

Searching the Scriptures / 17 / The Forgiveness Of Sin / Part 2

Today our topic concerns forgiveness of sins. Isa 59:2 reveals our true spiritual condition that has been caused by our sin: *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”* Psa 130:4 records an amazing concept: *“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”*

Dan 9:9 describes why this is so incredible: *“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.”* Unbelievable as it sounds, forgiveness first originated with God Himself although we have rebelled against him. One of the most interesting accounts of the New Testament is found in Luke 4, where Jesus enters the temple in Nazareth. He is handed the Book of Isaiah, and He turns to Isa 61 and reads verses 1 and 2, as we find quoted in Luke 4:18-19 *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance [forgiveness] to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

This beautiful summary illustrates the Lord Jesus’ mission to this sin-cursed planet. It also serves to highlight mankind’s spiritual bankruptcy:

- We are spiritually poor because we need a Savior
- We are spiritually broken-hearted by our sin
- We need to hear about God’s forgiveness (deliverance) since we are spiritually imprisoned by Satan
- We need to be given spiritual sight
- We need to be released as those who are spiritually afflicted.

Concerning the Lord Jesus, we read in Acts 10:43, *“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission [forgiveness] of sins.”*

The Bible teaches much about forgiveness and how it is intimately associated with blood atonement. But why blood atonement? In Lev 17:11 we find this principle, *“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.”* This explains why the Old Testament is replete with accounts of lambs, oxen, and turtledoves which were sacrificed on the altar in the temple – like in an animal *“slaughter house”* – on a daily basis.

We also read in the New Testament, in Heb 9:22, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness].”* But what kind of sacrifice is God looking for – an animal sacrifice of some kind? Not at all. We find the answer to this question in Mic 6:7, *“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?” We also read in Heb 9:4, *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”* So, if God is not concerned with the shedding of an animal’s blood, then what kind of blood is He looking for?

We know from Heb 10:12, *“But this man [the Lord Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”* Rev 1:5 declares, *“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.”* Remember earlier I mentioned that to shed one’s blood means to give up one’s life, since *“the life of the flesh is in the blood.”*

For this reason, we understand why the Lord Jesus Christ is *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* (Rev 13:8). John the Baptist recognized this when he first saw Christ and announced in John 1:29, *“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* Christ is indeed *“the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel”*, as Heb 12:24 tells us.

Speaking of those who have received the new covenant or gospel of grace, we read in Rev 7:14, *“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* Isa 63:1-3 poignantly depicts the fact that Christ was alone in enduring the wrath of God in order to successfully atone or pay for the sins of His people. This is typified by His pure white garments, which have now become blood stained with the blood of those he came to redeem: *“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.”*

2 Cor 5:21 puts it in another light, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

As we look to the Bible to learn about this wonderful forgiveness that God has provided, may we be compelled to examine our own hearts to see how we stand before God. Have we received His incomprehensible forgiveness? If we have, are we sharing the Gospel of Christ with others so they, too, may also come to know His marvelous forgiveness?