

# Forgiveness in the Gospel of Matthew

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The man owed a whole lot of money. Such might have been words of Jesus in his parable of the unthankful servant, if he had been telling it today. The parable deals with the question of forgiveness from the standpoint of a debt that was owed. This parable, along with the other passages in which Matthew [1] deals with forgiveness are critical to a proper understanding of Matthew's gospel. Because little has been written on Matthew's understanding of this concept, this paper will endeavor to examine the major passages in which the motif occurs, and offer a proposition based upon the exegesis of these passages.

## Matthew's Use of the Word *aphes*

Certainly one cannot properly understand a motif by examining only the words used for that motif (i.e., the study must be larger than just a word study). However, an examination of how Matthew uses the word translated 'forgive' will provide helpful background information for the examination.

## Word Use Statistics

The word which is translated 'forgive' (*aphes*) occurs in Matthew 47 times. This is more than any in other book of the NT and a much higher number of uses than in any of the other synoptics. However, not all of these uses carry the meaning 'to forgive'. The word in can have meanings as broad as to let go; to send away, to remit, cancel or pardon; to leave; and to let go, tolerate. [2] Of these 47 uses, 17 have the meaning of 'forgive' or 'pardon' (Mt. 6:12, 14, 15; 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31, 32; 18:21,27, 32, 35). There is also one use of the noun form of the word in 26:28.

## Importance of Forgiveness in Matthew

That forgiveness is an important concept in the gospel is shown by two things. First, by Matthew's statements as to why Jesus came and died and second, by the implications which follow from the destruction of the temple.

At the beginning of Matthew's gospel Matthew states that an angel came and told Joseph that a son was to be born and that "for he will save his people from their sins" (1:21). This saving of his people from sin is a clear foreshadowing of the forgiveness that Jesus would offer to those who would follow him. This foreshadowing is more clearly brought out in 26:28 where Jesus says "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins" . Thus at the beginning and near the end of his gospel, Matthew states that Jesus came and died for the purpose of the forgiveness of sin.

To these specific statements about the purpose of Jesus arrival and death must be added the tension that was felt by the Jewish population at the destruction of the temple. Whether Matthew is writing after the destruction of the temple or not, many of those reading the gospel are reading it after this event and thus

feel the tension that exists as a result of having to rethink their methods for gaining atonement and achieving forgiveness.

When the above facts are added to the seventeen times that Matthew uses *aphes* in the sense of 'forgive' it is clear that the writer is very concerned with forgiveness.

### **A Setting Forth of the Important Passages**

The seventeen times that Matthew uses 'forgive' occur in four separate contexts. [3] In this section of the paper, the passages will simply be set out, with pertinent exegesis to follow in the next section.

The first passage is the forgiveness clause of the Lord's prayer where Matthew, in an important redaction states that "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors; And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (6:12-15) This passage is very significant in an understanding of Matthew's view of forgiveness, and must be dealt with carefully to avoid the Lord's stinging rebuke; "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; (5:19, NASB).

The second context in which the forgiveness motif is found is in the early part of chapter nine. Here Christ is forgiving the lame man and to prove that he is forgiven, he heals him. This is one of the two cases in the New Testament "when Jesus explicitly forgives someone's sin" (the other is in (Luke 7:48). [4]

The third context in which forgiveness appears is that of the unforgivable sin which is mentioned in 12:31-32. This is a difficult passage to interpret but several insights will be drawn in the exegesis portion of the paper.

The fourth and longest context in which Matthew deals with forgiveness occurs in Matthew 18. This chapter deals with three different aspects of forgiveness. The first occurs when Jesus tells his disciples about how to handle the problem of a brother that has sinned against you. The second, when Peter asks how often he should forgive that brother. The last, occurs when Jesus tells the story of the unthankful servant.

Thus, Matthew's gospel has a number of important pericopes that deal with forgiveness. These passages will now be dealt with closely in an attempt to show that **for Matthew, people show that they have been forgiven, by acting in a manner that is consistent with a forgiven person.** This conclusion will be shown through the setting forth of three important facts. First, that for Matthew, forgiveness is reciprocal. Second, that forgiveness presupposes repentance and third, that forgiveness must never be taken for granted.

### **For Matthew, Forgiveness is Reciprocal**

#### **The Forgiveness Clause of the Lord's Prayer**

Matthew's version of the Lord's prayer ends with a very significant redaction by Matthew. Matthew states that if we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven by the Heavenly Father. The converse is also stated, that is, if we forgive others we will be forgiven. Does Matthew mean that one merits forgiveness as a result of forgiving others? It is tempting to freight back in all of the systematic theology on the forgiveness of God that is taught in the rest of the New Testament. However, because this is a paper on Matthew's view of forgiveness, this cannot be done. Thus, the question stands; 'Does Matthew intend to say that one must forgive in order to merit the forgiveness of God?'

In answer to this question one must answer an emphatic 'Yes and No!' Yes, in that Matthew does not intend for his redaction in verses fourteen and fifteen to be softened. When he makes the statement "For if you

forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," he means it. That is, Matthew means to say that if a person does not forgive others, he will not be forgiven. While the evangelical Protestant may not be comfortable calling that merit, the statements of Matthew himself must not be muted.

On the other hand, a case can be made that Matthew redacted this passage in a particular manner in order to avoid suggesting that the forgiveness of others actually places God in a position of having to forgive us. Matthew takes this passage from Mark 11:25. [5] Mark has this statement in a totally different context, [6] and has some interesting differences from Matthew. The most interesting one is that Mark actually says "and whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." The "hina" [so that] clause is very strong in Mark, and it seems as if Matthew backs off a little by using the "ean" with the subjunctive [if you forgive...]. Thus one could argue that Matthew's redaction of Mark suggests (because "ean" with the subjunctive is only a little softer) that he wanted to avoid a misunderstanding that is possible in reading the text of Mark.

How then is this passage to be understood? First, the forgiveness by the Father is to be taken in eschatological terms. That is that final forgiveness "comes at the final judgement." [7] Thus, for Matthew, no one is fully forgiven until the final eschaton. Second, Matthew simply could not conceive of a forgiven person who did not forgive others. For Matthew, the fact that one did not forgive others, showed that he had not been forgiven. This is shown by the parable of the unthankful servant.

### **The Parable of the Unthankful Servant**

This parable raises a number of questions. There is the question of context. Why does Christ tell Peter to forgive an unlimited number of times (seventy times seven) [8] and then tell a story about a king-who represents the Father-who only forgives once and then takes that forgiveness back? There is the question of the taking back of forgiveness. How is it that the man is cleared of his debt and then this forgiveness is taken away? Does God give his forgiveness and then take it back? There is the question of the size of the debt and whether or not it would have been possible to owe this much money. This is not the point of the parable, and the size of the debt (equivalent to the national debt today) is not a mistake on the part of Matthew but is an exaggeration that Jesus expects his hearers to laugh at, particularly when the man asks for more time to pay. [9]

Once the real point of the parable is understood, many of these questions resolve themselves. The point that Jesus is making with this story is that in the eschaton, if a disciple has not forgiven others, he will not be forgiven. Matthew's 'Christianity' has much to do with how one acts. [10] Jesus is pointing out here that it matters very little what one might say, if they are not acting in a manner that is consistent with a forgiven person, they are not, and will not be forgiven. Thus, final forgiveness, is yet to be obtained. That is why Jesus "sees no contradiction between the acts of the king and God's acts, and neither should we." [11]

For Matthew, merit and forgiveness are inextricably tied together. While it should be said that "God's forgiveness although it cannot be merited, must be received, and it cannot be received by those without the will to forgive others." [12] It should also be said that Matthew's words are very strong, they should not be muted by our own preconceptions about what he ought to say, based upon our systematic theology.

Thus, it is clear that for Matthew, forgiveness is reciprocal. The person who does not forgive others will not be forgiven. This may be a frightening idea to some in evangelical Christianity. It should be.

Is the Christian then bound to forgive anyone, regardless of how often and how heinously they sin against her? This is the second point of proof for the above-mentioned proposition. A truly forgiven person not only forgives others, but also repents and seeks to make atonement when he wrongs another.

### **Forgiveness is Conditioned Upon Repentance**

This may be the most controversial section of the paper. The question of the relationship of forgiveness and repentance in Matthew has not been considered carefully from a theological perspective. The larger question of whether Christ calls his followers to forgive an unrepentant brother is a significant one. [13] The query has received a variety of answers. In general these answers have fallen into two categories. Most popular level books that consider this dilemma follow the advice given by Louis Smedes in his work *Forgive and Forget* [14]. In Chapter 7 "Forgiving People who do not Care" Smedes confronts the question of the forgiveness of an unrepentant person. He concludes that

Realism, it seems to me, nudges us toward forgiving people who hurt us whether or not they repent for doing it. . . . We need to forgive the unrepentant for our own sake. [15]

He quotes a document called 'Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs' (unfortunately with no footnote) as saying

if a man sin against thee . . . if he repent and confess, forgive him . . . but if he be shameless, and persisteth in his wrongdoing even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging. [16]

More technical works that deal with this problem seem to take the opposite approach. These works may be represented by C. F. D. Moule who succinctly states

That forgiveness is conditioned by repentance is true, because reconciliation is a personal relationship, and cannot be achieved without responsiveness on both sides of the relationship. [17]

Does the fact that writers disagree on this problem leave the question of the forgiveness of an unrepentant brother or sister open to interpretation? I believe that a careful examination of the texts will show that it is not only unwise, but also unscriptural to forgive an unrepentant person. This analysis will take the form of three arguments from Matthew's gospel.

### **The Argument from the Conditional Sentence**

The text of 18:15 states a command followed by a conditional sentence. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone." This command indicates that it is incumbent upon the person who has been offended to go to the offender and tell him his fault in a private manner. The fact that this is a private affair indicates, or at least implies, that the sin is known only to a small (perhaps only two) number of people.

The conditional sentence is quite straightforward. Christ says that if your brother hears you (note that Luke uses the word 'repent' which may help to understand what Matthew meant by 'hear') [18] that you have gained a brother. The clear implication of the condition is that if the offender does not hear you, you have not gained a brother. The offense simply cannot be overlooked. Otherwise, there would be no reason for going to the person in the first place.

### **The Argument from Church Discipline**

Christ does not leave the question hanging about what one should do if the person does not repent he answers it very clearly. The interesting thing is that if the offender does not repent, the offended party is not commanded by Christ to forgive him anyway "for his own sake" (to use Smedes language). Quite the contrary, he tells the offended person to continue in the procedure with the hope of obtaining repentance. While the offence was once private, it now becomes known to a somewhat larger number of people. The Lord commands the offended person not to forget about the offense, but to take two or three witnesses with him to see the offender again. To simply let it go is to disobey the command of the Lord.

If after being visited by several people, along with the offended party, the offender still does not repent, he is to be treated like "a Gentile and a tax collector". That is he or she is to be turned out of the community. There are several important implications of this argument.

First, the continuation of Church discipline indicates that the offender has not been forgiven. If the above analysis on the nature of forgiveness is correct (i.e., that forgiveness 'wipes away' the debt, never to be brought up again) then a forgiven person cannot be disciplined for the offense which he is forgiven of. Taylor states that

When it is said that the wrongdoer must be forgiven 'until seventy times seven' (Mt. xviii. 22, cf. Lk. xvii. 3f), the injunction is that, because of his repentance, grounds of offence are repeatedly to be set aside; they do not count against him. [19]

Thus the discipline continues from a private matter, to a public censure precisely because the offender is not forgiven. He is unforgiven not because forgiveness is not offered to him, but because he will not repent and, by making matters right, accept the offer. Thus to forgive an unrepentant offender is to directly disobey the command of the Lord about church discipline.

Second, this passage indicates in addition to the fact that the offender is not forgiven, that the positive obligation to forgive is not absolute and invariable, since that would destroy discipline. . . . The individual is obliged to forgive if the offender repents (and, obviously, apologizes). [20]

Thus the command to forgive a person who has offended you is conditioned upon that person's repentance. To believe otherwise is to be unable to exercise discipline.

Third, the passage indicates that the person who refuses to repent of his wrongdoing shows that she is not a part of the Christian community. For Matthew "the notion of an unrepentant Christian is an oxymoron. . . . It is scandalous-and, for early Christians, virtually unthinkable-that God's forgiveness would not induce lifelong repentance." [21] The Lord's command to send such people out of the community is a harsh one. These offenders are being told by that action that their behavior has excluded them, and that they are no longer a part of the Christian church. While this statement would have been far more serious in Matthew's day than in ours (there was not another Baptist church down the street that would be happy to have a new member), even today it ought to be a very serious matter.

This excommunication, or putting of a person out of the church and thus outside the Christian community, is done for one reason and with one hope. The reason is, quite simply, a failure to repent. The result that is hoped for is repentance. Church discipline always hopes to restore the fallen person back into the community of believers.

Richard Swinburne, in his work *Responsibility and Atonement*, gives a philosophical analysis of this question of repentance and forgiveness. He comes down very clearly and forcefully when he says

Indeed not merely is it ineffective but it is bad, in the case of serious acts, for the victim to treat the acts as not having been done, in the absence of some atonement at least in the form of an apology from the wrongdoer. [22]

He goes on to argue that the forgiving of the unrepentant

involves your failing to treat me seriously, to take seriously my attitude towards you expressed in my action. Thereby it trivializes human relationships, for it supposes that good human relations can exist when we do not take each other seriously. [23]

Thus, the implications of the passage on church discipline are clear. "By hurting you, I put myself in a moral situation somewhat like the legal situation of a person who owes money. The wrong needs righting." [24] When a person refuses to attempt to right that wrong, they show themselves to be unforgiven, and as a result of that they must be placed outside the community. This helps to protect the members of the community from further harm, as well as (hopefully) show the offender the seriousness of his action.

### **The Argument from the Exclusion From the Kingdom**

The third argument which shows that repentance must precede forgiveness stems from the fact that Jesus excluded from the kingdom those who refused to repent. In 21:31-32 Jesus is speaking to the scribes and pharisees who have given him so much trouble in Matthew's gospel. He says to them that "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." He then goes on to explain to them why it is that they will not be a part of the kingdom. It is quite simply because

"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe." (21:32)

Thus, the exclusion from the kingdom of God happens as a direct result of the fact that they had refused to repent and believe. The refusal to repent of a wrongdoing is a serious offence. It should be treated as such by the Christian community. For the protection of those who are within, and the awakening of those who are unrepentant, the offender cannot be forgiven and must be put out of the Christian community.

Jonathan Edwards in his sermon on the "Nature and End of Excommunication" [25] seeks to show those who are proper subjects of excommunication. He states that members of the church become visibly wicked either by "gross sin" or by remaining "impenitent in their sins after proper means [are] used to reclaim them." Edwards goes on to state that "if strict discipline were maintained in the church, it would in all probability be one of the most powerful means of conviction and conversion towards those who are without." One might ask what the "proper means" are that are to be used to reclaim the sinner. For Matthew, the obvious answer is the steps that are laid out by the Lord. If we forgive an unrepentant person rather than follow these steps, we lose this powerful means of conviction and conversion.

### **An Excursus on Two Problem Passages**

There are two particularly troublesome passages for the position outlined above. One is found in Matthew's gospel and one in the gospel of Luke. The first passage is found in Luke 23:34 where Christ utters these words from the cross: "Father forgive them; for they know what they do.."

At first glance this passage would seem to indicate that Christ is unilaterally forgiving those who are unrepentant. What is one to make of this statement of Christ in terms of the above analysis? There are at least four reasons why this passage should not be seen as an absolute teaching on the forgiveness of a brother:

First of all these people make no claim to be Christians. Therefore Christ's words in Matthew 18 may not apply to this specific situation.

Secondly this is a specific salvific event which occurred only once. One must be careful not to draw conclusions which may not apply to the situation as it exists today.

Thirdly, it seems, based upon the statement of Christ, that these men did not know that they were killing an innocent man. Christ asks that they be forgiven because they did not realize what they were doing. That is, they thought they were obeying those in authority over them.

Fourthly and perhaps most importantly, there is a very serious textual problem with this passage. The Greek Text of the UBS3 gives this passage a "C" rating. Metzger, in his Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, somewhat equivocally argues for the saying's authenticity, by stating

The absence of these words from such early and diverse witnesses as p75 B D\* W Q ita,d copsa,bo is most impressive and can scarcely be explained as a deliberate excision by copyists who, considering the fall of Jerusalem to be proof that God had not forgiven the Jews, could not allow it to appear that the prayer of Jesus had remained unanswered. At the same time, the logion, though probably not a part of the original Gospel of Luke, bears self-evident tokens of its dominical origin, and was retained, within double square brackets . . . [26]

Thus the above arguments show very clearly that one cannot argue for forgiveness without repentance based upon the Lord's statement from the cross. The second troublesome passage is found in Matthew 9. It is the story of the healing of the lame man and the problem is that the man is healed without any indication of repentance. This is a significant incident, because "only at one other time in the canonical Gospels does Jesus explicitly forgive someone's sin." [27] Thus the question of why Jesus forgives the paralytic without any indication of repentance is important. There are several potential responses:

First, this is an argument from silence (on both sides) one cannot be sure about whether or not the man was repentant, because the scripture is silent on this point.

Second, the man had faith, which may include repentance. When the text says that "When Jesus saw their faith [pistin autoun]" the "aoutoun" "here includes the faith of the paralytic." [28] Thus the man could have been repentant, and since his faith was genuine (it was seen by Christ) it almost certainly included repentance.

Because neither of the above passages disproves the point, the above contention seems to stand under close analysis. An unrepentant person should not be forgiven. Should the Christian see this doctrine as an excuse to harbor bitterness and hatred over past deeds through which they have been harmed? Certainly not! The attitude of Christ teaches that one must always be willing to forgive the repentant sinner. That is, that the offer of forgiveness must always be open to the unrepentant brother, in hope that they will one day see the error of their way.

The lack of repentance on the part of one person must never be the excuse for sin in another. Therefore one must never harbor hatred or bitterness. The distinction must be made, however, between harboring hatred or bitterness, and reconciliation. One does not need to be reconciled in order not to have bitterness. Clearly God does not have sinful bitterness, yet He is not reconciled to unrepentant sinners.

Reformer John Calvin [29] states that there are three purposes for Church discipline: The first is that "they who lead a filthy and infamous life may not be called Christians, to the dishonor of God, as if his holy church were a conspiracy of wicked and abandoned men." The second is that "the good be not corrupted by the constant company of the wicked, as commonly happens." The third "purpose is that those overcome by shame for their baseness have begun to repent." They who "under gentler treatment would have become more stubborn . . . ". All three of these purposes, but particularly the third one is circumvented by a Christian, or a church forgiving a person who is unrepentant. While the offer of forgiveness stands, it must be conditioned upon repentance by the offender.

### **Forgiveness Should Never Be Taken for Granted**

The obvious implication from the above analysis is that forgiveness in Matthew has a great deal to do with how one acts. If one does not act like a forgiven person (e.g., does not forgive others, does not repent) then she is not a forgiven person, no matter what she may say.

Matthew points out that there is one unforgivable sin (12:31-32). While Davies and Allison "remain stumped" [30] on this passage, it seems clear that the sin is a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The scribes and pharisees knew that Christ was the messiah and yet still attempted to destroy him. They stated that he cast out demons by the prince of demons, yet they knew that his work was of the Holy Spirit. This total disregard for the truth of the Spirit is the sin that Matthew points to.

Matthew's entire gospel desires to teach its readers to look carefully at themselves and their works. Matthew knows nothing of a Christianity that does not expose itself through its lifestyle. He implies that those whose lives do not match their claims are 'hypocrites' and are not a part of the kingdom of God. [31] Matthew desires that all of his readers carefully examine their lives to see if they are acting like forgiven people.

## Conclusion

Matthew's Christianity is a far cry from much of the 'easy believeism' that exists in the United States today. Matthew knows nothing of a forgiveness without repentance, a change of heart without a change of life, or a Christian who acts like an unbeliever. For him, how one acts shows who one really is.

This paper has attempted to show that for Matthew, forgiveness is reciprocal. That is one is forgiven on the basis of how one forgives others. The unforgiving person is the unforgiven person. It has also attempted to show that repentance must be prior to forgiveness. A person who will not repent of his wrongdoing, either against God or against another human being, shows that he is unforgiven.

Lastly, the paper has attempted to show that no one should take forgiveness for granted. One cannot simply say a few words, and never allow Christianity to affect their lives, and yet still claim to be forgiven. That person is like the man who owed ten thousand talents, he seemed forgiven, yet in the end he ends up with the torturers. Matthew would ask each reader of his gospel to carefully consider the lesson of that parable, and the lesson of his gospel. Forgiven people are different. The forgiveness that they have received has changed their lives. Matthew's gospel offers stern warnings to those who would soften the commands of the Lord.

## Appendix

Ref.	Source	Form	Meaning	Connotations	#
6:12	TQ	aphes	Forgive	We are forgiven as we forgive	1
6:12	TQ	aphaekamen	Forgive		2
6:14	RM	aphaete	Forgive		3
6:14	RM	aphaesei	Forgive		4
6:15	RM	aphaete	Forgive		5
6:15	RM	aphaesei	Forgive		6
9:2	TMK	aphientai	Forgive		7
9:5	TMK	aphientai	Forgive		8
9:6	TMK	aphienai	Forgive		9
12:31	TMK	aphethaesetai	Forgive		10
12:31	RM	aphethesetai	Forgive		11

12:32	RM	aphethaetai	Forgive		12
12:32	TMK	aphethaetai	Forgive		13
18:21	RM	aphaesou	Forgive		14
18:27	RM	aphaekev	Forgive/Release		15
18:32	RM	aphaeka	Forgive		16
18:35	RM	aphaete	Forgive		17
26:28		aphesin	Forgiveness	Noun form of the word -- used only here by Matthew	18

## Endnotes

[1] For the purposes of this paper the author of the gospel of Matthew will be called "Matthew." This may or may not have been the tax collector.

[2] BAGD, 125b. See also Bultmann in TDNT I, 509-513.

[3] For an examination of the sources of these passages, see appendix I.

[4] W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Vol II, International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, eds. J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1991), 89.

[5] Markan priority is assumed for all redaction criticism work in this paper.

[6] Thus this is an example of "transposition of tradition" on the part of Matthew. See Scot McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 86.

[7] Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1:13*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, no. 33a, ed. Ralph Martin (Dallas: Word, 1993), 150.

[8] Hagner (Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14:28*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, no. 33b, ed. Ralph P. Martin (Dallas: Word, 1995)) points out that "Rabbis considered three times enough. Jesus number indicates an unlimited frequency."

[9] For work on this parable see the bibliography in Hagner, as well as Elton Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1964), George Aichele, Jr., "The Fantastic in the Parabolic Language of Jesus," *Neotestamentica* 24 (1990), Martinus C. De Boer, "Ten Thousand Talents? Matthew's Interpretation and Redaction of the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt. 18:23-35)," *CBQ* 50 (1988), Thomas Deidun, "Parable of the Unmerciful Servant," *BTB* 6 (1976), Douglas E. Oakman, "Jesus and Agrarian Palestine: The Factor of Debt," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1985 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), Bernard Brandon Scott, "The King's Accounting: Matthew 18:23-34," *JBL* 104 (1985).

[10] See Blaine Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 1993).

[11] D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, no. 8, ed. F. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

[12] Davies, Matthew, 611.

[13] For a theological examination of the doctrine of forgiveness (not specifically from a Matthean prospective) see L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), for a philosophical examination see chapter five of Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

[14] Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

[15] *Ibid.*, 69.

[16] *Ibid.*, 69.

[17] C. F. D. Moule, "' . . . As We Forgive . . .' A Note on the Distinction Between Deserts and Capacity in the Understanding of Forgiveness," in *Donum Gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube*, eds. E. Bammel, C.K. Barrett and W.D. Davies (Oxford: Oxford, 1978), 72.

[18] Note that I am not here arguing a literary connection between Matthew and Luke, only that the "Q" material from which this saying originated, may be amplified by the reading of both sources.

[19] Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Second ed. (London: Macmillian, 1941; reprint, London: Macmillian and Co., 1946), 13.

[20] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "'Where Two Or Three Are Convened in My Name . . .': A Sad Misunderstanding," *Expository Times* 91 (1979-1980), 84.

[21] Jones, *Forgiveness*, 159.

[22] Swinburne, *Responsibility*, 85.

[23] *Ibid.*, 87.

[24] *Ibid.*, 74.

[25] Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume I* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 120-121.

[26] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Corrected ed.* (Stuttgart, Germany: UBS, 1975), 180.

[27] Davies, Matthew, 89. Note that Davies and Allison do not include the word from the cross (discussed above) in this statistic.

[28] Hagner, Matthew, 232. It should be noted here, in the interest of fairness that Gundry states that the faith of the paralytic does not come into view. (See Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982)).

[29] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), book IV, ch. XII, 5.

[30] Davies, Matthew, 348.

[31] See Charette, Recompense.

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