

# David: How Does God Completely Forgive?

## PSALM 32

The Miracle of Complete Forgiveness is wonderful, but how did God do such a thing?

This evening we will start a look at our salvation and how God accomplished the once and for all sacrifice of Christ for our sins. But we will do it in a way that is very unusual. We will look in Heaven and see what the final results of our salvation will be. But first look at the grand song of David.

### HEY—LOOK AT THIS

Psalm 32 is his personal testimony. David nicely summarizes what God did for him in this Psalm with the use of an emphasis word SELAH. In today's language it means, "Hey, look at this!" Let's look at what God did.

Psalm 32: 1-11 A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.

Psalm 32: 1-4 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah [Look at this--**God convicted me and forgave me**]

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah [Look at this--**God heard my confession and forgave me**]

Psalm 32:6-7 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah [Look at this--**God offers me refuge in His forgiveness**]

Psalm 32:8-11 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And

shout for joy, all you upright in heart! NKJV [Look at this--**God will keep me**]

David was 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.

David experienced all this because by nature God is forgiving. The Old Testament abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.

- 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).
- 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.
- Daniel said, “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness” (Dan. 9:9).
- 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.

## ALL SINS ARE FORGIVABLE

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 naughtiness.
- 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>1</sup>

So to see how God accomplished complete forgiveness of our sins through Christ's sacrifice—turn with me to our final destination—heaven!

Where would we find that? Most of us would turn to Revelation, but an even clearer picture of that wonderful city we are headed towards is actually in Hebrews 12. Please open there with me!

## THE FUTURE OF THE FORGIVEN

What awaits all of us who have experienced the Miracle of Complete Forgiveness? Hebrews 12 tells us these precious realities.

1. WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ENTER THE CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS: those completely forgiven come to the *city of God*—"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God" (v. 22a). The longing of our hearts as throughout our earthly lives we were pilgrims and strangers always waiting for and looking for this city God was preparing for us.
  - Mount Zion was the location of the city of Melchisadek, the site of Abraham's offering of Isaac and the later Jebusite stronghold that David captured. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant to this place he made Jerusalem the spiritual center of his kingdom—the place of God's presence with his people.
  - Later as Solomon built the Temple and installed the Ark, Zion/Jerusalem became representative of the earthly dwelling-place of God.
  - As believers we are already citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and have all the privileges of that heavenly citizenship. Remember what Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).
  - As believers we are already seated at the banquet table with Jesus because of our position in Him as Paul wrote, for "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).
  - So as Paul we follow after (keep going slogging through the trench warfare of life) so that we can arrive at the goal already ours through the upward call of Christ Jesus!
2. WE THE FORGIVEN WILL SEE THE COUNTLESS ANGELS: those completely forgiven

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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

meet *angels*—"You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly" (v. 22b). At last we get to meet all those who watched over us while we went through this life—mighty flaming spirits, "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (1:14).

- Moses tells us that "myriads of holy ones" attended the giving of the Law (Deuteronomy 33:2), and from Daniel we hear that "Thousands upon thousands attended him [the Ancient of Days—God]; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Daniel 7:10).
- David said, "The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands" (Psalm 68:17).
- So seldom do we even reflect upon God's special ministers who are as Kent Hughes writes "passing in and out of our lives, moving around us and over us just as they did Jacob of old. Sometimes they protect God's elect—
  - (i) for example, the "tall men in shining garments" who surrounded Mr. and Mrs. John G. Paton years ago in the New Hebrides—
  - (ii) or the "tall soldiers with shining faces" who protected missionary Marie Monsen in North China—
  - (iii) or, on another occasion, the "huge men dressed in white with flaming swords" who surrounded the Rift Valley Academy—
  - (iv) and on another the "hundreds of men dressed in white, with swords and shields" who stood guard over a hut shielding Clyde Taylor, who would one day found the National Association of Evangelicals.
  - (v) Olive Fleming Liefeld in her book *Unfolding Destinies* tells how two young Auca Indians, Dawa and Kimo, heard singing after witnessing the martyrdom of the five missionaries in the jungles of Ecuador: "As they looked up over the tops of the trees they saw a large group of people. They were all singing, and it looked as if there were a hundred flashlights."
  - (vi) But the grand emphasis of our passage is not so much the angels' care of us, but rather our joining them in festal assembly. The word translated "joyful assembly" was used in ancient culture to describe the great national assemblies and sacred games of the Greeks. Whereas at Mount Sinai the angels blew celestial trumpets that terrified God's people, we are to see ourselves on Mount Zion as dressed in festal attire and worshiping in awe side by side with these shining beings!"<sup>2</sup>

3. WE THE FORGIVEN WILL JOIN THE SAINTS OF ALL TIME: those completely forgiven come to *fellow-believers*—"to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven" (v. 23a). Hebrews tells us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, so with Him we are sharing in the inheritance promised us by God the Father.

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<sup>2</sup> Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993. electronic edition, in loc.

- In the ancient world all the rights of inheritance go to the firstborn. Because we are purchased by Christ and completely forgiven—we are “co-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).
  - Bishop Westcott says we are “a society of ‘eldest sons’ of God.” There are no second or third or fourth sons and daughters in the church. We all get the big inheritance! Plus our names are written in Heaven along with the all of those who are already there. In other words, we are all the Body of Christ! They are there awaiting us as we come one by one escorted by Christ. One with Him, brothers and sisters we are united until His entire family has safely made it home. Then Christ can celebrate communion with us when all are safely home.
4. WE THE FORGIVEN WILL BE WITH OUR ALMIGHTY GOD: those completely forgiven come to *God the ALMIGHTY*—“You have come to God, the judge of all men” (v. 23b). At last we come before the God of the Universe. What an awesome moment to be transported before Him.
- The writer of Hebrews has already said that “nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (4:13).
  - Plus he said that God is dreadfully powerful, “ ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:30, 31).
  - But as we learned in Revelation, we come led by the nail scarred Hand of Jesus to meet our Heavenly Father--because Jesus paid it all. This is our *highest delight*—to gather before God! It is a miracle of grace.
  - Look for a moment at what will happen then as recorded in Revelation 3:5.as Jesus tells us, “...but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”?

## FACE TO FACE WITH JESUS

To be taken by the hand by the Lord Jesus, to be led up past the marshaled ranks of the angels, up along the golden boulevards of glory, up past the cherubim and the seraphim, up, up to the throne of God Himself and to hear the Lord Jesus call you by your name and present you in person as His well beloved!

Then to hear the Father say, “Bring the best robe and put it on him.” Think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light.

What a reward for all of us who have been completely forgiven--to have a robe like that draped around our shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways of glory in light transfigured clothes. We have joined all the saints of all the ages home at last with our God.

### FACE TO FACE (#549)

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,  
Face to face—what will it be,  
When with rapture I behold Him,  
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!

Only faintly now I see Him,  
With the darkened veil between,  
But a blessed day is coming,  
When His glory shall be seen.

Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!

What rejoicing in His presence,  
When are banished grief and pain;  
When the crooked ways are straightened,  
And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!

Face to face—oh, blissful moment!  
Face to face—to see and know;  
Face to face with my Redeemer,  
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!

## **PERFECT AT LAST!**

5. WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ATLAST BE PERFECTED: those completely forgiven come as *saints to heaven*—"to the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (v. 23c). We join in the assembly of the perfected ones, the justified, sanctified and now at last

glorified ones. The hope and longing of all our earthly struggle has been realized. We are finally free from sin in all its hideous power and presence.

- We are sharing in that power of an endless life but amazingly by God's plan we get to partake of it together with all the saints of all the ages. Though some will have preceded us by thousands of years God tells us in Hebrews 11:40, "that only together with us would they be made perfect." The Old Testament saints waited for centuries for the perfection we received when we trusted Christ, because that came only with Christ's death—"by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (10: 14). Because of Christ's work we are not one whit inferior to the patriarchs, for through Christ we are all equal in righteousness!

6. **WE THE FORGIVEN WILL BE WITH JESUS OUR SAVIOR:** those completely forgiven come to **JESUS OUR SAVIOR**—"to *Jesus* the mediator of a new covenant" (v. 24a). The writer of Hebrews uses the name given to God the Son at His birth. He is seen in Hebrews as the One who destroyed the Devil 'him that had the power of death'; and who was made like us and has felt our temptations. He is Jesus who invites us to boldly come to the very Throne of God and find grace and mercy. Jesus is the One through whom all things are promised us, given us, and He sustains all things. So here we come to Him who is our all in all. Just like the chorus we often sing declared, we find here to be true.

**ALL IN ALL** (D. Jernigan / Shepherd's Heart music)

You are my strength when I am weak; You are the treasure that I seek--You are my all in all.

You took my sin, my cross, my shame, Rising again, I take your name--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name; Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

Seeking you as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up I'd be a fool, You are my all in all.

When I fall down, you pick me up, When I am dry, you fill my cup--You are my all in all.

Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name. Jesus, you're the Lamb of God, holy is your name.

7. **FINALLY WE THE FORGIVEN WILL ENJOY HIS COMPLETE FORGIVENESS:** those completely forgiven come to eternal forgiveness because of *Christ's blood*—"and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v. 24b). The blood of Abel cried from the ground demanding vengeance; the blood of God the

Son will forever proclaim that we are completely forgiven at an infinite price we were bought by the love of God who gave His only Son to die in our place!

The miracle of complete forgiveness is what Jesus said we are to celebrate in heaven forever! And complete forgiveness that David experienced and sang about in Psalm 32 is #201 in your hymnbook.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,  
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.  
What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,  
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
You that are longing to see his face,  
Will you this moment his grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
**Grace that is greater than all our (MY) sin!**

So God's Word tells us that those who come to Christ are completely forgiven. The writer of Hebrews says it is now our in Christ "you have come" (*right now!*) to these seven realities:

- To the City of God,
- To myriads of angels,
- To fellow-believers,
- To our awesome God,
- To at last be glorified,
- To Jesus our Savior,
- To complete forgiveness.

If this does not create a wellspring of thanksgiving in our hearts and make us want to

march to Zion, what will?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Adapter from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993. electronic edition, in loc.