



# A Biblical Study of “Forgiveness” in Matthew 6:14-15 and its Implications for Christians

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## Abstract

Sin which is a violation of God's law, makes humans stray away from God and causes damage to the relationship between them and God. Humans can't get back in touch with God unless they have received forgiveness from God. The purpose of this paper is to ascertain the meaning of forgiveness as it is expressed in the Gospel of Matthew 6:14-15, through a biblical study based on the Byzantine Greek text of the Bible. The approaches taken were an exegesis and a descriptive literature methodology approach. The result obtained in this limited study is that the meaning of forgiveness in the Gospel of Matthew 6:14-15 is that there is a connection between the first clause and the second clause used which is a conditional sentence along with its negation. Based on the grammatical and lexical structure of Matthew 6:14 the second clause is an apodosis of the first clause, where the second clause is the answer to the first clause which is the prosthesis. So the sentence apodosis will apply if the prosthesis is fulfilled, as well as in the next paragraph which is the sentence negation. When the prosthesis in Matthew 6:15 is not performed, then the apodosis in Matthew 6:14 becomes invalid. Also, Matthew 6:14-15 cannot be separated from Matthew 6:12, where the translation of this verse grammatically states that God has forgiven humans first, and this is the basis for Matthew 6:14-15. This was emphasized by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:35. Christians in Indonesia should understand the meaning of forgiveness that the Lord Jesus taught, so that after a person has repented and become a Christian, he or she remains in Christ and keeps their life holy and forgive others, as a form of response to God, for the forgiveness that the Lord Jesus has given to them. Thus there must be repentance including a change of heart about one's actions or one's whole life. Atonement is needed as well which is making reparation after one has committed an offense.



**Keywords:** Bible Study, forgiveness, Christians, Holy Scriptures, atonement.

## Introduction

Christian teachings assert that God is love, and He came to earth to forgive humans their many sins. There are many perceptions and paradigms about sin and forgiveness conveyed by pastors, God's servants, and Christian teachers. Indeed sin is an active enmity against God and an acute violation of all His laws, which causes all wrongs (Berkhof, 2017). When someone sins against God, that person violates holiness. When sinning against others, man violates his humanity. Sin is a form of transgression against God and also against man (Sproul, 2018). That is why, it is necessary to take steps to solve the problem of sinning. Humans will not be able to free themselves from sin and improve their relationship with God and with each other unless they strive not to committed sins. Christ's death is a substitute for sinners, redemption in relation to sin, atonement in relation to humanity, and forgiveness in relation to God (Sproul, 2018). Christians must show kindness to those who dislike them, no matter what. Meanwhile, forgiveness must be practiced for those who have hurt someone's heart (Ferguson, 1995). This statement shows that all Christians must always forgive others in real life. From the Greek verb ἀφίημι (aphiemi) which means "to forgive" which is found in the Byzantine Bible text Matthew 6:14-15, there are three questions that need to be scrutinized and responded to regarding the meaning of the word, including: Can everyone forgive people's mistakes in their sins, without getting forgiveness first?, If Christians don't forgive each other's mistakes, will God cancel his pardon? And What is the meaning of the word "forgiveness" according to its grammatical, lexical, and theological connotation?.

The questions above will be scrutinized and studied biblically, in order to gain a better understanding of the meaning of the word "forgive" as stated by the Lord Jesus (Harianto, Metekohy, Sahertian & Ming, 2023). The author sees that there are different views and doctrines that make the notion of "forgiveness" one that is related to the verse in Matthew 6:14-15 in relation to sin and salvation. Also, different text sources can lead to differences in the translation and interpretation of the verse, this is something that some Christians and Christian theologians are not fully aware of. Several sources of Bible texts used by Christians so far, have been taken from the Textus Receptus, Tischendorf, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and Byzantine texts.

There are many differences in the translation of the Bible, even though it seems that the number of verses and books is the same, there are many differences in content and grammatical translations. So of course this will give rise to many different translations of the Bible as well. This then becomes a theological debate among Christian theologians and the emergence of various diverse doctrines and denominations, due to the many differences in the results of Bible translations. It is important to understand that the differences in the Bible used for research will greatly affect the results of the research. Error in selecting the correct text of the Bible will be detrimental to research. The next step in translating the source of the Bible text, grammatically, should not be separated from theological translation.

In this case the author uses the Byzantine Text as the main reference, because this text is the only text that has been canonized by the church fathers after going through several councils respectively including one in 393 CE, another in 397 CE and 403 CE), and finally one in 419 CE. The Greek κανών meaning "rule" or "measuring stick" at Carthage has been designated as the Greek canon Bible which contains the 27 books of the NT which include the Canonical Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles of the Apostles and the book of Revelation.



## Method

The author used a qualitative writing method with a pure exegesis study, by applying a literature study based on hermeneutics from John D. Grassmick's (9 steps of exegesis analysis) on the Byzantine Greek Bible text in the Gospel of Matthew 6:14-15. The purpose of exegesis is always to capture the essence of the message conveyed by the texts studied. The best way to achieve that goal is to extract the original language of the document (Grassmick, 2015). In this case it is very important for writers to master linguistics, textual criticism, literary criticism, historical criticism, archaeological discoveries and additional tools. The expertise and tools possessed by an exegete are thus very helpful and greatly determine the process and results of exegesis in their efforts to find the truth. Kevin J. Vanhoozer has stated that the hermeneutic crisis is basically a theological one in nature (Poythress, 1999). If someone stops believing in God, then everything related to the meaning, the writer, the text, and the reader all become problematic aspects. This becomes the cause of an unhealthy outlook (Poythress, 1999). Hermeneutic's task is to understand the content of the text correctly (Ricoeur, 2017).

## Result and Discussion

### Background to the Gospel Of Matthew

In understanding the meaning of "forgiveness" in Matthew 6:14-15, of course it has something to do with Matthew 6:12 regarding the clause; "and forgive us our "tribulations," as we also "forgive those who trespass against us." The word "mistake" in this verse is not an ordinary mistake, but is related to sin. Therefore, to discuss "forgiveness" related to "mistakes or sins", in this study, the researchers linked it to soteriology and hamartology in the Gospel of Matthew. Several important notes regarding the emphasis on the soteriological views of Matthew's Gospel cannot be separated, because Matthew emerged from the situation that Jewish Christians suffered persecution from fellow Jews who had not yet become Christians. As a result, and as always happens during times of persecution certain issues manifest which play an important role such as:

1. Matthew saw Judas, betraying other Christians to their persecutors(Matthew 24:10).
2. Matthew saw Peter, counterfeiting their initial confession with a public denial of Christ (Matthew 10:33).
3. Matthew saw their characteristically Christian behaviour as being distorted in a way that made them indistinguishable from their fellow Jews who did not profess Christianity (Matthew 24:12).
4. Matthew saw that they failed to evangelize their fellow Jews, and failed to disciple Gentiles as well, because such an evangelistic attempt would have marked them for persecution.

It is very important to note that according to Matthew, salvation depends on perseverance in Christian life and witness. In general, the view of theologians is that the Gospel of Matthew was written by one of Jesus' disciples who was a Jew who converted to Christianity. He was also a tax collector who lived in Capernaum, which is located in Galilee and his name was Matthew (Jamieson, 2002). Early Church fathers such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria stated that Matthew preached the Gospel to the Jewish community in Judea, before going to other countries. Ancient writers disagree as to which other country these were, but almost all sources mention Ethiopia as being one (Eugène, 1911).

The early church thus believed that the Gospel of Matthew was written by the apostle Matthew. It is first attested, among other surviving first and second century writings, by the early Christian bishop Papias of Hierapolis (c. 60–163 CE) (Dale B, 2012), quoted by the Church historian Eusebius (260–340 CE). Early Christian theologians pointed out that the first Gospel



was written by Matthew and compiled in Hebrew near Jerusalem for Jewish Christians and translated into Greek. While the original book written by Matthew in Hebrew was kept in the library of Caesarea (Nicholson, 1879).

## Research Result

### Grammatical and Lexical Analysis:

Based on the research results of the original text of the Byzantine Bible contained in the Gospel of Matthew 6:14-15, which contains the teachings of the Lord Jesus about "forgiveness" which uses the Greek verb αφητε (aphēte) in the aorist tenses, which is based on the Greek grammatical structure, should be translated into in the past tense as: "you have forgiven". In Koine Greek, the verb aorist is used to express an action that happened in the past and was completed perfectly. In several Bible translations, it has been translated in present: 'forgive' (KJV, WEB, Darby, NIV, ESV, NASB, LSV, ISV, ASV, NLT, etc.) (Nicholson, 1879), in the new translation of the Indonesian Bible it is also translated as "forgive."

### Results of Text Analysis Based on Koine Greek Grammar

Byzantine text Matthew 6:14-15

Matthew 6:14

Byzantine texts	εαν γαρ αφητε τοις ανθρωποις τα παραπτωματα αυτων αφησει και υμιν ο πατηρ υμων ο ουρανιος
• Transliteration	ean gar aphēte tois anthrōpois ta paraptōmata autōn aphēsei kai umin o patēr umōn o ouranios
• Morphology	εαν <sup>COND</sup> γαρ <sup>CONJ</sup> αφητε <sup>V-2AAS-2P</sup> τοις <sup>T-DPM</sup> ανθρωποις <sup>N-DPM</sup> τα <sup>T-APN</sup> παραπτωματα <sup>N-APN</sup> αυτων <sup>P-GPM</sup> αφησει <sup>V-FAI-3S</sup> και <sup>CONJ</sup> υμιν <sup>P-2DP</sup> ο <sup>T-NSM</sup> πατηρ <sup>N-NSM</sup> υμων <sup>P-2GP</sup> ο <sup>T-NSM</sup> ουρανιος <sup>A-NSM</sup>

Matthew 6:15

Byzantine texts	εαν δε μη αφητε τοις ανθρωποις τα παραπτωματα αυτων ουδε ο πατηρ υμων αφησει τ απαραπτωματα υμων
• Transliteration	ean de mē aphēte tois anthrōpois ta paraptōmata autōn oude o patēr umōn aphēsei ta paraptōmata umōn
• Morphology	εαν <sup>COND</sup> δε <sup>CONJ</sup> μη <sup>PRT-N</sup> αφητε <sup>V-2AAS-2P</sup> τοις <sup>T-DPM</sup> ανθρωποις <sup>N-DPM</sup> τα <sup>T-APN</sup> παραπτωματα <sup>N-APN</sup> αυτων <sup>P-GPM</sup> ουδε <sup>CONJ-N</sup> ο <sup>T-NSM</sup> πατηρ <sup>N-NSM</sup> υμων <sup>P-2GP</sup> αφησει <sup>V-FAI-3S</sup> τα <sup>T-APN</sup> παραπτωματα <sup>N-APN</sup> υμων <sup>P-2GP</sup>

The Greek verb αφητε (aphēte) comes from the verb άφίμι (aphiēmi), and is a form of a double or compound verb (preposition+verb) which comes from a combination of the preposition απο (apo) which means "from" or "out of" with the verb ιμι (iemi) which has a meaning a which includes almost all types of emission (radiance). This άφίμι (aphiēmi) has a paradigm that describes an act that is done intentionally and forcefully. Among others are ; defined as: "let go" (debt by not demanding it) or "forgive" for example: Matthew. 6:12; 6:14 as well as several others meaning, "to; 18:35 ; 18:32; 18:27; 18:21; 32: 12; 12:31; 9:5; 9:2 . send," "to let," "to allow," "to give up," "to leave," etc.

The verb αφητε (aphēte) is an irregular verb (which in English is also classified as an irregular verb), which is used in the subjunctive form. In the grammatical structure of the Koine Greek language, the use of the subjunctive mode is to describe an action that refers to a "possibility," or "doubt." Thus, grammatically it usually begins with a subjunctive auxiliary such as εαν (ean)



as found in the text of Matthew 6:14-15. In general, the use of the subjunctive mode is to express various elements of doubt or possibility, thus necessitating the use of the subjunctive mode, thus forming a conditional sentence. Therefore, based on the relationship between texts, structure and context, the use of the verb ἀφητε (aphēte) in Matthew 6:14 functions as a prosthesis of the first clause which reads: εἰν γὰρ ἀφητε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν (ean gar aphēte tois anthrōpois ta paraptōmata autōn ), which asserts that the act of forgiveness in the prosthesis clause will result in a logical consequence, where, if "we" forgives the mistakes (offences) of people [as the "Father" has forgiven the mistakes (offences) "we" then "He" who is "the Father in heaven" will also forgive "our" sins (transgressions). This is closely related to what the Lord Jesus previously taught in Matthew 6:12, which uses the Greek verb in the aorist tense: ἀφεσ (aphes), which means "have forgiven." Throughout the New Testament, the verb ἀφίημι (aphiēmi) is used a total of 143 times.

Etymologically, the word παραπτώματα (paraptōmata) comes from the noun παράπτωμα (paraptōma) which has a paradigm of "transgressions" or "mistakes" related to "sins against God, but in this case, the use of this noun in in the Bible to reveal all forms of relatively minor sins which the Apostle Paul classifies as unintentional sins, and the Apostle John classifies them as sins that do not lead to death, but whose name is "sin". Even though it is committed unintentionally and does not lead to death, the guilty person must still atone with God through forgiveness (see: Numbers 15:26-29). Throughout the New Testament, the noun παράπτωμα (paraptōma) is used 23 times.

The nominative singular masculine adjective οὐράνιος (ouranios) is derived from the noun ουρανός (ouranos) which means "heaven," but as an adjective used in the attributive phrase ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐρανίος (o patēr umōn o ouranios), so the meaning of the word the attribute οὐράνιος (ouranios) should be taken as "that which is heavenly," not "that which is in heaven" as most translations have mistranslated it. So grammatically speaking, the attributive phrase ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐρανίος (o patēr umōn o ouranios) means "your heavenly Father." Based on the lexical meaning, the use of the adjective οὐράνιος (ouranios) emphasizes its "essence", while the use of the adjective ἐπουρανίος (epouranios) emphasizes its "location". In the New Testament Bible, the use of the adjective οὐράνιος (ouranios) is used mostly of "Father," but it is also used of the heavenly armies (Luke 2:13), as well as of heavenly visions (Acts 26:19).

Throughout the New Testament, the adjective οὐράνιος (ouranios) is used 6 times. Whereas Matthew 6:15 is only a form of negation of Matthew 6:14, but gives a deep meaning that is very closely related to the concept of salvation that has been understood by Christians. The same thing was emphasized by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the 10000 talents (Matthew 18:35). Matthew 18:23-35 King James Version (KJV) "And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."

Whereas Matthew 6:15 is only a form of negation of Matthew 6:14, but gives a deep meaning that is very closely related to the concept of salvation that has been understood by Christians. The same thing was emphasized by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the 1000 talents (Matthew 18:35). Whereas Matthew 6:15 is only a form of negation of Matthew 6:14, but gives a deep meaning that is very closely related to the concept of salvation that has been understood by Christians. The same thing was emphasized by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the 10000 talents (Matthew 18:35).



*Structural Analysis:*

Based on structural analysis, by investigating the relationships between paragraphs and sentences or coupling particles, and within paragraphs or sentences or types of words, each element of a sentence, word, phrase, and clause has a specific role. Thus each sentence in the paragraph has a special role as well.

**Matthew 6:14**

Say	Trans.	Stem	Information	Meaning
εαν	ean		Conjunction cp	If/ if
γαρ	gar		Conjunction	Because
αφητε	aphēte	ἀφί	Verbs V-2AAS-2P	you have forgiven
τοις	tois		Plural masculine articles	(no meaning)
ανθρωποις	anthropois		Plural masculine dative nouns	People
τα	ta		Plural neutral articles	(no meaning)
παραπτωματα	paraptōmata		Plural neutral accusative nouns	Mistakes/violations
αυτων	auton		Personal pronoun, third person, masculine plural	(theirs
αφησει	aphēsei	ἀφί	V-FAI-3S verbs	He will forgive
και	kai		conjunction	And also
υμιν	umin		Personal pronoun dative second person plural	To you
ο	o		Singular masculine nominative article	(no meaning)
πατηρ	putter		Singular masculine nominative noun	
υμων	umon		Personal pronoun, second person plural	(belongs to) you
ο	o		The singular masculine nominative article	(no meaning)
ουρανιος	ouranios		Singular masculine nominative adjective	heaven

**Structural analysis table Matthew 6:14**

Constituents	Translation	Textuality	Transitivity	moods
εαν	If		Condition particle conjunctions	
γαρ	Because		Reason	
αφητε	You have forgiven	Theme	Process	Predicate (Limited)
τοις ανθρωποις τα παραπτωματα αυτων	The faults (offences) of people		Perpetrator	object
αφησει	He will forgive	Theme	process	Predicate
και	And also			
υμιν	To you		perpetrator	object
ο πατηρ υμων ο ουρανιος	Your heavenly Father		Perpetrator	Subject

**Matthew 6:15**

Say	Trans.	Stem	Information	Meaning
εαν	ean		Conjunction cp	If/ if
δε	de		Conjunction	And
μη	mē		Negative particle	No do not
αφητε	aphēte	ἀφί	Verbs V-2AAS-2P	you have forgiven
τοις	tois		Plural masculine articles	(no meaning)
ανθρωποις	anthropois		Plural masculine dative nouns	People



τα	ta		Plural neutral articles	(no meaning)
παραπτώματα	paraptōmata		Plural neutral accusative nouns	Mistakes/violations
αυτων	auton		Personal pronoun, third person, masculine plural	(theirs
ουδε	oude		Negative conjunction	And no/ Neither
ο	ο		Singular masculine nominative article	(no meaning)
πατηρ	putter		Singular masculine nominative noun	
υμων	umon		Personal pronoun, second person plural	(belongs to) you
αφησει	aphēsei	ἀφί	V-FAI-3S verbs	He will forgive
και	kai		conjunction	And also
υμιν	umin		Personal pronoun dative second person plural	To you
τα	ta		Plural neutral articles	(no meaning)
παραπτώματα	paraptōmata		Plural neutral accusative nouns	Mistakes/violations
υμων	umon		Personal pronoun, second person plural	(belongs to) you

In Matthew 6:15 has 2 clauses:

1. εαν δε μη αφητε τοις ανθρωποις τα παραπτωματα αυτων
2. ουδε ο πατηρ υμων αφησει τα παραπτωματα υμων

Structural analysis table Matthew 6:15

<b>Constituents</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Textuality</b>	<b>Transitivity</b>	<b>moods</b>
εαν	If		Condition particle conjunctions	
δε	And also		Conjunctions	
μη	mē		Negative particle	
αφητε	You have forgiven	Theme	Process	Predicate (Limited)
τοις ανθρωποις τα παραπτωματα αυτων	The faults (offences) of people		Perpetrator	object
ουδε	And no/ neither		Negative conjunction	
ο πατηρ υμων	your father		perpetrator	Subject
αφησει	He will forgive	Theme	process	Predicate
τα παραπτωματα υμων	Your faults (offences).		attribute	object

First clause:

1. The negative sentence in the first clause begins with a post positive conjunction δε (de) which is strung with the negative particle μη (me) before the verb αφητε (aphēte). This has made the first clause structure in Matthew 6:15 the opposite of the first clause in Matthew 6:14.
2. The explanation of the first clause of Matthew 6:15 is the same as the first clause of Matthew 6:14.

Second clause:

1. The negative sentence in the second clause also starts with a postpositive δε (de) which is strung with the negative particle μη (me) which is used for the indicative mode: ου (ou) thus forming the conjunction ουδε (oude), which usually shows a light transition and is rarely translated, but means: "and not" or "and not," or sometimes translated



“not”, this is because the use of the conjunction ουδε ( oude ) follows the negation that preceded it.

2. The explanation of the second clause of Matthew 6:15 is the same as the second clause of Matthew 6:14.

Thus, the meaning given in Matthew 6:15 is actually the same as the meaning in Matthew 6:14, only in the form of negation. So based on the grammatical, lexical and structural analysis, the text of Matthew 6:15 has a grammatical translation:

"But if you don't forgive people's mistakes, neither will your Father forgive your mistakes."  
Grammatical Translation of Matthew 6:14-15:

14 For if you forgive people's faults, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive people's faults, neither will your Father forgive your sins.

### *Contextual Analysis:*

To understand the concept of forgiveness of sins based on the relationship between Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 6:12, the main key lies in the polyvalence of the verb ἀφιῆμι (aphiēmi) which means “forgive” or “cancel,” with the noun ὀφείλημα (opheilēma) which means “debt” or “offence,” and the noun ὀφειλέτης (opheiletēs) means “one who owes” (debtor) or “offender.” In Matthew 6:12, the aorist verb ἀφες (aphes) can refer to “forgiveness of a debt of money,” or “forgiveness of sins,” as its direct object (the noun (ὀφειλήματα) can refer literally to a debt of money, or figuratively to the sins or transgressions of others (cf. BAGD, 125; L&N, 503, 582; Wolter, 1991, 2.550; Leroy, 1990, 1.181-183).<sup>1</sup>

Problems arising from the interpretation of Matthew 6:12 will not only raise semantic questions, but will also raise various historical questions, because the use of the 5th petition of the Lord's Prayer as a reference for the forgiveness of monetary debts is largely based on the understanding which is socio-historical, which by Ringe (1985) and also Crosby (1988), ascribed to the context of the jubilee year and the increasing indebtedness of the general population in Syria and Palestine in the first century. For this reason, it is important to know whether the issue of debts and expectations regarding the year of Jubilee raised by Ringe and Crosby above is in a valid context?

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<sup>1</sup>The noun ὀφειλήματα usually has the literal meaning of "debt," both in the Septuagint, the New Testament, and secular sources (Betz 1995, 400-402). For this reason some scholars [eg: MH Crosby, House of Disciples: Church, Economics & Justice in Matthew. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 188-190] states that Jesus here demanded cancellation of the money owed. However, it may also have a metaphorical meaning of "transgression" or "sin" in Matthew 6:12 [Example: WD Davies and DC Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. vol. 1. (Edinburgh: Clark [ICC], 1988), 611], because of the Aramaic noun ܩܒܠܐ, which may underlie the word ὀφειλήματα, may refer literally to "debt" or metaphorically to "guilt for sin" [BAGD, 603; Wolter, EDNT 1991, 2-550]. Louw and Nida [JP Louw and EA Nida (L&N). Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains. Vol. 1. (New York: UBS, 1988), 774] defines its meaning as "a moral debt arising as a result of sin." However, they qualify this definition with a footnote stating that "some scholars interpret ὀφείλημα in Matthew 6:12 to literally refer to debt, as they believe that this statement refers to the actual forgiveness of debt in the ideal Jubilee year of the Torah." " Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains. Vol. 1. (New York: UBS, 1988), 774] defines its meaning as "a moral debt arising as a result of sin." However, they qualify this definition with a footnote stating that "some scholars interpret ὀφείλημα in Matthew 6:12 to literally refer to debt, as they believe that this statement refers to the actual forgiveness of debt in the ideal Jubilee year of the Torah." " Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains. Vol. 1. (New York: UBS, 1988), 774] defines its meaning as "a moral debt arising as a result of sin." However, they qualify this definition with a footnote stating that "some scholars interpret ὀφείλημα in Matthew 6:12 to literally refer to debt, as they believe that this statement refers to the actual forgiveness of debt in the ideal Jubilee year of the Torah." "





However, based on Matthew's own statement in Matthew 6:14-15, which is contextually closely related to the 5th petition in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:12, a more thorough argumentation structure must be considered from Matthew 6:9-15, since it is so important to establish the meaning of the noun *ὀφείλημα* (*opheilēma*), is Matthew referring to that noun to "debt," or to "moral transgression?" From this, researchers can make decisions and conclusions, that the meaning of the verb *ἀφίημι* (*aphiēmi*) which means "forgiveness," the noun *ὀφείλημα* (*opheilēma*) which means "debt" or "offence," and the noun *οφειλέτης* (*opheiletēs*) which means "debtor," refers to the semantic range of Jewish understanding at that time.

The concept of "forgiveness of sins" in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), which is metonymized by the word "debt" (Matthew 6:12), is in sync, and very consistent with the parable "Forgiveness of a debtor of 10000 talents" (Matthew 18:23-35). The concept that "sin" is "debt" is a common metonym for Jews. In the Old Testament, sins and mistakes must be atoned for and be paid for with a sin offering (Leviticus 4:1-35) made by the Israelites as well as by the Priests who had committed sins unintentionally (Numbers 15:26-29). Everyone who has sinned must come with a sacrifice to wash away their sins, and this is offered to God through the priest. Because God is the Most Holy, all the priests and people of Israel must also be holy before God. They have to make up for all the sins they have committed before God, and then God will likely forgive them. In the New Testament, the concept of "sin" is "debt" is much clearer, where apart from the parable of the debt of 10000 talents, the apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:20 : "For you have been bought and the price has been paid in full: Therefore glorify God with your body!" Sin is a debt, this is clear in Paul's other writings found in Colossians 2:13-14 (LAI-TB) which says: "You too, although you were dead in your transgressions and because you were not circumcised outwardly, God has made you alive with - together with him, after he forgave all our transgressions, by canceling the debt, which by the provisions of the law accuses and threatens us. And He removed it by nailing it to the cross." In the New Testament it is very clear that the concept of sin is debt.

#### *Historical Analysis:*

It is appropriate if the Gospel of Matthew is placed in the first part as the first book. Although the author's name is not mentioned in the text of the Bible, the testimony of all the early church fathers (since about 130 CE) states that this Gospel was written by Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples (Abundant Life Guide Bible, 2009).

The ancient writers have unanimously and consistently asserted that Matthew was the author of the first of the four Gospels, (Farmer, 1994) i.e. one of the 12 disciples of Jesus (Matthew 9:9; 10:3). Although Matthew did not identify himself by the name Matthew, internal evidence indicates that the person who wrote the "Gospel of Matthew" was a Jew who converted to Christianity. Meanwhile, external evidence was presented by Daniel Carro regarding the existence of an impressive list of early Church fathers linking the first Gospel to someone named Matthew the Levite (Carro, 1997).

Regarding the date of writing, Brown says that Matthew's Gospel was written sometime between 30 and 90 CE in Aramaea (Syria) and was addressed to a Christian church that was once very Jewish, but became increasingly Gentile in composition.<sup>2</sup>

Although there is no definite information about the exact location of Matthew's first readers, some interpreters believe, that the first readers of Matthew's Gospel lived in a community

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<sup>2</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Yale: Doubleday, 1997), 213. have been written by Matthew several years before the destruction of Jerusalem.



associated with the large Jewish population outside Palestine (Schnelle, 1998), probably in Syrian Antioch.<sup>3</sup> If this assumption is correct, then the political context of Matthew's early readers is the same as in Palestine at the time of Jesus' life, since Syria was also under Roman rule from 63 BCE (Sinnigen and Robinson, 1981).

Matthew's intended recipients were Jews who already believed in Jesus, and that Jesus was the Messiah. The conclusion is that Matthew's gospel was written for the Jews. Unlike Mark's gospel, Matthew's gospel does not explain Jewish customs (compare Matthew 5:1-9 with Mark 7:1-13); he describes Jesus as the new teachings of Moses and Jesus as the new Torah; he quoted the Hebrew Scriptures and often referred to Old Testament passages, with the aim of showing that Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy.

#### *Literature Analysis:*

Based on a literary analysis of the Byzantine Greek New Testament, which was canonized in 419 CE in Carthage, a comparison has been made. A text has been obtained whose validity and authenticity are undoubted, and there are no contradictions in it. This is because the Byzantine Greek New Testament canon Bible is the product of legitimate church authorities, so there is no doubt about its authenticity and legitimacy.

#### *Textual Criticism Analysis:*

Based on the analysis of textual criticism, the text used by the researcher is in accordance with the canon text of the New Testament Bible as a result of the Carthaginian council of 419 M. Therefore, the discussion of the problem of textual criticism in Matthew 6:14-15 is only on the difference in the use of the word "τα παραπτώματα" ( ta paraptōmata autōn) in the Gospel of Matthew which is not found in the Gospel of Mark. Based on the textual criticism, the text in Matthew 6:15 which reads τα παραπτώματα αυτων (ta paraptōmata autōn) in the first clause is original, not an additional text added later. From the results of the analysis of Textual Criticism, several points of conclusion are obtained, namely:

1. The possible reason for removing the phrase "τα παραπτώματα αυτων" (ta paraptōmata autōn) in Matthew 6:15 is due to its harmonization with Mark 11:26.
2. The difference between the Manuscript and non-canon text is because the text in Matthew 6:15 which reads τα παραπτώματα αυτων (ta paraptōmata autōn) in the first clause is in accordance with the Byzantine canon Bible text of the council results (cf. Council of Carthage 419 CE canon 24).
3. In Jewish literature, the words are also important in chiasmus.

#### *Exegetical Analysis:*

Based on the exegetical analysis, the researcher found the result that the text contained in Matthew 6:14-15 is a dependent clause, which is bound to others by another clause. Exegetically, the text contained in Matthew 6:14-15 contains sentences of protasis and sentences of apodosis regarding the terms of forgiveness that must be carried out, or its negation. The explanation is as follows:

1. The first clause in Matthew 6:14 contains protasis, which reads: "For if you forgive people the sins". Is a condition. This condition occurs because God has first forgiven the sins of the praying person, as contained in the previous verse above, namely in Matthew 6:12



which reads: "You have forgiven our mistakes, as we also always forgive those who are guilty of we."

2. The second part in Matthew 6:14 which reads: "then your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you," is an apodosis of the first clause. So the sentence apodosis will apply if the protasis is fulfilled.
3. When the protasis in Matthew 6:15 which reads: "But if you do not forgive people's sins," is not carried out by the prayer person, then the apodosis in Matthew 6:14 which reads: "Your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you," becomes invalid.
4. If the protasis in Matthew 6:15 which reads: "For if you do not forgive people's mistakes," is not fulfilled, then the apodosis in Matthew 6:14 which reads: then your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you," also not fulfilled.

#### *Theological Analysis:*

Based on the theological analysis, forgiveness done by humans is a response to forgiveness that God has done beforehand as stated in Matthew 6:12, so that forgiveness done by humans cannot be called the cause of God forgiving human sins.

#### **Conclusion**

In Matthew 6 Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray and outlines how we are restored into having deep intimacy with God whenever we have annoyed Him. Jesus instructs all people to build into their prayers a request for God to forgive us in the same way that we have forgiven others who have harmed us (Matthew 6:12). If we have not forgiven others when we pray for our forgiveness, then practically speaking, we are asking God not to restore a right relationship with us after we sin.

Matthew 6 does not teach us that our destiny is based on our forgiving other people but rather teaches us that we must pardon those who have sinned against us. The Holy Bible is very clear that God pardons sin by His grace based on Christ's redemptive work on the cross for all of humanity, and it is not based on a man's actions.

Grammatically the sentence in Matthew 6:14 is a form of conditional possibility, this can be seen in the first clause which contains protasis with a grammatical structure that uses the word εαν (ean) and the subjunctive verb αφητε (aphēte). The second clause contains apodosis which will occur if the conditions in apodosis are met. Second, Matthew 6:15 is a negation sentence from Matthew 6:14. Third, based on the context, Matthew 6:14-15 is related to Matthew 6:12 which theologically states that if we have to forgive others, it is because God has forgiven us first. So that the understanding of Matthew 6:14 is our response to the forgiveness that God has given before (Matthew 6:12).

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