

The New Testament records 37 miracles<sup>1</sup> that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry.

These include sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, health to the sick – and many other tremendous miracles supernaturally performed by Christ.

Which one was the greatest? If you analyze them they were wonderful but ALL were only temporary.

- The paralyzed, lame, mute, and blind that Jesus gave back eyes, fingers, toes, and skin eventually lost them all again when they got sick and died some years later.
- Peter's mother-in-law was miraculously set free from a fever but years later died of other causes which may also involve a fever.
- The food miraculously created by Jesus was consumed by the five and four thousands, and used up – and hunger returned the next day.
- The eyes restored to blind Bartimaeus were used, worn out, and dimmed by the time he died.
- The hearing that the deaf received were subject to the natural downward slide of the human body and faded most likely by their death.
- Those dancing feet after Christ's touch that the lame possessed, soon turned to a shuffle and then stopped working altogether as they lay in bed awaiting death many years later.
- Lepers who found fresh new skin and limbs saw them again return to wrinkles, weakness, and finally immobility as circulation, respiration, and digestion all slowly were assaulted by the weight of many years.
- So yes, Jesus performed many miracles – but all of them but one were TEMPORARY.

So, which was the greatest of all Christ's miracles?

The answer is the one that never faded, never aged, never ended. It was the miracle unfaded by time, untouched by health, unaffected by circumstances. That miracle, the greatest miracle is the one that Jesus Christ is still doing in our midst today. It is the miracle that I have personally experienced. It is the miracle that most of us in this room have also experienced. It is the greatest of all Christ's miracles – **the miracle of complete forgiveness.**

This morning we turn again to the greatest verse in all the Bible for anyone who has ever sinned – and that is all of us.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Table at the end of the message.

As we open to Mark 3.20-30 we come to the place where Jesus pronounced the greatest doom of all. In verse 29 Jesus said: **never has forgiveness**. But this morning, side by side with the most gloomy, hopeless verse in the Bible – is the most hope filled, comforting verse in the Bible. Five words that should ring in your heart if you have ever feared the grave, if you have ever feared the judgment, if you ever fear not making it to Heaven. In verse 28 Jesus said: **all sins will be forgiven**. Those are the brightest words of the Bible --

Side by side in two verses in the Gospel by Mark are the three darkest words of the Bible, and the five brightest words. And there is a message for each of us from those two verses. The messages are:

Please stand with me as we listen to Mark 3.28-30. Pray.

- **JESUS DECLARES ALL SINS ARE FORGIVEABLE. 3:28** “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter.”<sup>NRSV</sup> **FORGIVENESS IS ABSOLUTE:** The drunkenness of Noah, the lies of Abraham, the deceit of Jacob, the murder by Moses, the doubting of Gideon, the adultery of David, and the denials of Peter – they ALL are forgivable, and so is **ANYTHING THAT YOU HAVE EVER DONE OR WILL DO!** “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). “The doctrine<sup>2</sup> here laid down is the crown and glory of the Gospel. The very first thing it proposes to man is free pardon, full forgiveness, complete remission, without money and without price. Let us take hold of this doctrine without delay, if we never received it before. It is for us, as well as for others. We too, this very day, if we come to Christ, may be completely forgiven. Let us cling firmly to this doctrine, if we have received it already. We may sometimes feel faint, and unworthy, and cast down. But if we have really come to Jesus by faith, our sins are completely forgiven. They have been thrown behind God’s back— sunk into the depths of the sea. Let us believe and not be afraid.”
- **JESUS DECLARED THAT DAMNATION IS ETERNAL. 3:29** *A Soul Can Be Lost Forever in Hell.* He speaks of someone who is “guilty of an eternal sin” (verse 29). Never be ashamed of what Jesus said.<sup>3</sup> Jesus declares much to the moderate and liberal dismay -- that there is an eternal God—an eternal heaven—and an eternal hell. Sin is an infinite evil. Sin needed an atonement of infinite value to deliver an infinite soul from its infinite damnation. Sin produces an infinite loss on the unbeliever who rejects the remedy provided for it. And that remedy is Christ's blood poured out upon the altar of God's wrath against sin on Christ's Cross.

Why is it such a big deal to be sure that all sins are forgiven, taken away, erased and removed. Why is this such a huge issue? To understand how God looks at sin He has given us over 75 different word pictures describing sin and its effects in the Old Testament. The most completely described picture of sin is leprosy.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Mark.* The Crossway classic commentaries. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill; 1993.

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Ryle in the Gospel by *Mark.* The Crossway classic commentaries. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill; 1993.

In the Old Testament world leprosy was not only a dreaded disease, and a horrible condition – it was also the most somber warning of the absolutely unaccepted condition of sin being allowed to remain in God's presence.

To show you what I mean note some verses as we back toward Leviticus in our Bibles. In each of these verses God reveals that when He looks at us He sees all of our sins stuck to us – our sins clothe us like the loathsome disease of leprosy. Flip back to these verses on the way:

- Zechariah 3: 3-4 Now Joshua was **clothed with filthy garments**, and was standing before the Angel. 4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have **removed your iniquity** from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."
- Hosea 7:2 They do not consider in their hearts That I remember all their wickedness; Now their **own deeds have surrounded them**; They are before My face.
- Ezekiel 33:10 "Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and **our sins lie upon us**, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?" '
- Psalm 109:18-19 He wore cursing as his garment; it entered into his body like water, into his bones like oil. 19 May it be like a cloak wrapped about him, **like a belt tied forever around him**.
- Psalm 73:6 Therefore pride is their necklace; **they clothe themselves with violence**.

Now open to Leviticus 13. Note how detailed God describes this disease. He spends longer on this than He does on the creation of the Universe or crucifixion of Christ! Maybe He wants us to be concerned about the horrible leprosy of the soul that sin truly is in His sight.

Leviticus 13:3 The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears **to be more than skin deep**, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. Now note verses 4 -8; 20 –36. Now look at this, God so abhors sin that when it permeates a garment v. 52 says burn it.

Leprous garments must be burned.

Sin that clothes a human is like leprosy.

Sin must be burned.

Humans that wear leprosy garments on this planet and never get them removed will have to burn forever.

Hell is the garbage dump of the Universe burning the leprosy garmented individuals who die without ever being forgiven.

What are you wearing today? Are you clothed in sin or washed and wearing the robes of Christ's righteousness?

And there is only one remedy for sin. Do you see why forgiveness of sins is such a miracle? The greatest miracle?

We are all exposed to the deadly SIN virus. It is a genetic disorder we all have, the Divine Physician had to make a cure and that involved getting a pure and virus free blood to offer as payment for the sin of the world – and that is exactly what He did in Christ. Christ's blood is all that can wash us clean from our garments stained with the leprosy of sin.

Back to Mark 3.28 -- Jesus made the incredible promise that *people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter*. Too often people miss this promise and worry about the warning in the next verse. But the fact is, those who believe in Jesus will be forgiven of all sins (evil acts, wrong actions, good actions not done, evil thoughts, evil motives, etc.) and of all blasphemies (evil words said against God). When there is confession and repentance, no sin is beyond God's forgiveness.

- ALL OUR SINS ARE COVERED – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. Psalm 103:3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; Colossians 1:14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; 1 John 2:12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. NO STAIN OF SIN IS TOO DEEP FOR CHRIST'S BLOOD TO CLEANSE. Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.
- ALL WHO ARE FORGIVEN ARE TO LEAVE THEIR SINS – BUT LEAVING OUR SINS IS NOT A CONDITION FOR FORGIVENESS. Look at John 8. *"This is why the ending of the story of Jesus and the woman trapped in adultery is so important, though it is often overlooked. [Having forgiven her, Jesus] added, "Go now and leave your life of sin." This always follows upon forgiveness.... If we are saved, we must stop sinning. At the same time, we can be grateful that Jesus spoke as he did. For we notice that he did not say, "Leave your life of sin, and I will not condemn you." If he had said that, what hope for us could there be? Our problem is precisely that we do sin. There could be no forgiveness if forgiveness was based upon our ceasing to sin. Instead of that, Jesus actually spoke in the reverse order. First, he granted forgiveness freely, without any conceivable link to our performance. Forgiveness is granted only on the merit of his atoning death. But then, having forgiven us freely, Jesus tells us with equal force to stop sinning<sup>4</sup>.*
- ALL WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS HAVE THE PENALTY OF ALL THEIR SINS REMOVED FOREVER. Acts 13:39 and by Him everyone who believes is **justified from all things** from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. This verse helps us to define God's incredible grace. We learn that no sin can block His loving forgiveness – no evil, no stain, no corruption, no secret, no defilement, none can stay His mighty Hand. All we are asked to do is to *confess our sins and turn away from them. He lovingly forgives us because we have placed our trust in Jesus. The*

---

<sup>4</sup> James M. Boice, *Amazing Grace*, Wheaton: Tyndale, 1993, 41-42.

*person that has ruined our life, soiled our name, harmed our loved one – we can hardly imagine forgiving—but God can and does. Those who wound us deeply and repeatedly, those who mar and scar our lives, those who attack and pursue us for harm – we rarely forget. Yet God can and does forgive and forget. As God says in the Psalms “If God should keep track of all our sins – none of us would stand. Yet He forgives without condemning, He pays without asking for repayment. When we confess and receive His forgiveness we see God at His best. God so loves that He sent the Only One who could ever earn, merit, or accomplish our forgiveness – Jesus. And when Jesus forgives us the greatest miracle of all takes place! Jesus invites any and all to that life-changing offer – come to Me and by my Cross I will gladly and fully forgive your sins.*

- ALL CONFESSED SIN IS FORGIVEN SIN. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“Now came the miracle. In describing it Mark used his favorite word (v. 42):

“*Immediately* the leprosy left him and he was cured.” The healing was *sudden* and *complete*. His feet—toeless, ulcerated stubs—were suddenly whole, bursting his shrunken sandals. The knobs on his hands grew fingers before his very eyes. Back came his hair, eyebrows, eyelashes. Under his hair were ears and before him a nose! His skin was supple and soft. Can you hear a thundering roar from the multitude? Can you hear the man crying *not*, “Unclean! Unclean!,” but, “*I’m clean! I’m clean!*”

- That is what Jesus Christ can do for you, for anyone in an instant, in a split second of belief.
- The healing of Christ in salvation from sin is *instantaneous* and *complete* (“the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin).” All my confidence, everything I am, all I represent, all preaching rests in this!

If you realize that the leprosy of sin has infected your person, then you have no doubt that you are a sinner. If you believe that, there is no reason why you should not go immediately to him. He has compassion, he *feels* for you heart for heart, blood for blood. More, he will actually *touch* your leprosy. He will take hold of it. Even better, you will be immediately healed! Can you humble yourself to say, “I know you are willing, make me clean”? Then do it now.” 5

One of the most profound confessions of forgiveness was written by a Chicago lawyer in the last 1800’s. His testimony is on page # 493 in the testimonies of great saints that we use in our worship. Let me read it to you.

#201 Grace greater than all our sin

Have you experienced the greatest miracle of all?

FOUR HEBREW WORDS FOR SIN IN PSALM 32: Sin is such an offense to God that He has to use 15 different words in the Hebrew Old Testament just to describe it. Four of them are here in David's song. When David stole his neighbor Uriah's little ewe lamb for his already overflowing banqueting table he defied the rules God had laid down. HE WAS:

1. DEFYING GOD'S RULE IS SIN. Transgression (Peshah): 'a going away', 'departure', *passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited*, or 'rebellion' against God and his authority. This is a picture of a relationship with God that is rebelled against. OUR TRANSGRESSIONS MUST BE PULLED OFF: "Forgiven" means literally to have our sin lifted off. *nesui*, borne away, i.e., by a vicarious sacrifice; for *bearing sin*, or *bearing away sin*, always implies this. As Pilgrim it rolls off and into Christ's tomb. "My sin oh the bliss . . .". We are being crushed by any sins we keep around. They suffocate, smother and squish the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free. And to his only hope, David fled. God cleansed David's Sin that smothers: now they were forgiven "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven"
2. MISSING GOD'S MARK IS SIN. (*chattath*) is same as hamartia in Greek 'coming short' or 'falling short' as in an arrow falling short. The target is God's law and sin is missing the mark on the target. This is a picture of failing to measure up to God's Divine Law. *Sin, chataah*. The *second* signifies the *missing of a mark*, not doing what was commanded; but is often taken to express *sinfulness*, or sin in the future, producing transgression in the life. SIN, *chataah*, must be *covered, kesui*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. Whose sin is covered. "Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy-seat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit!" (Spurgeon) WE MUST BE SHEILDED FROM OUR SINS: "Covered" speaks of the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement. On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark was the tablets portraying God's divine law. In essence, the blood stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us! God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood. "Whose sin is covered"
3. DEFACING GOD'S IMAGE IS SIN. Iniquity (*hawon*) means 'corrupt' or 'twisted' or 'crooked'. This word pictures what sin does to us inside as it warps and ruins us. *Iniquity, avon*. The *third* signifies *what is turned out of its proper course or situation; any thing morally distorted or perverted*. *Iniquity*, what is contrary to *equity* or *justice*. INIQUITY, *anon*, which is *perverse* or *distorted*, must not be imputed, *lo yachshob*, must *not be reckoned to his account*. THE LEDGER OF OUR WAYWARDNESS CLEARED OUT: "Not Counted" speaks of a list of debts no longer held against us. David had become utterly bankrupted by his sin. The bills were piling up, mounting like a flood and drowning him. Desire, deceit, cruel deception,

cunning craftiness and shameless murder all charged heavy debts to his soul. And now in sheer delight all the mountain of impossible debt is cleared from the ledger. "My sins are gone, and shall not be remembered, God in mercy tenderly forgives." God cleansed David's Sin that steals: now they were not imputed to his account as debts. "2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" Note that the three words so often used to denote our disobedience—transgression, sin, and iniquity—are the three-headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced its barkings forever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non-imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him.

Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness; be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down" (Spurgeon)

4. DECEIVING GOD'S PEOPLE IS SIN. David says "guile" and he means it. He was hunted down by the Holy Spirit, haunted by his own conscience through the night watches, but haughty and "business as usual" in the daytime. *Guile, remiyah*. The *fourth* signifies *fraud, deceit, guile*, etc. To remove these evils, *three* acts are mentioned: *forgiving, covering, and not imputing*. *GUILE, remiyah*, must be annihilated from the soul: *In whose spirit there is no GUILE*. God cleansed David's Sin that slithers: now there was no guile. "And in whose spirit there is no deceit."

The man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.<sup>6</sup>

#### FIVE GREEK WORDS FOR SIN:

1. SHOOT AWRY - HAMARTIA in the New Testament [#266] 174 x and most often translated "sin" means to 'miss the mark'. It is the most often used word for sin in the NT. A word picture is to shoot an arrow and miss the mark. All are guilty of hamartia [Romans 3:23] and fall short. Our target is of course the perfection of God. [Matthew 6:48]. This holds the idea of our inability, helplessness to hit God's mark.
2. STEP ACROSS - PARABASIS used 7 x in the New Testament [#3847] means 'to step across the line' and is most often translated in English "transgression". God is the one who has drawn the line between right and wrong. sin is when we cross that line. This is a bit more flagrant, planned incursion into the area off limits. As in Gal 3:19 and I Tim 2:14.
3. SERIOUS REBELLION - ANOMIA means lawlessness. Used 15 x in the New Testament [#458] it is most often translated "iniquity" as in Mt. 7:23. This is an open, violent rebellion against God's way. it is a serious progression.
4. SWEEP AWAY - PARAPTOMA used 23 x in the New Testament [#3900] and often translated "offense" or "trespass" means 'to slip or fall'. In Matthew 6:14-15 it is translated "trespass". It is the idea of being taken in the passion of the moment and yielding to the desire, whatever it may be.

---

<sup>6</sup>Clarke, Adam, *Clarke's Commentary: Psalms*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 1999.

5. SUNK IN DEBT - OPTHEILMA is the word "debt" used 2 x in the New Testament [#3783] as in Matthew 6:12. It speaks of sin as a failure to pay God what is due. The meaning from the uses in the NT is that every time we sin we owe God a consequence to that sin. As Revelation 20:11-12 says, the record books will be opened. All whose debts are outstanding will pay for them eternally. Only Jesus can wipe out, satisfy your debt.

It is impossible to commit an unpardonable sin today—if by that you mean one can commit a sin today, come under conviction because of it tomorrow, come to God in repentance, and He would not forgive you. You see, Christ died for *all* sin, not just some sin. He didn't die for all sin but *one*, the unpardonable sin. **There is no such thing as being able to commit a sin today that He will not forgive. The attitude and state of the unbeliever is unpardonable—not the act. The only sin today that God cannot forgive is rejection of His Son (John 3:16–21, 31)**<sup>7</sup>. When the Spirit of God convicts the sinner and reveals the Savior, the sinner may resist the Spirit and reject the witness of the Word of God, but that does not mean he has forfeited all his opportunities to be saved. If he will repent and believe, God can still forgive him. Even if the sinner so hardens his heart that he seems to be insensitive to the pleadings of God, **so long as there is life, there is hope.** Only God knows if and when any "deadline" has been crossed. You and I must never despair of any sinner (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).<sup>8</sup>

By nature God is forgiving. The Old Testament abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.

- David declared, "For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee" (Ps. 86:5).
- In another psalm he reminds us that God pardons all our iniquities. Psalm 103:3,12 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- Daniel said, "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness" (Dan. 9:9).
- God described Himself to Moses as, "the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Ex. 34:6–7).
- Micah extolled the Lord, saying, Micah 7:18–19 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

---

<sup>7</sup> McGee, J. V. 1997, c1981. *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson: Nashville

<sup>8</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.



That is the essence of the gospel: God's divine and gracious provision for the forgiveness of man's sin. In Christ, Paul says, "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7; cf. Col. 1:14). John assures us that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" and that our "sins are forgiven [us] for His name's sake" (1 John 1:9; 2:12).

No matter how severe the sin, God can forgive it. The worst conceivable sin would be to kill God's own Son—and that while He was on earth for the very purpose of providing salvation from sin and the way to everlasting life. Nothing could possibly be more heinous, vicious, and wicked than that. And, of course, killing Him is exactly what men did to the Son of God. Yet, while hanging on the cross and about to die, Jesus prayed and affirmed the forgiving mercy available to His executioners, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

- The *degree* of sin does not forfeit forgiveness, because even killing the Son of God was forgivable.
- Nor does the *volume* of sin end the possibility of mercy. A seventy-year-old profligate who has lived a life of debauchery, stealing, lying, profanity, blasphemy, and immorality is just as forgivable as a seven-year-old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood haughtiness.
- Nor does the particular *kind* of sin cancel grace. In Scripture we find God forgiving idolatry, murder, gluttony, fornication, adultery, cheating, lying, homosexuality, covenant breaking, blasphemy, drunkenness, extortion, and every other kind of sin imaginable. He forgives self-righteousness, which is the deceiving sin of thinking that one has no sin. He even forgives the sin of rejecting Christ; otherwise no one could be saved, because before salvation *everyone*, to some degree, is a Christ rejecter. There is no forgiveness of even the smallest sin unless it is confessed and repented of; but there is forgiveness of even the greatest sin if those divine conditions are met.<sup>9</sup>

Grace means that sin is not held against the sinner. Such forgiveness is dependent on a payment of sin's penalty to satisfy holy justice. That requires a substitute—one to die in the sinner's place. God's chosen substitute—the only one who qualified—was Jesus. Salvation is always by the same gracious means, whether during OT or NT times. When any sinner comes to God, repentant and convinced he has no power to save himself from the deserved judgment of divine wrath, and pleads for mercy, God's promise of forgiveness is granted. God then declares him righteous because the sacrifice and obedience of Christ is put to his account. In the NT, the Lord Savior came and actually provided the promised sacrifice for sin on the cross. Having fulfilled all righteousness by His perfect life, He fulfilled justice by His death. Thus God Himself atoned for sin, at a cost too great for the human mind to fathom. That is what Scripture means when it speaks of salvation by grace.<sup>10</sup>

NAHUM1 -- God's forgiveness is set forth in the Scripture by many figures of speech.

1. His forgiveness is like a *debt* which has been paid. In Isaiah He says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not

---

<sup>9</sup> MacArthur, J. 1989. *Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago

<sup>10</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25). Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ..." (Acts 3:19). On His ledger I am in debt, because there it is written, "... the wages of sin is death ..." (Rom. 6:23), and "... in Adam all die ..." (1 Cor. 15:22).

2. God's forgiveness is set forth in Scripture as the healing of a *disease*. Jeremiah writes, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings ..." (Jer. 3:22). And in Isaiah 61:1 He has promised to "... bind up the brokenhearted...."
3. Finally, God's forgiveness is pictured as the cleansing of a *pollution*, a *contamination*. The Scriptures tell us that "... according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). And we read also, "... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). How wonderful our God is!

How does God forgive? God is different for there is none like Him in forgiving. God never forgives until the debt is paid. And on the Cross Christ paid the debt. He redeemed us. We are sold under sin. We today have offended the holiness of God. We are in debt to Him. We have a disease, and God is not going to take the disease of sin into heaven. But Christ paid our debt, and Christ is the One who will forgive us. He cleanses us, and He makes us acceptable in God's sight so that we might go to heaven someday.

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." Isn't He a wonderful God? He is someday going to restore Israel to the land, not because *they* are wonderful, but because *He* is wonderful. And, my friend, I am going to heaven someday, but I am not going there because I am good or righteous—I am not. I'm going to heaven because Jesus died for me. I'm going because the debt has been paid, and there is no God like my God. 11

PSALM 51 -- You have to go to the cross to find the interpretation. *Forgive* them! How can He forgive them? And how can He forgive you and me? "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). And every time you find forgiveness in the New Testament, the blood of Christ is close by. God never forgives sin apart from the death of Christ. Never. *Never*. God is not forgiving sin because He is big-hearted. He forgives because His Son paid the penalty. And now with open arms He can say to you, "I can extend mercy to *you* because My Son died for you." It is the application of the death of Christ to the life. 12

MATTHEW 12 -- There is no sin committed yesterday that the Lord would not forgive today because He died for *all* sin. There is no act of sin that you could commit for which there is no forgiveness. Of course, if you resist the Holy Spirit, there is no forgiveness because He is *bringing* forgiveness. It is like the man who is dying from a certain disease, and the doctor tells him there is a remedy for it. The man refuses to take the remedy and dies, not from the disease but from refusing to take the remedy. There is a

---

11McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

12McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

remedy for the disease of sin, and the Holy Spirit applies it; but if you resist it, there is no remedy. That is the only way sin can be unpardonable today.<sup>13</sup>

EPHESIANS 1 -- There are three Greek words in the New Testament which are translated by the one English word *redemption*.

1. The Greek word *aitro* means "to buy at the marketplace." Here is the picture of a housewife out in the morning shopping for the day. She sees some vegetables and a roast and puts down cash on the barrelhead. She pays the price and now they belong to her, of course. The only thought in this word *aitro*, then, is to buy and take out. This is the word Paul used in 1 Corinthians 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
2. The Greek word *aitro* means "to buy out of the market," and it has the thought of buying something for one's own use. You see, somebody could go into the marketplace and buy that roast and those vegetables and go down to the next town, where they are short of those items, and put them up for sale at a profit. *aitro* means, however, to take goods out of the market place and never to sell them again, but rather to keep them for one's own use. This is the word which is used in Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This means that Christ redeemed us so that we would not be exposed for sale again. He has paid the price, and He has taken us off the market. We belong to Him.
3. The third Greek word for redemption is *lutro* which is the word used here in verse seven. It means "to liberate by the paying of a ransom in order to set a person free." *Redemption* is a marvelous word. It means not only to go into the marketplace and put cash on the barrelhead; it means not only to take it out of the market for your own private use, never to sell it to anyone else; but it also means to set free or to liberate after paying the price. The last applies to buying a slave out of slavery in order to set him free, and this is the word for redemption we have here in this verse. Man has been sold under sin and is in the bondage of sin. All one needs to do is look around to see that this is true. Man is a rotten, corrupt sinner and he cannot do anything else but sin—he is a slave to sin. Christ came to pay the price of man's freedom. That is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

One drop of the blood of the holy Son of God can save every sinner on topside of this earth, if that sinner will put his trust in the Savior. "The forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness is not the act of an indulgent deity who is moved by sentiment to the exclusion of justice, righteousness, and holiness. Forgiveness depends on the shedding of blood: it demands and depends on the payment of the penalty for sin. Christ's death and the shedding of His blood is the foundation for forgiveness and, without that, there could be no forgiveness.

A righteous God forgives on the basis that a penalty has been executed. When was it executed? When Jesus Christ shed His blood over nineteen hundred years ago. God cannot forgive us until the penalty has been executed. The good news is that the penalty has been executed. That is the reason that in the Word of God you will find forgiveness back to back with the blood of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness depends on the blood of Christ. That is how valuable His blood is. I have said it before, and I will say it again: you come to God as a nobody and let Him make you a somebody. He can forgive you your sins because He paid the penalty for your sins. This is the only way that you and I can have forgiveness for our sins. 14

**COLOSSIANS 1 -- He redeemed us (v. 14a).** This word means "to release a prisoner by the payment of a ransom." Paul did not suggest that Jesus paid a ransom to Satan in order to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness. By His death and resurrection, Jesus met the holy demands of God's Law. Satan seeks to accuse us and imprison us because he knows we are guilty of breaking God's Law. But the ransom has been paid on Calvary, and through faith in Jesus Christ, we have been set free.

**He has forgiven us (v. 14b).** Redemption and forgiveness go together (Eph. 1:7). The word translated *forgiveness* means "to send away" or "to cancel a debt." Christ has not only set us free and transferred us to a new kingdom, but He has canceled every debt so that we cannot be enslaved again. Satan cannot find anything in the files that will indict us! 15

Paul then illustrates God's forgiveness. When God forgave us, He **canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Certificate of debt** translates *cheirographon*, which literally means "something written with the hand," or "an autograph." It was used to refer to a certificate of indebtedness handwritten by the debtor in acknowledgment of his debt. Paul describes that certificate as **consisting of decrees against us.** **(decrees)** refers to the Mosaic law (cf. Eph. 2:15). All peoples (Including Gentiles, cf. Rom. 2:14-15) owe God a debt because they have violated His law. The certificate was **hostile to us**, that is, it was enough to condemn us to judgment and hell, because "cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them" (Gal. 3:10).

**(canceled out)** means "to wipe off," like erasing a blackboard. Ancient documents were commonly written either on papyrus, a paper like material made from the bulrush plant, or vellum, which was made from an animal's hide. The ink used then had no acid in it and did not soak into the writing material. Since the ink remained on the surface, it could be wiped off if the scribe wanted to reuse the material.

---

14McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

15Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

Paul says here that God has wiped off our certificate of debt, **having nailed it to the cross**. Not a trace of it remains to be held against us. Our forgiveness is complete.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of forgiveness is a constant theme of Scripture. There are no less than seventy-five different word pictures about forgiveness in the Bible. They help us grasp the importance, the nature, and the effects of forgiveness<sup>17</sup>.

To Forgive Is To Turn The Key, Open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free.

- To Forgive Is To Write In Large Letters across a debt, "Nothing owed"
- To Forgive Is To Pound The Gavel In a courtroom and declare, "Not guilty!"
- To Forgive Is To Shoot An Arrow So high and so far that it can never be found again.
- To Forgive Is To Bundle Up All The garbage and trash and dispose of it, leaving the house clean and fresh.
- To Forgive Is To Loose The Moorings Of a ship and release it to the open sea.
- To Forgive Is To Grant A Full Pardon to a condemned criminal.
- To Forgive Is To Relax A Stranglehold On a wrestling opponent.
- To Forgive Is To Sandblast A Wall Of graffiti, leaving it looking like new.
- To Forgive Is To Smash A Clay Pot into a thousand pieces so it can never be pieced together again.

Miracles (37)	Matthew (21)	Mark (19)	Luke (22)	John (8)
1. Cleansing a Leper	8:2-3	1:40	5:12	
2. Healing a Centurion's Servant (of paralysis)	8:5		7:1	
3. Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law's Fever	8:14-15	1:30	4:38	
4. Healing the Sick at Evening	8:16	1:32	4:40	
5. Stilling the Storm	8:23-26; 14:32	4:35	8:22	
6. Demons Entering a Herd of Swine	8:28-32	5:1	8:26	
7. Healing a Paralytic	9:2-13	2:3-12	5:18	
8. Raising the Ruler's Daughter	9:18,23	5:22,35	8:40,49	
9. Healing the Hemorrhaging Woman	9:20-22	5:25	8:43	
10. Healing Two Blind Men	9:27-30			
11. Curing a Demon-Possessed, Mute Man	9:32-33			
12. Healing a Man's Withered Hand	12:9-13	3:1	6:6	
13. Curing a Demon-Possessed, Blind and Mute Man	12:22		11:14	
14. Feeding the Five Thousand	14:13-21	6:30	9:10	6:1
15. Walking on the Sea	14:25-29	6:48		6:19-21
16. Healing the Gentile Woman's Daughter	15:21-28	7:24		
17. Feeding the Four Thousand	15:32-38	8:1		

<sup>16</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

<sup>17</sup>John Nieder and Thomas Thompson, *Forgive and Love Again* [Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest House, 1991], p. 48.

18.	Healing the Epileptic Boy	17:14-18	9:17	9:38	
19.	Temple Tax in the Fish's Mouth	17:24-27			
20.	Healing Two Blind Man	20:30	10:46	18:35	
21.	Withering the Fig Tree	21:18-19	11:12		
22.	Casting Out an Unclean Spirit		1:23	4:33	
23.	Healing a Deaf-Mute		7:32-35		
24.	Healing a Blind Man at Bethsaida		8:22-25		
25.	Escape from the Hostile Multitude			4:30	
26.	Catch of Fish			5:1-6	
27.	Raising of a Widow's Son at Nain			7:11-15	
28.	Healing the Infirm, Bent Woman			13:11-13	
29.	Healing the Man with Dropsy			14:1-4	
30.	Cleansing the Ten Lepers			17:11-14	
31.	Restoring a Servant's Ear			22:50-51	
32.	Turning Water into Wine				2:1-10
33.	Healing the Nobleman's Son (of fever)				4:46-53
34.	Healing an Infirm Man at Bethesda				5:1-9
35.	Healing the Man Born Blind				9:1-7
36.	Raising of Lazarus				11:11-44
37.	Second Catch of Fish				21:1-6