

The Forgiveness of Sins

In considering the subject of the forgiveness of sins, the student should always keep in mind that there are two principal types of forgiveness. The first of these is known as judicial forgiveness and the second as parental forgiveness. The first has to do with the penalty of sin, and the second has to do with the restoration of fellowship that is broken by sin.

When we say that the Christian has been forgiven all his sins—past, present, and future—we are referring to the judicial forgiveness of sins. This means that the believer will never have to pay the penalty of his sins because Christ paid the penalty on the cross. When the Lord Jesus died, all our sins were in the future. Therefore, He died for all our sins—past, present, and future. The moment we trust Him as Savior, we receive complete forgiveness of sins as far as the penalty is concerned.

What happens then when a Christian sins? The answer is that fellowship with God is broken. The happy spirit of communion between the Father and His child has been severed. Fellowship remains broken until that sin is confessed and forsaken. When we confess these sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Here we are speaking about parental forgiveness. It is not a judge forgiving a criminal, but a father forgiving his child.

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