

Forgiveness - When and Why?

by Stella Paterson

"When the smallest doctrine in the body of truth is mutilated it is sure to avenge itself upon the whole system." - Author unknown (Found in a book printed in 1895)

The "forgiveness" doctrine is one such mutilated truth. And it has most certainly avenged itself upon the whole system. This can be seen in the recent article, *Apostate Gospel - The Great Deception*, where we exposed the foolishness of simple forgiveness being sufficient to result in a new creature in Christ Jesus. Here, we will look deeper into the topic of forgiveness; the meaning of the Greek words from which "forgive" is translated, and their proper Biblical use.

First of all, how did the word "forgiveness" come to be so mistranslated in the New Testament, then in the minds of those who now trust in or preach an apostate gospel?

To be simplistic, we could say that man has embraced tradition and not read the whole Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This has led to a mixture of Law and Grace, with neither being fully understood.

To understand Grace, we must first understand the Law of Moses and its role in the lives of God's people Israel. The Law has no place in the lives of believers in Jesus - the One who brought Grace and Truth. (John 1:17) As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:56, *"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."* (We must keep in mind that "death" came in the Garden of Eden with the knowledge of good and evil.)

The Law and forgiveness

To show where the idea of forgiveness came from, I have borrowed a paragraph from my book. *"The word 'forgiveness' was first used in the Law of Moses. The Jews continually transgressed the Law, so they were required to make atonement with a sin offering which they practiced year after year, and century after century. Each time the sin offering of blood was made, God granted them forgiveness. But it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, and forgiveness itself most surely could never take away sin. The sin offerings were merely a pattern of that which was to come."* "That which was to come" was the Lamb of God who shed His blood to satisfy the Law, making atonement once and for all.

The Apostle Paul referred to the Law as the "ministration of death." *"But if the **ministration of death**, written and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the*

*glory of his face; which glory was to be done away: how shall not rather the **ministration of the spirit** be with glory? For if the **ministration of condemnation** is glory, much rather doth the **ministration of righteousness** exceed in glory."* (2 Corinthians 3:7-9)

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai and received from God the Ten Commandments, he came away with the glory of God visible on his face. He had been in the presence of the Almighty and it showed. We see then that the Law was glorious for Israel. These were the commandments the Jews would religiously follow for thousands of years, being tutored to bring them unto Christ. And as the passage shows, that "glory" (the Law) was to be done away on the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul's next words speak of that which followed the Cross and the disannulling of the Law which he also called "*the ministration of condemnation.*" He continues the passage, speaking of the "*ministration of the spirit*" and how it is more glorious by far. It is the ministration of the Holy Spirit of Love who comes to dwell in us, fulfilling the Law, for "*love is the fulfilling of the law.*" (Romans 13:10)

Here is a simple comparison of the Old and New Covenants:

- Old Covenant "*ministration of death*" is replaced with the New Covenant "*ministration of the Spirit.*"
- Old Covenant "*ministration of condemnation*" is replaced with the New Covenant "*ministration of righteousness.*"

The Law as "accuser"

In John 5:45-46, Jesus told how He did not come to accuse the Jews to the Father but that the Law had been their accuser. The Law in which they had placed their hope was actually their accuser, revealing their sinfulness and their need for atonement.

I believe the most important aspect of the Law of Moses was that of shedding blood to atone for the transgression of the Law. And so, you see, this is where the forgiveness came in. But the "forgiveness" under the Law was only a temporary thing - until the next time they transgressed the Law. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away the sin. The people did not ask God to forgive them - they offered the blood sacrifice to make atonement. And "sinners" today need not to ask forgiveness - they need only to receive the gift of Life through faith (belief) in Jesus. To "believe" means to "*rely upon Christ for salvation*" and to "have faith" is to "*entrust ones spiritual wellbeing to Christ.*"

Another passage where Paul is speaking of the new birth tells us this: "*Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are*

*passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, **not reckoning unto them their trespasses**; and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-19)*

Paul did not say that if any man asks forgiveness he is a new creature. Forgiveness cannot place us "in Christ." His next words about all things being "*of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ*" suggest nothing on forgiveness. The "*ministry of reconciliation*" is the true Gospel whereby man is told how Jesus made reconciliation and now he must receive the free gift of salvation. What is the free gift? It is Life - the Life of Jesus who comes to dwell in our spirit.

The remainder of the above passage tells us that in reconciling the world unto Himself, Jesus was **not reckoning unto them their trespasses**. The Greek word for "reckoning" is defined as "*taking an inventory*." Jesus had no thought in mind as to the sins against Moses' Law, or the sins of anyone for that matter. It is no longer about the transgression of any law. The glorious truth is that Jesus came to take away the ordinances of the Law, nailing them to His Cross, so that the Jews would no longer have anything against them. And they, along with the Gentiles, could have Life.

Where there is no Law to transgress, there is no need for "forgiveness of sins."

The place for forgiveness is in the life of a believer, as can be seen in 1 John 1:9. The full chapter addresses the relationship among believers, telling how Jesus the Word of Life is the Light. And if we walk in the Light we "*have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin*." Verse 9 tells us if we acknowledge our offences, God is faithful and just to forgive us (lay aside) our offences, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. This is all about our relationship one with another and walking in the Light. It is not a "salvation" passage.

Definitions

Now let's look at how the various translators and revisers imposed upon readers the idea of forgiveness by translating Greek words erroneously.

There are four Greek words which were translated as "forgive" or "forgiveness." Not one of the Greek words is defined specifically as either. The New Testament "Forgiveness study" gives the details of each of the four words and their references so I will not repeat them all here. What I will do is refer to them and let you check the references in the study. When we see how the Greek words were used in the various verses, it becomes obvious how impossible it is that "forgiveness" can make a new creature in Christ Jesus.

1. "*Aphesis*" means "*freedom*" primarily but is used figuratively as "*pardon*." This is the word which was translated as "remission" and is quite good because of how the Cross of Jesus Christ bought freedom from flesh for all. Webster's dictionary tells us that "remission" means "*cancellation of or release from a debt, tax, penalty, etc.*" The remission was made on the Cross. The "cancellation" of the penalty of death upon flesh was accomplished. That is why Jesus said, "*It is finished.*" Why would we ask Him to die again if it is finished? If we were to take the word "*aphesis*" and use it in an attempt to ask for pardon for our sins, Jesus would probably look at us and say "Huh? You had better study your Bible a little closer and listen to my Spirit. When I say it is finished, it is finished!" Even though the translators may have innocently been confused with the Old Testament use of "forgiveness" following atonement, it is still misleading.

2. "*Aphiemi*" is defined as "*to send forth, in various applications.*" The many "applications" used by the translators include this use in Matthew 8:15: "*And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto him.*" How is it possible that a simple word such as "left" could be a synonym of "forgive" as is understood today according to the apostate gospel? The references for this Greek word's use can all be found in the study. Read them and compare them; it will bring greater understanding of what the Bible really says about what Jesus accomplished at Calvary.

3. "*Charizomai*" is defined as "*to grant as a favor, that is, gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue.*" There are two verses I will quote here. First, "*And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he quicken together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses;*" Notice that Paul said here (Colossians 2:13) that they were dead through trespasses and the unregenerate condition of flesh, but that Jesus quickened them, having pardoned all. It is about death and Life.

Secondly, Paul said "*But we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are **freely given** to us by God.*" *Charizomai* is taken from the word for "grace" [charis]. The relationship can be seen with the use of "*freely given*" in this verse. (1 Corinthians 2:12)

4. "*Apoluo*" means "*to free fully, that is, (literally) relieve, release, dismiss (reflexively depart), or (figuratively) let die, pardon, or (specifically) divorce.*" Again, the word "forgive" is not even a part of the definition. *Apoluo* is used as "dismiss, put away, divorce, etc." with none being synonymous with "forgive."

As the study of "forgiveness" shows, the word "forgive" is well translated in those passages regarding our forgiving one another. In fact, it is imperative that we walk in forgiveness - both asking for it when we err against another, and giving it graciously when another sincerely asks for our forgiveness. Even when someone errs against us, without asking forgiveness, we must forgive [Greek: release] them if we desire to be released ourselves.

In summation, the apostate gospel of forgiveness of sins has been spread around the globe. But in some places of the world there are nations where this "gospel" has not penetrated. What a blessing that is, for when God's Word has reached the lost it is the pure message those people get to hear. They read the words of Jesus and other books of the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to the Truth. The response is phenomenal! God's word will not return to Him void, and millions of souls in persecution-ridden nations are coming to Jesus. There is no preoccupation with "sin" as we have in Western civilization. There is no condemnation heaped on the people over what they have done - they respond to the love of God, often weeping at the marvelous revelation that Jesus died for them. Their first thought is to share this Good News. And they also know that even though their persecutors may kill the body, they will immediately be in the presence of Jesus. If you have not read Richard Wurmbrand's book, *Tortured for Christ*, I urge you to get a copy.

If only we could do away with the clutter of tradition and simply share the message of the New Testament - the New Covenant through Jesus' blood!