

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is the act of excusing or pardoning another in spite of his slights, shortcomings, and errors. Forgiveness refers to God's pardon of the sins of human beings. No religious book except the Bible teaches that God completely forgives sin.

Psalm 51:1,9, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity."

Isaiah 38:17, "Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back."

Hebrews 10:17, "Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

The initiative of forgiveness comes from God. **John 3:16**; "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

God is ready to forgive. **Colossians 2:13**; "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins."

He is a God of grace and pardon. **Daniel 9:9**, "The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him."

Sin deserves divine punishment because it is a violation of God's holy character **1 Peter 1:16**, "for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

God's pardon is gracious **Ps 130:4**, "But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared."

Rom 5:6,8, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

In order for God to forgive sin, two conditions are necessary. A life must be taken as a substitute for that of the sinner. **Heb 9:22**, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Secondly the sinner must come to God's sacrifice in a spirit of repentance and faith, **Mark 1:4**, "And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". **Acts 10:43**, "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Forgiveness in the Bible is directly linked to Christ, **Acts 5:31**, "God exalted him (Christ) to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to the believers."

[Colossians 1:13-14](#), “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

His sacrificial death on the cross. [Rom 4:25](#), “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

And His resurrection, [2 Corinthians 5:15](#), “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

He was the morally perfect sacrifice. [Rom 8:3](#), “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.”

Jesus Christ is the final and ultimate fulfillment of all Old Testament sacrifices

[Hebrews 9:11-12](#). “When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”

By faith sinners are forgiven-"justified" in Paul's terminology. [Rom 3:28](#), “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.” [Gal 3:8-9](#), “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

Those who are forgiven sin's penalty also die to its controlling power in their lives. [Romans 6:5-7](#). “If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”

Christ's resurrection was more than proof of His deity or innocence; it was related in a special way to His forgiveness. Christ's resurrection was an act by which God wiped out the false charges against Him; it was God's declaration of the perfect righteousness of His Son, the Second Adam, and of His acceptance of Christ's sacrifice.

[1 Timothy 3:16](#), “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great He (Christ) appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”

To be forgiven is to be identified with Christ in His crucifixion and resurrection.

Christ has the authority to forgive sins. [Matthew 1:21](#), “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

[Hebrew 9:14-15](#), “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”

This forgiveness is an essential part of the gospel message. [Acts 2:38](#), "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." [Acts 5:31](#), "God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable sin - not because God cannot or will not forgive such a sin but because such a hard-hearted person has put himself beyond the possibility of repentance and faith. [Mark 3:28-29](#), "I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

God's forgiveness of us demands that we forgive others, because grace brings responsibility and obligation. [Matthew 18:32-35](#), "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." [Luke 6:37](#), "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

We must also forgive others, [Luke 17:3-4](#), "So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." [Mark 11:25](#), "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, **so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.** "