

## THE UNPARDONABLE SIN – SLANDER FROM EVIL HEARTS

### Matthew 9:34 (KJV)

But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

### Matthew 12:24 (KJV)

But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

### Mark 3:22 (KJV)

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

### Luke 12:10 (KJV)

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

### Jamieson, Fausset and Brown

#### Matthew 12:31 (KJV)

**Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men** — The word “blasphemy” properly signifies “detraction,” or “slander.” In the New Testament it is applied, as it is here, to vituperation directed against God as well as against men; and in this sense it is to be understood as an aggravated form of sin. Well, says our Lord, all sin - whether in its ordinary or its more aggravated forms - shall find forgiveness with God. Accordingly, in Mark ([Mar 3:28](#)) the language is still stronger: “All sin shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.” There is no sin whatever, it seems, of which it may be said, “That is not a pardonable sin.” This glorious assurance is not to be limited by what follows; but, on the contrary, what follows is to be explained by this.

**but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.**

### F B Meyer

#### Matthew 12:24-37 (KJV)

Spite and hatred absolutely blind the eyes and distort the judgment. They reached their climax in this effort of the Pharisees to discredit Christ. They could not deny His miracles, so they imputed them to a collusion between Him and Satan. On the face of it, this charge was absurd. But our Lord showed clearly that in making the allegation, His enemies were violating their spiritual sense and deliberately blinding their eyes and dulling their ears to God’s Spirit. This is the sin that hath never forgiveness, because the soul that acts thus ceases to wish for or seek it.

What a glimpse is given of our Saviour’s sore temptations and glorious victory in [Mat 12:29](#)! He had already bound the strong man, and for this reason was able to spoil his house and deliver his captives. Let Jesus into your heart, and no foe, though he may batter the door, shall break in to destroy!

The one test that Jesus proposes is *fruit*. The nature of a man or doctrine or movement can be rightly estimated only when the results have had time to develop. How splendidly Christianity has stood this test!

### John Wesley

#### Matthew 12:31 (KJV)

The blasphemy against the Spirit - How much stir has been made about this? How many sermons, yea, volumes, have been written concerning it? And yet there is nothing plainer in all the Bible. It is

neither more nor less than the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil, which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. [Mar 3:28](#); [Luk 12:10](#).

**Adam Clarke**

**Matthew 12:31 (KJV)**

**All manner of sin and blasphemy** - *Βλασφημία*, injurious or impious speaking, mocking and deriding speech, Anglo-Saxon. See [Mat 9:3](#).

**But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost** - Even personal reproaches, revilings, persecutions against Christ, were remissible; but blasphemy, or impious speaking against the Holy Spirit was to have no forgiveness: i.e. when the person obstinately attributed those works to the devil, which he had the fullest evidence could be wrought only by the Spirit of God. That this, and nothing else, is the sin against the Holy Spirit, is evident from the connection in this place, and more particularly from [Mar 3:28-30](#). "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Here the matter is made clear beyond the smallest doubt - the unpardonable sin, as some term it, is neither less nor more than ascribing the miracles Christ wrought, by the power of God, to the spirit of the devil.

Many sincere people have been grievously troubled with apprehensions that they had committed the unpardonable sin; but let it be observed that no man who believes the Divine mission of Jesus Christ, ever can commit this sin: therefore let no man's heart fail because of it, from henceforth and for ever, Amen.

Compiled by Joseph van Loon.

## The Unpardonable Sin

Pardon. What a wonderful thing to experience! When God pardons, He forgives, and the debt of sin is no longer charged to our account. To know the sweetness of pardon and then to slowly and surely, but unexplainably, feel the crushing weight of sin once more — that is terrifying. What is wrong when a Christian sins and takes the steps that the Bible outlines for restoration and forgiveness, yet peace seems to evade him? Has he done something that God is not able to forgive? Has he sinned away the day of grace? Has he committed the unpardonable sin?

The term *unpardonable sin* is not a Biblical term. But the Bible does have something to say about it. We will examine various Bible passages that address this subject.

“Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit” (Mark 3:28-30).

These words come from the lips of Him who said He came to seek and save the lost. This One who was able to save men and women, whom others had cast out as hopeless, here declares that there is an attitude of the human soul which is hopeless! “He . . . hath never forgiveness.” This person has, according to the strong language of Jesus, stepped across the line of no return. What has he done?

Let us go to a parallel passage.

“And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven” (Luke 12:10).

Blasphemy is in general the utterance of a presumptuous insult toward God. It is not a careless slip of the tongue. It is not a thoughtless, reckless statement. Blasphemy springs from fully conscious and stubborn hatred against God. Such an utterance, says Jesus, “shall not be forgiven.”

Jesus makes special reference to blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is tender and sensitive. When a person is guilty of blasphemy the Spirit abandons him. He then lives in a state of hardness and utter indifference to spiritual things.

Jesus addressed the Pharisees with similar words in Matthew 12:31-32. These men had already made up their minds about Jesus. Even though they could not deny His miracle-working power (Matthew 12:22-24), they refused with stubborn pride to accept the plain facts. They tried to invent a theory (verse 24) to neutralize the facts. They displayed a persistent, determined, and blind rejection of the Spirit’s demonstration of heavenly power.

In all three accounts that we have noted, Jesus declares the sin against the Spirit to be the worst of all sins. Jesus forgives many who misunderstand Himself, as we can observe in the life of Saul of Tarsus. But the man is perilously near the unpardonable point who — out of malice, rooted dislike for the good, or selfish preference of wrong because of the advantage it brings — heaps vicious words upon a good man or a good cause. There was no lack of emphasis in Pharisaic comments about Jesus. They hissed out their wicked words at Him, being not heartless but bad hearted. Thus Jesus uses these Pharisees as an illustration of this terrible sin against the Holy Ghost. They were approaching the point of wilful, personal, and final rejection of the Spirit’s

testimony by their words which expressed the decision of the heart.

The following Scripture also uses strong wording: “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned” (Hebrews 6:4-8).

This person had a relationship with God from which he fell away. He can become guilty of actions and attitudes that make it impossible for him to be restored as a Christian.

“For it is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance.” Is this impossible on God’s part? Or is it impossible on men’s part?

It could be either.

When considered with the illustration of verses 7 and 8, these verses seem to declare the utter folly of trying to convert the old man. We may plan interviews, preach mighty sermons, carry out careful discipline, and make more rules. But none of these can bring good fruit out of a carnal heart. All the “dressing” man does cannot possibly save the soul unless God has first performed His miracle of grace in the heart.

On the other hand, the writer to the Hebrews tells us that “dressing” is necessary. The Christian is responsible to cultivate spiritual fruit. It is impossible for God to work His good work in the heart that was converted but ceases to exercise itself in the way of discipleship. If he is hindering the process of sanctification in his life, he is stunting his spiritual growth. He has made it impossible for God to save him. He has become a spiritual runt.

By comparing this passage with other Scriptures, we conclude that this sin is unpardonable, not because the grace of God is not sufficient, but because it springs from the heart in which there is no inclination to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. At whatever point that soul inclines itself to repent, the forgiveness and pardon of God returns. Were this not true, Christ’s call to repentance in Revelation 2 and 3 would be a mockery.

But remember it is a foolish thing to presume on the grace of God. Those who plan to get right with God at the eleventh hour, often die at 10:30.

We will note another Scripture that relates to the subject. “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:26-27).

Here is one who deliberately goes against God and against right. He will not listen to counsel from others, (Hebrews 10:24-25). He spurns the most sacred and precious realities of the Gospel. He despises time-held and time-proven traditions. When he does that, he renounces all part in spiritual things. He cuts himself off from Christ, his only hope.

Another Scripture that is sometimes misunderstood is “If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not a sin unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death” (1 John 5:16-17).

John gives two categories of sin: “sin not unto death” and “sin unto death.” The sin is committed by a brother in the church, in full fellowship with Christ and with fellow Christians. John recognizes the potential for failure in the Christian, and he charges other Christians to make it their business to intercede for such as fall into “sin not unto death.”

The “sin unto death” is sin that is preceded by a wicked disposition. It cuts the bond of fellowship with Christ. Whatever breaks that bond is unto death, for apart from Christ there is no life (1 John 5:12). While John does not forbid intercession for such sin, he does not enjoin it, for such sin is unforgivable as long as the sinner’s disposition remains hard and impenitent.

So the “sin unto death” is by far the more serious of the two categories of sin. This does not mean that sins “not unto death” will be overlooked by our holy God. When the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit upon our conscience or the reminder of a faithful brother makes us aware of such sin in our lives, we must humbly acknowledge it and repent. This is God’s plan for keeping the stumbling Christian in fellowship with Himself.

In conclusion, we must come to God in His time and on His terms. It is dangerous folly to wait for a more convenient season to repent. God is eager to forgive the penitent heart. The very fear of a penitent man that he has committed the unpardonable sin is full demonstration that he has not done so.

Human intercession can influence at what point the line of no forgiveness is crossed. Abraham prayed for Lot (Genesis 18:23-33), Moses prayed for Israel (Numbers 14:19-20), and Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34).

So pray on! It may keep you and your friend from committing the unpardonable sin.

Clifford Weaver  
Waterloo, NY  
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## The Unpardonable Sin

The term unpardonable sin, although familiar in Christian circles, is not found in the Bible. The idea is derived from Jesus' words, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Matthew 12:31). Why is this the most serious sin? How is this different from other sins, that it "shall not be forgiven"? To answer these questions, we must consider the setting of this declaration and other related Scriptures.

First of all, keep in mind that these words were spoken by the One who also said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). No man ever put forth greater effort than Jesus did to save lost souls from eternal destruction. In fact He gave His life for that very purpose. He came to call sinners to repentance. The Gospel's primary message is: Jesus desires to save all sinners, even the worst of them.

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Secondly, take notice to whom these words were spoken. Jesus was addressing the self-righteous Pharisees. 'these men had already made up their minds about Jesus. They could not deny His miracle-working power (Matthew 12:22-24). But in stubborn pride, they refused to acknowledge the Spirit of God at work through Him (Matthew 12:18). Their explanation--He performed these miracles "by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." These men displayed a persistent determination to reject every effort of God to reach them with His message of salvation. Jesus called them evil and a generation of vipers (Matthew 12:34).

Perhaps an illustration would be helpful. Suppose John is boating alone without a life preserver. The water is very rough and John is thrown overboard. The captain of a nearby ship notices John's plight and skillfully throws a rope within his reach.

If John desires to be rescued, he needs to reach out and grasp the help offered to him. But if he stubbornly refuses help and mulishly determines to save himself (which is impossible), he

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loses his only hope of being saved.

The ship represents the New Testament church, the body of believers with Jesus Christ as the Head (the Captain). The rope depicts the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. John's choice illustrates our freedom to accept or reject God's provision of salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. He is the appointed way to be saved. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Jesus foretold that the work of rescuing lost sinners would be assigned to the Holy Spirit. "And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Therefore, resisting the Holy Spirit's pleading is a very serious matter. The apostle Paul warned. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed (secured) unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). The sobering fact is that God's Spirit will not always strive with those who willfully reject Him (Genesis 6:3).

Repentance is the only path to forgiveness.

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"For it is impossible ... if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4, 6). No one can be renewed or forgiven while continuing in sin, but this does not teach that men cannot

repent. Jesus told the self-righteous Pharisees, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). God cannot pardon willful, unrepented sin.

Repentance is the opposite response to blaspheming (speaking against and refusing) the Holy Ghost. Repentance is a person's readiness to acknowledge his sinfulness. It is acceptance of God's provision for forgiveness—"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son (which' cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

One of the devil's tricks is to convince people that they have committed the unpardonable sin. He wants them to believe they have crossed the line. He does not want them to seek salvation or to cry out for God's mercy. He desires them to drown in despair or confusion.

If such thoughts are troubling you, consider

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this fact: The penitent man who fears he has committed the unpardonable sin fully demonstrates that he has not done so. A sincere, earnest desire for God's salvation is evidence that God's mercy is still available to him.

Remember also, it is dangerous and foolish to wait for a more convenient time to repent. We must come to God in His time and on His terms. "Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

—James Martin