

# **FORGIVENESS IN THE PSALMS**

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“Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight. . .” (Ps 51:4a NASB).

# **MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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1. God was a mean old ogre who had a character change 2,000 years ago.
2. The Old Testament is a bunch of rules and the New Testament got rid of the rules.
3. The only access to God was through the priest.
4. Sacrifice was required for forgiveness to occur.
5. Psalms is part of the New Testament.

**Why do people like the  
Psalms?**

# GOD'S ACTIVITY IN THE PSALMS

## TOP ACTIONS IN THE PSALMS

Delivering:	382.	*****
Showing favor:	179.	*****
Helping:	173.	*****
Paying attention:	128.	*****
Destroying:	105.	*****
Bringing safety:	104.	*****

## NUMBER OF PSALMS WITH CERTAIN DIVINE ACTIONS (OF 150)

Delivering	(110):	*****
Helping	(79):	*****
Showing favor	(63):	*****
Paying attention	(57):	*****
Destroying	(53):	*****
Bringing safety	(48):	*****

## **PSALMS OF GODLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SINNED**

Psalm 38: The mental and spiritual condition of one who has sinned.

Psalm 51: The pleas for mercy by one who has sinned.

Psalm 32: Reflections and exhortations by one who has sinned.

**MISERY OF SIN**  
**PSALM 38**

- 1 O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath,  
And chasten me not in Your burning anger.
- 2 For Your arrows have sunk deep into me,  
And Your hand has pressed down on me.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation;  
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities are gone over my head;  
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.
- 5 My wounds grow foul and fester because of my folly.
- 6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down;  
I go mourning all day long.
- 7 For my loins are filled with burning,  
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am benumbed and badly crushed;  
I groan because of the agitation of my heart.
- 9 Lord, all my desire is before You;  
And my sighing is not hidden from You.
- 10 My heart throbs, my strength fails me;  
And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me.



## SIN TERMS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. חטא ( <i>hata'</i> )	<u>sin, miss the mark</u> (a serious problem)
B. עון ( <i>'avon</i> )	<u>iniquity, guilt</u>
C. רע ( <i>ra'</i> )	<u>evil, including morally wrong</u>
D. רשע ( <i>rasha'</i> )	<u>morally wrong</u>
E. תועבות ( <i>to'avot</i> )	<u>abominations</u>
F. עול ( <i>'aval</i> )	<u>iniquity</u>
G. מעל ( <i>ma'al</i> )	<u>unfaithfulness/trespass</u>
H. פשע ( <i>pasha'</i> )	<u>offense, transgression</u>
I. מאס ( <i>ma'as</i> )	<u>reject (God's ways)</u>
J. מאן ( <i>me'en</i> )	<u>refuse (to be obedient)</u>
K. מרה ( <i>marah</i> )	<u>be obstinate, rebel</u>

- 11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague;  
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
- 12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me;  
And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction,  
And they devise treachery all day long.
- 13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;  
And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.
- 14 Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth are no  
arguments.
- 15 For I hope in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God.
- 16 For I said, "May they not rejoice over me, who, when my foot slips, would  
magnify themselves against me."
- 17 For I am ready to fall, and my sorrow is continually before me.
- 18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.
- 19 But my enemies are vigorous and strong,  
And many are those who hate me wrongfully.
- 20 And those who repay evil for good,  
They oppose me, because I follow what is good.
- 21 Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me!
- 22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

This person has some problems:

1. Sin which has resulted in misery
2. Family and friends who have withdrawn from him
3. People who rejoice in his decline

This person has some things going for him:

1. Hopes in God
2. Still has a sense of right and wrong
3. Calls upon God for deliverance

**CONFESSIOIN OF SIN**  
**PSALM 51**

- 1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
And cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned  
And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And blameless when You judge.
  
- 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.
- 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,  
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

- 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,  
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
- 9 Hide Your face from my sins  
And blot out all my iniquities.
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation  
And sustain me with a willing spirit.
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners will be converted to You.
- 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;  
Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.

16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,  
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;  
Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

1. Sin is ultimately an offense against God.
2. Attitude: There were no excuses, but honesty and humility.
3. To whom did he confess his sin? God.
4. He hoped for God's restoration which would make him useful again in God's Kingdom.
5. With restoration he would again be able to worship God in truth and sincerity.

**REFLECTION AND EXHORTATION: DEAL WITH YOUR SIN**  
**PSALM 32**

- 1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered!
- 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
- 3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning  
all day long.
- 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.
- 5 I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I did not hide;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";  
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.
- 6 Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be  
found;  
Surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him.
- 7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;  
You surround me with songs of deliverance.



## FORGIVENESS EXPRESSIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. נשא (*nasa'*) “**lift up**” the sin/transgression (usu. translated “forgive)
- B. סלה (*salah*) “**forgive, pardon**”
- C. סר (*sar*) “**take away, turn aside**” (i.e., move out of the way)
- D. נחם (*niham*) “**have compassion**” (i.e., to feel sorry for, have compassion on, change one’s mind concerning punishment)
- E. “**cast sins into the sea**” (idea: remove a great distance)
- F. כפר (*kafar/kipper*) “**forgive, atone for**” (i.e., cover, make atonement, so that no punishment is necessary)
- G. “**tread iniquities underfoot**” (i.e., to treat them as trash)
- H. כסה (*kissah*) “**cover**” (i.e., to put something over so it is out of sight [done w/excrement in Deut 23:13])
- I. תהר (*taher*) “**cleanse/make pure**”

- 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;  
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.
- 9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding,  
Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check,  
Otherwise they will not come near to you.
- 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.
- 11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all  
you who are upright in heart.

Don't be an idiot (like he had been)--

*confess your sins to God.*

**HE WILL FORGIVE YOU!**

## THE IDEA OF FORGIVENESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

God has compassion on the person, lifts the sin off the person, physically removes sin to a different location, gets it out of sight so that no one else will step in it, and declares the person innocent, so that sin is no longer a concern and so that punishment is no longer necessary. The result of this is a restored relationship with God.

Psalm 38 describes the misery of sin

Psalm 51 provides a model for confessing sin to God

Psalm 32 reflects back on the misery of sin, the relief which comes from confession of sin, and encourages others--yes, godly people--to confess their sins to God in order to receive forgiveness.

**How blessed is the one whose  
transgression is forgiven,**

**Whose sin is covered! (Ps 32:1)**