

# Chapter Eight

# Three Phases of Forgiveness

## Introduction

The three phases of salvation which we studied in chapter 4 are paralleled by three phases of forgiveness. These three phases are:

- (i) Universal Corporate Forgiveness – at the cross the whole human race was legally forgiven. This allowed probationary life for all individual persons. As we shall learn, this pardon is called CHARIZOMAI in the Greek. This forgiveness was pre-probationary.
- (ii) Individual Forgiveness in justification by faith where sin is removed from the heart of the individual who exercises genuine faith in Christ. As we shall also learn, this individual forgiveness is called APHIEMI in the Greek. This forgiveness occurs during a person's probation. It is intra-probationary.
- (iii) THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS RECORDED IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY – this occurs for each individual after the close of individual probation and therefore will be completed for all believers before the general closure of probation. Since this forgiveness occurs after the close of the individual's probation, it is therefore post-probationary for the individual.

Notice too that the second phase of forgiveness is the result of and depends on the first phase. And the third phase of forgiveness is the result of and depends on a completed second phase. In other words, the first phase is the gospel; the second phase is the fruit of the gospel; the third phase is the assurance of the hope of the gospel.

Having summarized for clarity and easy assimilation, let us now present our scriptural proof.

## Bible Proof for the First Phase of Forgiveness

Our key passage is 2 Corinthians 5: 18- 20.

*And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. {2 Corinthians 5: 18- 20} KJV*

This wonderful passage, in its first half, teaches us the first phase of forgiveness. Pay careful attention to these key points:-

- (i) God has (past tense) reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ (verse 18)

- (ii) God was (past tense) in Christ reconciling the world to Himself not imputing their trespasses to them (verse 19)

Although the entire human race has sinned, God did not impute those sins to us instead HE imputed them to CHRIST. This is the Gospel! This is corporate universal legal pardon to Adam's race. The first condemnation is cancelled, our sins are not counted against us but against Christ our Substitute, Surety and Representative; our Second Adam, our Saviour, our Lord! And He exhausted the penalty that those sins incurred!

This is in complete agreement with Romans 3: 23- 24:-

*"For all alike have sinned, and are deprived of the divine splendor, and all are justified by God's free grace alone, through His act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus" {Romans 3: 23- 24} NEB .*

And with Romans 5: 18:-

*"It follows, then, that as the issue of one misdeed was condemnation for all men, so the issue of one just act is acquittal and life for all men" {Romans 5: 18} NEB.*

And with Romans 5: 10- 11

*"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life!" {Romans 5: 10- 11} NEB.*

Remember, the first phase forgiveness, universal legal pardon, does not justify the individual by faith. But without this first phase forgiveness no individual would have had any probationary existence and therefore no individual could have been justified by faith.

The incredibly Good News is that before we were born, before we could choose, before we could believe, before we could repent, God graciously granted a legal pardon to all mankind. On what grounds? What were the conditions required? Jesus our Second Adam, was born for us, chose for us, believed for us, repented for us, obeyed for us, was baptized for us, died for us! He fulfilled all the required conditions! Therefore the universal corporate legal pardon is unconditional for us because Christ fulfilled all the conditions for us! Hallelujah!

*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. {Romans 5: 10- 11} KJV*

*The atonement of Christ sealed forever the everlasting covenant of grace. It was the fulfilling of every condition upon which God*

*suspended the free communication of grace to the human family. Every barrier was then broken down which intercepted the freest fullness of the exercise of grace, mercy, peace and love to the most guilty of Adam's race. {7A SDA B.C page 465 para 3}*

*The world does not acknowledge that, at an infinite cost, Christ has purchased the human race. They do not acknowledge that by creation and by redemption He holds a just claim to every human being. But as the redeemer of the fallen race, He has been given the deed of possession, which entitles Him to claim them as His property. {7A SDA B.C page 466}*

*He planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. "It is enough," He said. "The atonement is complete." {R.H. September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1901 paragraph 11}*

*For every human being, Christ has paid the election price. No one need be lost. ALL HAVE BEEN REDEEMED. {7 SDA B.C page 944}*

*Adam listened to the words of the tempter, and yielding to his insinuations, fell into sin. Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case?--Because a ransom was found. God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint. {R.H. April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1901}*

### **Bible Proof for the Second Phase of Forgiveness**

Let us go back now to our key text.

*And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. {2 Corinthians 5: 18- 20} KJV*

We have already studied the first half of this passage which deals with the universal legal pardon freely granted to all mankind by Christ's death. The second half of the passage deals with the individual response to what God has already done. When we accept God's corporate legal pardon and give ourselves to Him there occurs a change of heart, we are justified by faith and have peace with God and have experiential access by faith into the grace already given.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: {Romans 5: 1} KJV*

In this second phase of forgiveness, the love of Christ in the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ. As we appreciate the infinite price He paid for our redemption and the legal pardon already given, His love in the Holy Spirit gives us repentance and motivates and enables us to confess and repent and receive that forgiveness which takes away sin from our hearts and imparts

the righteousness of Christ. This is justification by faith and it requires our free choice to surrender self to Christ and to accept the already given gift! 1 John 1: 9 refers to this second phase of forgiveness and should not be used to nullify the first phase of universal corporate legal pardon granted to all mankind.

This second phase forgiveness, justification by faith, produces sanctification and holiness of life which is the fruit of the gospel. Our holiness of life has no redemptive merit before God; the only merit God accepts is the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ. But our holiness of life gives God glory, vindicates His government and proves Satan wrong in the great controversy. Christ's righteousness imputed to us is the only merit we can carry to God! Yet holiness of life will be rewarded because it demonstrates faith and love.

We can now requote our last passage from 7 SDA B.C 944 in full and see both the first and second phases of forgiveness.

*For every human being, Christ has paid the election price. No one need be lost. All have been redeemed. To those who receive Christ as a personal Saviour will be given power to become the sons and daughters of God. An eternal life insurance policy has been provided for all. {7 SDA B.C page 944}*

### **Discerning Corporate Realities in the Word**

Most, if not all evangelical Christians including Seventh Day Adventists would have been theologically nurtured in the Arminian school of thought. Arminianism stresses the second phase of forgiveness and uses 1 John 1: 9 as its key text, but does not recognize the first phase of forgiveness. Therefore when we read certain passages of scripture we apply them only to individual justification by faith. It is therefore surprising to many when they study the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness and see the 1888 Reformers applying certain scriptures to what Christ has done for all mankind and not merely for believers only. One such passage is Ephesians 1: 3- 6.

Notice verse 3:

*Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: {Ephesians 1: 3} KJV*

According to Arminians, this passage refers only to believers. But listen to A.T. Jones in the 1893 G.C. Bulletin:

*Now He has done all that and has done it freely. For how many people did He do this? [Congregation: "All."] Every soul? [Congregation: "Yes, sir."] Gave all the blessings He has to every soul in this world; He chose every soul in the world; He chose Him in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinated him unto the adoption of children and made him accepted in the Beloved, did He not? [Congregation: "Yes."] Of course He did.*

Another such passage is Colossians 2: 11- 14.

*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye*

*are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; {Colossians 2: 11- 14} KJV*

It is important to highlight the representative, corporate achievements of Christ for all mankind in this passage:-

- (i) All humanity was circumcised when Christ was “cut off” (Daniel 9: 26). In dying the second death for mankind, all mankind died that death in Christ (2 Corinthians 5: 14).
- (ii) When Christ was baptized for us we were all baptized in Him and when He died for all, all died in Him.
- (iii) When Christ rose from the dead all humanity rose in Him, we were “quickened together with Him”.
- (iv) The first condemnation caused by Adam’s sin together with our collective corporate burden of sin, guilt and shame were forgiven. That first condemnation and all its resultant sins were nailed to the cross, blotted out! And notice that this corporate forgiveness occurred before the quickening or resurrection.

When Jesus was resurrected all trespasses were already forgiven because they were forgiven when He died for us and we died in Him.

*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {Colossians 2: 13} KJV*

### **CHARIZOMAI: The Greek for Forgiveness in Colossians 2: 13**

In this text, the Greek word for forgiveness is CHARIZOMAI. This word is derived from the root word CHARIS which means grace. The Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament tells us that: “CHARIZOMAI, as a verb means to bestow a favour unconditionally, it is used of the act of forgiveness, whether divine or human.”

At the Cross, God gave CHARIZOMAI freely to all mankind. It was unconditional to mankind because Christ fulfilled all the necessary conditions!

### **APHIEMI: The Greek for Forgiveness in 1 John 1:9**

*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} KJV*

The Greek word translated as “forgive” in 1 John 1:9 is APHIEMI, this word does not mean unconditional pardon, it means literally to “send away from”, it is derived from two root words:- apo and hiemi. Apo means “from” and hiemi means

“send away”. (APHIEMI is the word for “send away” or “put away” in Matthew 13: 36 and 1 Corinthians 7: 11 respectively).

Therefore we now understand that in 1 John 1: 9, the word translated “forgive”, aphiemi, really means to “put away” or “send away” or “separate our sins from us”.

We see then that Colossians 2: 13 is speaking of pardon while 1 John 1: 9 is speaking of heart cleansing.

All sins were pardoned unconditionally at the cross. This is charizomai.

Only those who believe this good news, and accept the already given gift and confess and repent, experience the removal of sin from their heart. This is aphiemi.

The sins removed by aphiemi (1John1:9) are transferred to the Heavenly Sanctuary and remain there until the individual’s mind is fixed one way or the other. Those who lose faith and choose their sins rather than choosing Christ, their sins will return to them and will indicate that they have rejected Christ and brought the second condemnation on themselves.

Those who abide faithful to the end indicate that they are fixed in their acceptance of Christ and their rejection of Satan’s government. Their sins will be blotted out of the Sanctuary and put on the Scapegoat. Why? Because those sins represent unbelief in and rejection of Christ, and Satan was the instigator of unbelief in, and rejection of Christ. And he must bare that guilt because he rejected the Son of God irreversibly at the beginning of the great controversy.

Both charizomai and aphiemi are essential for individual salvation. Neither one is to be neglected or ignored. Both go together. And there could be no aphiemi if there was no charizomai.

### **Biblical Proof for the Third Phase of Forgiveness**

Those who believe and accept God’s CHARIZOMAI, (unconditional pardon), will, through repentance and confession experience APHIEMI, (heart cleansing in justification by faith). This produces spiritual growth in sanctification and holiness. Those who abide in Christ by faith to end of their probation will have their names retained in the Book of Life and the record of their sins blotted out of the Heavenly Sanctuary as explained above. (John 15: 1- 10, Matthew 24: 13, Acts 3: 19, Revelation 3: 5).

### **Closing Gem**

*Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, gave himself for a fallen world, and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. No greater gift can be bestowed upon man than that which is comprehended in Christ. And yet men wait, refusing to give to God the allegiance of the heart. But let the impenitent look to the plan of redemption, and ask themselves, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” It is perilous to neglect to render to God the full consecration of all our powers, for he has given them to man in trust. Will you not ask yourself, “How is it with my soul?” The*

great gift of salvation has been placed within our reach at an infinite cost to the Father and the Son. To neglect salvation, is to neglect the knowledge of the Father and of the Son whom God hath sent in order that man might become a partaker of the divine nature, and thus, with Christ, an heir of all things. A neglect to lay hold of the priceless treasure of salvation, means the eternal ruin of your soul. The peril of indifference to God and neglect of his gift, is measured by the greatness of salvation. God has done to the uttermost of his almighty power. The resources of infinite love have been exhausted in devising and executing the plan of redemption for man. God has revealed his character in the goodness, the mercy, compassion, and love manifested to save a race of guilty rebels. What could be done that has not been done in the provisions of the plan of salvation? If the sinner remains indifferent to the manifestation of the goodness of God, if he neglects so great a salvation, rejects the overtures of divine mercy, refuses the gift of life purchased by the precious blood of Christ, what could be done to touch his hard heart? If the wonderful achievement wrought out by our Creator and Redeemer, into which he threw all his power and love, does not move the proud human heart, when man sees that his soul was thought of such value that the Son of the infinite God, the Majesty of heaven, was willing to lay down his life in order that we might be saved, then there is nothing that will move him. Christ left the royal courts, and accepted a life of shame, reproach, and suffering, and did not shrink even from the death of the cross, in order that he might unite humanity with divinity. Are you so infatuated with the love of self, with the suggestions of Satan, that these considerations do not move you to a life of humility, and of submission to God? Will not the love and compassion of him who gave in one gift all that heaven afforded, awaken a response in your heart? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

Those who do neglect the great gift of salvation, will have no second probation provided for them, but will be left without hope. The Son of the infinite God was the author of our salvation. He covenanted from the first to be man's substitute, and he became man that he might take upon himself the wrath which sin had provoked. The plan of redemption called forth the amazement of the heavenly hosts. The angels looked with wonder to see the mystery wrought out before them in the life of the Son of God. They saw the Redeemer take step after step down the path of humiliation. They saw him rejected, denied, insulted, abused, and crucified, and yet it was something beyond all finite intelligence to comprehend the full mystery of redemption.

The only way in which salvation could be provided for man was through the union of divinity with humanity. Christ in human flesh alone could bridge the gulf that sin had made. With his humanity he was prepared to touch humanity. The greatness, the breadth, of the plan of salvation invests it with incomparable grandeur; but it can only be spiritually discerned, and it increases in greatness as we contemplate it. Looking to Jesus dying upon the cross, and knowing that it was our sin that placed the innocent Sufferer there, we are bowed down before him in wonder and love. The greatness of this salvation proves the peril of its neglect.

Satan constantly seeks to make of none effect the great work of redemption. What importance, what magnitude, it gives to the theme of redemption, that he who has undertaken the salvation of man was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person. How, then, can heaven regard those who neglect so great a

salvation, wrought out for man at such infinite cost? To neglect to lay hold on the rich blessings of heaven, is to refuse, to set at naught, him who was equal with the Father, the only one who could save fallen man. O, shall we through neglect of Christ throw away our one chance for eternal life? Shall we scorn divine mercy, and trample underfoot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing?

The divine Author of salvation left nothing incomplete in the plan; every phase of it is perfect. The sin of the whole world was laid upon Jesus, and divinity gave its highest value to the suffering of humanity in Jesus, that the whole world might be pardoned through faith in the Substitute. The most guilty need have no fear but that God will pardon, for because of the efficacy of the divine sacrifice the penalty of the law will be remitted. Through Christ the sinner may return to allegiance to God. How wonderful is the plan of redemption in its simplicity and fullness. It not only provides for the full pardon of the sinner, but also for the restoration of the transgressor, making a way whereby he may be accepted as a son of God. Through obedience he may be the possessor of love and peace and joy. His faith may unite him in his weakness to Christ, the source of divine strength; and through the merits of Christ he may find the approval of God, because Christ has satisfied the demands of the law, and he imputes his righteousness to the penitent, believing soul. The spotless robe woven in the loom of heaven, covers the contrite one, and he wills to be obedient, taking the yoke of Christ, suffering as Christ suffered when he walked a man among men.

What love, what wonderful love, was displayed by the Son of God. The death we deserved was suffered to come upon him, that immortality might be given to us, who could never merit such a reward. Is not salvation great in its simplicity, and wonderful in its comprehensiveness? Christ takes the sinner from the lowest degradation, and purifies, refines, and ennobles him. By beholding Jesus as he is, the sinner is transformed, and elevated to the very summit of dignity, even to a seat with Christ upon his throne. Contemplating the fullness of the provision that God has made, whereby every son and daughter of Adam may be saved, we are led to exclaim with John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The angels are amazed at the manifestation of divine love for the fallen race. The fact that angels look with wonder upon the marvelous display of love on the part of God for man, shows how terrible a thing it is to neglect the salvation he has provided. The plan of redemption provides for every emergency, and for every want of the soul. If it were deficient in any way, the sinner might find some excuse to plead for neglect of its terms; but the infinite God had a knowledge of every human necessity, and ample provision has been made to supply every need. Thereby our sin can be pardoned, and eternal life secured; for the righteousness of Christ may be imputed unto us, to bear the test and meet the approval of a holy God. What, then, can the sinner say in the great day of final judgment, as to why he refused to give attention, the most thorough and earnest, to the salvation proffered him? {R.H, March 10, 1891}

Your Servant in Christ

*Elder E. O. Deughlin*

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