



Stephen N. Johnson

FORGIVING FOR GOOD (Part 1 of 3)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

One of the most enlightening, encouraging, and incredible passages of Scripture regarding God's forgiveness of all our sins is found in Colossians 2:13-14.

The Good News in these two verses is heartening to anyone discouraged or defeated by recent sins or anyone who labors under the crushing weight of guilt over past sins. The truths of these verses are *glorious*.

Colossians 2:13 "And when you were dead in your transgressions. . . He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions..."

Dead. Dead due to our transgressions. That's where we were when God came to us—where you were when God came to you.

God is the subject of these two verses. Not an angel, not a lesser spirit, not the Holy Spirit, not even Jesus. It is the Almighty God who is acting here; God takes the initiative; God, Who, though we were dead, gives us life.

It's not our doings, not our performance, not our fine faith or nifty works. We were dead. It was there, in the midst of our sin induced death, that God responded to us, giving us life.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Exactly what did God do in forgiving our sins?

Colossians 2:14a ". . . having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us. . . "

A "certificate of debt" was a legal note obligating an indebtedness, such as you sign with a bank when you borrow money. The "decrees," one by one, set forth the specifics of the indebtedness.

In Paul's analogy the "certificate of debt" set forth our indebtedness to God and specified degree by degree, every one of our sins.

But, notice the past tense I use in the preceding paragraph. Why?

Because the note of indebtedness is no more!

The word "canceled out" means "erased." The reference is to letters or documents written on papyrus scrolls. Paper was so rare and precious in ancient days that it was never wadded up and thrown away or shredded as we do today. The words on the page (scroll) were simply erased, rubbed out, wiped off so the paper could be used again. Whatever had been previously written on the paper no longer existed. "Canceled out" also means *to obliterate*.

This is how Paul describes what God has done with any record of our sins. He has rubbed them out, erased them, obliterated them. From where God sits, they are no more. They are gone forever.

But Paul is not finished expressing the Good News.

Not only have the specific sins on the paper been rubbed out, but more, the paper itself no longer exists.

Colossians 2:14b ". . . and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."



God took the certificate from which our sins had been erased, and He (literately) “lifted it up and carried it off.” Where did God carry it? He “nailed it to the cross.” The certificate itself, on which our erased sins were formerly detailed, is no more.

God no longer has certificates of debt. He has the cross!

God no longer catalogues our sins. He forgives!

Our God is no celestial Santa Claus, “making a list and checking it twice; gonna find out who’s naughty or nice.”

He doesn’t make lists. He knows that none are really nice—not nice enough to earn the favor or forgiveness of a Holy God at any rate.

So, He just forgives. He has erased all the records. He has destroyed all the record books. The God of Jesus Christ doesn’t have record books because He is not a bookkeeper. He is a Lover.

Love. That’s why He has done all of this for us.

Because of His great love for us, *God* (no lesser):

- Gives us life.
- Forgives all our transgressions.
- Erases all record of our sins.
- Destroys the record books.

My sin— oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;

My sin not in part, but the whole

Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

You can... rest... assured... that you are forgiven.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Indeed!

*Grace be with you,
Steve Johnson*

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