›Kenneth E. Hagin



Three Big Words

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Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.
Three Big Words
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CHAPTER 1

Atonement

The Lord asked me a question, and I want to pass it on to you:

“What are the three biggest words in the Bible?”

Different people, according to what they believe and what they are studying at the moment, would have different opinions. I am sure, however, that no one would disagree that the following are three of the most important words in the Bible:

Atonement

Remission

Forgiveness

The children of Israel, living under the Old Covenant (or Old Testament), had the Mosaic law, the priesthood, sacrifices, and ordinances.

When the law was broken (which was inevitable, because Israel was spiritually dead), the priesthood was ordered to make an *atonement* (or covering) for the sins of the people.

The Old Testament describes two remarkable things that took place on the Day of Atonement.

First, surrounded with great precautions, the High Priest carried the blood of an innocent animal into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat. That blood “covered” all the sins the children of Israel had committed during the previous year.

Leviticus 17:11 tells us that blood was used as a covering or atonement because of the life that was in it. Thus, the life of an innocent animal was spread over spiritually dead Israel.

The second important aspect of the Day of Atonement was when the priest symbolically laid the sins of the people on the scapegoat by laying his hands on the animal’s head and confessing the people’s sin over it. The scapegoat was turned loose in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts.

Israel was now free—blood covered—their sins borne away—for one year. These ceremonies had to be repeated on the next Day of Atonement, because the people did not yet have eternal life.

Eternal life, the greatest event that can ever take place in any person’s experience, could not be provided until Jesus Christ, the perfect Sacrifice, had come.

Under the New Covenant, the blood of Jesus Christ not only *covers* our sins—it *washes* them away. The Bible tells us in Revelation 1:5, *"Unto him that loved us, and WASHED us from our sins in his own blood."*

I could show you a piece of paper with writing on it, and I could cover that writing with my fingers so that you could not see it. The writing would still be there. That is what happened to Israel. Their sins were still there, but covered (atoned). The sin-nature was still in them. That is the reason why they kept on sinning. They could not help it.

CHAPTER 2

Remission

If I apply a cleansing agent and remove the ink from the paper, I would not have to cover the writing. The ink would be gone—cleansed—*erased.*

When we come to God as sinners, all that we have ever DONE in the past is wiped out, and all that we have ever BEEN is wiped out. We become a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). That is the *remission* of sins.

The blood of animals in the Old Testament, which offered only temporary covering or atonement, was a type of the blood of Jesus, the eternal Lamb of God. His blood was shed for us that our sins might be erased permanently. Under the New Covenant, we are *redeemed.* We receive *remission* of our sins.

Atonement is one of the great words of the Old Testament; *remission* is one of the great words of the New Covenant. Yet remission really has not been proclaimed as it should have been.

Remission means a wiping out as though it had never been. The word remission is only used in connection with the New Birth, as you will discover as you dig a little deeper into the Bible.

Several times in the *King James* translation of the New Testament, the Greek word that should be translated "remission" is translated "forgiveness."

It is translated correctly in Acts 10:43, "*To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive REMISSION of sins."* It is also translated correctly earlier in Acts, where Peter preached, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the REMISSION of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost* (Acts 2:38).

(In my estimation, it is translated incorrectly in such passages as Ephesians 1:7, Acts 26:18, and Colossians 1:13–14.)

Actually, *the sinner receives remission of sins; not forgiveness.*

If a sinner had to confess all of his sins to be saved, then I have never been saved yet. A sinner could never think of everything he has ever done wrong—because everything he has ever done is wrong!

Once in a while, even yet, something will pop up that I had forgotten I did before I was saved. What do I do? I just laugh about it and say, "Yes, that's right I certainly did that, but that fellow is gone. He's dead. I'm a new man in Christ. That's all *remitted.*"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17
17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

If you look at a person from the natural standpoint, you might say, “He has the same body he had before.” Yes, but his body was not born again; it was the man on the inside—the *real* man—who was born again. Naturally, having lived in the flesh, he did certain things in the flesh before he was born again.

Several years ago, a young man wrote me from the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas. He said, “Brother Hagin, I want to thank you for your *Bible Faith Study Course*. I’ve been born again and filled with the Spirit. I just wanted to write and thank you that I’ve learned to walk by faith, and to tell you that I am getting out of this penitentiary on parole.”

He said, “When I confess that here in prison to my fellow inmates, they all laugh at me. When I tell the guards, they laugh. They say, ‘You’re not getting out. They don’t let anybody get out when he comes up for parole the first time if he committed the crime you committed.’ ”

He said, “You know, Brother Hagin, the fellow who committed that crime is gone. I’m a new man in Christ Jesus. I don’t want to hurt anybody. I’m not going to hurt anybody. And I want you to know that I *am* getting out.”

When this young man came up for parole, he did get it. It was almost unheard of, but he got out. Then he made application to come to Rhema Bible Training Center. He was graduated, and today he is out in the ministry.

You say, “A criminal, preaching?”

He is not a criminal. All he had ever been, as well as all he had ever done, was remitted in the sight of God. Yes, he had a debt to pay to society, but he paid a portion of it. The authorities could see that he is a new and different man, so regulations were laid aside and he was released. He even has been granted a full pardon.

You see, that man is no longer a criminal. He is a preacher—and what a preacher! (You could tell it in school when he got up to speak. The anointing to preach was upon him.)

Our ministry is to turn men and women from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the power of God. Yet when you start talking about God’s power, it almost scares some Christians. They seem to have the idea that you can get saved and filled with the Spirit (and talk a little in tongues), but then you have to go through life down and out, sick and suffering, never having anything, just barely getting by.

Somebody finally wrote an unbelieving song about it: “If I can just make it in.”

Somebody else wrote another unbelieving song: “Just build me a cabin over in

the corner of the glory world.” Dear Lord!

Let’s not belittle God. He is all powerful. He is just as powerful today as He ever was. Satan was powerful, too, but Jesus has dethroned him. We need to know that. We need to know that we have an inheritance among them that are sanctified; not only in the next world, but also in this one.

CHAPTER 3

Forgiveness

When a sinner accepts Christ as his Savior, his spirit is recreated; his sins are remitted once and for all; and he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Until he gets his mind renewed with the Word of God, however, he will be conscious of sin. And if he does not grow spiritually, he will keep making mistakes, because his wrong thinking and his flesh will dominate him, and his spirit will not develop to be the dominant factor in his life.

You might ask, "What happens if a Christian misses it after he is born again? What if he fails? What if he sins?"

The Christian, if he fails and commits sin, receives *forgiveness.*

If the Christian were to receive *remission,* everything he had ever done in the past—both good and bad—would be wiped out. Even his New Birth would be wiped out—erased. But it is not, because the Christian does not receive remission; he receives forgiveness.

The first and second chapters of First John deal with this great issue of forgiveness for believers. It is important to realize that this epistle was written to believers, not sinners.

First John 1:9 says, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* We use that verse with sinners, yet it is talking about Christians!

The minute a Christian sins, he knows it. He has a monitor inside him: His spirit will let him know he missed it. He should stop then and there and say, "Father, I missed it. Forgive me." He should not stay out of fellowship for a minute. God wants us to stay in fellowship.

On the grounds of the believer's relationship as a child of God and of Jesus' ministry at the right hand of the Father, there is *forgiveness* for a believer's sins. There is a way back. (If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.)

Thank God for that word *forgiveness*. It works on the divine level, and it also works on the natural level. Forgiveness is a fellowship word, speaking from a New Testament point of view.

When a child of God commits sin, he breaks *fellowship* with the Father, but he does not break *relationship*. It is like when a husband and wife quarrel. They don't break their *relationship*—they're still husband and wife—but they break *fellowship*,

and they need to ask one another for forgiveness.

Similarly, no Christian can break his *relationship* with God, because he did not establish it; God established it. Only God can break it, and He will, under certain conditions. He said He would in His Word, but that is a different subject.

Notice that the subject of First John 1 is *forgiveness* and *fellowship.* Four times John mentions *fellowship* in this passage:

1 JOHN 1:3–8

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have FELLOWSHIP with us: and truly our FELLOWSHIP is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.
4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.
5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
6 If we say that we have FELLOWSHIP with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have FELLOWSHIP one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Look closely at verse 7. It says, *"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* What does it mean?

As you look back in your Christian life, you realize some of its truths. I pastored churches nearly 12 years. At my level of spiritual growth then, I thought I had done a supreme—a superb—a magnificent—job at pastoring, and I was even ignorant enough to say so.

But after getting away from the churches a little and growing a little, I looked back in shame. I almost was ashamed to go back and visit, I had done such a poor job. Finally I got down and repented, saying, "My God, forgive me! I missed it."

But, you see, I was walking in all the light I had, and there was a continual cleansing of the blood for me as I walked in that light. We all have sinned and not realized it, but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Do not take the eighth verse out of its setting and make it say something it does not say. What John is saying is: If you have gotten out of the light and are walking in darkness, yet you say you have not sinned, you are deceiving yourself.

But thank God, there is a way back out of darkness into light and fellowship: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

CHAPTER 4

Staying in Fellowship

In conclusion, let us examine two verses in the next chapter:

1 JOHN 2:1–2

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

These verses tie right into what John just got through saying in the first chapter. John said, *"these things write I unto you* [referring to the previous chapter], *that ye sin not."* What he means is that he wrote these things so his converts would stay in fellowship and the light. He did *not* write them so they would sin.

There is great controversy in the church world over these verses. Some are afraid that the verses give people a license to sin. I always say, "They'll do enough sinning without any license; there's no use giving them one."

John is saying that God does not want us to sin—and we will not sin if we walk in love, stay in the light, and stay in fellowship. Every step out of love is sin, but if any man sins, he has an Advocate (that word means lawyer) up in the throne room.

Although the person who has sinned cannot enter in because he has broken fellowship and because of his sense of unrighteousness, Jesus is there to plead his case. And He's not arguing *against* the believer who sinned; He's arguing *for* him! He is saying, "Father, I took this person's place. I shed my blood."

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then we stand again in the presence of God as though we had never done wrong.

This has bothered a lot of people. Often, somebody who backslid and then repented gets answers to prayer which are absolutely amazing.

Some of the old saints have come to me crying, "Brother Hagin, I just don't understand it! I've tried to live right and do right. I stayed in church. Why won't the Lord heal me? So-and-so has been backslid, yet he got healed!"

I always say, "Yes, the Lord will forgive you of complaining and griping, too, if you ask Him to."

Can you see what has happened here? The backslider confessed his sins, the Lord forgave him, cleansed him from all unrighteousness, restored him to right standing with God, and that is the reason he could get answers. The other person

had had right standing all along, but did not know he had it, so he did not take advantage of it. (Sometimes we don't practice what we preach.)

Often we only judge from the outward appearance. We need to be very careful about judging the other fellow, even if we think he has come up short. We might not have done as well as he did under the circumstances.

One time when I was attending a convention, I was having physical problems. I didn't say anything to my wife, but I couldn't sleep. Three nights I got down by the bed praying, but my healing would not come into manifestation. The symptoms would not leave me.

Finally, the third night, I said, "Lord, I know there is nothing wrong with You. You cannot fail. I don't know whether I failed or what, but if there is anything I need to do, I'm willing to do it. Just show me."

As plain as somebody speaking to me (but I heard it in my spirit), I heard Him say, "Didn't you say such-and-such about Brother—(a pastor down in East Texas)?"

And in all of my supposed innocence, I replied, "I thought he was wrong. Wasn't he?"

"The question is not whether he was wrong or not."

I said, "But I thought he missed it. It looked like anybody with any sense would know better than that."

He said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Is he your servant or My servant?"

"Well," I said, "if he's anybody's, he's Yours. He sure isn't mine."

He said, "If you were under the pressure that pastor is under, and going through what he went through, you might not have done as well as he did."

I repented with tears. I said, "My God, that's the truth. Forgive me for making a statement like that. I'll go back to the preacher I said it to and ask him to forgive me for talking like that."

The minute I finished this prayer, I was all right physically. I have learned from experience: If you want to walk in health, you're going to have to watch your tongue and be careful about not judging people.

You say you don't believe that? Well, believe what you want to. That's your problem, not mine. But don't come griping to me because you have gotten into trouble. First, I'm liable to chew you out and second, by using your tongue this way, you will open the door for the devil to attack you.

But thank God for the word *forgiveness.*

Forgiveness belongs to Christians. Writing to the Church at Ephesus, Paul said, *"be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, FORGIVING one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Eph. 4:32.)

We can forgive just like God forgives. Why? Because the Bible says, "*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"* (Rom. 5:5).

In our heads? No, if you let your *head* dominate you, there is no telling where you will end up unless you get your mind renewed with the Word of God. Similarly, if you let your *flesh* dominate you, there is no telling where you will end up unless you present your bodies to God a living sacrifice, as the Bible instructs (Rom. 12:1). No, the love of God has been shed abroad in our *hearts*—in our spirits.

Christian believers are to walk in divine, not human, love. We are not to let human love be the motivating force in our lives.

Natural human love is selfish. It is concerned about *me*, what is *mine*, what *I* can have, and what *I* have to put up with.

Divine love is unselfish. It is not concerned with how I can use you, and what I can *get* from you. It is concerned with what I can *give*: *"For GOD SO LOVED the world, that HE GAVE his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). Oh, how the Church needs to know and walk in the light of divine love! It will solve your problems for you.

Natural human love will turn to hatred overnight. That is the reason so many married persons say, "I just don't love him (or her) anymore." They are operating entirely on natural human love when they say that.

Divine love never has been to the divorce court. Natural love has, because it will turn to hatred. "*But be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

One night after a church service, my wife and I went out to eat with the pastor and his wife. This pastor's wife said, "Brother Hagin, you've got me in a mess. Since I've heard you preach, I don't even know if I'm saved or not!"

I happened to know she grew up in a Full Gospel parsonage, was graduated from a Full Gospel school, and both she and her husband were ordained ministers.

"How did I confuse you?" I asked.

She explained that one night I had quoted from First John 3:15, where John says, *"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."*

“You’ve got me all confused,” the woman said. “I hate my mother-in-law!”

I replied, “I didn’t get you confused. You were confused before I got here. The light of God’s Word showed it up.”

“But I hate my mother-in-law,” she repeated.

I said, “Well, if that’s the case, then of course you *aren’t* saved. You *don’t* have eternal life in you.

(I was going to rescue her in a moment, but wanted her to see herself, so I let her stew for a little while.)

I knew what the problem was; it is a problem for many Christians. They really do not know what they have or who they are in Christ. They let their mind (unrenewed with the Word of God) or their flesh (which is unsanctified) confuse them, and that can really get them into a mess.

I decided to rescue this sister. I said, “Look me in the eye and say, ‘I hate my mother-in-law.’ At the same time, check down in your spirit (not up in your brain). What happens in there?”

She looked across the table and said, “I hate my mother-in-law.”

“Now,” I said, “what happened down on the inside of you?”

She said, “There is something down there ‘scratching’ me.”

I said, “I know it. It is the love of God that has been shed abroad in your heart trying to get your attention.”

“What should I do?” she said.

I said, “Let that love that’s on the inside of you dominate you. Don’t let your thinking dominate you. I don’t care what your head says. Your head sometimes can say some awful things. Don’t let your flesh dominate you. Crucify the flesh. It hurts, but crucify it. Act from your heart. Act like you would if you *did* love her —*because you really do*.”

A few days later, she came to me and said, “You know, you are exactly right! I don’t hate my mother-in-law. I don’t hate my husband’s family. They’re good people. They’re Christians. They love the Lord.”

It is awfully easy to get in the flesh if you are not careful. I could understand it in this case. Her husband was the only son of a widow.

Bless their darling hearts, I don’t care if people are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit; if they don’t get into the Word and let the love of god dominate them, they will walk in the natural.

But thank God, the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

About the Author

Kenneth E. Hagin

Kenneth E. Hagin ministered for almost 70 years after God miraculously healed him of a deformed heart and an incurable blood disease at the age of 17. Even though Rev. Hagin went home to be with the Lord in 2003, the ministry he founded continues to bless multitudes around the globe.

Kenneth Hagin Ministries' outreaches include *The Word of Faith,* a free magazine; Rhema Bible Training Center; Rhema Alumni Association; Rhema Ministerial Association International; Rhema Correspondence Bible School; and the Rhema Prison Ministry. Rev. Hagin's son and daughter-in-law, Kenneth W. and Lynette Hagin, cohost *Rhema Praise,* a weekly television broadcast; *Rhema for Today,* a weekday radio program; and *Living Faith Crusades* held around the world.

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