

## The Remission of Sins

The Greek noun *aphesis* means “remission” or “forgiveness.” The precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ remits and forgives our sins before God the Father: “**For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission [859 aphasis] of sins**” (Mat 26:28); “And that repentance and remission [859 aphasis] of sins should be preached in his name” (Luk 24:47); “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [859 aphasis] of sins” (Act 2:38); “to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness [859 aphasis] of sins” (Act 5:31); “that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission [859 aphasis] of sins” (Act 10:43); “that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness [859 aphasis] of sins” (Act 13:38).

The blood of animals sacrificed under the Old Covenant, however, never remitted or forgave sins: “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should **take away sins**” (Heb 10:4); “the same sacrifices, which can never **take away sins**” (Heb 10:11); “But in those *sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year*” (Heb 10:3). It’s only by Jesus Christ’s precious shed blood that God forgives and remembers our sins no more: “I will make a **new covenant** ... their sins and their iniquities **will I remember no more**” (Heb 8:8, 12), “their sins and iniquities **will I remember no more**. Now where remission [859 aphasis] of these *is, there is no more offering for sin*” (Heb 10:17-18).

The Greek noun *paresis* in “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for **the remission [3929 paresis] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God**” (Rom 3:25), means “passing over” or “letting go.” Under the Old Covenant, the blood of animals covered sins so that God passed over them, “*it is the LORD’S Passover*” (Exo 12:11), “when I see the blood, I will pass over you” (v. 13), “kill the Passover” (v. 21), “*It is the sacrifice of the LORD’S passover*” (v. 27). He forbore His judgment upon the sins committed in the past for His Son to come and remit them, “And for this cause he is the mediator of **the new testament [covenant]**, that by means of death, for **the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament [covenant]**” (Heb 9:15).

Referring to the high priestly duties on the annual day of atonement, the writer of Hebrews calls them *nekros ergon* or “dead actions”: “But into the second **went the**

**high priest alone once every year**” (Heb 9:7), “*Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and **divers washings [909 baptismos]**” (Heb 9:10), “For if **the blood of bulls and of goats**, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience from dead [3498 nekros] works [2041 ergon]** to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:13-14). These “dead actions” are what they had repented and turned away from, “not laying again the foundation of **repentance [3341 metanoia] from dead [3498 nekros] works [2041 ergon]**, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of **baptisms [909 baptismos]**, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment” (Heb 6:1-2). The actions of the high priest were washing himself in water and laying his hands on the scapegoat, “therefore shall he **wash his flesh in water**” (Lev 16:4), “And Aaron shall **lay both his hands** upon the head of the live goat” (v. 21), “And he shall **wash his flesh with water** in the holy place” (v. 24).

When Peter preached the first evangelistic message to his fellow Jewish brethren, he concluded it with, “**Repent [3340 metanoeo]**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission [859 aphasis] of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Act 2:38). His message was for them to turn away from the “dead works” of the law and turn to the blood of the Lord, “**Repent [3340 metanoeo]** ye therefore, and be **converted [1994 epistrepho]**, that **your sins may be blotted out**” (Act 3:19). The Greek *epistrepho* means “to turn” as in “turned [1994 epistrepho] unto the Lord” (Act 9:35, 11:21).

The importance of this is because Paul concluded, “Therefore **we conclude** that a man is **justified by faith [faithfulness] without the deeds [actions] of the law**” (Rom 3:28). In context his conclusion is that justification is by Christ’s faithfulness to shed His blood for our sins, “the righteousness of God through **the faithfulness of Jesus Christ**” (3:22 NET), “the justifier of the one who lives because of **Jesus’ faithfulness**” (3:26 NET), without the “dead actions” of shedding the blood of animals. However, it’s being falsely taught to mean “faith alone” without meritorious “works.” What was meant to be a plea to the Jews to turn away from the “dead actions” of the law and unto Christ’s faithfulness, is being used to keep people from obeying Christ’s commandments under the deception of only needing to believe some facts are true—faith alone. It’s a sinister falsehood that’s damning the souls of untold multitudes.