

# Romans 4:7-9 Commentary

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Romans 4:7 "**BLESSED** ARE THOSE **WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS** HAVE BEEN **FORGIVEN**, AND **WHOSE SINS** HAVE BEEN **COVERED**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Makaríoi on aphethesan \(3PAPI\) ai anomíai kai on epekaluphthesan \(3PAPI\) ai hamartíai:](#)

**Amplified:** Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** Spiritually prosperous are those whose lawlessnesses were put away and whose sins were covered.

**Young's Literal:** Happy they whose lawless acts were forgiven, and whose sins were covered;

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION

God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
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God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
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Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " <a href="#">Jensen's Survey of the NT</a> "				

**BLESSED (spiritually prosperous) ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN: makarioi on apthethesan (3PAPI) ai anomiai:**

- Ps 32:1,2; 51:8,9; 85:2; 130:3,4; Isa 40:1,2; Jer 33:8,9; Mic 7:18, 19, 20; Mt 9:2; Lk 7:47, 48, 49, 50
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Blessed** (3107) (**makarios** [word study]) is from **makar** which means to be happy but not in the usual sense of happiness based on positive circumstances. Homer, for example, used the word to describe the Greek gods as being blessed in themselves, a state unaffected by the world of men, who were subject to poverty, weakness, and death.

**Makarios** means possessing the favor of God, experiencing "**spiritual prosperity**". It describes a state of being marked by fullness from God. And so what Jesus is saying in the "Beatitudes" is "**Spiritually prosperous** (blessed) are the poor in spirit...", etc (Mt 5:3-note) Blessed are the spiritual paupers, the spiritually empty, the spiritually bankrupt who cringe in a corner and cry out to God for mercy. They are the happy ones. Why? Because they are the only ones who tap the real resource for happiness. They are the only ones who ever know God. Theirs is the kingdom—then and there, here and now.

**Blessed** connotes the state of "prosperity" that comes when a superior bestows his favor (blessing) on one.

**Makarios** - 50x in 49v -blessed(1), blessed(46), fortunate(1), happier(1), happy(1).

Matt 5:3-5; 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 24:46; Luke 1:45; 6:20-22; 7:23; 10:23; 11:27-28; 12:37-37, 43; 14:14-15; 23:29; John 13:17; 20:29; Acts 20:35; 26:2; Ro 4:7-8; 14:22; 1Cor 7:40; 1Tim 1:11; 6:15; Titus 2:13; Jas 1:12, 25; 1Pet 3:14; 4:14; Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.

**Makarios** is used 39 times in the Septuagint (LXX)

Gen 30:13; Deut 33:29; 1Ki 10:8; 2Chr 9:7; Job 5:17; Ps 1:1; 2:12; 32:1-2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4-5, 12; 89:15; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1, 2; 127:5; 128:1, 2; 137:8, 9; 144:15; 146:5; Pr 3:13; 8:32; 20:7; 28:14; Eccl 10:17; Isa 30:18; 31:9; 32:20; 56:2; Dan 12:12

**Cremer** says that **makarios** "is the gracious and saving effect of God's favor ... , but is enjoyed only when there is a corresponding behavior towards God; so that it forms the hoped-for good of those who in this life are subject to oppression." He goes on to add that in the NT **makarios** "is quite a religiously qualified conception, expressing the life-joy and satisfaction of the man who does or shall experience God's favor and salvation, his blessedness altogether apart from his outward condition ... It always signifies a happiness produced by some experience of God's favor, and specially conditioned by the revelation of grace.

**Kenneth Wuest** says that when **makarios** is "used of the state or condition of the believer, we would say that it refers to the spiritually prosperous state of that person who is the recipient of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, who is enabled to minister these blessings to him when the believer yields to Him for that ministry and cooperates with Him in it. For instance, those who are reproached for the name of Christ, are in a spiritually prosperous condition, for the Holy Spirit is ministering to them with refreshing

power (1Pe 4:14-note).

**Makarios** is used in pagan Greek literature to describe the state of happiness and well-being such as the gods enjoy as distinct from that of men who were subject to poverty and death, denoting a state of being of the gods who were exalted above earthly suffering and the limitations of earthly life. Other secular Greek writers used makarios to describe the state of certain men as supremely blest, fortunate, prosperous, wealthy.

Some theological dictionaries define blessed as a "state of happiness" but this is not completely accurate because **blessed** differs from "**happy**" which describes a person with good "luck". "**Happy**" is from the root **hap** = luck as a favorable circumstance. In marked contrast **makarios** describes one who is in the world yet independent of the world because their satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances

**Blessed** is the state of the individual who is the recipient of the God's grace (favor) and blessing. In the Old Testament this blessedness may involve material things, but forgiveness is foremost ([Ps 32:1](#)). The psalms begin with the acclamation of "How **blessed** (LXX = makarios) is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked..." ([Ps 1:1](#)) and in the original Hebrew is in the plural implying the multiplicity of blessings upon the man whom God justifies. One might translate it "Oh the **blessednesses!**"

One can be "**makarios**" and yet be in miserable circumstances. "Blessed (makarios) are you," Jesus said, "when they insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Mt 5:10,11,12-notes). So "blessed are you" does not mean "untroubled are you" or "healthy are you" or "admired are you" or "prosperous are you." It means "between you and God all is well." You are deeply secure, profoundly content, happy in God - even if you are weeping over the pain of a struck body, a perplexed mind, or a heartbreaking relationship.

Whatever the **makarios** state is, it is true of God. Whatever it means to be blest and blessed, it is true of God and of Jesus Christ. For example, Paul describes God as "He who is the **blessed** and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords." (1Ti 6:15). Thus it stands to reason that the only people who will ever experience **makarios** fully are those who partake of God and of Christ. There can be no biblical blessedness or happiness apart from Jesus. Only for those who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, who by faith have become partakers in the divine nature (2Pe 1:4-note), the same bliss, the same contentment, the same happiness, the same sense of **makarios** that is fundamentally an element of the character of God and Christ, is ours. So, when the Scripture speaks of blessedness, it is from a biblical context and does not refer to a superficial attitude based on circumstance.

David's psalm of thanksgiving after his repentance over his sin of adultery w Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2Sa 11:16,17) which by contrast left him "spiritually destitute" (Read Ps 32:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Paul thus notes that justification by faith was true both before and after Moses--before, in Abraham, Israel's great patriarch, and after, in David, Israel's greatest king & was always apart from works.

**Barclay** has this note on **makarios** writing that

**Makarios** is the word which specially describes the gods. In Christianity there is a godlike joy. The meaning of makarios can best be seen from one particular usage of it. The Greeks always called Cyprus hē makaria (the feminine form of the adjective), which means The Happy Isle, and they did so because they believed that Cyprus was so lovely, so rich, and so fertile an island that a man would never need to go beyond its coastline to find the perfectly happy life. It had such a climate, such flowers and fruits and trees, such minerals, such natural resources that it contained within itself all the materials for perfect happiness. Makarios then describes that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and the changes of life. The English word happiness gives its own case away. It contains the root hap which means chance. Human happiness is something which is dependent on the chances and the changes of life, something which life may give and which life may also destroy. The Christian blessedness is completely untouchable and unassailable. "No one," said Jesus, "will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). (**Ed note: Makarios** is an inner peace, an inner bliss, an inner happiness. Such inner joy is not produced by circumstance. It is a word that indicates character, touching man at the very base of his existence) The beatitudes speak of that joy which seeks us through our pain, that joy which sorrow and loss, and pain and grief, are powerless to touch, that joy which shines through tears, and which nothing in life or death can take away.

The world can win its joys, and the world can equally well lose its joys. A change in fortune, a collapse in health, the failure of a plan, the disappointment of an ambition, even a change in the weather, can take away the fickle joy the world can give. But the Christian has the serene and untouchable joy which comes from walking for ever in the company and in the presence of Jesus Christ.

The greatness of the beatitudes is that they are not wistful glimpses of some future beauty; they are not even

golden promises of some distant glory; they are triumphant shouts of bliss for a permanent joy that nothing in the world can ever take away." (Barclay, W: [The Gospel of Matthew The New Daily Study Bible Westminster John Knox Press](#))

**Forgiven** (863) (**aphiemi** from **apo** = prefix implies separation + **hiemi** = put in motion, send; See noun **aphesis**) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. It means to send forth or away from one's self. It refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside. In secular Greek aphiemi initially conveyed the sense of to throw and in one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi). From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go.

**Aphiemi** in Ro 4:7 is in the **aojist tense**, expressing the definiteness of the act - when one knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are definitively forgiven in the eyes and mind of God, this is indeed a blessed condition!

**See new study on Forgive - [Aphiemi \(Greek Word Study\)](#)** - While there is some duplication this new page has considerably more information on aphiemi.

**NAS** translates aphiemi as = abandoned(1), allow(5), allowed(2), divorce(2), forgave(2), forgive(23), forgiven(23), forgives(1), gave...permission(1), leave(7), leaves(2), leaving(8), left(38), let(9), let...alone(6), let him have(1), neglected(1), neglecting(2), permit(6), permitted(1), permitting(1), send...away(1), tolerate(1), uttered(1), yielded(1).

**Aphiemi** is used 143x in 131v (Take a few minutes and hold pointer over the following passages to help give you a better sense of the meaning of this great NT word aphiemi) -

Mt 3:15; 4:11, 20, 22; 5:24, 40; 6:12, 14, 15; 7:4; 8:15, 22; 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31, 32; 13:30, 36; 15:14; 18:12, 21, 27, 32, 35; 19:14, 27, 29; 22:22, 25; 23:13, 23, 38; 24:2, 40, 41; 26:44, 56; 27:49, 50; Mk 1:18, 20, 31, 34; 2:5, 7, 9, 10; 3:28; 4:12, 36; 5:19, 37; 7:8, 12, 27; 8:13; 10:14, 28, 29; 11:6, 16, 25; 12:12, 19, 20, 22; 13:2, 34; 14:6, 50; 15:36, 37; Lk 4:39; 5:11, 20, 21,23, 24; 6:42; 7:47, 48, 49; 8:51; 9:60; 10:30; 11:4; 12:10, 39; 13:8, 35; 17:3, 4, 34, 35; 18:16, 28, 29; 19:44; 21:6; 23:34; Jn 4:3, 28, 52; 8:29; 10:12; 11:44, 48; 12:7; 14:18, 27; 16:28, 32; 18:8; 20:23; Acts 5:38; 8:22; 14:17; Ro 1:27; 4:7; 1Cor 7:11, 12, 13; Heb 2:8; 6:1; Jas 5:15; 1Jn 1:9; 2:12; Re 2:4, 20; 11:9.

**Aphiemi** is used 61 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

Ge 4:13; 18:26; 20:6; 35:18; 42:33; 45:2; 50:17; Ex 9:21; 12:23; 22:5; 32:32 -x2; Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 16:10; 19:22; Num 14:19; 15:25,26; 22:13; Deut 15:2; 26:10; Josh 10:19; Jdg 1:34; 2:21, 23; 3:1, 28; 16:26; Ruth 2:16; 2 Sam 15:16; 16:10, 11; 20:3; 1Ki 19:3; 2Ki 4:27; 23:18; 1Chr 16:21; 2Chr 10:4, 10; 28:14; Ezra 6:7; Job 39:5, 14; 42:10; Ps 17:14; 25:18; 32:1, 5; 85:2; 105:14, 20; 125:3; Pr 4:13; 24:31; Eccl 2:18; 5:12; 10:4; 11:6; Song 3:4; Isa 22:4, 14; 32:14; 33:24; 55:7; Jer 12:7; Ezek 16:39; Dan 4:15, 26)

**Aphiemi** refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside and as used in the present context means that God lets go of the obligation we "owe" Him because of sin against His holiness. It means to **remit** (to release from the guilt or penalty of) as one would a financial debt (e.g., on the Rosetta stone it refers to the "total remission" of certain taxes). Unfortunately the English word "**forgive**" does not adequately picture the meaning of the Greek.

In secular Greek literature, **aphiemi** was a fundamental word used to indicate the sending away of an object or a person. **Aphiemi** was used to describe the voluntary release of a person or thing over which one has legal or actual control. The related noun **aphesis** meant described a setting free. .Later it came to include the release of someone from the obligation of marriage, or debt, or even a religious vow. In its final form it came to embrace the principle of release from punishment for some wrongdoing. .

**Colin Brown** adds that **aphiemi** means "With a personal object, to send forth, send away (of a woman, to divorce; of a meeting, to dissolve, end), to let go, to leave, dispatch; with an impersonal object, to loose (e.g. a ship into the sea), to discharge (e.g. arrows), to give up. In the figurative sense the verb (aphiemi) means to let alone, permit, let pass, neglect, give up (taking trouble, etc.); in Josephus, Ant., 1, 12, 3, to lose one's life, die. The **legal use is important**: to release from a legal bond (office, guilt, etc. and also, a woman from marriage, e.g. Hdt., 5, 39), to acquit (e.g. cancellation of criminal proceedings, Plato, Laws, 9, 86, 9d), to exempt (from guilt, obligation, punishment, etc.; e.g. Hdt., 6, 30). Similarly the noun aphasis (e.g. Demosthenes, 24, 45) means release, pardon, or remission, etc ([Brown, Colin: New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

**Aphiemi** was also used of teachers, writers, and speakers when presenting a topic, in the sense of "to leave, let alone, disregard, not to discuss now. It means "to abandon, to leave as behind and done with in order to go on to another thing."

The Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, contained many of these ideas. In the Old Testament **aphiemi** spoke of releasing a

prisoner or remitting a debt, but it also came to mean pardon or forgiveness. **Aphiemi** is used in Lev 16:10 to describe sending the scapegoat into the wilderness.

Trench says that the image underlying **aphiemi** is that of releasing a prisoner (Isaiah 61:1), or letting go, as of a debt (Deut 15:3). One is reminded of the one goat who was offered as a sin-offering on the Day of Atonement, and of the other goat upon which was placed the sins of the people (symbolically) and which was let go in the wilderness, never to be seen again by Israel, the latter goat typifying that aspect of redemption in which the sins of the human race were put away, never to be charged against the individual again (see Leviticus 16)..

**Wuest** explains **aphiemi** from God's perspective noting that "It refers to the act of putting something away. God did that at the Cross when He **put sin away** by incarnating Himself in humanity in the Person of His Son, stepping down from His judgment throne, assuming the guilt of man's sin, and paying the penalty, thus, satisfying His justice, and making possible an offer of mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. When a sinner avails himself of the merits of that atoning sacrifice, **he thus puts himself within the provision God made. His sins were put away** at the Cross, and he comes into the benefit of that when he believes. [Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans](#)) (Bolding added)

**Richards** notes that **aphiemi** "is a verb that occurs 146 times in the NT. It has the sense of "forgive" 49 of these times, 44 of which occur in the Gospels; but it has this meaning only once in Paul's writings (Ro 4:7). It is used in the sense of forgiveness of sins, of debts, and of crimes. The majority of the occurrences of aphiemi convey a meaning other than forgiveness: i.e., dismiss, release, leave, or abandon. ([Richards, Larry: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words. 1985. Zondervan](#))

In 1Corinthians 7 (1Cor 7:11, 12, 13), Paul uses **aphiemi** in speaking of a Christian husband's not **sending away** (that is, divorcing) his unbelieving wife. Divorce is total marital separation, complete abandonment of the relationship. And so this same Greek word is used here in Romans of forgiveness of sins. When we are forgiven, our sins are put away from us, separated from us, "**divorced**" from us. In Mt 15:14 the same term is used to speak of separating ourselves from false teachers.

**Aphiemi** basically means to send away and was used to indicate the legal repayment or cancellation of a debt or the granting of a pardon. It is used in Scripture to refer to God's forgiveness of sin. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ actually took the sins of the world upon His own head, as it were, and carried them an infinite distance away from where they could never return. That is the extent of the forgiveness of our trespasses.

The **Scripture** testifies,

"Who is a God like Thee, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18, 19, cp Isa 38:17, 43:25, 44:22, Jer 31:34, 50:20)

**Comment:** Henry Morris "Micah 7:18,19, climaxing the Old Testament message of the prophet Micah, comprises a beautiful testimony to God's saving gospel. He pardons all our iniquities forever. Furthermore, He will "subdue" them in our personal lives by the compelling love of His compassion, and our sins will not be remembered any more." ([Morris, Henry: Defenders Study Bible. World Publishing](#))

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us," David declared (Ps 103:12-[note](#))

**Comment:** To ancient Israel the distance from east to west and "the depths of the sea" represented infinity. God's **forgiveness** is infinite; it takes away our trespasses to the farthest reaches of eternal infinity.

**Spurgeon's Wonderful Words: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.** O glorious verse, no word even upon the inspired page can excel it! Sin is removed from us by a miracle of love! What a load to move, and yet is it removed so far that the distance is incalculable. Fly as far as the wing of imagination can bear you, and if you journey through space eastward, you are further from the west at every beat of your wing. If sin be removed so far, then we may be sure that the scent, the trace, the very memory of it must be entirely gone. If this be the distance of its removal, there is no shade of fear of its ever being brought back again; even Satan himself could not achieve such a task. Our sins are gone, Jesus has borne them away. Far as the place of sunrise is removed from yonder west, where the sun sinks when his day's journey is done, so far were our sins carried by our scapegoat nineteen centuries ago, and now if they be sought for, they shall not be found, yea, they shall not be, saith the Lord. Come, my soul, awaken thyself thoroughly and glorify the Lord for this richest of blessings. Hallelujah. The Lord alone could remove sin at all, and he has done it in a godlike fashion, making a final sweep of all our transgressions.

On the Cross as He died,

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and **yielded up** (aphiemi) His spirit. (Mt 27:50, cp Jn 19:30)

Here **aphiemi** is translated "yielded up" and has the basic meaning of letting go or sending away, indicating an act of volition. Jesus' life was not taken from Him by men, but rather He surrendered His spirit by the conscious act of His own sovereign will. As He had explained to the Twelve...

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down (tithemi) on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down (tithemi), and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (John 10:18).

The literal meaning of **aphiemi** is illustrated in Mark where the disciples

immediately **left** (aphiemi) the nets and followed Him. (Mk 1:18, cp similar meaning in In Mt 4:11, 20, 22)

They made a complete break from their former life, yielding up their nets and separating from them. As far as their life's work was concerned, they abandoned, completely separated themselves from, their father and his fishing business.

Jesus spoke a parable describes "kingdom principles" (Mt 18:23) regarding forgiveness and ends with a stern warning regarding the consequences of an unforgiving spirit (Mt 18:33, 34) by those who had been freely forgiven so great a debt. In this parable He described an insolvent slave who was in debt to his lord and how

the lord of that slave **felt compassion** (splugchnizomai from splugchnon [word study]) and **released** him and **forgave** (aphiemi) him the debt. (Mt 18:27) (Note what precedes the forgiveness - compassion! cp Mt 5:7-note, Jas 2:13)

When missionaries in northern Alaska were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos, they discovered there was no word in that language for **forgiveness**. After much patient listening, however, they discovered a word that means, "not being able to think about it anymore." That word was used throughout the translation to represent forgiveness, because God's promise to repentant sinners is, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34).

God **forgave** at the Cross when He **put sin away** by incarnating Himself in humanity in the Person of His Son, stepping down from His judgment throne, assuming the guilt of man's sin, and paying the penalty, thus, satisfying His justice, and making possible an offer of mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. When a sinner avails himself of the merits of that atoning sacrifice, he thus puts himself within the provision God made. **His sins were put away at the Cross**, and he comes into the benefit of that when he believes.

**Forgiveness** means God buries our sin and does not mark the grave or leave the hatchet handle exposed (so to speak). When God at Calvary paid the penalty of human sin by satisfying the just demands of His holy law, He put away sin (along with its guilt, defilement, and penalty), "bidding it to go away" (aphiemi). This transaction was beautifully memorialized in the symbolism of the **Day of Atonement** (Lev 16:21, 22 - celebrated as one of the most solemn Jewish holidays by modern Jews who celebrate Yom Kippur on the 10th of Tishri or September) where the scapegoat, figuratively or symbolically laden with all the sins of all the people of Israel (one year's worth of sins!), was led away into the wilderness to bear away their sins, perfectly foreshadowing Jesus' once for all time work as our "Sin Bearer" (1Pe 2:24-note). On the **Day of Atonement** there was also a second goat which was chosen by lot and was sacrificed symbolizing the need for a substitute to die in the sinner's stead!

## LET THE POT DROP!

**Aphiemi** originally conveyed the sense of to **throw**." For example in a secular Greek writing we read "let the pot drop", where the verb is aphiemi (think about that grudge you on which you are stubbornly refusing to release your grip!!! Let it go, not just with your words, but from your heart. You will experience a freedom that can only be described as supernatural beloved!!!). From this physical meaning we derive the common meaning **"leave, let go."** An instance is found in the Rosetta stone for "total remission" of certain taxes.

**Thayer** says **aphiemi** means "to send from one's self, to send away, to let go or give up a debt, to remit, forgive."

Our English word **forgive** as commonly used does not give an adequate picture of the Greek verb **aphiemi**. We say that we have forgiven some one who has wronged us. By that we mean that any feeling of animosity we may have had, has changed to one of renewed friendliness and affection. We do not hold the wrong done against the person anymore. But so far as the act itself is concerned, we cannot do anything about it. It has been done, and it cannot be removed from the one who committed the wrong. But **aphiemi** includes within its meaning, the act of dealing with the **act** of wrong doing in such a way that the sinner who appropriates the Lord Jesus as Saviour, has his sins put away. First, they are put away on a judicial basis by the out-poured blood of Christ. He

paid the penalty the broken law required, and thus satisfied divine justice. Second, God removes the guilt of that sin from the believing sinner and bestows a positive righteousness, Jesus Christ Himself, in whom this person stands justified forever. This is what is in the Bible regarding God's forgiveness of believing sinners. Remember, however that **forgiveness** does not abolish the consequences of what we have done but it puts us right with God.

The opposite of forgiveness is obviously unforgiveness which is linked closely to bitterness one of the most dangerous of all plagues to healthy Christian living. It will eat away at the vitality of your spiritual life until your once-vibrant testimony is in shambles. Unforgiveness and bitterness is like "cancer to the soul", and as **Bryon Paulus** the director of Life Action Ministries explains, is the number one problem his revival teams encounter in American churches. The cure for this spiritually toxic plague is one of the most beautiful words in any language --**forgive**. Note that the essence of the word is in the last part, **give**. To forgive means to **give someone a release** from the wrong that he has done to you. It means to give up any right of retaliation.

God's forgiveness, which must coordinate with His justice, is based upon the payment of the penalty by a substitute. Jesus Christ, His Son, paid the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross...Looking at Calvary, God is now free to forgive those who come to Him through the blood of Christ.

When God forgives He forgives completely. This kind of forgiveness is "Judicial Forgiveness". It is one of five kinds of forgiveness in the Bible. A failure to distinguish these kinds of forgiveness causes great confusion, unnecessary guilt and needless fear.

**Easton's Bible Dictionary** gives a nice synopsis on **forgiveness** of sins describing it as

"one of the constituent parts of justification (being declared righteous). In pardoning sin, God absolves the sinner from the condemnation of the law, and that on account of the work of Christ, i.e., he removes the guilt of sin, or the sinner's actual liability to eternal wrath on account of it. All sins are forgiven freely (Act 5:31; Act 13:38; 1Jn 1:6, 7, 8,9). The sinner is by this act of grace for ever freed from the guilt and penalty of his sins. This is the peculiar prerogative of God (Ps 130:4-[note](#); Mark 2:5). It is offered to all in the gospel."

## Forgiveness:

### Five Kinds of Biblical Forgiveness

#### 1. Judicial Forgiveness

The eternal forgiveness of all sins of the one who has trusted Christ. This forgiveness is the result of **justification** and has to do with the believer's initial, necessary forgiveness from God. The forgiveness one experiences upon being justified by faith is once for all, and eternal. This forgiveness is accessed only on faith in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God Who took away the sins of the world. David describes this type of forgiveness in his declaration

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute not iniquity." (Ps 32:1, [2note](#)).

The psalms also teach that

"As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps 103:12[note](#)).

And so dear reader you can declare this moment,

"As I have trusted Christ for my salvation, the debt I owed for all my sins past, present, and future has been paid in full by the His precious blood shed for me and my debts have been completely **forgiven**, sent away, remitted. My Father remembers those sins no more." (Ps 130:4-note; Acts 26:18; Eph 1:7-note; Col 1:14-note)

#### 2. Paternal Forgiveness

This aspect of forgiveness describes that which is broken with our Father when we fail to forgive others. On the positive side this quality of forgiveness describes restoration of fellowship between God the Father and His beloved child thus speaking of "family" forgiveness. This forgiveness is contingent upon the child of God (a) Confessing their sin or specifically naming the sin, agreeing with God that it is in fact a grievous sin, and expressing a willingness and desire to forsake it, attitudes and actions that are well summed up in the word repentance (see 1Jn 1:9; Jn 13:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Mt 6:12-notes cf Pr 28:13) (b) Forgiveness of debts (sins) others have against us (Personal forgiveness - see the next kind of forgiveness.)

#### 3. Personal Forgiveness

Restoration of fellowship with another human being

(a) This facet of forgiveness is so important that Jesus conditions our forgiveness and restoration to fellowship with our Heavenly Father on our willingness to forgive others. In fact paternal/personal forgiveness is the only topic that Jesus elaborated on in the "Lord's (Disciple's) Prayer" in the Sermon on the Mount. See notes on the actual prayer in Mt 6:12-note and Jesus' further explanation in Mt 6:14,15-notes; Mt 18:21-35; Luke 6:37; Col. 3:13-note; Eph 4:31, 32-note)

(b) Personal forgiveness has a vertical dimension—we must release the person to God. This can happen anywhere at anytime. Jesus taught,

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mk 11:25)

(c) Personal forgiveness has a horizontal dimension—we must confront the offender and forgive if he repents.

“Be on your guard. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” (Luke 17:3)

#### 4. Social forgiveness

Restoration of fellowship with society (Jn 8:1-10) This may be a personal attitude in our own communities or involve us in ministries like Chuck Colson's prison ministry. There is little forgiveness by society today partly because there are very few things that society frowns on.

#### 5. Ecclesiastical Forgiveness

Restoration of fellowship with the church) 2Co 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 2Th 3:14, 15. This forgiveness assumes a prior discipline by the church body and an evidence of a repentant heart on the part of the one disciplined. The purpose of discipline is restoration, and forgiveness assumes repentance and restoration.

### Further Thoughts on Forgiveness

- You do not have to forget after you forgive. God's grace may allow you to do so, but your forgiving can still be sincere even if you remember.
- You do not overlook people's faults by forgiving them. You must forgive them because you do hold them to account and refuse to agree with or overlook their faults.
- Forgiveness deals with our emotional response toward an offender. Pardon deals with the consequences of his offense. Unless we have the authority we may not be able to pardon an offense, but we can always forgive.
- Forgiveness offers a chance at reconciliation; it is an opportunity for a life together instead of "death" together. Forgiveness has creative power to move us away from a past moment of pain, to unshackle us from our endless chain of emotional reactions, and to create a new situation in which both the wrongdoer and the wronged can begin a new way.
- The alternative to forgiveness is, in the end, a ceaseless process of hurt, bitterness, anger, resentment and self-destruction. And as Jesus clearly warns there is the continued hand of our Father which will weigh heavy upon us...

'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...for (Jesus explains why it is crucial that believers forgive the spiritual/ethical debts others owe us) if you forgive ("remit their debt", consciously choose to send it away) men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But **if you do not forgive men**, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." (Mt 6:12-note; Mt 6:14,15-note) Forgiveness of others is absolutely crucial in order for believers to experience the forgiveness (and fellowship) of their Father. Such restored fellowship will also remove a major hindrance or roadblock to effective prayer. **Has God's Spirit placed someone on your heart that you need to forgive?**

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**THE HIGH COST OF UNFORGIVENESS AND DESIRE TO "GET EVEN"**: Even animals know the value of not trying to get even. Dale Carnegie once noted that the only animal the grizzly would allow to eat with him was the skunk. Grizzly bears in Yellowstone Park often come to eat at the place where garbage is dumped. This huge bear can fight and beat almost any animal in the West, but it lets the skunk share its meal. Carnegie said that the grizzly surely resented the skunk and could have easily killed the little creature in any fight. No doubt the bear would have liked to have gotten even with him for his intrusion. But he didn't. Why? **Because he knew the high cost of getting even.** Most animals are not dumb. They are much smarter than many humans who allow their stomachs to churn all day, their minds to storm all night and their souls to turn black with hatred as they plot revenge.

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**TRUE FORGIVENESS TO SOME PEOPLE IS SIMPLY "TOO MUCH"!** - Marie de Medicis, the Italian-born wife of King Henri IV of



France, became the regent for their son Louis after her husband's death in 1610. In later years her relationship with Louis soured and they lived in a state of ongoing hostility. Marie also felt a deep sense of betrayal when Cardinal Richelieu, whom she had helped in his rise to political power, deserted her and went over to her son's side. While on her deathbed Marie was visited by Fabio Chigi, who was papal nuncio of France. Marie vowed to forgive all of her enemies, including Cardinal Richelieu. "Madam," asked Chigi, "as a mark of reconciliation, will you send him the bracelet you wear on your arm?" "No," she replied firmly, "that would be too much." **True forgiveness is hard to extend because it demands that people let go of something they value**(Ed: The very essence of the verb for forgiveness - Aphiemi = a sending away, letting it go, dropping it, canceling the debt they owe you!) -- **not a piece of jewelry, but pride, perhaps, as sense of justice, or desire for revenge.** (contrast Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note) -- Daily Walk, May 27, 1992.

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**Illustration - The Forgiveness Flower** - A girl was asked what forgiveness is. She gave the following beautiful answer: "It is the odor the flowers give off when they are trampled upon." For the merciful Christian (Jas 2:13, Mt 5:7-note), this odor reaches far, far away, even up to the judgment seat of Christ (2Cor 5:10) so that the Christian need not shrink back when he gets there. One day when Stan Mooneyham was walking along a trail in East Africa with some friends, he became aware of a delightful odor that filled the air. He looked up in the trees and around at the bushes in an effort to discover where it was coming from. Then his friends told him to look down at the small blue flower growing along the path. Each time they crushed the tiny blossoms under their feet, more of its sweet perfume was released into the air. Then his friends said, "We call it the forgiveness flower." This forgiveness flower does not wait until we ask forgiveness for crushing it. It does not release its fragrance in measured doses or hold us to a reciprocal arrangement. It does not ask for an apology; it merely lives up to its name and forgives-freely, fully, richly. What a touching example of outrageous forgiveness!

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**Related Resources:** Forgive/Forgiveness

- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15.
- Illustrations and quotes on forgiveness

**NT words for forgive/forgiveness:**

- Forgiveness ([859](#)) aphesis
- Forgive (send away from, cancel the debt, release, let go) ([863](#)) aphiemi
- Forgive (grant, freely give, bestow) ([5483](#)) charizomai

**Excellent 5 Part Sermon Series on Forgiveness by Dr Ray Pritchard:** following messages are also in his book -**The Healing Power of Forgiveness** ([see reviews by readers](#))

- [1\) Forgiveness Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved](#)
- [2\) Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer](#)
- [3\) Judge Not!](#)
- [4\) Is Total Forgiveness Realistic](#)
- [5\) The Final Step-Blessing Your Enemies](#)

**Other Resources on Forgiveness**

- [Father, Forgive Them by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiving the Unforgivable by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [How Can I Learn to Forgive? by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Unless You Forgive by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiving the Unforgivable article by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiveness of Injuries \(Mt 18:21-22\) by John Angell James](#)
- [Forgiveness of Sins by Henry Law - 17 Chapter Treatise!](#)

**AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED: kai on epekalupthesan (3PAPI) ai hamartiai:**

## WE ARE FOREVER COVERED BY OUR REDEEMER'S BLOOD

**Sins** (266) (**hamartia**) means in essence "missing God's mark." (see more detailed discussion in next verse below).

**Covered** (1943) (**epikalupto** from **epi** = over + **kalupto** = cover) literally means to conceal, hide, cover or cover over (as a shroud). Figuratively or metaphorically it means to cover over sins, i.e., forgive, pardon. Peter uses the derivative noun **epikalumma** (1Pe 2:16 = figurative "covering" = a strategy for concealing something, a pretext, Lxx - literal cover in 2Sa 17:19). And with what were these sins covered up? They were covered with the blood of Jesus! Isaiah 1:18-note records a prophecy that ultimately will be fulfilled in Jews who believe in Messiah (but of course applicable in principle to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile), whose sins were "as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.." The Hebrew word for **Scarlet** is **towla'** which was the name for a worm in Hebrew. This particular worm was used in the making of red dye, and so it's often translated "**scarlet**". The **towla'** would attach itself to a tree as it prepared to lay its eggs, and in the process, the mother would die, leaving a red stain on the wood. Later, after the babies would hatch and leave, the red stain would dry up, turn white, and flake off the wood. In Psalm 22:6, an indisputably Messianic psalm, the Messiah cries out, "**I am a worm**" (**towla'**). The picture our humble Messiah presents parallels the worm's life cycle, for Jesus died on a cross of wood in the process of giving birth to us, leaving a bloody stain that turns our sins from scarlet to white as snow! This is surely amazing, utterly incomprehensible grace and love in action! O come let us adore Him! For a more complete discussion of this fascinating OT metaphor read [Psalm 22-6-I Am a Worm](#). In Isaiah 1:18, **white as snow** speaks of total cleansing. God grants the repentant sinner **amnesty** as it were. He stays (stops the carrying out of) the execution and instead grants pardon to the condemned sinner. God is able to do so and still be just, because Another has paid the price to set the sinner free and allow the granting of "amnesty". The word **amnesty** is from the word from which we get **amnesia** which means **to forget**. What a beautiful picture this presents, for when the holy God washes away our unholy sins, they are completely forgotten. We're left whiter than snow, purer than wool. That's why a person whose sins have been covered is so incredibly blessed! Ponder the hymnwriter's poignant words...

There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins.  
And sinners plunged beneath the flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.  
([Listen to this beautiful version](#) and rejoice in our [Immanuel!](#))

**BDAG** says that **epikalupto** means first "to hide from view by covering", then by fig. extension as synonym for 'forgive' cover up."

**Epikalupto** - Used only in Ro 4:7 in the NT but 19x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** -

Ge 7:19, 20 (Literally of flood waters covering the mountains) Ge 8:2; Ex 14:26; Nu 4:11, 13; 2Sa 15:30; 1Kgs 19:13; Job 16:18; Ps 32:1; 44:19; Pr 28:13; Je 3:25; 14:4; Ezek 1:11, 23

The **Septuagint (LXX)** (Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) uses **epikalupto** in Ps 32:1-[note](#) (and Paul quotes from the **Septuagint** not the **Hebrew**). This same Greek word is used in the Septuagint of Pr 28:13 but in an opposite sense for we read that "He who **conceals** (**epikalupto** in this case covers over so as to keep secret) his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (**Commentary**)

**Vines** writes that **epikalupto** is "the equivalent to the Hebrew word for **'to atone.'**" It signifies, not merely a covering, but the removal of guilt under the covering; this involves the removal of divine wrath from the sinner. The English word "atonement" is not to be split into its parts as if it stood for "**at-one-ment.**" "**At-one-ment**" is the effect of **atonement**. The atonement stands for the sacrifice itself of Christ " ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

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**A Unique Offer** - Several years ago a group of Christian missionaries met in Delhi, India, with representatives of other religions to discuss their beliefs. In the course of their talks, a member of a major non-Christian religion said to a missionary, "Tell me one thing your religion can offer the Indians that mine can't."

The missionary thought for a moment and replied, "**Forgiveness! Forgiveness!**" Unlike the followers of all other world religions, those who put their hope in Christ have full assurance that their sins are forgiven.

British Bible teacher and lecturer David Pawson says, "I have talked to the most devout Muslims who pray five times a day, have journeyed to Mecca, have fasted during Ramadan, and are more devout than many Christians. But when I ask, 'Do you know if your sins are forgiven?' they've said, 'We don't. We just have to hope for the best.'"

In Colossians 1:14 (note), Ephesians 1:7 (note) (and here in Ro 4:7), Paul gave us the basis on which **forgiveness** rests--the **redemption** Christ secured through His death on the cross. But Christ is not merely the founder of a major religion. He is the "image of the invisible God" by whom all things were created (Col 1:15, 16-notes). The forgiveness He offers, therefore, is an offer from God Himself. - D J DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have you accepted the gift of forgiveness? (Ro 6:23-note).

What family member, neighbor, or co-worker needs to hear from you about God's offer of forgiveness?

**The search for forgiveness ends  
when you find Christ**

Romans 4:8 **"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."** (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [makarios aner ou me logisetai](#) (3SAMS) [kurios hamartian](#).

**Amplified:** Blessed and happy and to be envied is the person of whose sin the Lord will take no account nor reckon it against him. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

**NLT:** Yes, what joy for those whose sin is no longer counted against them by the Lord." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** Spiritually prosperous is the man to whose account the Lord does not in any case put sin.

**Young's Literal:** happy the man to whom the Lord may not reckon sin.'

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT: makarios aner ou me logisetai (3SAMS) kurios hamartian:**

- Isa 53:10, 11, 12; 2Co 5:19, 20; Philemon 1:18,19; 1Pet 2:24; 3:18
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BELIEVERS HAVE A PERFECT "CREDIT RATING" FOREVER!**

Why can every believer have a "perfect credit score" with God? Because of the fact that our (sin) debt was **paid in full** (See [tetelestai](#) = [perfect tense](#) of [teleo](#)), the payment being made over 2000 years ago with the precious blood as of a lamb, for we "were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19-[note](#)).

Paul is quoting not the Hebrew but the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) rendering of Psalm 32:2 which says "**How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity**, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!"

**Spurgeon's comments on Psalm 32:2 - *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*** The word **blessed** is in the plural, *oh, the blessednesses!* the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity, are the three headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced his barkings for ever against His own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "**Righteousness imputed without works.**" He is blessed indeed who has a **Substitute** to stand for him to Whose account all his debts may be set down. **And in whose spirit there is no guile.** He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim.

**Free from guilt, free from guile.**

**Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood.**

A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children (1 John 3:7,8), but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike (Ed: This does not speak of "perfection" but of general "direction!" -- upward, not downward, toward heaven, not hell!). There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink (cp Mt 7:26, 27), and eternal destruction must be their portion (Mt 7:23, 2 Thes 1:7, 8, 9). **Observe the three words to describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meaning. (Psalm 32 Treasury of David)**

**Blessed (3107)(makarios)** - Note that in the Greek there is no verb "is" and no definite article "the", so that the text reads literally "**Blessed man**". We who have believed are that **man**. Hallelujah! Remember that you may not always feel "blessed" in this present life, but in God's eyes you are (and you will be) eternally blessed! And all God's people shout "**Glory! Amen! Maranatha!**"

**Sin (266) (hamartia)** originally conveyed the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow and then came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. Scripturally the "mark" is God's will and God's will is most clearly revealed in His Word. In a practical (and sad) sense sin can be thought of as missing the true and ultimate purpose God has for each of us in this present life. To miss God's purpose is to miss out on the best thing this life has to offer. And thus it behooves us to arise each morning with an eternal mindset, and make a holy holistic (body and mind and soul) presentation to God (Ro 12:1-note) and then go forth in His power, for His glory, redeeming every moment He has so graciously allotted to us in this short life (Eph 5:16-note).

And so in Scripture sin often describes our thoughts, words and deeds that miss our God ordained purpose, because these thoughts, words and deeds fall short of God's perfect standard of holiness. Sin is lawlessness (1Jn 3:4-note), unrighteousness (1Jn 5:17-note). Sin is also characterized by the following passages - Jn 16:9 = do not believe in Jesus; Jas 4:17 = knows right thing to do and does not do it; Ro 3:23 = falling short of the glory of God.

**Augustine** had these words engraved on a plaque, and hung at the foot of his bed, so that every night he could look at them. Here was another young man with a checkered past. Until his dying day, the last thing his eyes fell upon were these words of David:

**Blessed is the man  
upon whom the Lord  
will not impute iniquity.**

**Lord (2962) (kurios)** means lord, master, owner or the one who has absolute ownership power. Jesus is referred to some ten times as Savior and some seven hundred times as **Lord**. Jesus is supreme in Authority. Note also that the Greek noun **Kurios** translates Jehovah (LORD in OT) in **Septuagint (LXX)** 7000 times (see also **Jehovah = Jesus**)

**Martin Luther** puts "**Lord**" in an interesting perspective noting that "The life of Christianity consists of possessive pronouns. It is one thing to say, "Christ is a Saviour"; it is quite another thing to say, "He is **my** Saviour and **my** Lord." The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second.

**Not** - Note that **not** is actually a combination of two different Greek words, "**me**" (**3361**) conveying relative negation and "**ou**" (**3756**) conveying **absolute negation**. This double negative emphasize the Lord not taking a sin into account. The NIV picks up this sense rendering it "will never count against him".

**Take into account (3049) (logizomai [word study])** means to think about something in a detailed and logical manner think about, reason about, put together with one's mind, ponder, draw conclusions through the use of reason.

By the marvelous provision of imputation, our sins were debited to the account of Jesus, the Son of man, whereas His perfect righteousness was credited to our account.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Cor 5:21-note).

**Romans 4:9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** o makarismos oun houtos epi ten peritomen e kai epi ten akrobustian? legomen (1PPAI) gar. Elogisthe

[\(3SAPI\) to Abraam e pistis eis dikaiosunen.](#)

**Amplified:** Is this blessing (happiness) then meant only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

**NLT:** Now then, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it for Gentiles, too? Well, what about Abraham? We have been saying he was declared righteous by God because of his faith. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** Therefore, does this spiritual prosperity come upon the circumcised one or the uncircumcised one, for we say, There was put to Abraham's account his faith, resulting in righteousness?

**Young's Literal:** Is this happiness, then, upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision--for we say that the faith was reckoned to Abraham--to righteousness?

## IS THIS BLESSING THEN UPON THE CIRCUMCISED OR UPON THE UNCIRCUMCISED ALSO: O makarismos oun houtos epi ten peritomen e kai epi ten akrobustian:

- Ro 3:29,30; 9:23,24; 10:12,13; 15:8-19; Isaiah 49:6; Luke 2:32; Galatians 3:14,26, 27, 28; Ep 2:11, 12, 13; 3:8; Col 3:11
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### UPON WHOM IS THIS PRICELESS BLESSING?

**This blessing** (3108) (**makarismos** from **makarizo** = to bless from **makarios**) means blessedness or extolling as blessed. It is a state of spiritual prosperity implying favorable circumstances. In Gal 4:15 the idea is a frame of mind produced by favorable circumstances. In the present context **makarismos** is blessedness of a person indwelt by Holy Spirit because of faith in Jesus Christ.

**BDAG** - pronouncement of being in receipt of special favor,

The blessing is being reckoned righteousness by God apart from works.

The Greek construction of this question is phrased in a way that expects an affirmative answer.

**Makarismos** - 3x (not found in Septuagint) - Usage: blessing(2), sense of blessing(1).

Romans 4:6 just as David also speaks of the **blessing** on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Romans 4:9 Is this **blessing** then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Galatians 4:15 Where then is that **sense of blessing** you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

**Circumcised** (4061) (**peritome** [word study] from **perí** = around + **témno** = cut off) refers literally to cutting and removal of the foreskin. (referring to physical not spiritual circumcision; see related topic **Scriptures on Circumcision**)

**Circumcised** - The Jews. Paul again raised the question of the Jews' special position. He also directly confronted the teaching that the rite of circumcision was a requirement for salvation as the following examples sadly illustrate. As Paul has already pointedly explained the majority of those Jews while physically circumcised remained tragically spiritually uncircumcised (Ro 2:28, 29-note)!

### JEWISH MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING CIRCUMCISION

The Jewish apocryphal Book of Jubilees declares "This law is for all generations for ever, and there is no circumcision of the time, and no passing over one day out of the eight days; for it is an eternal ordinance, ordained and written on the heavenly tables. And every one that is born, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, belongs not to the children of the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, for he belongs to the children of destruction; nor is there moreover any sign on him that he is the Lord's but (he is destined) to be destroyed and slain from the earth." (See also [Circumcision - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#))

The covenant that Jehovah made with Abraham was an unconditional covenant which Abraham entered by faith, not by physical circumcision (**Related resource:** Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic; Abrahamic vs Old vs New). Many Jews believed that salvation was based on their **obedience** to God in being **circumcised**, and that their eternal security rested in that rite (they missed the truth of Jas 2:10, Gal 3:10)

In his commentary on the Book of Moses, Rabbi Menachem ("wishfully" in my opinion) wrote, "Our Rabbins [rabbis] have said that no circumcised man will ever see hell".

**Circumcision** was considered such a mark of God's favor that it was taught that if a Jew had practiced idolatry his circumcision must first be removed before he could go down to hell. Since it is humanly impossible to remove circumcision, presumably that would be accomplished by a direct act of God.

The Jalkut Rubem taught that "Circumcision saves from hell"

The Midrash Millim taught that "God swore to Abraham that no one who was circumcised should be sent to hell"

The book Akedath Jizehak taught that Abraham sits before the gate of hell and does not allow that any circumcised Israelite should enter there

Why does Paul raise this question here? The Jewish objection he may be addressing would go as follows -- "It is true that both pre-law Abraham and under-law David received righteousness. But both of them were also circumcised. Since circumcision is the sign of the covenant between God and us Jews (Ge 17:9-14) is it not possible that this was the ground of our justification?"

**Ray Stedman** tells a true story to illustrate the need for Paul's teaching. He writes "I will never forget the young man who came into my study one day, Bible in hand, and announced that he had been reading the Bible. He didn't know a lot about it, but he said, "Would you circumcise me?" I blinked three or four times, then said, "Why?" He said, "I've been reading in this Bible that if you want to know God you have to be circumcised. I want to know God, so I want to be circumcised." I had the joy of telling him what circumcision meant, that it was simply a sign of something that was already true by faith. That boy became a Christian and is still in our congregation and growing in the Lord." (Read full sermon text [The Father of Faith](#))

**Uncircumcised** (203) (**akrobustia** from **ákrōn** = the extreme + **búō** = cover) means uncircumcised or uncircumcision and thus referred to the **prepuce** or **foreskin**. "The **uncircumcised**" is used here as a figure of speech to refer to the Gentiles. Jews saw all of the world as composed of either the "**circumcised**" (Jews) and "**uncircumcised**" (Gentiles). Of course, as Paul has already discussed in Romans 2:28-29-note they misinterpreted the deeper and true meaning that God had always intended for "circumcision." God was not interested so much in the external condition but the internal condition of a person, ultimately the condition of one's spiritual heart -- of which there are only two possibilities for all mankind -- either one's heart is "spiritually circumcised" or it is "spiritually uncircumcised," and this latter group is still spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-note).

Paul's question is whether the blessing of justification granted to Abraham is limited to Abraham's natural descendants, the Jewish race? He goes on to clearly explain that the answer is "No!" Why? Because faith was credited to Abraham (internal "circumcision" of his heart) before he obediently carried out the physical (external) act of circumcision. To help understand this critically important concept which is taught in both the Old and New Testament you might consider taking a moment and reading the discussion of

[Circumcision of the Heart](#). Nave Topical Bible [Circumcision](#)

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Circumcision](#)
- American Tract Society [Circumcision](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Circumcision](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Circumcision](#) [Circumcision](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Circumcision](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Circumcision](#)
- Condensed Biblical Cyclopedia [Covenant of Circumcision](#)

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Circumcision](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Circumcision](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Circumcision](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Circumcision](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Circumcision](#)

**FOR WE SAY FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS: legomen (1PPAI) gar elogisthe (3SAPI) to Abraam e pistis eis dikaiosunen:**

- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FAITH CREDITED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul anticipated what his Jewish readers would be thinking - If Abraham was justified by his faith alone, why did God command him and his descendants to be circumcised?

Paul's response not only addresses those concerned with circumcision, but also by way of application speaks to the millions (even billions) who still cling to some other kind of **religious ceremony** or **activity** (e.g., church membership, raised in a Christian family, physical baptism, etc) as their basis for righteousness. Remember that all other world religions (and sadly even many who think they are "Christians" - cp Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note) practice a religion of **"DO"** whereas only the true Christian rests his or her faith on the truth that it is all **"DONE"** (cp Jn 19:30, 17:4). Unfortunately even genuine believers can fall into the "Miry Martha Maze" (Lk 10:38, 39, 40, 41, 42) of **"DOING"** thinking "God will love me more" or "God will accept me more" (etc, etc) because of my **DOING!** God is interested in our **BEING** (abiding), not in our our **DOING**. Abiding will lead to **DOING** (Jn 15:5, Ep 2:10-note), but we are so quick to reverse the order. Whether subtle or overt, that is legalism and it will bind you not free you. Only Christ frees us (Jn 8:36) and we must now daily choose to abide in His Word (and thereby in Him [Jn 1:1, 2, 14] as we hear and then obey [Lk 11:28] in the power of His Spirit - Ezek 36:27a, Ep 5:18-note, Php 2:13-note) and walk forth by faith in His Word (2Cor 5:7, Gal 5:16-note).

**Faith** (4102) (**pistis** [word study]) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

**Wayne Grudem** defines faith that saves one's soul - **Saving faith** is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ. Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "trust" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "faith" or "belief." The reason is that we can "believe" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. ([Grudem, W. A. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine Zondervan](#)) (Bolding added)

**Reckoned** (3049) (**logizomai** from **lógos** = reason, word, account) (Click study of logizomai) means to take something that belongs to someone else and credit it to another's account.

**Logizomai** - 40x in 39v - consider(6), considered(2), counted(1), counting(1), credit(1), credited(9), credits(1), dwell(1), maintain(1), numbered(2), propose(1), reason(1), reckoned(2), regard(4), regarded(3), suppose(1), take into account(3), thinks(1).

Luke 22:37; John 11:50; Acts 19:27; Rom 2:3, 26; 3:28; 4:3-5, 8-10, 22-24; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8; 14:14; 1Cor 4:1; 13:5, 11; 2Cor 3:5; 5:19; 10:2, 7, 11; 11:5; 12:6; Gal 3:6; Phil 3:13; 4:8; 2Tim 4:16; Heb 11:19; Jas 2:23; 1Pet 5:12.

**Righteousness** (1343) (**dikaosune** [word study] from **dikaos** [word study] = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God.

**Dikaosune** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through faith in Christ (Click [here](#) to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).