

THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD

BY JIM RUDD

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

The movie term known as [MISE-EN-SCENE](#) translates as setting the scene. Used to create common ground between the story teller and the audience, [MIS- EN-SCENE](#) paints the scene before the story officially starts. Before examining how God forgives, we too must set the common ground of defining what forgiveness is and what it is not. Which actions connote forgiveness and which do not?

As a framework for forgiveness, we can examine the world around us. Most of the world is undergoing an economic downturn, including the United States. President Obama instituted a mortgage forgiveness program to help home owners who could not pay their mortgages. This program encourages banks to forgive a portion of the mortgage debt of home owners. If we theoretically expand this program, we can help define what forgiveness is and what it is not.

If you bought a home for a million dollars and you put twenty percent down, your original mortgage would be \$800,000. After you paid your mortgage for five years, you might still owe the bank \$760,000. If something happened, like losing your job or getting injured on the job and you could no longer make your mortgage payments, you could call the bank and informed them you were really sorry, repentant, for not being able to pay the mortgage, but there was nothing you could do about it. The bank would still have a few options in handling your situation. If the bank informed you that you no longer had to pay the loan, then your debt would be forgiven by the bank. You didn't really deserve to have this debt forgiven, but the bank has taken mercy on you and you are now debt free. The bank statement that no payment was required fits the definition of forgiveness.

However, the bank could, and most probably would, state that you owed the money and if you did not make your mortgage payments, they would require you to pay the debt another way, most likely by foreclosure on your house, which was the penalty agreed upon for not paying your mortgage. Most people would agree the bank would be well within its rights and it was following the dictates of the law if it foreclosed on the property to receive payment for the debt it was owed. But if someone else, like a rich uncle or perhaps loving children, intervened and paid the debt for you, then you would no longer owe the money to the bank. But in this second scenario did the bank show mercy and forgive your debt or did they demand payment in full?

It is true in both scenarios you do not have to pay the debt, but did the bank forgive your debt if someone else paid the debt for you? Did the bank show mercy or did it

require the letter of the law and demand that payment had to be made, even if you did not pay it? Some might say that if the bank allowed or even facilitated someone else paying off your debt, then they showed mercy and forgave your debt. However, the bank's actions do not fit the definition of forgiveness of debt because the debt still had to be paid.

*"Forgiveness is typically defined as the process of concluding resentment, indignation or anger as a result of a perceived offense, difference or mistake, and/or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution. The Oxford English Dictionary defines forgiveness as 'to grant free pardon and to give up all claim on account of an offense or debt.'"*¹ If the bank simply followed the letter of the law by demanding payment and it received payment from a third party, even if it facilitated that payment, the bank could not legally claim it forgave your debt. Such a statement would be erroneous and most people would agree the bank would have no right to state it had forgiven your loan.

The scriptural definitions of forgiveness from the Hebrew and Greek agree with our practical example. The Hebrew word translated forgiveness is **SEL-EE-KHAW** which comes from the Hebrew word **SAW-LAKH** (Strong's 5547 and 5545 respectively). These Hebrew words define forgiveness as *to pardon or spare*. The Greek word is for forgiveness is **APHESIS** (Strong's 859). It is defined as *-freedom; (figuratively) pardon: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission*. Therefore the best definition of forgiveness, both practically and scripturally, is forgiving a debt without requiring the payment dictated by law.

GOD IS A FORGIVING GOD

THE STORY OF JONAH

*"Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."*² Nineveh was sinful and wicked and God was going to punish it. We know the story of Jonah, who tries to run away, but is sent to do God's will anyway after spending three days and three nights in the belly of the beast. So what happens?

*"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he proclaimed, and said: 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'"*³ Jonah is preaching, telling the people of Nineveh that God is going to punish them for their sins. What is the reaction of Nineveh?

*"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."*⁴ Nineveh actually repents. The story of the prophets can be summarized as God begging Israel to repent and change their ways so God will not have punish them, but Israel rarely heeding this warning. Yet when a prophet of God goes to a gentile, fish-god worshipping people, they repent. So

much that the king of Nineveh asks the question, *“Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”*⁵

How does God deal with the repentance of Nineveh? Remember, this was gentile nation, not in covenant with God. There was no animal sacrifice made to God. Nineveh simply humbled themselves and repented.⁶ *“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”*⁷

God forgave Nineveh. He said He would not punish them for their sins because they had truly repented. That is forgiveness. So what is the moral of the story?

*“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”*⁸

Jonah knew if Nineveh repented God would forgive them without requiring some kind of payment or bribe or any kind of animal sacrifice for their sin. Why? Because, as the book of Jonah states, God is kind and merciful.

A number Christians have balked at the idea that God forgave the sins of Nineveh when shown that God did not require a blood sacrifice or any other kind of payment when He forgave Nineveh. What He required and what He saw was true repentance. Some Christians have actually presented the incredulous suggestion that God may have forgiven Nineveh’s “physical sins”, but He did not forgive their “spiritual” or “eternal” sins, an idea without any scriptural merit and completely against the spiritual lesson of the book of Jonah – which is, that if you repent, God will forgive you.

Another, more valid, argument against God actually forgiving Nineveh is that the book of Jonah never explicitly states that God forgave them. However, the idea that God is not issuing forgiveness when He extends His mercy towards Nineveh’s repentance and when He rescinds His punishment, ignores scripture. This not only would require changing the scriptural meaning of the word forgiveness, but would also be a mismatch to God’s process of forgiveness, as the verses below show.

*“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation”.*⁹

*“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. 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.”*¹⁰

“For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to pardon, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.”¹¹

A third argument has been made that God did not really forgive Nineveh, that He simply delayed their punishment since they repented. The supposed justification for this idea comes from God’s punishment of Judah after the reign of Josiah. The twenty third chapter of second Kings states, *“And like unto him (Josiah) was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked Him.”¹²* Josiah followed Manasseh as king of Judah and God did not punish Judah for the sins Judah committed under Manasseh because of Josiah’s actions, yet scripture states God will punish Judah because of its former king, Manasseh. This line of reasoning suggests that God can hold off punishment if a nation repents, but He does not have to forgive them, only delay their punishment.

Attempting to prove that God did not forgive Nineveh, even after they truly repented, by using the II Kings story of Manasseh and Josiah, is fallacious and makes a mockery of the story of Jonah and Nineveh. Unfortunately, it also shows a willingness to advance an erroneous understanding of what the writer of II Kings presented about God’s punishment of Judah to deflect the supposition that God forgave Nineveh.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown state, *“The national reformation which Josiah carried on was acquiesced in by the people from submission to the royal will; but they entertained a secret and strong hankering after the suppressed idolatries. Though outwardly purified, their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from many passages of the prophetic writings; their thorough reform was hopeless; and God, who saw no sign of genuine repentance, allowed His decree (2Ki_21:12-15) for the subversion of the kingdom to take fatal effect.”¹³* In other words, Judah never repented of their sins, thus they did not change and went back to the ways of Manasseh as soon they could. Keil and Delitzsch agree.

“Nevertheless the Lord turned not from the great fierceness of His wrath, wherewith He had burned against Judah on account of all the provocations ‘with which Manasseh had provoked Him.’ With this sentence, in which אָדָּה לֹא יָשַׁב forms an unmistakable word-play upon יִשְׁבֵּר יְשָׁב אֶל, the historian introduces the account not merely of the end of Josiah's reign, but also of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah. Manasseh is mentioned here and at 2Ki_24:3 and Jer_15:4 as the person who, by his idolatry and his unrighteousness, with which he provoked God to anger, had brought upon Judah and Jerusalem the unavoidable judgment of rejection. It is true that Josiah had exterminated outward and gross idolatry throughout the land by his sincere conversion to the Lord, and by his zeal for the restoration of the lawful worship of Jehovah, and

*had persuaded the people to enter into covenant with its God once more; but a thorough conversion of the people to the Lord he had not been able to effect. For, as Clericus has correctly observed, "although the king was most religious, and the people obeyed him through fear, yet for all that the mind of the people was not changed, as is evident enough from the reproaches of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and other prophets, who prophesied about that time and a little after." With regard to this point compare especially the first ten chapters of Jeremiah, which contain a resumé of his labours in the reign of Josiah, and bear witness to the deep inward apostasy of the people from the Lord, not only before and during Josiah's reform of worship, but also afterwards. As the Holy One of Israel, therefore, God could not forgive any more, but was obliged to bring upon the people and kingdom, after the death of Josiah, the judgment already foretold to Manasseh himself (2Ki_21:12.)."*¹⁴

The lesson of scripture, amplified by the book of Jonah and the Sermon on the Mount is if a people genuinely repent, whether they were Israelites or gentiles, God will show mercy and forgive them. However, the Israelites never repented under Josiah, as the book of Jeremiah clearly depicts. Judah may have outwardly followed God's ways because of fear of being punished by zealous king Josiah, but their hearts never left the way of Manasseh. Thus God was forced to punish them for the sins they committed both before and after the reign of Josiah, which were the sins of Manasseh that the nation of Judah never repented of.

The idea that God did not forgive the city of Nineveh when it truly repented does great damage to the meaning of scripture because the purpose of the book of Jonah is that God is a God of mercy, love and forgiveness. He punishes only if people completely refuse to repent and change their ways. He punishes for our own good. However, far too often mankind prefers a God that can be paid off, like Zeus or Hera, rather than a loving father who requires a personal relationship with true repentance and true forgiveness. Jonah knew that was the kind of God YHVH was and is. Are we willing to believe scripture? *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*¹⁵

EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS

NO FORGIVENESS

Suppose someone commits a crime and is caught. He is judged, sentenced to jail, serves his time and is released. He has paid the penalty for his crime. There was no mercy or forgiveness. It would be merciful or giving forgiveness if he was pardoned or given clemency and did not have to serve some or all of his sentence. So clearly no mercy was shown to this criminal and thus no forgiveness was given.

DEALING WITH CHILDREN

God states over and over again that we are His children, created in His image. I have three boys and I am proud of them, but sometimes they break my laws. Sometimes it is out of ignorance. Sometimes they are just pushing the limits. Sometimes they are just boys and feel the need to wrestle in the house, no matter how many times they have been told not to, especially when they have been sick and are just recovering. Sometimes this disobedience is willful. I have to figure out why they “broke my law” so I know how to guide them to maturity so they will stop doing the wrong thing. Sometimes they are punished, sometimes they are totally forgiven and sometimes they are shown mercy and forgiveness, but they are punished, just not given the penalty for their crime, but something less.

*“Spare the rod and spoil the child.”*¹⁶ I have seen enough self-centered brats to know that is true. But I also know if you do not spare the rod some of the time, you also spoil the child. Far too many children brought up in legalistic churches, like the churches of God and Seventh Day Adventist, were required to pay a penalty for violating the law almost every time they did. When I was a young man, I saw fathers beat, actually beat, their children with a belt. I have seen a father slap and once even punch his child. And this was at “church services”. I could not image what these unloving fathers did in private. These children were not shown mercy or forgiveness and were told paying the penalty was actually showing love. And a lot of them are now broken people.

It should be obvious that parents must show love, mercy and grace to their children by forgiving them and not requiring a payment for every violation of the law when that is the best thing for their children. But GOD THE LAWGIVER supposedly can't show the same mercy? That opens the question of how can I be more merciful and forgiving than our merciful and loving Father? After all, according Christianity in general, God requires payment for each and every sin. His son pays that price for us, right? So there really isn't forgiveness because our sins are actually paid for by the death of His only begotten son. Remember, if the bank required payment, even if someone else paid it, then there was no forgiveness. So if God requires payment, even if it is from someone else, no matter whether He facilitated it or not, then payment was made and forgiveness was not required or given.

However, theologians state that in some mystical way God can be paid for the violation of His law, yet this is still somehow forgiveness. Their faulty reasoning states that since God is the one who supplied His only begotten son to pay the penalty for us, then God is forgiving us in His own way. So let me ask you... You owe someone \$10,000 dollars and you can't pay. So the person says, okay, I will arrange to have the payment done another way. You can work in my shop at \$10 an hour until it is paid for. Or they go to your relatives and the relatives pay off the debt. Has the debt been paid in these situations? Yes, it was. Even if someone else pays it for you, you were not forgiven the debt by the person to whom you owed \$10,000.

So does God require payment for all sin? **God the Fierce Lawgiver** supposedly does. But does **God the Father**? If all sins are paid for by the shed blood of Jesus, then they were not really forgiven. Those sins were paid for. Is our God not merciful enough to forgive sins unless they are paid for (which means they really weren't forgiven)? Remember, repentance is not payment. It is actually feeling sorry for doing what you did, asking for forgiveness, and striving to do better in the future. No payment is required in that process, just a personal relationship where you actually apologize for doing wrong and change because you are truly sorry to the core of your being for letting the other person down.

THE ROLE OF SACRIFICES

But wasn't the sacrificial system part of God's religious system? Of course it was, as the book of Leviticus shows in great detail. But was the sacrificial system a requirement for God's religious system? The prophet Jeremiah states it was not. *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."*¹⁷ King

David was also painfully aware of the kind of sacrifices God wanted. *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*¹⁸

God always wanted the same thing from His people. *"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."*¹⁹

But Israel and Judah paid no heed to what God wanted and instead treated Him like the gentiles treated their gods. The gentiles bribed and cajoled their gods and thought they could bargain with their gods to justify their actions and buy blessings. The verses below paint a clear picture of God rejecting the sacrifices of His non-repentant people. The prophets carry the message that the creator God of this world is not to be treated as a God who can be bought off or bribed over and over again. God did not want animal sacrifices, with the shedding of blood, to take the place of following Him. Not only did He not have to be bought off to give His blessings, as the false gods supposedly did, He

did not even want the payment for the sins that were committed unless the person actually repented of that sin. God found such actions repugnant. As Isaiah 1:18 states, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*²⁰

*“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*²¹

*“Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance: let us plead together.”*²²

*“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.”*²³

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto

you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.”²⁴

“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”²⁵

Here is an updated example of how Israel dealt with God and the sacrificial system. Imagine you have a 17 year-old who has worked hard and actually bought his own car. He has put a lot of work into it and you are proud of him. He is generally a good son and he listens to you and there is mutual love and respect. You have boundaries and rules and your son generally follows them.

One day your son comes to you and says, “Dad, I am headed out with my friends tonight. We are going to be drag racing our cars. We won’t smoke any dope or drink anything until we get done racing. But after the racing we are going to indulge and my friends even tell me there are going to be women there to party with. It sounds like a great time and I won’t be back until tomorrow morning.”

A shocked father should respond to his son, “You know I don’t approve of that. There are penalties to be paid for that sort of actions. I want you to be safe and not do this so you can avoid the penalty of breaking my law.”

The son replies, “I know dad. I counted up the possible violations and here is 300 hundred dollars I have saved. I am leaving it here on the table. It is the amount you listed as having to be paid for the violation of the rules. I wanted to make sure that we still have a good relationship after tonight, so I wanted to pay the penalty you instituted beforehand. Bye Dad, see you tomorrow morning.”

This is actually the way Israel treated God. Except they did not really care about keeping any relationship except the one in which they could buy goods blessings and forestall punishment with bribes while they did whatever they wanted. Israel thought YHVH was like the other gods, who only demanded a price be paid to appease the angry god and get his blessing. Would any father in his right mind give his son the impression if he paid for his bad deeds, either in advance or afterward, by paying a certain price, the those deeds were “covered?”

Wouldn’t any real father instead say, “Son, I don’t want payment for bad deeds. I want you not to do them because that is what is best for you. You don’t even know all the bad things that could happen to you if you go out with your friends as you have planned tonight.”

Any good father would desire his son simply not to do the actions that could and probably will hurt him. If you build the right relationship between father and son you can have that kind of conversation. But even then, boys will be boys. If a son messes up by pushing boundaries, a loving father may still have to punish and require some penalty to be paid so the son is taught a lesson. But it is far more likely a father will show mercy and forgiveness if his son has learned his lesson and repented from his wrong and “evil” deeds.

BLOOD AND SIN UNDER THE OLD COVENANT

The book of Leviticus has the most detailed picture of the sacrificial system instituted by God. We have already established that God did not need nor want this system, so He must have instituted it for Israel rather than for Him. Leviticus 17 explains why this system was set up.

“Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them; This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying, What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations. And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”²⁶

God taught that all sacrifices had to be done at the temple so the people would not sacrifice to false gods. God states that life is in the blood, which we know is true. He said if anyone did any sacrifice outside of the temple, with or without blood being shed, then

they were to be cut off from covenanting with God. Verse 11 states it is the blood of the sacrifice that makes atonement for the soul.

Most scholars agree that Paul references Leviticus 17 in Hebrews 9:22.²⁷ Is God teaching Israel that the blood of the sacrifice actually makes atonement or gives forgiveness for sin in Lev. 17:11 or Heb. 9:22? We just read how God detested sacrifices if they were not done with true repentance. Therefore God must be teaching Israel that their sins are atoned or forgiven if they follow His ways, which includes sacrificing at the temple according to Lev. 17. We have established that Paul writes in the beginning of Hebrews 10 that the blood of bulls and goats does not take away sin.²⁸ Reconciling these two sets of scriptures reveals that the blood of the sacrifice, when sprinkled on the altar in the manner proscribed by God, is what allowed reconciliation of the person to God, but only because the person had followed Gods commands. They had followed His commands and had done so with their whole heart. The next step in this process is God forgiving sins and God states that if you defy Him and do not shed the blood of the sacrifice at the altar, or even if you shed the blood of the sacrifice at the altar and have not repented, your sins were **not** forgiven. It was not the blood that magically forgave the sin.

Scientifically we now know the life is in the blood. God chose that blood to represent His way of life under the sacrificial system. You had to shed blood as a reminder that you were following His way of life and you had to do it the way God commanded. But the sacrifice of 10,000,000 lambs would not forgive one sin according to Paul.²⁹ Therefore doing the sacrifice was nothing more and nothing less than an outward sign of what was happening internally of the person's very being, in their heart. This sacrifice was done for the person and not for God. If a sacrifice was done to honor God, with a contrite heart, then God forgave the person's sins, just as He forgave Nineveh when they truly repented. If the person was doing nothing more than putting on a show, the person's sins were not forgiven.

TOUGH CONCEPTS THAT ARE TRADITIONS

TRINITY

Theologians like to use big words and mysteries to hide behind. What is the **nature of God**? A mysterious trinity that no one can understand? The trinity is an extra-biblical concept. It is often referred to as a mystery, wrapped inside a riddle, inside an enigma. Why? Because the trinity was the political compromise reached at the council of Nicea in 325 BCE, not because of scripture. However, scholars have sold this concept of the trinity to Christians for millennia. To defy the orthodoxy of the trinity is to invite the label of being un-Christian.

EIGHTH DAY SABBATH

Why do Catholics observe the Sabbath on Sunday? Part of Catholic dogma (teaching) states that the Pope has the right to change just about anything related to the worship of God. The papal teaching that changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the eighth day supposedly was because Jesus came after the Old Covenant. As the Gnostic *Epistle of Barnabas* states, *"It is not these sabbaths of the present age that I find acceptable, but the one of my own appointment: the one that, after I have set all things at rest, is to usher in the Eighth Day, the commencement of a new world.' (And we too rejoice in celebrating the Eighth Day; because that was when Jesus rose from the dead, and showed Himself again, and ascended into heaven.)"*³⁰ Theological double speak has the first day and eighth day of a seven day week occurring on the same day. However, this is nothing compared to why Protestants observe Sabbath on the "eighth day."

Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church with the battle cry of *solo scriptura* or scripture only, suggesting they would abandon papal traditions that were either non-biblical or extra-biblical. But the Protestants could not embrace a seventh day Sabbath because it was too Jewish, thus they rejected this practice under the guise of rejecting legalism. Yet these same Protestant reformers instituted the same Catholic legalism supposedly based upon four scriptures rather than papal authority. However, even the Catholic Church scoffs at the idea that these four verses support a change of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the eighth/first day of the week. Yet the vast majority of Protestants continue to practice a Sunday Sabbath that is not supported by scripture and this author feels this practice hinders their walk with God.

MYSTERIES

The mystery of the trinity. The mystery of observing an eighth day Sabbath during a seven day week. Paul attacks the idea that God is a mystery in the "love" chapter, the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*³¹

Another dark mystery to add to this list of traditions is how every sin has to be paid for by the blood of Christ, yet we are still forgiven of those sins. Consider that Einstein rejected quantum mechanics because *"the theory says a lot, but does not really bring us*

any closer to the secret of the 'old one.' I, at any rate, am convinced that He does not throw dice."³² This author rejects the idea of mysterious trinity, of a mysterious eighth day Sabbath and the mystery that the sacrifice of the Messiah paid for all sins, yet somehow they are also forgiven.

VERSES ABOUT THE SACRIFICE OF THE MESSIAH

There are many verses referring to the sacrifice of Jesus as the Messiah. There is no doubt Jesus was the Messiah and his blood was shed on the cross as he was sacrificed by his father, YHVH. But by and large people have simply taken these verses out of context to match their traditional beliefs. One of the verses most often taken out of context is Hebrews 9:22. *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*³³

We will look at this verse more completely later, but first we must examine the three roles scripture states were fulfilled by the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah.

JESUS, THE TRUE PASSOVER

The first role that Jesus' sacrifice fulfilled was as the true Passover. Paul wrote, *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."*³⁴ This author has written a complete book on Jesus' role as the true Passover,³⁵ but the Passover is not nor was it ever a sin offering, thus it can't be part of the process where blood was supposedly shed for the forgiveness of sins.

JESUS, THE ULTIMATE ATONEMENT SACRIFICE

Although Jesus was crucified at approximately the same time as the Passover lambs, he also fulfilled the role of the ultimate atonement sacrifice according to Paul in Hebrews 8-10. Before examining Paul's writings about atonement, we need to examine the Old Testament writings about atonement to put the atonement sacrifice in the proper context.

*"And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD."*³⁶

The atonement sacrifice was most holy to YHVH and the entire sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is devoted to this most holy of sacrifices. No one was allowed to enter the holy of holies except the high priest, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.³⁷ The high priest had to do a special sacrifice to cleanse himself and then put on special clothing.³⁸ He next took two goats for the atonement sacrifice. One goat was to be slain as a sin sacrifice and its blood was to be used to symbolically cleanse the tabernacle.³⁹ The other goat fulfilled the role of the scapegoat.⁴⁰ *"And Aaron shall lay both his hands*

upon the head of the live goat (scapegoat), and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”⁴¹ After the nation of Israel had completed all of the rituals according to God’s commands, God told the people, “For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.”⁴² On the Day of Atonement the entire nation of Israel knew their sins were borne away and forgiven by God.

Was it the atonement sacrifice that forgave the sins of the nation of Israel? Paul is very clear that the atonement sacrifice did not fulfill this purpose. *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”⁴³ The nation of Israel was already supposed to know that the sacrifices, the shedding of blood, did not forgive sins, as the prophets kept reminding them. Only God forgave sins and only when His people repented and reconciled with Him. Therefore God forgave the nation of Israel of all their unknown sins (if you knew you had sinned against your brother and done nothing to rectify the situation, then you were not truly following God’s covenant).⁴⁴ This happened on the Day of Atonement if they were in covenant with Him. God wanted His people to know His mercy and that “as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”⁴⁵ The goat being symbolically removed from camp let the people know that God was a merciful and forgiving God.*

Jesus came to fulfill the role of the scapegoat. John the Baptist knew his cousin was to fulfill the role of the ultimate atonement sacrifice.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”⁴⁶

The apostle Paul writes about the atonement sacrifice throughout Hebrews 8 and 9 and concludes, *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”⁴⁷*

The apostle Peter agreed that Jesus was the ultimate atonement sacrifice.

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto

righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”⁴⁸

In context, Peter is teaching and preaching that we should bare the wrong doings of others just as Christ endured the pain of the crucifixion, even though he had done nothing to deserve this kind of death. Peter writes that part of the reason for the crucifixion was leave us an example of how to act under these horrible situations in verse 21. Even though Jesus was punished beyond what we see in the movies, being beaten to a pulp before he was taken out to die a horribly painful and what society considered to be a horribly embarrassing death, he did not sin or complain.

The word usually translated as *INIQUITIES* in Hebrew is *AW-VONE'*, Strong's H5771. In the Greek, it is *HAMARTIA*, Strong's G266. Although Peter may not have been the same kind of biblical scholar Paul was, he knew scripture better than me or probably better than anyone reading this. He knew what the atonement sacrifice did and what it did not do. Compare 1 Peter 2:24 with Lev. 16:21-2. The atonement goat bares all the iniquities, all the sins, of the entire nation on him, just as Jesus did for the whole world. Of course the scapegoat did not have all the sins that the nation of Israel had committed in the past year mystically transferred to it. In the same way, Jesus did not mystically have all the sins ever committed physically transferred to him. This was done symbolically so we, as physical human beings, could internalize how God deals with sin. Once it has been forgiven, it is totally removed so it can no longer act as a barrier between God and His people.

This author has heard more than one Christian speculate that actually having that sins of the world thrust upon Jesus must have been more painful than the crucifixion itself. This idea is not supported by scripture. This kind of idea leads people to treat the sacrifice of Christ as a sort of mystical black box where all sin goes in and none comes out. Many Christians act as if their sins have no real consequences because Jesus has already borne them all for us. This can and has led to the heretical idea that we should sin more so that grace may abound even more. God has made clear that He never wanted sacrifices to pay for sin. What God wanted was for the sin to never happen in the first place. We were made good, just the way God wanted us made, but we were not made perfect.⁴⁹ God knew that if we sinned, but still maintained our covenant relationship with Him, He would forgive our sins. This does not mean there are not physical repercussions for sin. Adam and Eve had to vacate Eden and none of their children were ever allowed back in as a direct result of their sin.⁵⁰ David and Bathsheba's first son was killed by God because of their adultery and the murder of Uriah.⁵¹ But even after the death of his child, David was aware of how loving, merciful and forgiving God was. *“Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While*

the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”⁵²

JOHN THE BAPTIST’S TEACHINGS ALSO LED TO THE REMISSION OF SINS

John the Baptist was Jesus’ older cousin. He came from a priestly line and was given the job of a prophet while still in the womb. Those who followed his teachings about returning to God’s covenant by repenting also had their sins forgiven. Although the nation of Judah was under the Old Covenant when Jesus strode the earth, the emphasis in scripture is that repentance was the ingredient needed for forgiveness of sins, which is the message of the entirety of scripture.

“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”⁵³

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”⁵⁴

“Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”⁵⁵

There is no doubt that Jesus’ ministry was greater than John’s.⁵⁶ But Jesus himself stated that John’s the Baptist was the greatest prophet born of man of all time.⁵⁷ And John’s ministry was to teach Israel to repent so they could receive the remission of sins. Just as Nineveh repented and was forgiven. Just as God begged Judah to truly repent during the time of Jeremiah. Jesus even lamented, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”⁵⁸* Repentance is required for forgiveness and God lists the things that we have to repent of in scripture if we wish to remain in covenant with Him. If we do our part and repent of the things we know we are doing wrong, God will do His part and forgive all of our sins, even the ones we don’t know about. And under the New Covenant this total forgiveness of sins is available as an on-going basis, not just once a year, because Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the role of the true and absolute atonement sacrifice.

JESUS' SACRIFICE RATIFIED THE NEW COVENANT

The word for covenant in the Greek is **DIATHĒKĒ**. I have to agree with the idea that a testament was actually just a contract or a covenant has been blurred since the time of King James. I believe Christians would have a better idea of how God was working with mankind if the two division of scriptures were labeled as being Old Covenant and New Covenant rather than Old and New Testament. The reason why this blurring is important will become apparent as we examine what New Covenant is. Before looking at the New Covenant in the New Testament, we should examine what the Old Covenant was and how it was ratified so we can better understand the New Covenant.

What was the purpose of the Old Covenant? *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”*⁵⁹

How did Israel become a kingdom of priests?

*“And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”*⁶⁰

The Old Covenant had to be signed with blood, just as any important contract of that time had to be signed with blood. The people still had to enter this contract or covenant voluntarily, but once they entered the Old Covenant, their children and their children's children and so forth were part of the covenant. Blood was required to enter into a contractual relationship with God, a relationship where righteous people had their sins forgiven by God.⁶¹ Paul was writing about the ratification of the Old Covenant in Hebrews 9:15-22. *“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”*⁶²

Many Christians know that Paul wrote that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin,⁶³ but they have mistakenly assumed that Paul meant Jesus' blood was required for the remission of sins when he wrote, *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*⁶⁴ However, the blood being referred to by Paul in Hebrews 9:15-22 is the blood that was used to ratify the Old Covenant, the blood used by Moses in Exodus 24. This blood was shed so it could be sprinkled on Israel and the tabernacle and this sprinkling is what led to the forgiveness of sins. What did the sprinkling of blood accomplish in Exodus 24? Entry into the Old Covenant for the nation of Israel. What did the "sprinkling" of Jesus' blood accomplish, according to Paul in Hebrews 8-10? Paul wrote this sprinkling ushered in the New Covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah. If we are not in covenant with God, there can be no remission of sin, with a few notable exceptions like the nation of Nineveh at the time of Jonah and the Samaritan woman by the well.⁶⁵ What makes these exceptions so notable is that they were examples of true repentance, which is usually only accomplished by joining the covenant.

The blood used to ratify the New Covenant was from the Messiah himself.

*"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."*⁶⁶

*"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."*⁶⁷

*"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*⁶⁸

The blood of Christ had to be shed to seal the New Covenant.⁶⁹ That covenant, as Jesus said, was for many people and the remissions of their sins. You must repent and go to God to ask for forgiveness. So of course, the shedding of Christ's blood was the turning point in mankind's relationship with God. It changed everything because the veil was torn asunder,⁷⁰ allowing the prophesied access of all mankind to God the Father. Because of the shedding of Jesus' blood, the whole world is redeemed because now gentiles can enter into covenant with God, just as the prophets said.⁷¹ The third and final role fulfilled by Jesus when he was sacrificed was to ratify the New Covenant between man and God with his own blood.

THE RESULTS OF THE NEW COVENANT

What was the New Covenant? Paul explains not only what the New Covenant is, but why God knew it would be necessary.

“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”⁷²

Just as under the Old Covenant, under the New Covenant God will be merciful and forgive sins. Only this time it will be God that writes the laws into the hearts of the people that are in covenant with Him rather than the parents.⁷³ It will be God who will work with His people’s hearts rather than allowing the priest to do that job.⁷⁴ The two great commandments of the New Covenant were expressed by Jesus in Matthew 22.

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”⁷⁵

Of course Jesus was simply restating the two great commands of the Old Covenant.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”⁷⁶

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”⁷⁷

At the first Pentecost of the New Covenant, Peter gave one of the greatest sermons of all time. He was speaking to observant Jews who had come for the least of the three major feast, the feast of weeks. Upon hearing Peter’s sermon, these Jews, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”⁷⁸ What was the major sin of these Jews? Their non-belief that Jesus was the promised messiah. So, then “Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”⁷⁹ Peter taught there in the temple that the New Covenant was now in effect and to receive the promised

forgiveness of sins, the people of God had to repent, which is what God has always promised and always taught. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."⁸⁰

Paul also wrote extensively about the role of Jesus in redemption via joining the New Covenant.

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."⁸¹

God leads us to repentance so He does not need to bring the penalty of His judgment upon us. He is patient and wants us to repent so He can forgive us and all of this is made possible by us joining the New Covenant, which is made possible by the blood of Jesus the Messiah.

Paul wrote about the human condition and how God wanted it to change for the better because he is our Father.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."⁸²

God has made the New Covenant available because of His patience. That New Covenant, made possible only by the shedding of His only begotten son's blood to ratify this contract, was done so all of mankind can be justified and forgiven of their sins by God.

VERSES TYPICALLY USED TO "PROVE" JESUS' SHED BLOOD IS WHAT FORGIVES SIN

COL. 1:14

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"⁸³

Taken out of context, Col. 1:14 looks like it is the blood of Christ that forgives sins, but this is not correct when the verse is examined in context.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of

darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”⁸⁴

How were we made partakers of the light and delivered from darkness? By entering into the New Covenant, which is made possible by the ratifying blood of Jesus the Messiah.”⁸⁵

We used to be a part of this world, but we are now a part of the kingdom of His son. What does it mean that we are now a part of the kingdom of His son? *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”⁸⁶* But of course we know that Peter was simply referring back to how Israel became a holy nation and a kingdom of priests when they entered into covenant with God. We also become a kingdom of priests, obtaining mercy and forgiveness of sins by joining God’s covenant, the New Covenant. A quick examination of other translations of Col. 1: 14 shows the real cause and effect leading to the forgiveness of sins.

“... in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”⁸⁷

“... by whom we have redemption and remission of sins”⁸⁸

“... in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.”⁸⁹

“... in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”⁹⁰

“... in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.”⁹¹

Many of these translations do not have the phrase “through his blood” because it is not in a number of the manuscripts. However, there is no doubt that that the phrase “through his blood” is used in Eph. 1:7, which we will examine next. The idea Paul is trying to communicate in Col. 1:14 is that our sins can be forgiven because we have been redeemed. As Eph. 1:7 agrees, we have been redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus, which is what allowed us to become part of the New Covenant.

EPH 1:7

Col. 1:14 states, *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”⁹²* Paul expounds on this idea in the Ephesians 1.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the

beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”⁹³

We have been predestined to have God truly become our Father since before the foundation of this age. What does this predestination enable? *“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”⁹⁴* God’s plan was to adopt all of mankind as His children, just as Roman emperors would adopt the best of the best as their children to continue their line. The adoption process was planned from the beginning, as is written in Genesis 3:15.⁹⁵ In God’s wisdom and prudence He has redeemed us to Him via the New Covenant, which is made possible by the shedding of His only begotten son’s blood. If we remain in that glorious covenant, to which a small number of people have been currently called, we will enjoy the forgiveness of all of our sins. This is quite a promise and quite a gift from God. And this gift has been overlooked or misunderstood for a very long time.

ROMAN 5:8-9

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”⁹⁶

Paul is writing about what we were like before we came into the New Covenant. We were sinners. We were like the son who had turned into drug addict, began to steal to support his habit and then stole from the home he was raised in, beating up his brothers on the way out just to get money to support his habit. And what was God’s answer to this problem? Just as with the prodigal son, the father misses his son and wants him to come to his senses and return. When the father sees his wayward son returning, he knows this prodigal son has changed, has repented, and this is welcomed. There is often a physical price to be paid for leading a life of sin, but God the Father makes it easy for us to come back once we have seen the truth and want to follow His way of life. He does not put obstacles up that would hinder us from doing righteousness.

God opened the door wide under the New Covenant, changing the way mankind could covenant with him, making it open to all. And God did that while we were still sinners. John 3:16 tells us why God had to sacrifice his only begotten son to commence the New Covenant. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that*

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁹⁷ God showed that love with the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.

God told Abraham, *"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."*⁹⁸ Christians, Muslims, and Jews the world over know the story of the sacrifice of Isaac as the ultimate story of obedience. But it is far more than that. This is the story of how much Abraham loves God. *"And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."*⁹⁹ Abraham is ready to sacrifice the son of promise, the only begotten son of Sarah and him. Abraham did not have to go through with this sacrifice, but he was ready to. God said through an angel, *"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."*¹⁰⁰ No matter how much Abraham feared God, he must have loved him. What father, especially an old man like Abraham was, would not give up his own life for his strapping young son? This is more than fear.

The word from which fear is translated is **Y A R E**, H3372 from Strong's. It is more than just fear. The word also means morally reverent. Abraham revered God, he loved God enough to sacrifice his only son for God. And YHVH used that example to show up how much he loves us. Substitute God for Abraham. Substitute Jesus for Isaac. And as shocking as this seems, substitute you and I for God. How much does God love us? More than Abraham loved Isaac. It appears to this author that God knew the only way to convince us that He loved us was to show us. And He showed us by actually going through with the sacrifice of His only begotten son for our sakes.

This is a hard concept to accept, especially for legalists who place emphasis on the law over the love of God. Mankind, by and large, does not believe God loves them as a Father loves their children. God the lawgiver supposedly can't forgive sins because He must have payment for His broken law. Even the Jews, who are often (and sometimes justly) accused of worshipping the law over God, understand that God does not require payment for each broken law. What God requires is a broken and contrite heart. What God requires is repentance. What God desires is a personal relationship with us as we grow into His image. What God desires is to be a proud father whose children follow in His footsteps.

Paul writes that we were justified and redeemed back to God with the blood that Jesus, which was used to ratify the New Covenant. If God was willing to do that while we were His enemies, think of what He wants to do for us, given that He has already resurrected His only begotten son. Yes, Jesus died for us while we were sinners and His shed blood was required for the New Covenant that gives every single human being the opportunity to have one on one relationship with God, either now or in the second resurrection. And

it was the sacrifice of Jesus that was required to show us what the covenant of love with God is truly about.

1 JOHN 1:7

1 John 1:7 seems to argue against this author's contention that it is God the Father that forgives sins and the shedding of blood, especially the blood of Jesus, is not what forgives sins. John wrote, "*and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"¹⁰¹ If you examine this partial verse out of context, it does seem to say that blood of Jesus actually cleanses us of our sins. However, Peter wrote about the dangers twisting of scripture, especially Paul's epistles, by taking them out of context. "*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*"¹⁰² In context, John is referring to us walking out of the darkness of our life before a personal relationship with God and how we have entered the light because of our joining the New Covenant.

*"(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."*¹⁰³

John writes that what he is saying is true and the greatest joy we could have is to have true fellowship, a personal covenant relationship with God and Jesus, just as he has. We should be ecstatic about that relationship and the blessings it brings.

John then goes on to write about the same thing Paul wrote about in Col. 1. We used to be in darkness because we were part of this world, but we are now in the light because we are part of the New Covenant with God. If we continue to walk in the ways of this world, if we do not change, if we do not repent, then we are liars when we say we are in covenant with God.

We are cleansed from all our sins because of the shed blood of Christ, not just as a one-time thing, but as an on-going basis. If you only had the epistle of 1 John, it might be easy to dismiss the idea of John's writing about darkness and light as nothing but a metaphor, but when we examine the gospels, the Pauline epistles, the other general

epistles and the Book of Revelations, which we will do shortly, there is a clear pattern that emerges. The blood of Christ is essential in the forgiveness of sins, but it does not forgive sins. It is a part of the process.

When we sin against another person, is there one magic event that leads to forgiveness or is it a process? Can we just take it for granted that the person is a Christian and they must forgive us?¹⁰⁴ This is not how we operate and it is not how God operates. We know forgiveness is a process. And the apostles wrote about how wondrous this process is. Although every human being is a child of God, most of mankind is caught in the darkness of not really knowing God. Even if you know of God, you do not know Him unless you approach Him as Father. And God has created the New Covenant in such a way that we should have no choice but to know and accept Him as our loving Father, yet Christianity has bypassed this message by depending upon the mystical idea that God requires payment, yet that payment is somehow actually forgiveness, something that God the lawgiver supposedly requires. However the idea that payment is required distorts who and what God is and this distorts our relationship with our Father.

REV 1:5

Although Revelations 1:5 is being examined under the context of Jesus' blood being used to ratify the New Covenant, it is possible that John tied together the idea of Jesus being the ultimate atonement sacrifice in verse five with us being part of God's New Covenant in verse six.

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”¹⁰⁵

Examine 1Pet. 2:9-10, Ex. 19:5-6 and 24:3-8 again. 1 John 1:7 states we were cleansed from our sins when we entered the light of the New Covenant. How do we become kings and priests of God, which is what Rev. 1-6 is talking about? We have to enter into covenant with God. How do you enter into covenant with God? The covenant has to be signed in blood. John writes that we must be baptized in the blood of Jesus the Messiah to be kings and priests of the New Covenant whereas to be kings and priests of the Old Covenant you only had to be sprinkled with the ratifying blood.¹⁰⁶

As you notice from the other translations, we are made free from or washed from our sins because of the shedding of Jesus' blood. We would not be part of the New Covenant without the shedding Jesus' blood, thus we would still be in our sin.

“and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood;”¹⁰⁷

“even from Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness, the First-born out of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him loving us and washing us from our sins by His blood.”¹⁰⁸

“and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood;”¹⁰⁹

“And from Jesus Christ, the true witness, the first to come back from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who had love for us and has made us clean from our sins by his blood.”¹¹⁰

“May kindness and peace be yours from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Jesus was the first to conquer death, and he is the ruler of all earthly kings. Christ loves us, and by his blood he set us free from our sins.”¹¹¹

“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born out of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth; to him who did love us, and did bathe us from our sins in his blood,”¹¹²

“and from Jesus Christ, the truthful witness, the first of the dead to be born to Life, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins with His own blood,”¹¹³

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”¹¹⁴

“and from Jesus Christ, the witness, the faithful one, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.”¹¹⁵

The Greek word translated as washed in verse five is **ΛΟΥΘ**, which means, “A primary verb; to bathe (the whole person; whereas G3538 means to wet a part only, and G4150 to wash, cleanse garments exclusively): - wash.”¹¹⁶ Many theologians point out that this is the only place where we are washed by the blood of Jesus and this mystical washing is what removes our sins.¹¹⁷ However they have ignored the idea that John was writing that we have been baptized, because **ΛΟΥΘ** means to immerse, by Jesus’ blood, metaphorically, to enter the New Covenant whereas Israel was sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats to enter the Old Covenant. We have been freed from our sins by Jesus’ blood because His blood makes us kings and priests in the New Covenant, which allows us to have a personal relationship with God the father, who has always forgiven sins when His children repent. Jesus’ shed blood allowed him to obtain, “a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”¹¹⁸ So although Israel was “baptized unto Moses in the

cloud and in the sea,"¹¹⁹ Christians have a better baptism, into Jesus' kingdom by his blood, according John.

1 COR 15:17

*"In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God because we testified on God's behalf that he raised Christ-whom he did not raise if in fact it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins. Yes, even those who have died in Christ are lost."*¹²⁰

1 Cor. 15:15-18 is really very simple to understand if taken in context. Paul is rehearsing what he taught the Corinthians, who are looking at other teachings that are not correct in their teachings. He lists his authority, even listing other disciples who agree with him and are his friends. Paul is incensed that the Corinthians have embraced teachers who have gone so far as to teach there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection from the dead, then Jesus is not resurrected. And if Jesus isn't raised, Paul writes, then I am a liar and everything I have taught you is a lie. And if Paul is a liar, then the death of Jesus is also worth nothing because Paul must be lying about that. So there is no New Covenant. If there is no New Covenant, then the Corinthians have no real relationship with God and they are still sinners because your sins can't be forgiven if you are not in covenant with God. Paul is asking the Corinthians if they believe him. Do we?

HOW DOES GOD DEAL WITH SIN?

God forgave the city of Nineveh when it repented. God forgave Israel and Judah on the rare occasions they repented. The first sermon of the New Covenant tells people to repent if they want their sins forgiven. God has made this forgiveness possible because He loves us.

I play many roles in my life. I am a provider for my family. I am a husband. I am an engineer. I am a bicycle rider. I am a basketball player. I am a Christian. What is my most important role, which I have not listed? Read on.

God plays many roles. He is the creator. He is the Lawgiver. He is a judge. He is our healer. But according to Him, His most important role is as a father to mankind. But mankind has generally rejected God as a father. There is no doubt the average Israelite treated YHWH like He was Baal or Dagon or some other false god who had to be appeased rather than respected, obeyed and loved. The average Christian treats YHWH like He is a god rather than our Father. Are we going to continue placing barriers between us and our Father because it is easier to treat Him like Zeus, an angry god WHO requires payments and reparations, or will we repent and go to ask Dad if He will forgive us and walk with us and continue to teach us how to be more like Him. God said, *"I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; to love the LORD thy God, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave unto Him; for that is thy life, and the length of thy days."*¹²¹

What does God require of us? We could make a list of things, like having a contrite heart, repenting of our wrongs, to lead a righteous life, to fear and love Him and more. But what does He really want? *“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”*¹²² This is a father telling his kids he wants to be proud of them because they are good kids. *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; to love the LORD thy God, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave unto Him; for that is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”*¹²³

God creates the environment for his children to learn and grow. He encourages us to take “good” chances and discourages us from taking “bad” chances. He wants us to grow and mature and is disappointed if we don’t.¹²⁴ Would we be happy and proud if your 10 year-old acted like a 2 year-old? How about if your 30 year-old acts like he is 15? However, you should be happy if your 10 year-old acts like he is 10 years old. But would you be disappointed if your 10 year-old acted like he was 20? In most cases the answer to that should be yes because a 10 year-old would give up too much of the joy of life if he acted 20.

Jesus in the garden said, *“And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”*¹²⁵ The Aramaic word **A B B A** is Strong’s G5. Rather than having the connotation of the formal title father, **A B B A** is much better translated as daddy. **A B B A** is only used three times in scripture, but it is to emphasize how we should view YHVH as daddy.¹²⁶ *“But just because it is transliterated only three times doesn’t mean that abbā is only used three times. In Jesus’ other prayers it is clear that the Aramaic abbā underlies the Greek of our New Testament, either directly or indirectly. It is very likely that in all Jesus’ teaching about the Father -- “my Father,” “your Father,” etc. -- that the warm, intimate Aramaic word abbā was the word Jesus actually used. Jesus introduced us to God as our Father in a way unheard of in the Old Testament or in Judaism.”*¹²⁷

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*¹²⁸ I have heard Christians state they were nothing but pond scum or crud. These people seem prefer to believe the only way God could stand to be around us is if we were hidden behind the blood of Jesus, so when He looked at us, all He really saw was Jesus. This is just the kind of attitude that God was fighting against in John 3:16, yet far too many Christians have turned the love of John 3:16 upside down by requiring God take payment for every sin we commit and denying Him the ability to forgive us.

I presented this study to a small group of people to get their input and I am very glad I did. Not only did it help sharpen the focus of this article, but it also gave me an ending. It is rare for me to hear the still, quiet voice of God in the madcap world in which we live. But I heard it in what one man said. He expressed the following testimony as what it is like to have God as your Father.

"At one point in my life, I've found myself faced with a temptation that seemed to be pre-meditated. The cunning, sly motives of my old man somehow distracted me from the good focus on my Father and His love and promise. By pre-meditated, I mean that the temptation was of something that was to occur in the future, giving me time to plan my evil deeds. This could be called First Degree Sin. In retrospect, I was sinning already while in the 'planning stage'. My perfectly patient Father watched and allowed me to push the thoughts of repentance out. I was on a mission.

The day came to carry out my plan, and at some point in the day, I had another one of those "thoughts of repentance." This time, I stopped to consider the thought. "Do I love God more than my flesh?" Yes. "Why am I serving my flesh and not God?" Hmmm. Tough one. So, out of habit when faced with a tough one, I asked for help...

Father? Can you help? (silly question, of course He can) And there He was, gentle, guiding, provoking reflection in me, and oh, so very patient. Perfectly patient... He asked me a simple, disarming question: "What are you doing!?" His tone was incredulous, like that of a dad in disbelief of what he is witnessing his son doing. In fact, if I (in several years) watched one of my kids doing the same, I would likely add an explicative or two to the same simple disarming question.

My answer never actually was formulated into words. I knew the answer. But, more importantly, I knew what I had done and what I needed to do. The answer came as a crumpling surrender; I experienced true repentance on that day."

God loves each and every one of us so much that He always wants to do the right thing for His kids. And God is perfect, so He can actually do it. But if we treat Him like God and not like Dad by requiring payment for every sin we commit and take away His ability to forgive us, we can't have the kind of relationship He wants with us. We are the ones that stand in the way of that relationship. We don't earn the salvation of the New Covenant. God loves us so much He gave us that. But God wants to be proud of every son and daughter He has. If we treat God like Dad, it means we have to do the work of growing up to be a son or daughter He can be proud of, which is awfully hard work. But we are the work of God and our job, which we can only do with God's help, is to grow up to be sons and daughters God can be proud of.¹²⁹ And being an adult has its advantages, especially when you have dad like YHVH.

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- ¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgiveness#cite_note-apa-0
- ² Jon 1:1-2 JPS
- ³ Jon 3:3-4 JPS
- ⁴ Jon 3:5
- ⁵ Jon 3:9
- ⁶ 2 Chron. 7:14
- ⁷ Jon 3:10
- ⁸ Jon 4:1-2
- ⁹ Ex. 34:7
- ¹⁰ Num. 14:18-9
- ¹¹ Ps. 86:5 JPS
- ¹² 2 Kings 23:25-6
- ¹³ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Commentary on the Old Testament, from E-sword commentaries on 2 Kings 23:26
- ¹⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, From e-sword, commentary on 2 Kings 23:26
- ¹⁵ John 3:16
- ¹⁶ Prov. 13:24
- ¹⁷ Jer. 7:21-3
- ¹⁸ Ps 51:17
- ¹⁹ Isa 57:15
- ²⁰ Is. 1:18
- ²¹ Is. 1:11-18
- ²² Is. 43:23-6
- ²³ Jer. 6:19-20
- ²⁴ Jer. 7:21-6
- ²⁵ Mic. 6:6-8
- ²⁶ Lev. 17:2-11
- ²⁷ Heb. 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.
- ²⁸ Heb. 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
- ²⁹ Heb. 10:4
- ³⁰ **EPISTLE OF BARNABAS**.¹⁵. Staniforth, Maxwell, trans. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath_in_Christianity#cite_note-11
- ³¹ 1 Cor. 13:12
- ³² http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein
- ³³ Heb. 9:22
- ³⁴ 1 Cor. 5:7

³⁵ Jesus, the True Passover. Available at www.keepersoftheway.org

³⁶ Ex. 30:10

³⁷ Lev. 16:2

³⁸ Lev. 16:3-7

³⁹ Lev. 16:5-19

⁴⁰ Lev. 16:8

⁴¹ Lev. 16:21-2

⁴² Lev. 16:30

⁴³ Heb. 10:4

⁴⁴ Matt. 5:23-4 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

⁴⁵ Ps 103:12

⁴⁶ John 1:29

⁴⁷ Heb. 10:12-4

⁴⁸ 1Pet. 2:19-25

⁴⁹ Gen. 1:31

⁵⁰ Gen 3:22-4

⁵¹ 2 Sam 12:18-9 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

⁵² 2 Sam 12:20-23

⁵³ Luke 1:76-80

⁵⁴ Mark 1:4

⁵⁵ Luke 3:2-4

⁵⁶ John 1:27

⁵⁷ Matt. 11:11

⁵⁸ Matt. 23:37

⁵⁹ Exo 19:5-6

⁶⁰ Exo 24:3-8

⁶¹ Deut. 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Exo 34:6-7 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

Jer. 36:3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

⁶² Heb. 9:19-22

⁶³ Heb. 10:4

⁶⁴ Heb. 9:22

⁶⁵ John 4:7-29

⁶⁶ Luk 22:20

⁶⁷ Mar 14:23-4

⁶⁸ Mat 26:27-8

⁶⁹ Heb. 8:8-13 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

⁷⁰ Mat 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

Mar 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Luk 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

⁷¹ Isa 2:3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

⁷² Heb. 8:8-13

⁷³ Deut. 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁷⁴ Deu 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Deut. 11:1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always.

Deut. 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Deut. 10:12-3 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

Deut. 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

Deut. 19:9 If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:

Deut 30:16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

Lev. 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

⁷⁵ Matt. 22:37-40

⁷⁶ Deut. 6:4-5

⁷⁷ Lev. 19:18

⁷⁸ Acts 2:37

⁷⁹ Acts 2:38

⁸⁰ Act 10:43

⁸¹ Rom. 2:2-4

⁸² Rom. 3:23-6

⁸³ Col 1:14

⁸⁴ Col. 1:12-14

⁸⁵ Col. 1:12-14

⁸⁶ 1Pe 2:9-10

⁸⁷ Col 1:14 ESV

⁸⁸ Col 1:14 Murdock

⁸⁹ Col 1:14 ASV

⁹⁰ Col 1:14 Darby

⁹¹ Col 1:14 RV

⁹² Col. 1:14

⁹³ Eph. 1:3-8

⁹⁴ Rev 13:8

⁹⁵ Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

⁹⁶ Rom 5:5-10

⁹⁷ John 3:16

⁹⁸ Gen. 22:2

⁹⁹ Gen 22:9-10

¹⁰⁰ Gen 22:12

¹⁰¹ 1 John 1:7

¹⁰² 2 Peter 3:16

¹⁰³ 1 John 1:1-10

¹⁰⁴ Matt. 6:14-5 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matt. 18: 21-2 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

¹⁰⁵ Rev. 1:5-6

¹⁰⁶ Ex. 24: 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

¹⁰⁷ Rev. 1:5 RSV

¹⁰⁸ Rev. 1:5 LITV

¹⁰⁹ Rev. 1:5 ASV

¹¹⁰ Rev 1:5 BBE

¹¹¹ Rev 1:5 CEV

¹¹² Rev 1:5 YLT

¹¹³ Rev 1:5 WNT

¹¹⁴ Rev 1:5 Webster

¹¹⁵ Rev. 1:5 ISV

¹¹⁶ Strong's Concordance from e-sword, G3638

¹¹⁷ Barnes Notes on Rev. 1:5 from e-sword

And washed us from our sins in his own blood - He has removed the pollution of sin from our souls by his blood; that is, his blood has been applied to cleanse us from sin. Blood can be represented as having a cleansing power only as it makes an expiation for sin, for considered literally its effect would be the reverse. The language is such as would be used only on the supposition that he had made an atonement, and that it was by the atonement that we are cleansed; for in what sense could it be said of a martyr that he "had washed us from our sins in his blood?" How could this language be used of Paul or Polycarp; of Ridley or Cranmer? The doctrine that the blood of Christ cleanses us from sin, or purifies us, is one that is common in the Scriptures. Compare 1Jo_1:7; Heb_9:14. The specific idea of washing, however - representing that blood as washing sin away - is one which does not elsewhere occur. It is evidently used in the sense of "cleansing" or "purifying," as we do this by "washing," and as the blood of Christ accomplishes in respect to our souls, what washing with water does in respect to the body.

and washed us from our sins in his own blood; which shows that these persons were loved before washed; they were not first washed, and then loved, but first loved, and then washed. Love was the cause of washing, and not washing the cause of love; hence it appears that they were in themselves filthy, and unclean through sin; and that they could not cleanse themselves by anything they could do; and that such was the love of Christ to them, that he shed his precious blood for them, which is a fountain opened, to wash in for sin, and which cleanses from all sin. This is to be understood, not of the sanctification of their natures, which is the work of the Spirit, but of atonement for their sins, and justification from them by the blood of Christ, whereby they are so removed, that they are all fair, and without spot. It is afterwards said, that these same persons are made priests; and it may be observed, that the priests were always washed, before they performed their service, as such (n). The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "and hath loosed us from our sins in", or "by his blood"; that is, from the guilt of them, which was bound upon them,

¹¹⁸ Heb. 8:6

¹¹⁹ 1 Cor. 10:2

¹²⁰ 1 Cor. 15:15-8

¹²¹ Deut. 30:19-20 JPS

¹²² Deut 10:12

¹²³ Deut. 30:11-2

¹²⁴ Heb. 5:11- 4 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness:

for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

¹²⁵ Mark 14:36

¹²⁶ Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Gal 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

¹²⁷ http://www.jesuswalk.com/names-god/9_father.htm

¹²⁸ John 3:16

¹²⁹ Is. 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

Rom. 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

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