

IF YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

By Mark Roberts

The purpose of this little tract is to present what the Bible says on the subject of forgiveness. You will not find quotes from men's creed books or the opinions of well-schooled theologians and scholars here. Instead what God has to say about this matter will be clearly presented by His word, and by His word only. If you will take your own Bible and follow along as you read this material you will be able to easily understand what the Bible teaches. Isn't that what really matters -- what the Bible says?

Nothing could be more important than obtaining the forgiveness of sins. All men have sinned (Romans 3:23), therefore this is a universal need. The reason forgiveness is so important is that it separates man from God: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Simply put, sin separates man from God, both here and in eternity. Forgiveness is all about being reconciled to God, or standing in a right relationship with Him again.

The Bible offers two ways of being forgiven of sins, one plan for those who are not God's children and one plan for those who are His children. Let's study each.

If a person is not a child of God's then he needs to believe the Gospel message of good news (Mark 1:15). Upon hearing that Jesus has died for his sins, and has arisen never to die again (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) one needs to determine to change his life. The Bible calls this repentance, and it means a turning away from sin. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner..." (2 Corinthians 7:9) Godly sorrow, which is sorrow about living a sinful, disobedient life, causes one to determine not to live in that kind of way any more. Repentance is essential to becoming a child of God (see Acts 2:38).

When a person has faith in Jesus as the son of God he will want to confess that faith publicly. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:36- 37). This public statement of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is known as confession and it is also essential to salvation (Romans 10:10).

Finally, a person must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Paul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The purpose of baptism is to "wash away sins" -- in other words, it is so your sins can be forgiven. Acts 2:38 tells us, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Baptism, though oft overlooked in today's religious world, is essential to salvation (1 Peter 3:21).

Those who have done these things are known as "children of God" (Romans 8:16-17) and are part of the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27).

But what do God's people do when they sin (and they will). Is it necessary to be baptized again and again? No, the Bible tells us that God's children may repent of that sin, confess that sin and prayerfully ask forgiveness. Upon so doing, God will forgive that sin: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Acts 8:18-24 provides an example of this in action. Remember, praying for forgiveness is a privilege reserved only for those who have obeyed the Gospel and become His children (1 Peter 3:12; John 9:31).

You have used your own Bible to learn what to do to have your sins forgiven. Can we help you be right with God?

--Mark Roberts

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