

Forgiveness – Bible Analysis

Read the quotations about forgiveness and answer the questions.

'But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.'

Exodus 21: 23-25

What does this quotation tell us about forgiveness?

'For if you forgive men their trespasses (sins), your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

Matthew 6: 14-15

What does this quotation tell us about forgiveness?

'Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'

Matthew 18: 21-22

What does this quotation tell us about forgiveness?

Extension:

There is a clear difference in the message of one of these passages. Which passage is it? Can you think of any reason why this might be the case?

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'But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.'

Exodus 21: 23-25

This quotation appears to suggest people should not forgive, rather they should seek vengeance for the wrongs done to them.

'For if you forgive men their trespasses (sins), your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

Matthew 6: 14-15

This quotation states that Christians must forgive. If they do not, they will not be forgiven by God. The inference is that without forgiveness you cannot enter heaven.

'Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'

Matthew 18: 21-22

In this passage, Jesus states that Christians should be willing to forgive many wrongs done to them. Most Christians see the number given by Jesus as rhetorical and meant to illustrate the idea that there should be no limit to forgiveness.

Extension:

There is a clear difference in the message of one of these passages. Which passage is it? Can you think of any reason why this might be the case?

This passage is from the Old Testament, which was written before the birth of Jesus. The others are from the New Testament, which describes the life of Jesus and the events after this. Part of his mission, Christians believe, was to bring new teachings to the world to replace some of those in the Old Testament.