exchange of goods between individuals.

2 Due to the valuable work of Dupont (1953), Fitzmyer (1975), and Marshall (1978), the confusion in the French and English speaking scholarly communities was less prevalent than amongst German scholars. Cf. also Spicq, s.v., the 3rd edition of BDAG and Fitzgerald (2003).

3 For a more comprehensive presentation of the material, see Breytenbach (1989). Bash (1997) is correct in stating that my book lacks full treatment of the πρεσβεία-terminology. At the time of writing, I was painfully aware of the insufficiency of available research in classical studies on the different roles of the πρεσβεία. It was however, beyond the scope of my investigation to clarify that matter. Now one can gratefully refer to Bash’s