

The Nature of True Forgiveness – A Brief Scriptural Overview

I. Forgiveness as Hiding Sin

The Hebrew word *kāsāh* is used to denote forgiveness from this point of view. It basically means *to cover* or *to conceal*.

Psalm 32:1

II. Forgiveness as Taking Away the Burden of Sin

David uses the Hebrew word *nāsā'* to speak of forgiveness as *the removal of a burden*.

Psalm 32:1, 5

III. Forgiveness as Erasing the Record of Sin

The Hebrew word *māchāh* is used to denote forgiveness from this point of view.

Psalm 51:1, 9

IV. Forgiveness as Remission of the Debt of Sin

The Greek word *aphiēmi* is often used to denote forgiveness from this point of view.

Matthew 18:21-35 (See also 1 John 1:6-9)

V. Forgiveness as Setting One Free From the Guilt of Sin

The Greek word *apoliō* may be used to denote forgiveness from this point of view. The word may often refer to *setting someone free* in some sense or other, and it is this meaning that led to its having the connotation of *pardon* or of *forgiveness*.

Luke 6:37

VI. Forgiveness as Showing God's Grace Toward Sin

The Greek word *charizomai* may be used to denote forgiveness from this point of view. The word may often refer to *giving freely* or *giving graciously*. It may thus also mean “to show oneself gracious by forgiving wrongdoing” (BAGD #7893, BibleWorks).

Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:13-14; 3:12-13

VII. Forgiveness as a Commitment *Not* to Hold a Person's Sin Against Him

Forgiveness involves refusal to remember a person's sins, which means that those sins are longer held against him.

Isaiah 43:25

Jeremiah 31:33-34