

Forgiveness

The Key to Fellowship with God and Men

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II. Vocabulary

A. Hebrew Words for Forgive/Forgiveness/Pardon

1. סָלַח (saw-lakh) H5545
 - a. Meaning: to forgive, pardon – almost always of God
 - b. Ex 34:9; Lev 4:20,26,31,35; 5:10,13,16,18; 6:7; 19:22; Num 14:19,20; 15:25,26,28; 30:5,8,12; Deut 29:20; 1 Sam 15:25; 1 Kgs 8:30,34,36,39,50; 2 Kgs 5:18_(x2); 24:4; 2 Chr 6:21,25,27,30,39; 7:14; Ps 25:11; 103:3; Isa 55:7; Jer 5:1,7; 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 50:20; Lam 3:42; Dan 9:19; Amos 7:2
2. סָלַח (sal-lawkh) H6739
 - a. Meaning: ready to forgive, forgiving
 - b. Ps 86:5
3. סְלִיחָה (səl-ee-khaw) H5547
 - a. Meaning: forgiveness
 - b. Neh 9:17; Ps 130:4; Dan 9:9

4. שָׂאָן (naw-saw) H5375

- a. Meaning: to lift up, exalt, promote, show partiality, swear, suffer, bear, sustain, support, bring, carry, grant, stir, take away, pardon, forgive
- b. Examples of “lift up”: Gen 7:17; 21:16,18; Ps 143:8
- c. Examples of “exalt”: 1 Chr 29:11; Ps 83:2
- d. Example of “promote”: Esther 5:11
- e. Examples of partiality: Deut 10:17; Ps 82:2
- f. Examples of “swear”: Ps 106:26; Ezek 20:5,6,...
- g. Examples of “bear”: Gen 4:13; Judg 9:54
- h. Example of “suffer”: Num 14:33
- i. Example of “sustain”: Gen 36:7
- j. Example of “support”: Ezra 1:4
- k. Examples of “bring”: 1 Chr 16:29; 2 Chr 25:28
- l. Examples of “carry”: Gen 47:30; Num 1:50
- m. Example of “grant”: Gen 19:21
- n. Examples of “stir”: Ex 35:21,26
- o. Examples of “take (away)”: Num 24:3; Deut 5:11; 2 Chr 24:3; 1 Chr 10:12; Job 24:10
- p. Used of forgiveness in 23 of 670 occurrences
- q. Gen 32:20; 50:17_(x2), Ex 10:17; 23:21; 32:32; 34:7; Num 14:18,19; Josh 24:19; 1 Sam 25:28; Job 7:21; 11:6; Ps 25:18; 32:1,5; 85:2; 99:8; Isa 2:9; 33:24; Hos 1:6; 14:2; Micah 7:18

5. כָּפַר (kaw-far) H3722

- a. Meaning: to cover over, forgive
- b. Deut 21:8_(x2); 2 Chr 30:18; Ps 65:3; 78:38; 79:9; Isa 6:7; 22:14; 27:9; Jer 18:23; Ezek 16:63

6. **כָּסָה** (caw-saw) H3680

- a. Meaning: to cover over, conceal
- b. Neh 4:5

B. Greek Words for Forgive/Forgiveness/Pardon1. **ἀφήμι** (af-ee-ay-mee) G863

- a. Meaning: to leave, permit, release - possibly from legal or moral obligation, pardon, forgive
- b. Examples of leaving: Matt 13:36; Jn 16:32; Heb 6:1
- c. Examples of permission: Luke 9:60; Mk 11:16
- d. Examples of releasing: Matt 27:50; 1 Cor 7:12,13
- e. Used of forgiveness in 49 of 155 occurrences
- f. Matt 6:12_(x2), 14_(x2), 15_(x2); 9:2,5,6; 12:31_(x2), 32_(x2); 18:21,27,32,35; Mk 2:5,7,9,10; 3:28; 4:12; 11:25_(x2), 26_(x2); Lk 5:20,21,23,24; 7:47_(x2), 48,49; 11:4_(x2); 12:10_(x2); 17:3,4; 23:34; Jn 20:23_(x2); Acts 8:22; Rom 4:7; Jam 5:15; 1 Jn 1:9; 2:12

2. **ἄφεσις** (af-es-is) G859

- a. Meaning: remission of penalty, forgiveness
- b. Matt 26:28; Mk 1:4; 3:29; Lk 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22; 10:18

3. **ἀπολύω** (ap-ol-oo-oh) G630

- a. Meaning: to grant acquittal, set free, release, pardon
- b. Lk 6:37_(x2)

4. **χαρίζομαι** (kar-id-zom-ai) G5483

- a. Meaning: to show oneself gracious by forgiving wrongdoing, forgive, pardon
- b. Lk 7:42,43; 2 Cor 2:7,10_(x3); 12:13; Eph 4:32_(x2); Col 2:13; 3:13_(x2)

III. God's Forgiveness of Men

- A. God's forgiveness of men is done in accordance with, not to the exclusion of, His perfect Essence (Ex 34:7; Neh 9:17; Ps 99:1-9; 103:1-13; Dan 9:9)
- B. We cannot be forgiven apart from salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Col 1:14)

C. Before the Cross

1. Innocent animals were sacrificed on behalf of sinful men
 - a. In the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:21)
 - b. Sin Offerings (Lev 4; 5:5-19)
2. These animal sacrifices could not take away sin (Heb 10:4)
3. Sins were forgiven as God “passed over” them (Rom 3:25)
4. Such forgiveness was possible because these sins would eventually be brought to judgment - they were imputed to Christ on the Cross
5. Israel, as God’s chosen people, was also concerned with their sins as a nation (Num 14:11-21; Ezra 9:5-15)
6. Forgiveness of sin was not the same as ritual purification (2 Chr 30:18)

D. After the Cross

1. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has once and for all taken sin away (Heb 10:12 cf. Jn 1:29)
2. Animal sacrifice is no longer necessary
3. We are a heavenly people, not an earthly nation, so we are not oriented nationally with regard to forgiveness of sins
4. We should, however, pray for our national leaders (1 Tim 2:1-4)
5. Forgiveness of sin is only one of the many blessings God bestows upon us at the moment of salvation
 - a. Forgiveness of sins is (in a sense) a subtraction
 - b. Salvation includes many glorious additions

E. Experiential

1. Our personal sins grieve (Eph 4:30) and quench (1 Thess 5:19) the Holy Spirit

- a. quench here does not mean satisfy
- b. σβέννυμι (SBEN-noo-mee) G4570
Meaning: extinguish, put out, stifle, suppress
2. When we confess our sins God cleanses all our unrighteousness and restores us to fellowship with Him as well as our brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Jn 1:3-9)
3. We should confess our sins as soon as we realize we are out of fellowship, but confession should be done at least daily (Eph 4:26)
4. Old Testament examples of confession of sin (Ps 32:1-5; 51:1-5)
5. Confession of sins is associated with turning away from (forsaking) sins (1 Kgs 8:30-53; 2 Chr 7:14; Pr 28:13; Isa 55:7)
6. Restoration to fellowship involves examining ourselves, turning away from our sins and returning to the Lord (Lam 3:42)
7. Forgiveness of sin does not preclude the possibility of discipline (2 Sam 12:13)

IV. Forgiveness Between Men

- A. Forgiveness of others should be based upon divine viewpoint (Gen 45:1-8; 50:17-21)
- B. When we have divine viewpoint, we are motivated to seek forgiveness on behalf of others as well (1 Sam 25:23-28)
- C. All sin is against God (Ps 51:4) so we should seek God's forgiveness before the forgiveness of men, but King Saul did not do that (1 Sam 15:9-35)
- D. Restoration to fellowship with God does not preclude the need for restoration to fellowship with men (Matt 5:23,24)
- E. The Lord desires for us to be at peace with one another (Rom 12:18; Heb 12:14)

- F. When our brother in Christ responds to discipline or a rebuke and repents of his sin, we are to forgive him (2 Cor 2:6-11) as often as it happens (Lk 17:3-4)
- G. We should (in love) forgive as we have been forgiven (Eph 4:30-32; Col 3:12-17)
- H. Refusal to forgive keeps us out of fellowship with God (Matt 6:9-15; Mk 11:25-26; Lk 6:36-37) and results in discipline (Matt 18:21-35)
- I. Prayer can bring about the restoration of sinful believers, leading to repentance and forgiveness of sin (Jam 5:14-16)
- J. When you forgive you do not need to forget, but once fellowship has been restored with a brother, do not use the offense as a stumbling block

V. Forgiving Ourselves

- A. There are no “forgiveness” passages in the Bible that speak of forgiving ourselves
- B. If we know that God has forgiven our sins and cleansed us from all unrighteousness and if our orientation is toward pleasing God, forgiving ourselves follows naturally
- C. If we are unable to forgive ourselves, it is due to...
 1. a refusal to accept the complete forgiveness we receive from God in His matchless grace
 2. a self-centered viewpoint that seeks our own approval instead of God’s approval
- D. Forgiving ourselves does nothing unless we have received the forgiveness of God

VI. Conclusions

- A. Forgiveness of sin by God is available only to believers

- B. Confession of sin is required for temporal forgiveness of sin and restoration to fellowship with God (and men)
- C. If we do not forgive others (and ourselves) as we have been forgiven, we harbor malice and will find ourselves continually wallowing in a host of mental attitude sins
- D. When we function in the realm of unselfish, sacrificial, integrity love (ἀγάπη), we will release our claims on others (and ourselves) and receive the inner peace that can only come from God (1 Cor 13:5; 2 Tim 2:24)