

The Life of David: How Does God Remove Our Sin Psalm 32

The first observation a student studying God's Word would make in Psalm 32 is that: **David is so thankful for his sin being forgiven**, that he uses four different Hebrew words to describe the depths God had to go to accomplish his forgiveness in just the first two verses. Note those with me as we open to Psalm 32:

*Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is **forgiven**, Whose sin is **covered**. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord **does not impute** iniquity, And **in whose spirit there is no deceit**. NKJV*

That is one happy man to declare the amazing depth of his forgiveness in every way possible.

But that same careful student of the Word would make a second equally powerful observation that: **sin is such an offense to God** that He has to use 15 different words in the Hebrew Old Testament just to describe the horribly dreadful depths of sins deadly power. Here in David's song we find the four primary Old Testament words for sin introduced and explained. Which leads us to first consider the:

THE MANY FACES OF SIN

When David stole his neighbor Uriah's little ewe lamb for his already overflowing banqueting table he defied the rules God had laid down. David now sees his life as God saw him. God was displeased with David because of these four areas of his life.

**First, sin means:
Resisting or defying God's rule**

*Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose **transgression is forgiven**, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV*

The word in Psalm 32:1 is transgression, the Hebrew *peshah*, which means: 'going away', 'departure', "passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited", or 'rebellion' against God and His authority. This word pictures a person who intentionally rebels against the authority and boundaries God has set up for them.

So, Forgiveness means having Our SINS PULLED OFF.

Our transgressions as we saw last time are so heavy that they must be pulled off of us or we will smother beneath their weight. "Forgiven" means literally to have our sin lifted off. The Hebrew word is *nasah*, "borne away by a substitutionary sacrifice."

As Pilgrim's crushing load finally drops from his back at the cross and tumbles down into the empty tomb, so we rejoice that all of our sins are nailed to Christ's Cross, and we bear them no more. 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 so David sings: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven".

Next we see that the second facet of sin is described by God as:

Second, sin means: Falling short of perfection or missing God's mark

*Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose **sin is covered**. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV*

In Psalm 32:1 the word "sin" is the Hebrew *chattath*, and has the same meaning as *hamartia* in Greek: 'coming short' or 'falling short' as in an arrow falling short of the target, or hitting around but not in the bull's eye. 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. The *chataah*, must be *covered*, *kasah*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight.

In commenting on that phrase: "whose sin is covered" the great Baptist pastor Spurgeon said, "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!"

So secondly, Forgiveness means We are SHEILDED FROM WRATH:

"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 were the stone 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 soiled his life: now they were removed from sight by the cleansing blood.

Then David goes on to say a second reality is now his—all of his just punishment has been graciously removed from him and he no longer faces God's wrath.

Second, Forgiveness means We are SHEILDED FROM WRATH:

v. 1b "...whose sin is covered".

Look at that little word "covered" which is the Hebrew word *kawsaw*. This word shouts the strong imagery in the events of the Day of Atonement. For most of us we need to be reminded of all that God asked His people to do on that solemn day of remembering the dreadful power of sin. Open with me to Leviticus 16 and see the incredible detail of this special day. Here is a summary:

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 were 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.

Now back to Psalm 32:1-2. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him, and the load of sins were led away from him. Both of these pointed to:

CHRIST IS OUR SCAPEGOAT

One of the most gripping pictures of Christ's death for us is when Jesus in John 19:16 was "led away" to be crucified. For all who know the events of the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16, it was eerily similar.

Jesus was being treated, by Pilate and the Sandhedrin, in ways so close to how the scapegoat was treated by the High Priest in Leviticus 16.

On Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, the High Priest took an innocent goat, laid both of his hands on its head, confessed the sins of the nation over it so that when it was led away, the sins of the nation would be carried away by it.

A series of men then led the goat from one point to another, each man taking the goat bearing the sin, further away from the Temple and deeper into the wilderness. At the last stop the goat was sent away for good, often pushed over a cliff or left so far into the desert that it would not survive. The idea was that the sins would be borne away never to return.

At the day of the crucifixion when Jesus was brought to the Council of the Jews they declared that He was guilty. Then Jesus was sent to Pilate where He was given a Cross to bear that pictured our sins. The Scriptures tell us that God "made Him who knew no sin" to become our sin (II Cor. 5:21); and also say that God "laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). As Jesus walked to the place of execution, carrying our sin upon Himself, He was acting out the events of the Day of Atonement.

Placing our Hands on Christ

Salvation is when we go from saying that He died for sin to confessing that: He bore away MY sin, took MY place, paid the price of MY debt, and forever freed ME from the punishment I forever deserved.

When we see that Cross on Christ's back it represents my load of sin now laid upon Him.

But for those who wish to be assured of salvation, how can we guide them? Simply by this:

- Have you come to Christ and by faith, placed your hands on His head and confessed over Him all your sins?
- Have you told Him that you trust that He alone can bear them away?

If so then salvation is yours!

Christ's sacrifice once and for all (Hebrews 10:12 "by one sacrifice forever") bears ours sins, all of them, and the record and the penalty due for them: forever away!

Leviticus 16 describes the rituals of the Day of Atonement, when the sins of Israel were forgiven by being "carried away" This is how the process was carried out as prescribed by God.

At daybreak the High Priest was washed and robed in a very special outfit that was only worn on this one day in the whole year. First the linen undergarments white and to his feet, all woven in one piece for him. Then over that came the Robe of dark blue that was

fringed all around the bottom edge with tassels of blue, purple, and scarlet tied in the shapes of pomegranates and alternated with tiny golden bells.

The Ephod as described by God was worn over this robe and consisted of linen woven with scarlet, purple, and gold. The shoulders each had an onyx stone engraved with six of the tribes, and fastened one on each side. A breastplate was fastened on the front having twelve stones all precious and each engraved with the name of a tribe. The High Priest walked with the people represented on his shoulders carried, and over his heart cared for and loved.

Next the High Priest donned a tall Mitre or headpiece made of linen with a gold plate attached by a dark blue ribbon. The golden plate was inscribed with the words directly over his forehead: Holiness to the Lord—a constant reminder to him and to all of us that our minds are the habitation of God and must be kept clean as His dwelling place.

Once ready and dressed the solemn events unfolded. First there was a sacrificing of a bullock, seven lambs, and a ram as prescribed in Numbers 29:7. Once this was done on behalf of himself and the people the High Priest took off those special robes, bathed again, and this time wore only simple, pure white linen clothes.

Then the actual events of the scapegoat offering began with all their mysteries and profound truths. Two goats were brought, lots were cast and one was marked as the scapegoat to be later led away.

The other was sacrificed as a sin covering atonement for the transgressions of God's people. When that was finished and the Scapegoat was brought forward and the High Priest laid his hands on its head and confessed in a vivid ceremony witnessed by all the people. With words along these lines the sins of the High Priest and the Nation were intoned and figuratively loaded upon the Scapegoat:

"Ah, Lord God, I have committed iniquity: I have transgressed: I have sinned—I and my house. O Lord, I entreat thee, cover over (atone for) the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins, which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house, even as it is written in the law of Moses, thy servant, 'For in that day, he will cover over (atone) for you to make you clean. From all your transgressions before the Lord you shall be cleansed.'"¹

Then, carrying the load of the sins of the nation, the Scapegoat was led far from the city and into a "land not inhabited" called the wilderness was pushed off a cliff so that it fell to its death carrying with it all the sins, never able to return with them

Christ: the Final Sacrifice

What was amazing is that this ceremony was repeated year after year. And, as the

¹ From the comments on Hebrews 9 by Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letter to the Hebrews (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1976.

writer of Hebrews reminds us, those endless sacrifices only covered sins, they never removed them. That is why Jesus was the Great High Priest who perfectly took both goats places: He was slain, shedding His blood to pay the debt of the punishment due for our sins; and He was also the Scapegoat who bore away our sins as far as "the east is from the west" (Psalm 103) so far He took them away.

Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed us white as snow.

So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us! This truth was captured beautifully by Wesley's hymn in our books as # 199. Turn there with me to share in the wonder of sins forgiven.

Arise, My Soul, Arise (Charles Wesley, 1742) #199

Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears;
The bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands,
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede;
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead;
His blood atoned for every race,
His blood atoned for every race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears;
received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers;
they strongly plead for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away the presence of His Son;
The Spirit answers to the blood,
The Spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear
With confidence I now draw nigh,

With confidence I now draw nigh,
And "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

So tonight, we with David celebrate our:

Sins Pulled Off and Shielded from God's Wrath

The message is so powerful to all of us who like David have had our sins "pulled off" by Christ's shedding His blood for us, and that we are now shielded from God's wrath because Jesus has carried our load of sins like a Scapegoat, forever away from us.

An incredible worship song that captures what the Lord does when He removed our sins was written during the Civil War years here in America by Charitie Bancroft. This great hymn has been set to new music and has seen a revival in recent days.

Tonight, allow these words to sink deeply into your heart. If Satan tempts you, accuses you, or tries to discourage you about being too bad for God to forgive again, start into this song and see how long the attack can go on.

Preach the Gospel to yourself and watch the gloom of doubt and despair fade away.

Please stand and offer with me this song to our great God.

BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD ABOVE (Words: Charitie Bancroft, 1863)

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea.
A great high Priest whose Name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart.
I know that while in Heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart. (2x)

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me. (2x)

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace,

One in Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ my Savior and my God! (2x)