

~FORGIVENESS (681)

[Hebrew, *sa-lach'*, Greek, *a-phi'e-mi*]

• The act of pardoning an offender, ceasing to feel resentment toward him because of his offense and giving up all claim to recompense. The Hebrew verb *sa-lach'*, forgive is used only with regard to God's pardoning a sinner. The Greek term *a-phi'e-mi*, literally means let go off.

See Also PARDON

- According to God's Law given to the nation of Israel, in order for a person who had sinned against God or against his fellowman to have his sins forgiven, he first had to rectify the wrong as the Law prescribed and then, in most cases, present a blood offering to Yehowah.
- And it must occur that in case he becomes guilty as respects one of these things, then he must confess in what way he has sinned. (**Leviticus 5:5**)
- And the priest must make an atonement for him before Yehowah, and so it must be forgiven him regarding any of all the things that he might do resulting in guiltiness by it. (**Leviticus 6:7**)
- Hence, the principle stated by Paul;
- Yes, nearly all things are cleansed with blood according to the Law, and unless blood is poured out no **forgiveness** takes place. (**Hebrews 9:22**)
- Actually, though, the blood of animal sacrifices could not take away sins and give the individual a perfectly clean conscience.
- For since the Law has a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things, men can never with the same sacrifices from year to year which they offer continually make those who approach perfect. (**Hebrews 10:1**)
- Otherwise, would the sacrifices not have stopped being offered, because those rendering sacred service who had been cleansed once for all time would have no consciousness of sins anymore?

(Hebrews 10:2)

- To the contrary, by these sacrifices there is a reminding of sins from year to year. **(Hebrews 10:3)**
- For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take sins away. **(Hebrews 10:4)**
- This very tent is an illustration for the appointed time that is now here, and in keeping with it both gifts and sacrifices are offered. However, these are not able to make the man doing sacred service perfect as respects his conscience. **(Hebrews 9:9)**
- For if the blood of goats and of bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled sanctifies to the extent of cleanness of the flesh. **(Hebrews 9:13)**
- How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God? **(Hebrews 9:14)**
- **By contrast, the foretold New Covenant made possible true forgiveness, based on Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice.**
- For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days, is the utterance of Yehowah. I will put my Law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. **(Jeremiah 31:33)**
- And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying; Know Yehowah! For they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them, is the utterance of Yehowah. For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more. **(Jeremiah 31:34)**
- For this means my blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out in behalf of many for **forgiveness** of sins. **(Matthew 26:28)**
- He did likewise respecting the cup also, after he had the evening meal, saying; This cup means the New Covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance

of me. (1 Corinthians 11:25)

- By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. (Ephesians 1:7)
- Even while on earth, Jesus, by healing a paralytic, demonstrated that he had authority to forgive sins.
- And, look! They were bringing him a paralyzed man lying on a bed. On seeing their faith Jesus said to the paralytic; Take courage, child, your sins are forgiven. (Matthew 9:2)
- And, look! Certain of the scribes said to themselves; This fellow is blaspheming. (Matthew 9:3)
- And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said; Why are you thinking wicked things in your hearts? (Matthew 9:4)
- For instance, which is easier, to say; Your sins are forgiven, or to say; Get up and walk? (Matthew 9:5)
- However, in order for you to know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Then he said to the paralytic: Get up, pick up your bed, and go to your home. (Matthew 9:6)
- And he got up and went off to his home. (Matthew 9:7)
- Yehowah forgives in a large way, as is indicated by Jesus illustrations of the prodigal son and of the king who forgave a slave a debt of 10,000 talents (60,000,000 denarii, or c. \$40,000,000), whereas that slave was unwilling to forgive a fellow slave a debt of a hundred denarii, approximately \$70.
- Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts, and let him return to Yehowah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way. (Isaiah 55:7)
- Then he said; A certain man had two sons. (Luke 15:11)
- And the younger of them said to his father; Father, give me the part of the property that falls to my share. Then he divided his

means of living to them. (Luke 15:12)

- Later, after not many days, the younger son gathered all things together and traveled abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property by living a debauched life. (Luke 15:13)
- When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he started to be in need. (Luke 15:14)
- He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to herd swine. (Luke 15:15)
- And he used to desire to be filled with the carob pods which the swine were eating, and no one would give him anything. (Luke 15:16)
- When he came to his senses, he said; How many hired men of my father are abounding with bread, while I am perishing here from famine! (Luke 15:17)
- I will rise and journey to my father and say to him; Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. (Luke 15:18)
- I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men. (Luke 15:19)
- So he rose and went to his father. While he was yet a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and fell upon his neck and tenderly kissed him. (Luke 15:20)
- Then the son said to him; Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men. (Luke 15:21)
- But the father said to his slaves; Quick! Bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. (Luke 15:22)
- And bring the fattened young bull, slaughter it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves. (Luke 15:23)

- **Because this my son was dead and came to life again. He was lost and was found. And they started to enjoy themselves. (Luke 15:24)**
- **Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and got near the house he heard a music concert and dancing. (Luke 15:25)**
- **So he called one of the servants to him and inquired what these things meant. (Luke 15:26)**
- **He said to him; Your brother has come, and your father slaughtered the fattened young bull, because he got him back in good health. (Luke 15:27)**
- **But he became wrathful and was unwilling to go in. Then his father came out and began to entreat him. (Luke 15:28)**
- **In reply he said to his father; Here it is so many years I have slaved for you and never once did I transgress your commandment, and yet to me you never once gave a kid for me to enjoy myself with my friends. (Luke 15:29)**
- **But as soon as this your son who ate up your means of living with harlots arrived, you slaughtered the fattened young bull for him. (Luke 15:30)**
- **Then he said to him; Child, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours. (Luke 15:31)**
- **But we just had to enjoy ourselves and rejoice, because this your brother was dead and came to life, and he was lost and was found. (Luke 15:32)**
- **That is why the kingdom of the heavens has become like a man, a king, that wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. (Matthew 18:23)**
- **When he started to settle them, there was brought in a man who owed him ten thousand talents equaling sixty-million, denarii. (Matthew 18:24)**
- **But because he did not have the means to pay it back, his master ordered him and his wife and his children and all the things he had to be sold and payment to be made. (Matthew 18:25)**

- Therefore the slave fell down and began to do obeisance to him, saying; Be patient with me and I will pay back everything to you. (**Matthew 18:26**)
- Moved to pity at this, the master of that slave let him off and canceled his debt. (**Matthew 18:27**)
- But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves that was owing him a hundred denarii, and, grabbing him, he began to choke him, saying; Pay back whatever you owe. (**Matthew 18:28**)
- Therefore his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying; Be patient with me and I will pay you back. (**Matthew 18:29**)
- However, he was not willing, but went off and had him thrown into prison until he should pay back what was owing. (**Matthew 18:30**)
- When, therefore, his fellow slaves saw the things that had happened, they became very much grieved, and they went and made clear to their master all the things that had happened. (**Matthew 18:31**)
- Then his master summoned him and said to him; Wicked slave, I canceled all that debt for you, when you entreated me. (**Matthew 18:32**)
- Ought you not, in turn, to have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I also had mercy on you? (**Matthew 18:33**)
- With that his master, provoked to wrath, delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay back all that was owing. (**Matthew 18:34**)
- In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts. (**Matthew 18:35**)
- Nevertheless, Yehowah's **forgiveness** is not prompted by sentimentality, for he does not leave notorious acts unpunished.

- O Yehowah our God, you yourself answered them. A God granting pardon you proved to be to them, and executing vengeance against their notorious deeds. (**Psalms 99:8**)
- Joshua warned Israel that Yehowah would not forgive apostasy on their part.
- Then Joshua said to the people; You are not able to serve Yehowah, for he is a holy God, he is a God exacting exclusive devotion. He will not pardon your revolting and your sins. (**Joshua 24:19**)
- In case you should leave Yehowah and you do serve foreign gods, he also will certainly turn back and do you injury and exterminate you after he has done you good. (**Joshua 24:20**)
- For you have forsaken your people, the house of Jacob. For they have become full of what is from the East, and they are practicers of magic like the Philistines, and with the children of foreigners they abound. (**Isaiah 2:6**)
- And their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no limit to their treasures. And their land is filled with horses, and there is no limit to their chariots. (**Isaiah 2:7**)
- And their land is filled with valueless gods. To the work of one's hands they bow down, to that which ones fingers have made. (**Isaiah 2:8**)
- And earthling man bows down, and man becomes low, and you cannot possibly pardon them. (**Isaiah 2:9**)
- God has a required way for seeking and receiving his **forgiveness**. A person must acknowledge his sin, recognize that it is an offense against God, confess it unqualifiedly, have a deep heartfelt sorrow for the wrong done, and have a determination to turn from such a course or practice.
- My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said; I shall make confession over my transgressions to Yehowah. And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins. (**Psalms 32:5**)
- Against you, you alone, I have sinned, and what is bad in your

eyes I have done, in order, that you may prove to be righteous when you speak, that you may be in the clear when you judge. **(Psalms 51:4)**

- **If we make the statement; We have no sin, we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)**
- **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)**
- **Hence even if I saddened you by my letter, I do not regret it. Even if I did at first regret it, I see that that letter saddened you, though but for a little while. (2 Corinthians 7:8)**
- **Now I rejoice, not because you were just saddened, but because you were saddened into repenting, for you were saddened in a godly way, that you might suffer no damage in anything due to us. (2 Corinthians 7:9)**
- **For sadness in a godly way makes for repentance to salvation that is not to be regretted, but the sadness of the world produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)**
- **For, look! This very thing, your being saddened in a godly way, what a great earnestness it produced in you, yes, clearing of yourselves, yes, indignation, yes, fear, yes, longing, yes, zeal, yes, righting of the wrong! In every respect you demonstrated yourselves to be chaste in this matter. (2 Corinthians 7:11)**
- **He must do what he can to right the wrong or damage done.**
- **If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you. (Matthew 5:23)**
- **Leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift. (Matthew 5:24)**
- **Then he must pray to God, asking for **forgiveness** on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice.**
- **By means of him we have the release by ransom through the**

blood of that one, yes, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. (**Ephesians 1:7**)

See Also REPENTANCE

- Moreover, **forgiving** others for personal offenses, regardless of the number of times involved, is a Christian requirement.
- Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother commits a sin give him a rebuke, and if he repents **forgive** him. (**Luke 17:3**)
- Even if he sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying; I repent, you must forgive him. (**Luke 17:4**)
- But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you. (**Ephesians 4:32**)
- Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Yehowah freely forgave you, so do you also. (**Colossians 3:13**)
- God's **forgiveness** is not extended toward those who refuse to forgive others.
- For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (**Matthew 6:14**)
- Whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (**Matthew 6:15**)
- However, even when serious wrongdoing leads to expulsion of the wicked man from the Christian congregation, that person may in due time be accorded **forgiveness** if he proves that he is truly repentant. At that time all in the congregation can confirm their love for him.
- While God judges those outside? Remove the wicked man from among yourselves. (**1 Corinthians 5:13**)
- This rebuke given by the majority is sufficient for such a man. (**2 Corinthians 2:6**)

- **So that, on the contrary now, you should kindly forgive and comfort him, that somehow such a man may not be swallowed up by his being overly sad. (2 Corinthians 2:7)**
- **Therefore I exhort you to confirm your love for him. (2 Corinthians 2:8)**
- **For to this end also I write to ascertain the proof of you, whether you are obedient in all things. (2 Corinthians 2:9)**
- **Anything you kindly forgive anyone, I do too. In fact, as for me, whatever I have kindly forgiven, if I have kindly forgiven anything, it has been for your sakes in Christ's sight. (2 Corinthians 2:10)**
- **That we may not be overreached by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs. (2 Corinthians 2:11)**
- **However, Christians are not required to forgive those who practice malicious, willful sin with no repentance. Such become God's enemies.**
- **For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left. (Hebrews 10:26)**
- **But there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition. (Hebrews 10:27)**
- **Any man that has disregarded the Law of Moses dies without compassion, upon the testimony of two or three. (Hebrews 10:28)**
- **Of how much more severe a punishment, do you think, will the man be counted worthy who has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt? (Hebrews 10:29)**
- **For we know him that said; Vengeance is mine. I will recompense. And again; Yehowah will judge his people. (Hebrews 10:30)**

- **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:31)**
- **Do I not hate those who are intensely hating you, O Yehowah, and do I not feel a loathing for those revolting against you? (Psalms 139:21)**
- **With a complete hatred I do hate them. They have become to me real enemies. (Psalms 139:22)**
- **It is proper to pray for God's **forgiveness** in behalf of others, even for an entire congregation. Moses did so respecting the nation of Israel, confessing their national sin and asking forgiveness, and he was favorably heard by Yehowah.**
- **Forgive, please, the error of this people according to the greatness of your loving-kindness, and just as you have pardoned this people from Egypt onward until now. (Numbers 14:19)**
- **Then Yehowah said; I do forgive according to your word. (Numbers 14:20)**
- **Also, Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, prayed that Yehowah might forgive his people when they sinned and then turned back from their wrong course.**
- **And you must listen to the request for favor on the part of your servant and of your people Israel with which they pray toward this place, and may you yourself hear at the place of your dwelling, in the heavens, and you must hear and forgive. (1 Kings 8:30)**
- **When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy, because they kept sinning against you, and they indeed return to you and laud your name and pray and make request for favor toward you in this house. (1 Kings 8:33)**
- **Then may you yourself hear from heaven, and you must forgive the sin of your people Israel and you must bring them back to the ground that you gave to their forefathers. (1 Kings 8:34)**
- **When heaven is shut up so that no rain occurs, because they kept**

sinning against you, and they actually pray toward this place and laud your name, and from their sin they turn back, because you kept afflicting them. (1 Kings 8:35)

- Then may you yourself hear from the heavens, and you must forgive the sin of your servants, even of your people Israel, because you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and you must give rain upon your land that you have given to your people as a hereditary possession. (1 Kings 8:36)
- In case a famine occurs in the land, in case a pestilence occurs, in case scorching, mildew, locusts, cockroaches occur, in case their enemy besieges them in the land of their gates, any sort of plague, any sort of malady. (1 Kings 8:37)
- Whatever prayer, whatever request for favor there may occur on the part of any man or of all your people Israel, because they know each one the plague of his own heart, and they actually spread out their palms to this house. (1 Kings 8:38)
- Then may you yourself hear from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, and you must forgive and act and give to each one according to all his ways, because you know his heart, for you yourself alone well know the heart of all the sons of mankind. (1 Kings 8:39)
- To the end that they may fear you all the days that they are alive upon the surface of the ground that you gave to our forefathers. (1 Kings 8:40)
- In case they sin against you, for there is no man that does not sin, and you have to be incensed at them and abandon them to the enemy, and their captors actually carry them off captive to the land of the enemy distant or nearby. (1 Kings 8:46)
- And they indeed come to their senses in the land where they have been carried off captive, and they actually return and make request to you for favor in the land of their captors, saying; We have sinned and erred, we have acted wickedly. (1 Kings 8:47)
- And they indeed return to you with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who carried them off captive, and they indeed pray to you in the direction of their land that you gave to their forefathers, the city that you have chosen

- and the house that I have built to your name. (**1 Kings 8:48**)
- You must also hear from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, their prayer and their request for favor, and you must execute judgment for them. (**1 Kings 8:49**)
 - And you must forgive your people who had sinned against you and all their transgressions with which they transgressed against you, and you must make them objects of pity before their captors and they must pity them (**1 Kings 8:50**)
 - For they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out from Egypt, from inside the iron furnace. (**1 Kings 8:51**)
 - That your eyes may prove to be opened to the request for favor of your servant and to the request for favor of your people Israel, by listening to them in all for which they call to you. (**1 Kings 8:52**)
 - Ezra acted representatively in confessing publicly the sins of the repatriated Jews. His heartfelt prayer and exhortation had the result that the people took action in order to receive Yehowah's **forgiveness**.
 - And after all that has come upon us for our bad deeds and our great guiltiness, for you yourself, O our God, have underestimated our error, and you have given us those who have escaped such as these. (**Ezra 9:13**)
 - Get up, for the matter devolves upon you, and we are with you. Be strong and act. (**Ezra 10:4**)
 - These all had accepted foreign wives, and they proceeded to send away wives along with sons. (**Ezra 10:44**)
 - At length Ezra the priest rose and said to them; You yourselves have acted unfaithfully in that you gave a dwelling to foreign wives so as to add to the guiltiness of Israel. (**Ezra 10:10**)
 - And now make confession to Yehowah the God of your forefathers and do his pleasure and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives. (**Ezra 10:11**)
 - To this all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice;

Exactly according to your word it devolves upon us to do. (Ezra 10:12)

- **However, the people are many, and it is the season of showers of rain, and it is not possible to stand outside, and the business will not take one day or two, for we have rebelled to a great extent in this matter. (Ezra 10:13)**
- **So, please, let our princes act representatively for all the congregation, and, as for all in our cities who have given a dwelling to foreign wives, let them come at the times appointed and along with them the older men of each individual city and its judges, until we have turned back the burning anger of our God from us, on account of this matter. (Ezra 10:14)**
- **However, Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah themselves stood up against this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levites were the ones that helped them. (Ezra 10:15)**
- **And the former exiles proceeded to do that way, and Ezra the priest and the men that were the heads of the fathers for their paternal house, even all of them by their names, now separated themselves and began sitting on the first day of the tenth month to inquire into the matter. (Ezra 10:16)**
- **And gradually they finished with all the men that had given a dwelling to foreign wives by the first day of the first month. (Ezra 10:17)**
- **And some of the sons of the priests came to be found that had given a dwelling to foreign wives, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jehozadak and his brothers, Maaseiah and Eliezer and Jarib and Gedaliah. (Ezra 10:18)**
- **But they promised by shaking hands to put their wives away, and that, they being guilty, there should be a ram of the flock for their guiltiness. (Ezra 10:19)**
- **James encouraged the spiritually sick one to call for the older men of the congregation to pray over him, and if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him.**
- **Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the older men of**

- the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Yehowah. (**James 5:14**)
- And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Yehowah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him. (**James 5:15**)
 - Therefore openly confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may get healed. A righteous man's supplication, when it is at work, has much force. (**James 5:16**)
 - However, there is a sin that does incur death, sin against the Holy Spirit, a deliberate practice of sin for which there is no **forgiveness**. A Christian should not pray for those sinning in this way.
 - If anyone catches sight of his brother sinning a sin that does not incur death, he will ask, and he will give life to him, yes, to those not sinning so as to incur death. There is a sin that does incur death. It is concerning that sin that I do not tell him to make request. (**1 John 5:16**)
 - On this account I say to you, every sort of sin and blasphemy will be **forgiven** men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be **forgiven**. (**Matthew 12:31**)
 - For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left. (**Hebrews 10:26**)
 - But there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition. (**Hebrews 10:27**)

See Also SIN, I
See Also SPIRIT