

*Was There Forgiveness Before the Cross?*  
*Series on forgiveness (3)*  
[www.cvillechurch.com](http://www.cvillechurch.com)

**Introduction:** We will consider a common question that comes into the minds of Bible students: "How were people saved before the cross?"

- A. On one hand we know people were saved.
  - 1. We read of Enoch, Noah and Abraham being saved before the giving of the Law of Moses. (**Heb 11:5-8**)
  - 2. We also read of Samuel, David and Gideon saved while under the Law of Moses. (**Heb 11:32**)
- B. It is my prayer that our study will bring us a greater appreciation of the nature of God and what He has done for us.

***I. Forgiveness as Described in the Old Testament***

- A. Men of faith were instructed to pray for forgiveness.
  - 1. Moses prayed for Israel. (**Ex 32:32-33**)
  - 2. Solomon prayed for his people. (**1 Kgs 8:33-34**)
  - 3. Daniel prayed for Israel. (**Dan 9:19**)
  - 4. David prayed for his personal forgiveness. (**Psa 25:16-18**)
- B. God's nature is described as forgiving in the Old Testament.
  - 1. What would Micah's readers conclude? (**Mic 7:18-19**)
  - 2. Those under the Law were urged to pray to a God that will forgive. (**Psa 86:5**)
- C. Those who repented were promised forgiveness by God Himself.
  - 1. These verses are plain! (**Isa 55:6-7; 2 Chron 7:14**)
  - 2. Some have tried to make a distinction between forgiveness and atonement. When one has atonement they also have forgiveness. (**Lev 4:35, 5:10,13,16,18**)
- D. Forgiveness was claimed in the Old Testament.
  - 1. How was this accomplished? (**Psa 32:5; Psa 103:12**)
  - 2. God's word was plain to His people. Now let us gain a better understanding from the New Testament.

***II. Additional Light from the New Testament***

- A. God had a plan that required a New Testament. (**Jer 31:31-34**)
  - 1. The people of God under this testament will be forgiven.
  - 2. The distinction here in how you become a child of God.
- B. The Law of Moses was not given to provide salvation by itself.
  - 1. There is no justification under a system of law alone! (**Rom 3:20**)
  - 2. God's purpose of the law was to prepare them for a Saviour, not be one in itself. (**Gal 3:11, 17-18**)
  - 3. Abraham was not saved by the law. How do we know this? He lived before the Law of Moses! (**Rom 4:1-4**)
  - 4. Why does law not save? Because as with any law the way to salvation is to do

all without fail. (**Gal 3:10; 5:3**)

- C. Animal sacrifices under the Old Testament did not provide forgiveness in themselves.
  - 1. While God commanded these things, their blood was not the source of appeasing God's wrath. (**Heb 10:4**)
  - 2. The sacrifices had to be repeated suggesting inadequacy. (**Heb 10:11-12**)
- D. Forgiveness to any man who ever lived must come through the blood of Christ.
  - 1. Jesus was the only sufficient sacrifice in all of history. (**1 Pt 1:18-19; Heb 9:24-28**)
  - 2. Those under the Old Testament law were forgiven by the blood of Christ. (**Heb 9:15**)
  - 3. Why is there a controversy then on this question?

### *III. Some problems Examined*

- A. There are two verses that may indicate another possible conclusion.
  - 1. What did it mean for God to "pass over" sins? (**Rom 3:25-26**)
  - 2. Were the sins in the Old Testament "rolled forward?" (**Heb 10:1-4**)
- B. Some possible explanations to these passages.
  - 1. Because of the number of sacrifices it was evident that they were insufficient.
  - 2. Still under these sacrifices there was forgiveness. Consider the promise associated with the day of atonement. (**Num 15:27-28**)
  - 3. Rather than suggesting that sins are rolled forward it is pointing out the inadequacy of these sacrifices by themselves.
  - 4. The same could be said about the sacrifices given before the law.
- C. When did those in the Old Testament find forgiveness?
  - 1. If Jesus had not died then how could they be forgiven?
  - 2. God is independent of time. He knows the future and can speak of things in a present tense as not yet occurring. (**Rom 4:17**)
  - 3. If forgiveness was not realized then at that time then I cannot know how men like Moses or Isaiah could appear in His presence. (**Isa 6:3-7**)
  - 4. If forgiveness was not present then how could God's presence and help be present? (**Isa 59:1-2**)
- D. How did men before the cross find forgiveness?
  - 1. The same way we do, by faith. (**Rom 4:3-8, 16**)
  - 2. What are you doing with your faith?

**Conclusion:** Let each of us be thankful for the marvelous provisions of the cross of Christ!

- A. This must be the focus of our happiness. (**Gal 6:14**)
- B. Our lives must be fully given to such a Saviour. (**Gal 2:20-21**)