

## When Forgiveness is Forbidden

*The LORD then said to Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven." And Moses built an altar and named it, "The LORD Is My Banner." He said, "Indeed, my hand is lifted up toward the LORD's throne. The LORD will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation." - Exodus 17:14-16*  
HCSB

Obviously, forgiveness is central to Ransomed theology. There are hundreds of passages describing the Lord's forgiving, merciful spirit and urging His people to forgive those who trespass against them. The Lord's Prayer actually warns that our own forgiveness is contingent upon our ability to forgive others.<sup>1</sup>

However, any virtue pushed too far may become a vice. Certain rules govern forgiveness. Consider the example of Amalek. The nation of Amalek attacked Israeli stragglers from behind with no fear or regard for God.<sup>2</sup>

As a result the Spirit of God, speaking through the prophet Balaam,<sup>3</sup> prophesied destruction for them.<sup>4</sup> God commanded the people of Israel, "Remember what the Amalekites did to you...When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget."<sup>5</sup>

He specifically gave the job to King Saul, ordering him to completely destroy them, sparing no one and nothing. When Saul failed to completely obey, sparing the Amalekite king's life in order to keep him as a trophy, the Lord not only rejected Saul as king but removed the Holy Spirit from him,<sup>6</sup> leaving him vulnerable to an evil spirit.<sup>7</sup>

We may not forgive a crime that was committed against someone else. We may only forgive those who trespass against **US**. Such forgiveness is "cheap grace."<sup>8</sup> This means that only the victim of murder could forgive a murderer. Since they obviously cannot, murder is unforgivable from the human perspective which is why the Scriptures make it a capital crime.

What justice is there in a parent forgiving a man who raped and killed their child? What virtue lies in extending the same forgiveness to one who stole a life as the one who stole a purse? To do so is to relegate human life to no more than an object that can be valued on the open market.

If forgiveness should be extended always and in every case, and if God is perfect love, why do the vast majority of souls end up in hell?<sup>9</sup> What about Satan and his fallen angels? Are they too to receive forgiveness? To say that forgiveness will be universally extended is to make the Son's sacrifice pointless.

God is not only Love but is also Holy. Even God Himself does not forgive every sin. Those who reject God's forgiveness will die "unshriven" and burn in hell.<sup>10</sup> Who are we to claim greater nobility than Yahweh?

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 25:17-18

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 24:2-4

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 24:20

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 25:17-19

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 15:2-28; 28:18-19

<sup>7</sup> 1 Samuel 16:14

<sup>8</sup> The Cost of Discipleship, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, page 47

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 7:13-14

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 12:31