

Forgiveness Pt 1 Israel's forgiveness under the law

This is the start new teaching on the word "forgive". In this study we will cover three points:

(I) God gave Moses the law for Israel including the sin offering made by the priest so the people could be forgiven for their sin, (ii) Israel sinned a great sin with the golden calf so Moses prayed to the LORD to pardon, forgive their sin, (iii) King Solomon besought the LORD to forgive the people when they sinned

We establish a meaning of the word "forgive" from searching the scriptures and showing links to other words with similar meaning.

There is a link between- **forgive** and pardon

"Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now" (Num.14: 19).

The similarity is evident in they both take away either the sin or the consequences of the iniquity

* To pardon our transgressions is to take away our iniquity

"And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." (Job 7:21)

* To forgive sin is to take away

"Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only" (Ex.10: 17).

To pardon iniquity is to pass by their transgression

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Mic.7: 18)

There is a link between pardon and cleanse- evident iniquity being pardoned and sin cleansed

"And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me" (Jer.33: 8).

There is a link between pardon and healed

Hezekiah besought the Lord to pardon those who were not cleansed, so He healed them to receive the passover

[18] For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one

[19] That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

[20] And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. (2 Chr.30:18-20).

There is a link between forgive and "blot out"- evident as Jeremiah asked that Israel neither have their sin forgiven, nor blotted out

"Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight..." (Jer 18:23).

There is link between blot out, wash and cleanse

David besought the LORD to blot out his transgressions, wash him from iniquity and cleanse his sin

[1] Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

[2] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (Ps.51: 1-2).

There is a link between forgive and cleanse-

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn.1: 9).

There is a link between forgiveness and redemption- in that we have redemption and forgiveness through Christ's blood- Eph 1:7- "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; See also Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins."

Given the links between the words “forgive”, “pardon” and “blot out” we have included these in our search of the scriptures, from which we establish our three points.

1. God gave Moses the law for Israel including the sin offering made by the priest so the people could be forgiven for their sin

“And he washed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour, and an offering made by fire unto the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses” (Leviticus 8:21) -CF- Lev 4:20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

The offering of two goats one is scapegoat and one is a sin offering

[6] And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

[7] And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

[8] And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

[9] And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.

[10] But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. (Lev.16: 6-10)

The high priest went into the holiest of holies once a year with blood for the errors of himself & the people

[6] Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

[7] But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (Heb.9: 6, 7). See (Lev.16:27,30,32-34).

2. Israel sinned a great sin with the golden calf so Moses prayed to the LORD to pardon, forgive their sin.

[24] And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

[29] For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

[31] And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

[32] Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. [33] And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. (Ex.32: 24,29,31-33)- CF- Ex 34:9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

Israel had to humble themselves, pray, seek His face, turn from their wicked ways THEN the LORD would hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.- 2Chr 7:14- “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”.

Even when Israel refused to obey God, He was ready to pardon, because gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness

“And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not” (Neh.9: 17).

He did the same again on the basis of the LORD's greatness of His mercy as he had forgiven them since they came out of Egypt- and the LORD forgave them according to the word of Moses

[19] Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

[20] And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: (Num 14:19, 20).

3. King Solomon besought the LORD to forgive the people when they sinned

[22] And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:

[26] And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified...

[33] When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:

[34] Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. 1 Kings 8:22,26,33, 34). See also 2 Chr.6: 21-39

David besought the Lord on the basis that he was ready to forgive

[3] Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

[4] Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

[5] For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. (Psalm 86:3-5)

The prophets besought the people to turn from their wicked way, and return to the LORD and He will have mercy upon him for He will abundantly pardon-

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55: 7).

Illustration

Israel were a nation of sacrifices that took place in their temple, specifically at the altar in the temple.

With no temple, no high priest to perform the sacrifice of animals in accordance with the law of Moses, how do Israel today receive forgiveness of their sin?

Come to think of it, how does any people group on earth that are not Christian (whether they be Muslim or Hindu, JW or Sikh receive forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood? THEY DO NOT!!

More questions to think about.

i) What happened to Israel when their sins were forgiven?

ii) Were Israel's sins forgiven and covered?

iii) Did Israel's sacrifices for sin clear the guilty?

Our answers from the scriptures.

i) When Israel's sinned she and God forgave their iniquity, then He did not remember them any more.

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer.31: 34). See also Isa.43: 25.

ii) Yes, David wrote: Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Ps.32:1).

iii) Moses besought the LORD on the basis that He is longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression and by no means clearing the guilty.[

18] The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

[19] Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. (Num 14:18, 19).

Next time you have an opportunity to sit with, or preach to a person of one of the world religions -ask the Lord for wisdom on what to say. Ask Him whether He wants you to ask the question- how do you receive forgiveness of sins? And even if there was a temple, the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins (Hebrews 10:4- “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”) and in the law Israel were taught that what Israel had received under the law could by no means clear the guilty! The sacrifices under the law were an interim, a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ - perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross. For today, let us grasp and seek to understand the significance of all that God did in the law to bring us unto Christ, that the simplicity, completeness and power of Christ's sacrifice will have more meaning to our heart. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).