



The God of
Forgiveness
and Pardons

The God of Forgiveness and Pardons

One of the attributive names for God is Eloha S^elichōt (s'leechot with a guttural "ch" and a long "o"), literally God of Pardons (see Insight on next page). The name is found only once in Scripture but its significance is powerful. In Nehemiah 8 the Jewish people living in Judah gathered together in Jerusalem on the 1st day of the seventh month. Ezra the scribe read the Law and the Word of God convicted the hearts of the people. They wept and grieved over their sins but afterward they celebrated the Feast of Booths for 8 days, recalling the Lord's setting them free from slavery.

On the 24th of that month they returned and a proclamation was written and read to the people. This ancient document of corporate confession is found in Nehemiah 9:5-38. For our study we'll look at verses 5-17.

Directions

OBSERVATION

Read Nehemiah 9:5-17.

Mark each reference to **God**, including pronouns, with a triangle 

Also mark the word **but** in verses 16 and 17 drawing a line / through it.

Nehemiah 9:5-17

- 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah, said,
“Arise, bless the LORD your God forever and ever!
O may Your glorious name be blessed
And exalted above all blessing and praise!
- 6 “You alone are the LORD.
You have made the heavens,
The heaven of heavens with all their host,
The earth and all that is on it,
The seas and all that is in them.
You give life to all of them
And the heavenly host bows down before You.
- 7 “You are the LORD God,
Who chose Abram
And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees,
And gave him the name Abraham.
- 8 “You found his heart faithful before You,
And made a covenant with him

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To give him the land of the Canaanite,
Of the Hittite and the Amorite,
Of the Perizzite, the Jebusite and the Girgashite—
To give it to his descendants.
And You have fulfilled Your promise,
For You are righteous.

9 “You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,
And heard their cry by the Red Sea.

10 “Then You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
Against all his servants and all the people of his land;
For You knew that they acted arrogantly toward them,
And made a name for Yourself as it is this day.

11 “You divided the sea before them,
So they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground;
And their pursuers You hurled into the depths,
Like a stone into raging waters.

12 “And with a pillar of cloud You led them by day,
And with a pillar of fire by night
To light for them the way In which they were to go.

13 “Then You came down on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven;
You gave them just ordinances and true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.

14 “So You made known to them Your holy sabbath,
And laid down for them commandments, statutes and law,
Through Your servant Moses.

15 “You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger,
You brought forth water from a rock for them for their thirst,
And You told them to enter in order to possess
The land which You swore to give them.

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- 16 “But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly;
They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments.
- 17 “They refused to listen,
And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them;
So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.
But You are a God of forgiveness,
Gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness;
And You did not forsake them.

INSIGHT

The phrase *God of forgiveness* in verse 17 translates the Hebrew phrase *Eloha S^elichōt*, essentially the singular masculine noun “God” (the plural is *Elohim*) followed by the plural feminine noun “pardons” or “forgivenesses.” This occurrence of “God” immediately followed by a second attributive noun is normal Hebrew construction for ascribing attributes to God. The plural noun here emphasizes that God forgives multiple times; He’s the God of pardons (forgivenesses). The word “*S^elichā!*” (“Pardon [me]!”) is a common courtesy used by Hebrew-speaking Jews today.

The noun “forgiveness” is used in two other places:

PSALM 130:3-4

“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is *forgiveness* with You, That You may be feared.”

DANIEL 9:9

“To the Lord our God belong compassion and *forgiveness*, for we have rebelled against Him;

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

What did you learn about God from these verses?

Sum up verses 5-15 with a phrase.

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The word *but* in verses 16 and 17 indicates a contrast. What does verse 16 contrast with?

What is contrasted in verse 17?

How is God described in verse 17?

Why is this important according to the context?

APPLICATION

What do you need forgiveness for?

Who do you need to forgive?

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THINK ABOUT IT

How forgiven are we?

*“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”
(Psalm 103:12)*

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The Pharisees knew that God forgave which is why they were upset when Jesus went beyond

Luke 5:17-26

- 17 One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. 18 And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him.
- 19 But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.
- 20 Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”
- 21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”
- 22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts?
- 23 “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?
- 24 “But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—He said to the paralytic—“I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.”
- 25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.
- 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”
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You can see in vv. 21 and 22 above that the scribes and Pharisees took Jesus' statement "Your sins are forgiven you" to be an act of God.

2. If we truly belong to Jesus, we will forgive as God did: "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Matthew 6:12-15

- 12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'
- 14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Colossians 2:13

- 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Colossians 3:13

- 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

If you are never injured, attacked, or falsely accused and forgive, how will you show "the God of forgivenesses" to a lost world desperately in need of His touch?

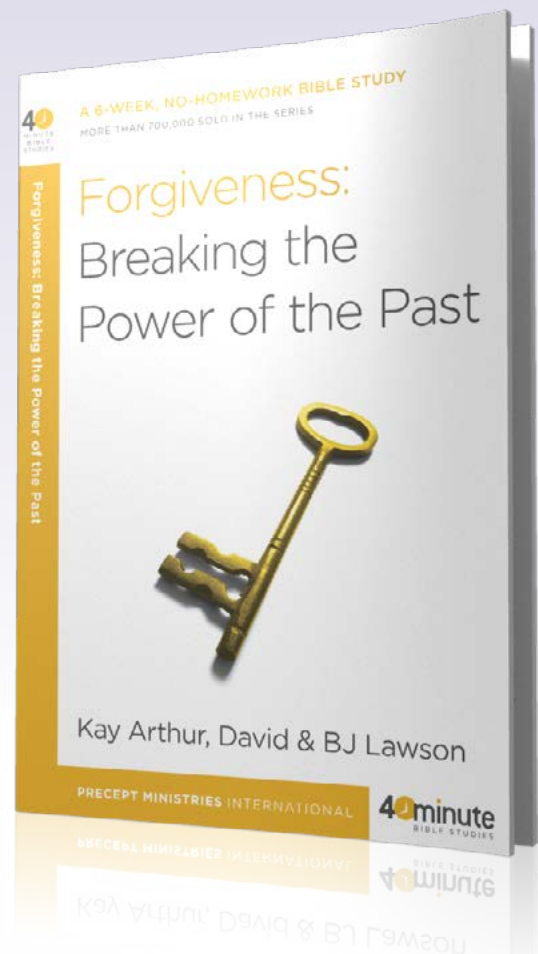
Forgiveness: Breaking the Power of the Past

by Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

Unleash the Healing Power of Forgiveness

As imperfect people living in an imperfect world, we eventually confront in nearly every relationship the need to extend or receive forgiveness. But when the wounds run deep, forgiveness doesn't come easy.

This eye-opening study deals with the difficult questions of forgiveness, including How can I forgive when the pain is so great? Does forgiving mean I have to forget the past? and What if I choose not to forgive? As you dig into what the Bible says on this vital topic, you'll encounter the depths of God's own mercy and discover how choosing forgiveness can free you from a painful past and propel you toward being all that God intends you to be.



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