

Unpardonable Blasphemy

It isn't rare for believers who have sinned, knowingly, to not wonder if that sin didn't incur that condition beyond which there can be no further forgiveness. Christ Himself made us aware that there is a Sin that cannot be forgiven, Not in this age, nor in the Age to Come.

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Any sincere believer who has become aware of Jesus' specific words regarding a condition that humans can achieve – what He identified as “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” – would be expected to have certain concerns. His statement was, *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”* [Matt. 12:30-32 KJV] And in another passage, *“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:”* [Mark 3:28-29 KJV] Where this matter concerns people is when considering how it might apply to them personally. Especially as people are “coming into the Truth” we see this question often asked. “Have I unwittingly committed such an act? Could I in fact be beyond forgiveness?” Such are the concerns we can at times encounter.

Beyond Predestination?

It is at this point that many speculate as to exactly what drastic thing a person would have to have done to warrant such condemnation. One thing we can deduce at this point is to realize that this is not a matter of a person NOT being predestined to salvation. ¹ This passage is somewhat relevant to

¹ See the article “*Biblical Predestination*” for an insightful explanation of what this involves.

the “predestination” issue, as is commonly taught, as it indicates that in such a case, being excluded from grace is justly deserved, whereas under Calvinistic teachings, persons are excluded for no reason other than God's irreversible election.

The unpardonable sin is obviously beyond that: a condition achieved by having DONE something especially despicable in God's sight.

Nor should we overlook who it was that Jesus was speaking to when He said these things. It was to the unconverted religious leadership of His day who should have known better.

What Are the Implications?

But, while we might accept the pronouncement by just a casual reading, there are several interesting key questions that we should consider.

- Does ‘the world to come’ refer to the future millennial and post-millennial ages? It obviously indicates that there is to be an age of forgiveness beyond this present age!
- Is this applicable only to converted people, or does it apply only to the unconverted?
- Is such blasphemy limited to verbal utterances, or are there other ways of expressing a contempt that would qualify as this degree of offence?
- Why is this one particular sin deemed to be beyond any hope of being forgiven?

Into a Future Age?

While there are scholars who conclude that such a sin cannot be committed in this age, it is apparent that they have not factored into their thinking the phrase “*neither in this world, neither in the*

world to come.” Now this tells us something about their understanding level and raises a very interesting question. Is there any possibility of forgiveness, at least of other sins, in the world(s) to come? In other words, is this telling us that people who live in this age are to be afforded forgiveness at some future time? Why would such a clarification be necessary if forgiveness is only a pre-death condition limited to this age alone?

Under another consideration, we’re forced to ask, will other people be living in future ages and will it be possible for them to commit the same sin then, as it is now?

We could look at this statement as indicating that there’s some future ‘forgiveness period’ available to people who lived in past and present ages, OR we could accept it as indicating that there is a future age where people will live much as we do in this age, still sinning and needing forgiveness but still with an opportunity to become converted. Such a concept is well beyond the awareness of the typical churchgoer. ² If the latter is the case, then we are being made aware that the commission of this particular offense against the Holy Spirit remains possible and on out into the future!

Applicable to Whom?

But when considering whether this sin can be committed by unconverted people only, we are faced with the obvious, that they are not forgiven of anything in any event, so not being forgiven of this sin is inconsequential. What’s the difference? They are under condemnation either way! (John 3:18) So why would such a thing be a matter of concern among those who are unconverted, presumably by their own choice, and who are, as a result of their inaction, consigned to Judgment in the Lake of Fire? In effect, spurning salvation is also an ‘unforgiven’ state, so what practical value would such a warning have with them? Being unforgiven and being unforgiveable warrants the same condemnation!

² The free booklets “*Understanding the Resurrections and Eternal Judgment*” and “*Beyond Armageddon and the Final Judgment of the World*” explain the future worlds that will exist beyond the Second Coming and the ‘First Resurrection’ of the Saints as immortal spirit beings to rule with Christ on earth for 1000 years!

Obviously then, the warning is for those who are candidates for salvation, not those who have no real concern about being forgiven!

Stepping back to a previous consideration, this area of concern would cast further indication that common ‘predestination’ teachings are incorrect, as that understanding claims that there is a large contingent of people who are barred from being called to salvation anyway, NOT of their own choosing and not of their own doing.

Only By Utterance?

But is it a matter of what we **say** only? Is there more than one way to blaspheme against God’s Holy Spirit? Typically, when people express concerns about possibly being assigned this condemnation, it regards something they did, more than anything they might have said.

But, it was Jesus’ warning against what these religious leaders were saying, or were alleging, that His powers were of the Devil, not of the Holy Spirit. (Effectively equating the Holy Spirit with Satan.) Of course, to say such a thing, it had to be motivated by what was in their minds. Was it a matter of them having known better, but alleging that His miracles were done by the power of Satan more for political expediency, while actually knowing that wasn’t the case? Did they really believe what they were saying, or should they have known better? It would make a world of difference.

Repentance Denied?

In order for ANY sin to be forgiven, there’s first a requirement of heart-felt repentance. No sinner is ever absolved of guilt without belief first (faith), followed by repentance and confession before God. But forgiveness at that point is relatively irrelevant if not followed-up by baptism and the receipt of God’s Holy Spirit by the laying-on-of-hands. (Hebrews 6:1-3) These are the basic steps of conversion. Let’s face it, forgiveness involves more than just the need for it. There must be a desire to receive it, and then appropriate steps to demonstrate the sincerity of that desire. John didn’t say for nothing, “*bring forth fruits meet (appropriate) for salvation.*” (Matt. 3:8)

A further factor is the matter of repentance. An average irreligious person isn't particularly interested in being forgiven. It's only when the Spirit of God begins to work with their own human spirit (their mind) that such an interest develops. While most religious people think their desire to repent is entirely self-generated, out of their own goodness, there's a factor we ought to take into account. We know that no man can come to Christ unless the Father draws them. (John 6:44). We should also keep in mind that it's the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. True repentance is NOT entirely of ourselves! (Romans 2:4) The question then must be, would God actually lead a person, who has committed an unpardonable sin, to repent if He isn't ever going to forgive that particular sin?

Possible Only in Their Day?

Some have claimed that the unpardonable sin was only assigning Christ's miracles to the power of Satan (what those Pharisees were doing) and thus isn't something we can do today. But considering that putting the account of that conversation into the New Testament for our information would be irrelevant, in that we won't be personal witnesses of His miracles. The Gospels were written nearly a full generation after Christ's ministry, so such a warning, extended to those beyond His ministry, would make no practical sense IF it was for that generation only. But the reference to 'the world to come' suggests it remains a type of sin that can be committed out through multiple generations and even into a future age!

That would then cause us to ask, what utterance or what deed on our part would qualify as being specifically unpardonable?

Word or Deed?

In the case of unrepentant Pharisees, we have their vehemence against Christ and His miracles as their means of commission. (When they, of all people, should have known better). But there is more to the condition than just that particular form of expression.

It is at this point that we should have adequate perspective to move on to other New Testament statements regarding a person achieving a con-

dition of justified condemnation. While we have discussed the condition of a person being "condemned already" as a result of unbelief,³ there are other situations, such as that described by the Apostle Paul, which warrant our attention.

The Heavenly Gift

In Paul's epistles, we are made aware of the status of people who were in fact converted, who received God's Spirit, but who through neglect or a change of mind, lost that Gift.

There is a passage that states "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God*".⁴ That is made in conclusion to a discussion on maintaining our personal commitment to the Covenant we made: "*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof **the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a **new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us **hold fast the profession** of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) ... **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. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, **who hath trodden under foot the Son of*********

³ John 3:17-18 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

⁴ Hebrews 10:31

God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. (Hebrews 10:14-30)

Can we see in this action on the part of someone who entered into the New Covenant, who turns away from that commitment, coming to effectively despise it, how it pours contempt on God's Holy Spirit by which the person was sanctified? (Set apart for Holy purpose). We are told specifically that there is no further Sacrifice which can be applied to absolve the guilt of such individuals!

Unpardonable / Unforgiveable!

This in effect is an unpardonable condition, and it also involves despising God's Spirit, as did the contempt shown by the Pharisees. Such a person, in such a condition effectively becomes bound in an unforgiveable state, awaiting Sentencing. Verse 39 concludes the subject by saying, "*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*" It is a serious matter to withdraw from the New Covenant once forgiven and once having received God's Spirit.

Although people can read and become aware that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable sin, can they truly understand that concept until accepting Jesus and actually receiving the Holy Spirit? **Once a person accepts Jesus and receives God's Spirit, if he then blasphemes the Holy Spirit, he can never re-attain Eternal Life.** That would suggest, a person cannot reject or blaspheme the Holy Spirit until he receives and understands it. If he then rejects or blasphemes the Holy Spirit, he never will be re-forgiven.

This is in regard to those who are truly converted. But, as we saw in the opening paragraphs, an unconverted person can also blaspheme the Holy Spirit, provided they know what they're doing, as the viperous Pharisees did with Christ.

Incorrigibly Wicked

It can't be proven that a human mind couldn't be

so horribly perverted in this life, even without having received God's Spirit, that the person wouldn't be considered as having already earned eternal Death. But, that explanation might warrant a broader discussion than just this matter of the unpardonable sin as a result of having spurned the Holy Spirit. Many people wouldn't be so magnanimous toward the world's perpetrators of horrendous evil, such as Hitler, Stalin, Himmler, Pol Pot, Count Dracula or Nimrod, and the like. How far into the depths of depravity can a person descend before their natures are so seared where they can't be restored? Is there such a state? The Beast and False Prophet (humans) will warrant being cast into the Lake of Fire early. That's well before the general Judgment! (Rev. 19:20)

Recapitulation

It is here suggested that it is when a person, who has "tasted the heavenly gift", (Heb. 6:4-6) as Paul says, decides to engage in un-repentant sin to the extent that he causes the Holy Spirit within himself to die out. (Luke 12:10) Once impregnated with God's Spirit (like with a stillborn child) if that fetus dies, it cannot be restored to life. God's Spirit implants the express character image of Christ within us. (Gal. 4:19) This activity, when we consider it, is tantamount to blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which is the bottom line in those previous scriptures that suggests as much. (Heb. 10:26-31) Such a decision effectively cuts a person off from the gift of repentance, which is not entirely self-generated. The desire to be repentant is also God induced. (Romans 2:4)

Adding a little more to it: We need to understand that being imbued with God's Spirit (a small measure of the essence from which He draws His existence and power), we then take on a degree of His Nature (while still having to deal with our own sin-prone nature while still in the flesh).

When we create in ourselves an environment that is toxic to that Nature, which causes the Life of Christ which is being cultured within us BY His Spirit, we can then cause that Spirit to die out. That Life can never be revived in us once that happens. Once the Spirit Nature of Christ becomes stillborn, our chance to pursue salvation to a successful conclusion is ended. 