

040314AM MARK 41.46 IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO GOD

# Is there Another Way to God?

## Mark 3.31-35

There are really two ultimate questions in life.

1<sup>st</sup> – “Do you have a personal relationship with God?” And once you answer that,

2<sup>nd</sup> – “Is there another way to God?”

We are in the Gospel by Mark 3.31-35.

Jesus stops and looks around at those seated at His feet one day as He taught.

And in that moment, and in the words captured by the Holy Spirit in God's Word – is the setting for the two ultimate questions. Each of us needs to answer these questions. Only when these two questions are answered, can we make sense of the world we live in today.

Last week we had the 1<sup>st</sup> question answered by Jesus, “Do you have a personal relationship with God?”

This week the second vital question, “Is there another way to God?”

Today there are supposed to be well over a billion Christians on the planet. The majority of that billion are part of a church that calls itself the Holy Roman Catholic Church. It says that it is built upon the foundation of Christ and His apostles. The key to understanding where a church stands in relationship to the Gospel is to examine the role of Jesus Christ in that church's doctrine. That is what we will do this morning. We will honestly examine one of the best-known doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church – the Role of Mary. And as we do so from scripture, you decide whether or not the Lord is honored and His Word obeyed by that church.

Please open again with me to Mark 3.31-35. As we turn there, let me ask you --

- Who is presented as perhaps the most honored woman in the Bible? **Mary**.  
Say it with me - MARY
- Who was chosen out of all the women in the whole world to raise God's Son?  
**MARY**.
- Who is the greatest living, breathing example in God's Word of the Proverbs 31 woman in ordinary everyday life? **MARY**.

- o Without exception, who is probably the most beloved and best-known woman in the world, from the Bible? **MARY**.

But even as we all say that, the veneration of Mary is not in God's Word. The elevation of Mary to a co-mediator role is not in God's Word. The example we see around the world of what may be called "Mary worship" is not in God's Word.

And all of the false teaching about Mary that goes on starts with the three primary teachings about Mary – never found in Scriptures.

- **The Immaculate conception** ("in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.");
- **The Perpetual Virginity** (stated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in AD 553 "holy and glorious Mary, mother of God and **ever-virgin...**");
- **The Bodily Assumption.** ("We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory." With these words, Pope Pius XII formally declared, in 1950, the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven to be a dogma of the Catholic Church.")

None of these three dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church are found in God's Word.

### **JESUS NEVER TAUGHT ANY FORM OF VENERATION OR ELEVATION OF MARY.**

*Let's be perfectly clear: It is a form of idolatry to bestow on Mary honor, titles, or attributes that in effect give her a coequal status in the redemptive work of her Son or elevate her as a special object of veneration. Nonetheless, Christ loved and honored His mother as a mother. He fulfilled the fifth commandment as perfectly as He fulfilled them all. And part of the responsibility of honoring one's parents is the duty to see that they are cared for in their old age. Christ did not neglect that duty.*

### **JESUS NEVER ELEVATED MARY TO A SPECIAL PLACE DURING HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY:**

Jesus is never recorded in the Scriptures as ever calling Mary His Mother; He does call her Woman twice in public. Once is in this week's text.

*The expression conveys no disrespect. But it does underscore the fact that Christ was much more to Mary than a Son. He was her Savior, too (cf. Luke 1:47). Mary was no sinless co-redemptrix. She was as dependent on divine grace as the lowliest of sinners, and after Christ reached adulthood, her relationship to Him was the same as that of any obedient believer to the Lord. She was a disciple; He was the Master.*

### **JESUS NEVER ALLOWED OTHERS TO ELEVATE MARY TO A SPECIAL PLACE:**

*Christ Himself rebuked those who wanted to elevate Mary to a place of extraordinary veneration: "A certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed*

*You!' But He said, 'More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!' "(Luke 11:27–28). Mary was blessed because she was obedient to the Word of God—the same as any other believer. Her position as Christ's mother did not carry with it any special titles such as co-mediatrix, queen of heaven, or any of the other forms of deification medieval superstition has attached to the popular concept of Mary<sup>1</sup>.*

- Only Jesus is to be worshipped says Jesus, Peter and the angels of Heaven. Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall **worship the Lord your God**, and Him only you shall serve.' "
- Acts 10:25-26 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet **and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."**
- Revelation 19:10 And **I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!** For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Please stand as we read Mark 3.31-35 and pray.

What is the Role that Mary, the mother of Jesus is to have in the church? What was her role to the church in Christ's time, and since? To answer that look around at the world today. [In Italy there is a famous church with a crucifix on which Jesus is hanging dead. On the other side of the cross is Mary also crucified. How could that be? That is Roman Catholic dogma. That dogma is that Mary is the co-redemptrix of the human race because with Christ she ransomed mankind from the power of Satan. Jesus redeemed us with the blood of His body, Mary with the agonies of her heart. This is quoting directly from Roman Catholic doctrine. It is really sad that people who love God and are seeking Him with their whole heart are deluded to think that that is true.](#)

To help everyone understand why we need to study God's Word about Mary and the unbiblical veneration of her that goes on around the world, let me read one of the most well known, well accepted, and widely used prayer card with 15 promises to those who offer prayers addressed as often as possible to Mary.

This is actually the second point of what I taught through 5 years ago in the study of the Book of Revelation. It is available in print and audio form online, in our library, and at the Resource Center. I called it ***Seven Reasons Why I am not a Roman Catholic***. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of those 7 reasons we learned.

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<sup>1</sup> These three paragraphs are quoted from MacArthur, J. 2000. *The Murder of Jesus : A study of how Jesus died*. Includes index. Word Pub.: Nashville, TN  
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# THE SECOND FALSE ROMAN CATHOLIC TEACHING IS THE DOCTRINE OF MARY

I have an official Rosary card from the Patrick J. Hayes (11.30.1867-9.4.1938), Archbishop of New York City. (Given to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan), These promises were given to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan de la Roche, one of the Dominican Fathers at the monastery at Dinan, in Brittany, France. He was an eminent theologian and a famous preacher in the 13th century. I checked and these 15 Promises from Mary are on 16,300 different websites in Google. This is pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II. They have the official seal of Rome called the Imprimatur: Patrick J. Hayes, D.D., and Archbishop of New York).

## THE FIFTEEN PROMISES OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY:

The 1<sup>st</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the rosary shall receive signal graces.”*** (The Roman Catholic Church defines these as – “Signal Graces are those special and unique Graces to help sanctify us in our state in life.”)

- o Jesus said that the way we are sanctified is through God's Word. John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
- o Paul said it is God who sanctifies. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.”***

- o I really admire Mary, she is probably one of the Godliest women that ever walked this planet. I think that Protestants are afraid of her. Mary is not omnipresent, omniscient or omnipotent. She does not know we are discussing her right now. I can pray through all the beads in the world I want and she cannot protect me.
- o Only God is omnipresent, omniscient or omnipotent. That is part of His eternal nature. Don't ascribe the attributes of God to a woman, born a sinner just like all of us were. Part of the myth of Romanism is that Mary is not sinful but she is just as much a sinner as you and I are. She had to be saved by the same grace of God that saves us.

1. **Omnipresence** means God is everywhere present. More specifically, omnipresence may be defined as “God, in the totality of his essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication or division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts.” Psalm 139: 7–12 explains the omnipresence of God. From the highest heaven to the depths of the earth and sea—God is everywhere present. There is no escaping God's presence. Psalm 139: 7-12 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the

morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

2. **Omniscience** means that God has all knowledge. A more comprehensive definition will state that God knows all things actual and possible, past, present, and future, in one eternal act. God knows all things that exist in actuality (Ps. 139: 1–6; 147: 4; Matt. 6: 8; 10: 28–30). God knows all future events. He knows the events that will yet transpire upon the earth (Matt. 24-25; Rev. 6–19).
3. **Omnipotence** signifies that God is all powerful. A proper definition states: "God is all-powerful and able to do whatever he wills. Since his will is limited by his nature, God can do everything that is in harmony with his perfections." Because God is Almighty, all things are possible (Matt. 19: 26). The One who has formed the unborn child (Ps. 139: 13–16) and created the heavens (Jer. 32: 17) can do all things; nothing is too hard for Him. He does as He pleases (Ps. 115: 3) and decrees all things in accordance with His will (Eph. 1: 11).<sup>2</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: **"The rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell; it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies."**

- o No it won't. The armor against Hell is found in Ephesians 6.13-17: Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..."
- o We are to be clothed in Christ, not Mary: Romans 13: 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.
- o We wear Christ's righteousness, not Mary's: 1 Corinthians 1: 30-31 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

The 4<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: **"It will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the World and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things."**

- o We are sanctified by Christ's word, and His Word, not Mary's. John 17: 17 says, "<sup>17</sup>Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." 1Thessalonians 5.23 "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely..." Mary cannot sanctify me.
- o Romans 8: 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

The 5<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: **"The soul, which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish."**

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2 Enns, Paul, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press) 1996.

- o John 3:16 says, **“<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** I thought only Jesus could give everlasting life. Has Mary also become a perfect sacrifice for sin with omnipotent power?
- o John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
- o 1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The 6<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just, he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.”***

- o Only Jesus is worthy, none of us are worthy of anything but eternal death. Listen to the united voice of all the saints in Heaven in Revelation 4-5.
- o Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”
- o Revelation 5:2-12 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, **“Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”** 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because **no one was found worthy** to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying:

**“You are worthy** to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice:

**“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”**

The 7<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“Whoever shall have a true devotion for the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.”***

- o Sacraments (as defined by Romanism), never are spoken of or detailed in God's Word.

The 8<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“Those who are faithful to recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plenitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.”***

- John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”
- Do you know what that is? The super-arrogation of the saints which means that some people are good enough on earth and do enough good works to not only get them into Heaven but some of that spills over into a great chalice in Heaven which is the repository of the super-arrogated merits of the saints. This is a superstition that people who are called saints had enough to get to Heaven plus some extra for others. They say that if you pray the Rosary, God or Mary will take a dipper of their good works and pour it on you to help you get out of purgatory faster.

The 9<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary.”***

- Not deliver from going there, but not stay there forever. Where in the Bible is any mention of purgatory?
- Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

The 10<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in Heaven.”***

- Mark 10:40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

The 11<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the rosary.”***

- Listen to Jesus speak about prayer:
  1. Matthew 18:19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning ***anything that they ask, it will be done for them*** by My Father in heaven.
  2. Matthew 21:22 And ***whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.***”
  3. Luke 11:9 “So I say to you, ***ask, and it will be given to you***; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
  4. John 14:14 ***If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.***
  5. John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, ***that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.***
  6. John 16:23-24 “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, ***whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*** 24

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. ***Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.***

7. 1 John 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, ***that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*** 15 And if we know that He hears us, ***whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.***

The 12<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“All those who propagate the holy rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.”***

- o Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- o Matthew 28:20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.
- o Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The 13<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.”***

- o 1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,
- o Hebrews 7:24-25 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

The 14<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“All who recite the rosary are my son, and brothers of my only son Jesus Christ.”***

- o Mark 3:31-35 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” 33 But **He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?”** 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 **For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”**
- o Mary had other children—James and Jude who wrote books of the New Testament were her sons.

The 15<sup>th</sup> PROMISE OF MARY TO CHRISTIANS WHO RECITE THE ROSARY: ***“Devotion of my rosary is a great sign of predestination.”***

- o This is blasphemous. This shows the depths to which human ingenuity has fabricated a way to get around the simplicity of the Gospel.
- o 2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

- o 1 Peter 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

“Grace be unto you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” is what the Scriptures say.

But listen to how the Council of Trent continues:

Mary is co-redemptrix of the human race...because with Christ she ransomed mankind from the power of Satan. Jesus redeemed us with the blood of His body, Mary with the agonies of her heart...The church and the saints greet her thus: “You, O Mary, together with Jesus Christ, redeemed us.”...God has ordained that no grace will be granted to us except through Mary...No one will be saved or obtain mercy except through you, O Heavenly Lady. ...No one will enter Heaven without passing through Mary as one would pass through a door. ...O Mary, our salvation is in your hands, etc.

We are all exposed to the deadly SIN virus.

The Divine Physician had to make a cure and that involved getting a pure and virus free blood to offer as payment for the sin of the world – and that is exactly what He did in Christ.

Christ's blood is all that can wash us clean from our garments stained with the leprosy of sin.

Back to Mark 3.28 -- Jesus made the incredible promise that *people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter*. Too often people miss this promise and worry about the warning in the next verse. But the fact is, those who believe in Jesus will be forgiven of all sins (evil acts, wrong actions, good actions not done, evil thoughts, evil motives, etc.) and of all blasphemies (evil words said against God). When there is confession and repentance, no sin is beyond God's forgiveness.

- ALL OUR SINS ARE COVERED – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. Psalm 103:3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; Colossians 1:14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; 1 John 2:12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. NO STAIN OF SIN IS TOO DEEP FOR CHRIST'S BLOOD TO CLEANSE. Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.
- ALL WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS HAVE THE PENALTY OF ALL THEIR SINS REMOVED FOREVER. Acts 13:39 and by Him everyone who believes is **justified from all things** from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. This verse helps us to define God's incredible grace. We learn that no sin can block His loving forgiveness – no evil, no stain, no corruption, no secret, no defilement, none can stay His mighty Hand. All we are asked to do is to *confess our sins and turn away from them. He lovingly forgives us because we have placed our trust in Jesus. The person*

*that has ruined our life, soiled our name, harmed our loved one – we can hardly imagine forgiving—but God can and does. Those who wound us deeply and repeatedly, those who mar and scar our lives, those who attack and pursue us for harm – we rarely forget. Yet God can and does forgive and forget. As God says in the Psalms “If God should keep track of all our sins – none of us would stand. Yet He forgives without condemning, He pays without asking for repayment. When we confess and receive His forgiveness we see God at His best. God so loves that He sent the Only One who could ever earn, merit, or accomplish our forgiveness – Jesus. And when Jesus forgives us the greatest miracle of all takes place! Jesus invites any and all to that life-changing offer – come to Me and by my Cross I will gladly and fully forgive your sins.*

#### FIVE GREEK WORDS FOR SIN:

1. SHOOT AWRY - HAMARTIA in the New Testament [#266] 174 x and most often translated “sin” means to ‘miss the mark’. It is the most often used word for sin in the NT. A word picture is to shoot an arrow and miss the mark. All are guilty of hamartia [Romans 3:23] and fall short. Our target is of course the perfection of God. [Matthew 6:48]. This holds the idea of our inability, helplessness to hit God’s mark.
  2. STEP ACROSS - PARABASIS used 7 x in the New Testament [#3847] means ‘to step across the line’ and is most often translated in English “transgression”. God is the one who has drawn the line between right and wrong. sin is when we cross that line. This is a bit more flagrant, planned incursion into the area off limits. As in Gal 3:19 and I Tim 2:14.
  3. SERIOUS REBELLION - ANOMIA means lawlessness. Used 15 x in the New Testament [#458] it is most often translated “iniquity” as in Mt. 7:23. This is an open, violent rebellion against God’s way. it is a serious progression.
  4. SWEPT AWAY - PARAPTOMA used 23 x in the New Testament [#3900] and often translated “offense” or “trespass” means ‘to slip or fall’. In Matthew 6:14-15 it is translated “trespass”. It is the idea of being taken in the passion of the moment and yielding to the desire, whatever it may be.
  5. SUNK IN DEBT - OPTHEILMA is the word “debt” used 2 x in the New Testament [#3783] as in Matthew 6:12. It speaks of sin as a failure to pay God what is due. The meaning from the uses in the NT is that every time we sin we owe God a consequence to that sin. As Revelation 20:11-12 says, the record books will be opened. All whose debts are outstanding will pay for them eternally. Only Jesus can wipe out, satisfy your debt.
- ALL CONFESSED SIN IS FORGIVEN SIN. 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.

The importance of forgiveness is a constant theme of Scripture. There are no less than seventy-five different word pictures about forgiveness in the Bible. They help us grasp the importance, the nature, and the effects of forgiveness<sup>3</sup>.

- To Forgive Is To Turn The Key, Open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free.
- To Forgive Is To Write In Large Letters across a debt, “Nothing owed”
- To Forgive Is To Pound The Gavel In a courtroom and declare, “Not guilty!”

<sup>3</sup> John Nieder and Thomas Thompson, *Forgive and Love Again* [Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest House, 1991], p. 48.

- To Forgive Is To Shoot An Arrow So high and so far that it can never be found again.
  - To Forgive Is To Bundle Up All The garbage and trash and dispose of it, leaving the house clean and fresh.
  - To Forgive Is To Loose The Moorings Of a ship and release it to the open sea.
  - To Forgive Is To Grant A Full Pardon to a condemned criminal.
  - To Forgive Is To Relax A Stranglehold On a wrestling opponent.
  - To Forgive Is To Sandblast A Wall Of graffiti, leaving it looking like new.
  - To Forgive Is To Smash A Clay Pot into a thousand pieces so it can never be pieced together again.
- ALL WHO ARE FORGIVEN ARE TO LEAVE THEIR SINS – BUT LEAVING OUR SINS IS NOT A CONDITION FOR FORGIVENESS. Look at John 8. *“This is why the ending of the story of Jesus and the woman trapped in adultery is so important, though it is often overlooked. [Having forgiven her, Jesus] added, “Go now and leave your life of sin.” This always follows upon forgiveness.... If we are saved, we must stop sinning. At the same time, we can be grateful that Jesus spoke as he did. For we notice that he did not say, “Leave your life of sin, and I will not condemn you.” If he had said that, what hope for us could there be? Our problem is precisely that we do sin. There could be no forgiveness if forgiveness was based upon our ceasing to sin. Instead of that, Jesus actually spoke in the reverse order. First, he granted forgiveness freely, without any conceivable link to our performance. Forgiveness is granted only on the merit of his atoning death. But then, having forgiven us freely, Jesus tells us with equal force to stop sinning<sup>4</sup>.*

FOUR HEBREW WORDS FOR SIN IN PSALM 32: Sin is such an offense to God that He has to use 15 different words in the Hebrew Old Testament just to describe it. Four of them are here in David’s song. When David stole his neighbor Uriah’s little ewe lamb for his already overflowing banqueting table he defied the rules God had laid down. HE WAS:

1. DEFYING GOD’S RULE IS SIN. Transgression (Peshah): 'a going away', 'departure', *passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited*, or 'rebellion' against God and his authority. This is a picture of a relationship with God that is rebelled against. OUR TRANSGRESSIONS MUST BE PULLED OFF: “Forgiven” means literally to have our sin lifted off. *nesui*, borne away, i.e., by a vicarious sacrifice; for *bearing sin*, or *bearing away sin*, always implies this. As Pilgrim it rolls off and into Christ's tomb. "My sin oh the bliss . . .". We are being crushed by any sins we keep around. They suffocate, smother and squish the very life of our soul. But there is a Redeemer who can set us free. And to his only hope, David fled. God cleansed David’s Sin that smothers: now they were forgiven “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven”
2. MISSING GOD’S MARK IS SIN. (*chattath*) is same as hamartia in Greek 'coming short' or 'falling short' as in an arrow falling short. The target is God's law and sin is missing the mark on the target. This is a picture of failing to measure up to God's Divine Law. *Sin, chataah*. The *second* signifies the *missing of a mark*, not doing what was commanded; but is often taken to express *sinfulness*, or sin in the future, producing transgression in the life. *SIN, chataah*, must be *covered, kesui*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. Whose sin is covered. “Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy-seat, as Noah was covered from

<sup>4</sup> James M. Boice, *Amazing Grace, Wheaton: Tyndale, 1993, 41-42.*

the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit!" (Spurgeon) WE MUST BE SHEILDED FROM OUR SINS: "Covered" speaks of the strong imagery in the events of the day of atonement. On that day the High priest took the blood of an animal and sprinkled it onto the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the presence of God portrayed by the outstretched arms of the cherubim. Beneath the lid of the ark was the tablets portraying God's divine law. In essence, the blood stood between a holy God and the sinners who broke His law, averting His wrath. David cried for joy when the wrath of God was turned away from him. So our sins are covered away by the blood of Jesus shed for us! God cleansed David's Sin that soils: now they were covered by the cleansing blood. "Whose sin is covered"

3. DEFACING GOD'S IMAGE IS SIN. Iniquity (hawon) means 'corrupt' or 'twisted' or 'crooked'. This word pictures what sin does to us inside as it warps and ruins us. *Iniquity, avon*. The *third* signifies *what is turned out of its proper course or situation; any thing morally distorted or perverted. Iniquity, what is contrary to equity or justice.* INIQUITY, *anon*, which is *perverse* or *distorted*, must not be imputed, *lo yachshob*, must *not be reckoned to his account*. THE LEDGER OF OUR WAYWARDNESS CLEARED OUT: "Not Counted" speaks of a list of debts no longer held against us. David had become utterly bankrupted by his sin. The bills were piling up, mounting like a flood and drowning him. Desire, deceit, cruel deception, cunning craftiness and shameless murder all charged heavy debts to his soul. And now in sheer delight all the mountain of impossible debt is cleared from the ledger. "My sins are gone, and shall not be remembered, God in mercy tenderly forgives." God cleansed David's Sin that steals: now they were not imputed to his account as debts. "2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" Note that 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 its barkings forever 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" (Spurgeon)
4. DECEIVING GOD'S PEOPLE IS SIN. David says "guile" and he means it. He was hunted down by the Holy Spirit, haunted by his own conscience through the night watches, but haughty and "business as usual" in the daytime. *Guile, remiyah*. The *fourth* signifies *fraud, deceit, guile*, etc. To remove these evils, *three* acts are mentioned: *forgiving, covering*, and *not imputing*. *GUILE, remiyah*, must be annihilated from the soul: *In whose spirit there is no GUILE*. God cleansed David's Sin that slithers: now there was no guile. "And in whose spirit there is no deceit."

The man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.<sup>5</sup>

By nature God is forgiving. The Old Testament abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.

- David declared, "For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee" (Ps. 86:5).
- In another psalm he reminds us that God pardons all our iniquities. Psalm 103:3,12 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

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<sup>5</sup>Clarke, Adam, *Clarke's Commentary: Psalms*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 1999.

- Daniel said, “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness” (Dan. 9:9).
- God described Himself to Moses as, “the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin” (Ex. 34:6–7).
- Micah extolled the Lord, saying, Micah 7:18–19 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

That is the essence of the gospel: God’s divine and gracious provision for the forgiveness of man’s sin. In Christ, Paul says, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7; cf. Col. 1:14). John assures us that, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” and that our “sins are forgiven [us] for His name’s sake” (1 John 1:9; 2:12).

No matter how severe the sin, God can forgive it. The worst conceivable sin would be to kill God’s own Son—and that while He was on earth for the very purpose of providing salvation from sin and the way to everlasting life. Nothing could possibly be more heinous, vicious, and wicked than that. And, of course, killing Him is exactly what men did to the Son of God. Yet, while hanging on the cross and about to die, Jesus prayed and affirmed the forgiving mercy available to His executioners, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

- The *degree* of sin does not forfeit forgiveness, because even killing the Son of God was forgivable.
- Nor does the *volume* of sin end the possibility of mercy. A seventy-year-old profligate who has lived a life of debauchery, stealing, lying, profanity, blasphemy, and immorality is just as forgivable as a seven-year-old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood haughtiness.
- Nor does the particular *kind* of sin cancel grace. In Scripture we find God forgiving idolatry, murder, gluttony, fornication, adultery, cheating, lying, homosexuality, covenant breaking, blasphemy, drunkenness, extortion, and every other kind of sin imaginable. He forgives self-righteousness, which is the deceiving sin of thinking that one has no sin. He even forgives the sin of rejecting Christ; otherwise no one could be saved, because before salvation *everyone*, to some degree, is a Christ rejecter. There is no forgiveness of even the smallest sin unless it is confessed and repented of; but there is forgiveness of even the greatest sin if those divine conditions are met.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, J. 1989. *Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago