

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS

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The Bible uses words such as "forgiveness" "pardon" and "remission". Forgiveness, pardon, and remission are used in both the Old and the New Testament to describe God letting our sins go as if they had not been committed, letting our sins go unpunished (Ex. 20:7; 34:7; 34:9; Lev. 4:20, 26, 19:22; Nu. 14:18; 14:19-20; 15:25-26; 30:5, 8, 12; I Kgs. 2:9; 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50; II Chr. 6:21-39; 7:14; Neh. 1:3; 9:17; Ps. 19:12-13; 25:11; 103:3; 130:4; Is. 55:7; Jer. 30:11; 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 46:28; Joel 4:21; Dan. 9:9-10; 9:19; Amos. 7:2; Mt. 6:12, 14, 15; 9:2, 5, 6; Mk. 2:5-10; Lk. 5:20-24; 12:31-32 (Mk. 3:28-30); 18:21, 27, 32, 35; Mk. 4:12; 11:25-26; Lk. 7:47-49; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3-4; 23:34; Jn. 20:23; Acts 8:22; Ro. 4:7; Jas. 5:15; I Jn. 1:9; 2:12).

The word "aphesis", for example, is translated as "remission" (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Heb. 9:22; 10:18) and as "forgiveness" (Mk. 3:29; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:38; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). This particular word "aphesis" means forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission or remitting the penalty that is deserved. Forgiveness of sin is when the punishment of sin is set aside, when God allows the sins themselves to go unpunished, letting them go as if they were not committed.

The Bible describes the forgiveness of sins as the penalty of sin being dispensed with (2 Chron. 32:26; Num. 16:46-48; Ps. 78:38; Micah 7:18-19; Jonah 3:9-10, 4:2). Forgiveness of sins is when God does not punish sins (Acts 5:31, Acts 13:38, Acts 26:18, Eph 1:7, Col 1:14, Heb 9:22), the pardon of a debt is when the payment for a debt remanded instead of demanded (Matt 6:12, Matt 18:27, Luke 7:42). The pardon of a debt and the payment of a debt are polar opposites (Matt. 18:23-35). Mercy is the opposite of judgment (Jas 2:13) because mercy is when retributive judgment is set aside, when crimes are pardoned instead of punished. God grants amnesty but never immunity or impunity (Matt. 18:25-35).

Forgiveness and justification are synonymous terms, the Bible uses them interchangeably (Lk. 18:14; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 5:9; Tit. 3:7). The Bible contrasts justification with condemnation (Prov. 17:15; Matt. 12:37). Condemnation is the execution of punishment, justification is the setting aside of punishment and treating one as if they were just. Justification is being treated just as if you had never sinned. To be justified by faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 3:24) or justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9) or justified by His grace (Rom 3:24) or to have the remission of sins through His blood (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) are essentially the same thing. Justification and remission are different expressions of the same concept, which is when God set's aside the punishment that sinners deserve and treat them as if they were just and righteous. When God forgives an individual by His grace, through the atonement, He set's aside their punishment and does not hold their past sins against them (Rom. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:9),

He treats them as if they were righteous (Rom. 4:6-8). This is what the Bible calls forgiveness or justification.

Forgiveness is simply when the penalty of the sin is remitted, when sins are let go as if they were not committed. Forgiveness in the Moral Government of God is when moral crimes or moral rebellion is graciously pardoned. And gracious pardon is the remission of the penalty of the Law.