



1. How can God forget our sins and be omniscient?

The question. If God is omniscient (knows all things without exception), how can He forget our sins? The Bible states that God is omniscient ... and states that He does not remember our sins (those of believers). Both of these statements are true. Do they contradict each other?

God is omniscient. The Bible states it definitively, *"For God is greater than our heart and knows all things,"* 1 John 3:20. God is infinite in knowledge. He is omniscient ... i.e., all-knowing. His knowledge is without limits. God knows all things that have happened ... are happening ... could happen ... and will happen. His knowledge extends beyond the realm of the creation ... beyond space ... and beyond time (extending infinitely from eternity past into eternity future). His knowledge is unlimited. In computer terms, no data could be added to His memory because everything, without limits, is already recorded there. In addition, nothing stored in His memory is irretrievable. No data is ever lost or deleted from His memory. Therefore, everything about us is fully known by God. *"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do,"* Hebrews 4:13.

Does God forget sin? The person who has believed in Jesus has received forgiveness of sins. *"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins,"* Acts 10:43. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us,"* Ephesians 1:7-8. God is holy and just. He neither ignores nor overlooks sin. *"For the wages of sin is death,"* Romans 6:23. Our sin must be paid for ... either by the death of Jesus (His payment applied to us upon our obeying the Gospel by believing in Him as our personal Savior) or by our spiritual death in eternal separation from God. *"The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,"* 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. If you have any doubt about your own spiritual standing with God, visit www.911GOD.org to learn how to get right with Him ... how to receive eternal forgiveness of sins. After you have believed in Jesus, all your sins are forgiven. David wrote, *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us,"* Psalm 103:12. The north and south poles are a finite distance apart. However, the east and west are figuratively an infinite distance apart. David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote that our sins are infinitely removed from us when God has forgiven us. However, is the knowledge of those sins removed from God? Does God forget anyone's sins ... remember them no more? Such questions require precise answers. The knowledge of our sins is neither lost nor deleted from God's memory. Moreover, it is retrievable. However, God does not remember our sin after we have believed. The Bible states this as a fact. *"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins,"* Isaiah 43:25. *"For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more,"* Hebrews 8:12. *"And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more,"* Hebrews 10:17. Misunderstanding about the definitions of the words *forget* and *remember* can lead to confusion.

The definitions. Permanent deletion from memory is not the common meaning of *forget*. Most often, *forget* means to treat with inattention, overlook, or to disregard ... intentionally or unintentionally. Joseph was mistreated by his family (beaten and sold into slavery). God graciously allowed him to disregard, to treat with inattention, his family and the trouble they caused. Joseph said, *"God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household,"* Genesis 41:51. The knowledge of his family was not deleted from Joseph's memory. God caused him not to mentally dwell on those hurtful memories. In computer terms, that data was archived but not in RAM. When Joseph's family came to Egypt, he recognized them. *"But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him. Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them,"* Genesis 42:8-9. Consider the definition of the word *remember*. It means to bring to mind, to think of, to give attention to, or to consider. When you remember something, you are retrieving that information from your stored knowledge (memory). To *not remember* is to *not retrieve* the stored data from your memory. Not remembering does not mean that the data has been lost or deleted. Nor does it mean that it is irretrievable ... it is retrievable but not retrieved. That is the common use of *remember* ... and is so used in many Biblical references including: Genesis 30:22, Exodus 2:24, Leviticus 26:42, Psalm 78:39, Psalm 89:50, Psalm 105:8, Psalm 105:42-43, Ezekiel 16:60, Matthew 5:23, Luke 16:25, and Luke 23:42.

The non-contradictory answer. God knows everything (including all our sins) ... while not remembering our sins. That is not a contradiction. When we believed in Jesus, our sins were forgiven ... and God remembers them no more. He no longer gives attention to our sins ... no longer considers them ... no longer brings them to mind. After we became His children, He disregarded our sins because they had already been paid for by Jesus on the cross. They were, and are, no longer of any consequence. The knowledge of our forgiven sins has not been deleted from His memory. There is just no reason for Him to retrieve that information. It is wonderful that our sins have been removed from us as far as the east is from the west ... and wonderful that God intentionally considers them no more. He knows absolutely everything about us. He has archived the data about our sins ... but does not retrieve it. God is omniscient. The data about our sins is in His memory ... but when He considers us, it is as if it had been deleted. *"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"* Psalm 32:1. *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account,"* Romans 4:7-8.

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