



And Did Not Forsake Them

Nehemiah 9:16-21



- Be good enough to forgive people, but don't be stupid enough to trust them again. (Internet Meme)
- We give ourselves an excuse to dismiss those who have hurt us.
- Forgive and Forget
 - We often infer from this colloquialism, that sins are dismissed but there are no responsibilities on the part of the one who forgives
 - In fact, we are often consoled by thinking that we've done an extraordinary thing in forgiving the offender



- And often counseled that having forgiven, we not only have no further responsibilities, but should no longer the offender to have a place in our lives if we can help it.
- Does our concept of forgiveness differ from God's teaching/forgiveness because we often forsake those who sin against us?



- Nehemiah's Summary of God's Care for Israel During the Exodus (Nehemiah 9:9-15)
- "And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and
- heard their cry at the Red Sea, 10 and
- performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers.
- And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day.



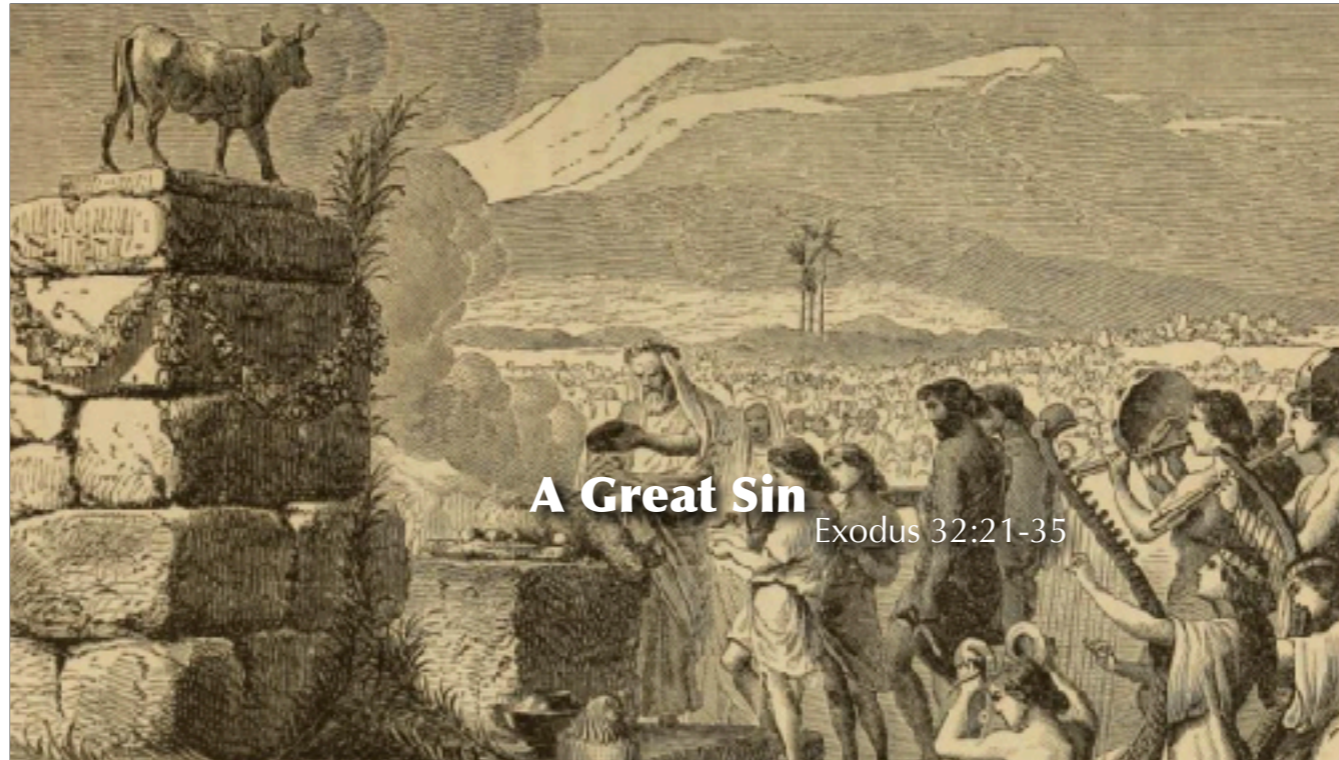
- 11 And you divided the sea before them,
- so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land,
- and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters.
- 12 By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and
- by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go.



- 13 You came down on Mount Sinai and
- spoke with them from heaven and
- gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments,
- 14 and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and
- commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant.



- 15 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and
- brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and
- you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them.



A Great Sin

Exodus 32:21-35

- The Great Sin of Israel (Exodus 32:21-35) (21, 30, 31)
- 21 And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?” 22 And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. 23 For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ 24 So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”



A Great Sin

Exodus 32:21-35

- 25 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD'S side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. 27 And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’” 28 And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. 29 And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”



- 30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” 31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” 33 But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. 34 But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”
- 35 Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.



- Nehemiah's Summary of Their Sin (Nehemiah 9:16-18)
- 16 "But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. 17 They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. 18 Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, 'This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,' and had committed great blasphemies,
 - blasphemies
 - (CWSB Dictionary) A feminine noun referring to blasphemy, aspersion. It indicates a disrespecting rejection and harmful attack by words and deeds against someone, especially God or His laws (Neh. 9:18, 26); or His holy land (Ezek. 35:12).
 - (TWOT) Our root signifies the action or attitude whereby the former recipient of favorable disposition and/or service is consciously viewed and/or treated with disdain.

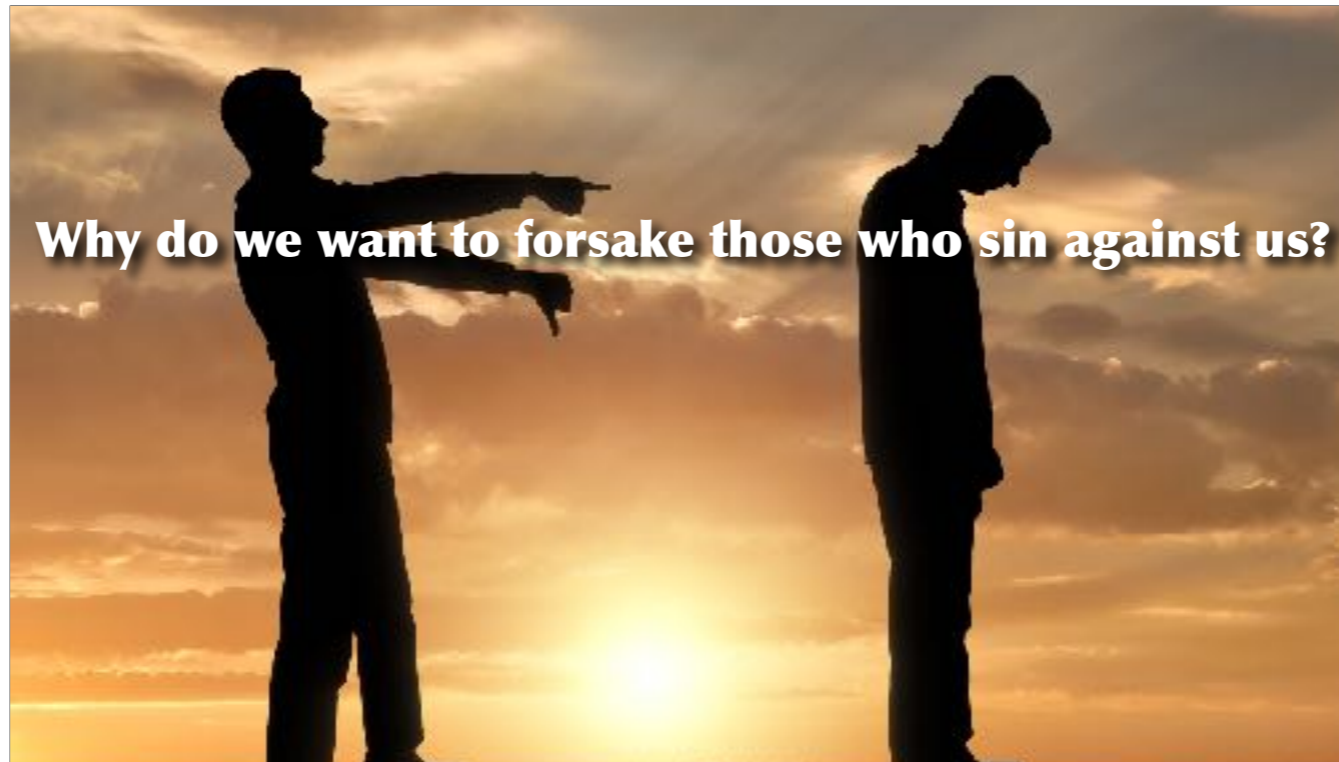


- blasphemies

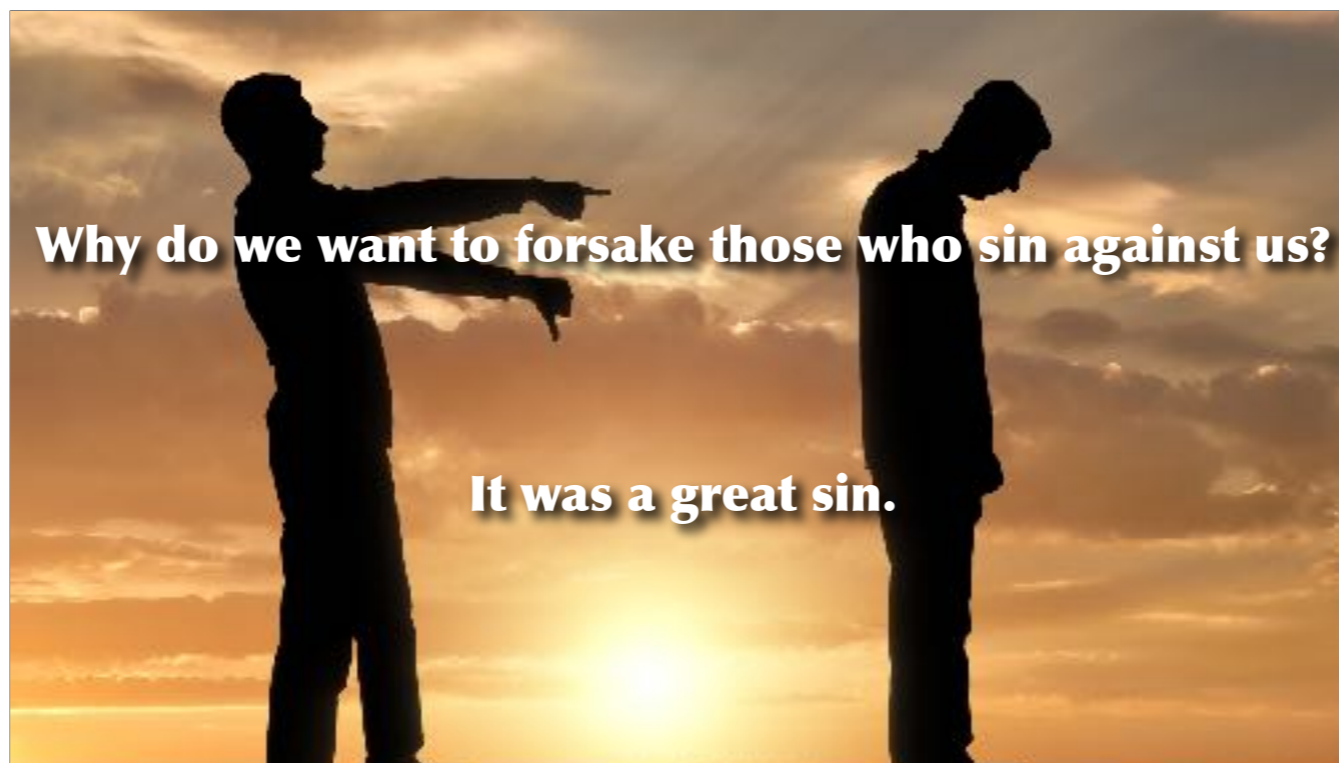
- (CWSB Dictionary) A feminine noun referring to blasphemy, aspersion. It indicates a disrespecting rejection and harmful attack by words and deeds against someone, especially God or His laws (Neh. 9:18, 26); or His holy land (Ezek. 35:12).
- (TWOT) Our root signifies the action or attitude whereby the former recipient of favorable disposition and/or service is consciously viewed and/or treated with disdain.



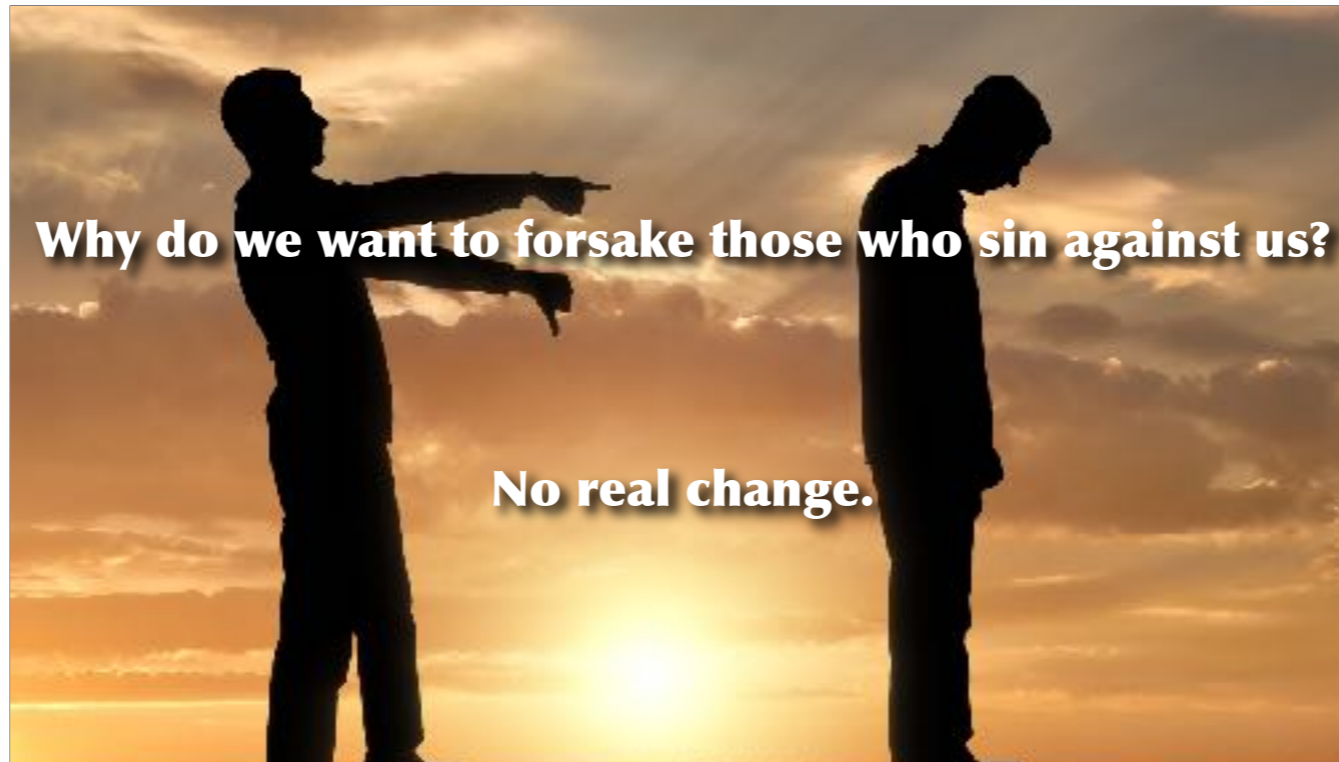
- Nehemiah's Recognition of God's Forgiveness (Nehemiah 9:19-21)
- 19 you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. 21 Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.



- Why do we forsake those who sin against us, even when we have “forgiven” them?



- It was a great sin (Ex. 32:21), presumptuous (Neh. 9.16)



- No real change:
 - They are set on evil (Ex. 32.22)



- No appreciation
 - They are not mindful of the wonders (Neh. 9.17)
 - No appreciation for what we've done for them (before or after sin)



- Betrayal
 - Make us gods (Ex. 32:23)
 - appointed a leader, return to slavery in Egypt (Neh. 9:17)



- Withholding Good
 - Did not withhold (Neh. 9:20) manna and water
 - We want to teach them a lesson
 - you've made your bed, now lie in it
 - so we withhold good (for their own good, we say)
 - We let them struggle, and suffer, and do without



- Why didn't God forsake Israel?
 - 19 you in **your great mercies** did not forsake them
 - (CWSB Dictionary) compassion, tenderness, or mercy.
 - 19: The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way **did not depart from them** by day
 - Teaching a child takes patience, long-suffering
 - Remember that they are a child (don't expect them to do more than they can)
 - God looked at these people not with accusation and hurt: but he loved them; heart is tender toward them; he had compassion for them.



- 17: ready to forgive (a God of forgiveness)
 - gracious and merciful
 - slow to anger
 - abounding in steadfast love.
- It's wasn't about what they did.
 - Although really bad, hurtful.
- It was about who God is and how he chooses to help those who he has created, and chosen.



- Do Not Forsake
 - Being ready to forgive requires our compassion and tenderness for the sinner
 - Having the character: gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in love
 - Ready to forgive.



- They are in the wilderness (19)
 - God had brought them to the wilderness to teach them to trust him.
 - Wilderness is a desolate, dangerous place. Lonely, lost.
 - We must consider where they are
 - They are struggling with sin (it's not just about what they did to me)



- God Lead them (19)
 - He did not depart
 - Lead them in the way they should go
 - Our responsibility is not to leave them alone, but to point them to the way (Jesus)
 - Out of sin and slavery
 - Through the Wilderness
 - There's something more!



- God gave them His good Spirit to instruct them (20)
 - God did not leave them guessing about what they should do, how they should live, make right choices.
 - We must teach them the truth:
 - Learn righteousness
 - Learn love
- Be careful of how we teach
 - not just rebuke, admonition
 - But helping to understand and grow



- God Sustained them for 40 Years (21)
 - They lacked nothing
 - cloths didn't wear out
 - feet did not swell
 - Generously sustain those who hurt us
 - extravagant love that can be seen, felt, and known



- Like God we must be ready to forgive
- And not forsake those who have wronged us.
- This provides us hope for our salvation when we believe and are baptized.
- God is faithful if we confess our sins to forgive.
- Our father will help us

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

Photo Credits:

All photos from istockphoto.com, crestock.com, bigstock.com, dreamtime.com, thinkstock.com, and shutterstock.com are copyright protected. They are used by permission. Please do not reuse without permission.)

<https://pixabay.com/photos/flower-life-yellow-flower-crack-887443/>

<https://pixabay.com/photos/caravan-desert-safari-dune-camels-339564/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/136041510@N05/23835926563>

<https://pixabay.com/photos/sunset-orange-dune-caravan-5083599/>

123rf.com: 35166143; 49277445; 101738205;

iStock_000006433376

<https://pixabay.com/photos/helping-hands-climbing-rescue-4661809/>

And Did Not Forsake Them

Nehemiah 9:16-21

Synopsis: When the people of Israel committed the great sin of creating the golden calf, Nehemiah reminds us that Jehovah was still ready to forgive them and that he did not forsake them. God's example of true forgiveness teaches us that we must not forsake those we forgive, rather we should lead them, instruct them, and sustain them.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

“Let all that you do be done with love.”