

Doctrine of the Unpardonables

Introduction

1. Jesus had returned to His home on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee in the city of Capernaum. He had just arrived from a near-by mountain retreat, where He had selected His twelve disciples. Crowds followed Him, flocking at His door.



Mar 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.

2. The phrase in Mar 3:20 “Jesus entered a house” is better translated, “*Jesus had come home to house-life as distinct from hill-life.*” The formal manner in which this is stated suggests a lengthy sojourn.

3. How he was occupied there is not known. It is quite possible the Lord spent time teaching His disciples. He may have taught the large group that followed Him up the “hill” and then held special classes just for the “Twelve” who would be sent out to witness.

4. In Capernaum Jesus healed a demon possessed man of his demon possession. The people were amazed thinking He just might be the long-awaited Messiah.

Mat 12:22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

Mat 12:23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

5. The Pharisees, however, were jealous and sought to discredit our Lord.

Mar 3:22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the *prince* of demons, he is driving out demons."

6. The religious leaders were trying to break the force of the attesting power of our Lord's miracles done in the energy of the Holy Spirit. By saying He performed them in dependence upon Satan, they thus thought to discredit His claims of "Messiahship" and link Him with the Devil.

7. Jesus, not overawed by the religious leaders, invites them to drop by the house to discuss the matter. He then teaches them by parable. Our Lord begins with a question, "How can Satan drive out Satan? Jesus by His question is declaring; "It is impossible for Satan to cast out Satan."

Mar 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mar 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mar 3:26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.

Mar 3:27 In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

Luk 11:19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

Luk 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

Luk 11:21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe.

Luk 11:22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.

Commentary

1. If the "casting out" of these evil spirits was not Satan's voluntary act, what was his motivation? There was only one answer—Satan had been conquered and overpowered. Our Lord provides the true explanation. Far from being Satan's ally, Jesus was Satan's spoiler.

2. "No one," He said, "can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first binds the strong man. No one can rescue the slaves and captives of Satan, unless he first over-come Satan himself. The fact that Jesus had done it, e.g., the man formerly afflicted with a blind and dumb spirit was rescued from the grip of Satan. He now both spoke and saw, was that not proof that Satan himself had been bound. Satan had more than met his match.

3. That is the account Christ gives of this mighty deliverance; that is the great claim He makes for Himself. He is the "stronger than the strong." He has "bound the strong man."

3.1 He has "cast out" Satan. He can "spoil his house." He can rob him of all his captives and slaves. And no one else can do it.

4. To call the event described by Matthew "the unpardonable sin" is technically a misnomer.

4.1 The lack of forgiveness is not due to the inadequacy of the atonement, nor may we infer any peculiar sacredness of the Third Person of the Trinity.

5. For this reason there seems to be credible evidence that refusing the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit as described in Joh 16:7-11 is more appropriately termed the **unpardonable sin** and the **unpardonable blasphemy** is best used to describe the action of the scribes who credited Beelzebub as the source of Jesus' exorcisms.

Joh 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Joh 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

Joh 16:9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

Joh 16:10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

Joh 16:11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

6. The context of Mark's account relates to our Lord being accused of casting out demons by the power of Satan rather than the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mar 3:22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons, He is driving out demons."

7. Clearly, the bizarre attribution could not take place today given the fact Christ is no longer incarnate. Matthew and Mark's account seems to give more credibility to the theory that this **blasphemy** is only a Kingdom Age phenomenon.

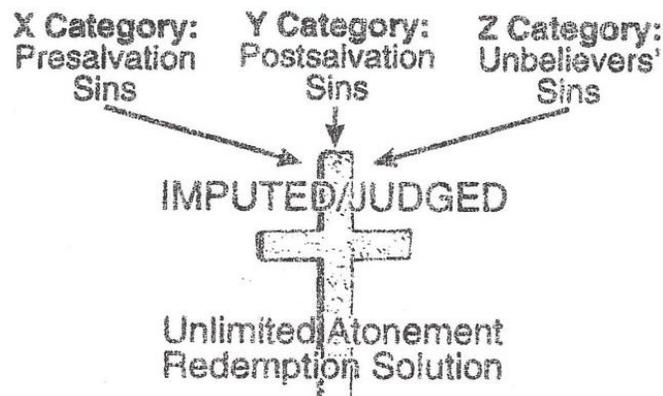
8. Let me now speak to the so-called **unpardonable sin**. The definition is rather simple: it is "saying no" to the Holy Spirit's convicting ministry described in Joh 16:8.

Joh 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

9. That every sin shall be forgiven is an integral part of unlimited atonement. Atonement provided by Christ was sufficient to remit the guilt of all sins, for both the believer and unbeliever.

10. Sin is no longer an issue because Christ paid the price for all sin. 1Jo 2:2

1Jo 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.



11. A particular function of the Holy Spirit is to convince the unbeliever that he falls terribly short of God's standard, thereby facilitating salvation. The Holy Spirit lays open the terrible sore of personal sin, judgment for sin, and relative righteousness.

12. He who rejects the overture of the Holy Spirit removes himself from the only force that can lead to forgiveness. That such a settled state can be reached in this life is explicitly stated in Joh 3:36.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

13. We cannot read hearts, and thus cannot judge when others have reached such a state, and it is really none of our business. Our job is simply to be ready to communicate our “hope” after the Holy Spirit does His job of convincing of sin, judgment and the futility of relative righteousness.

14. As for the Pharisees of Jesus' audience, it is not stated whether or not they had committed this blasphemy of refusing the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit, but the warning is clear.

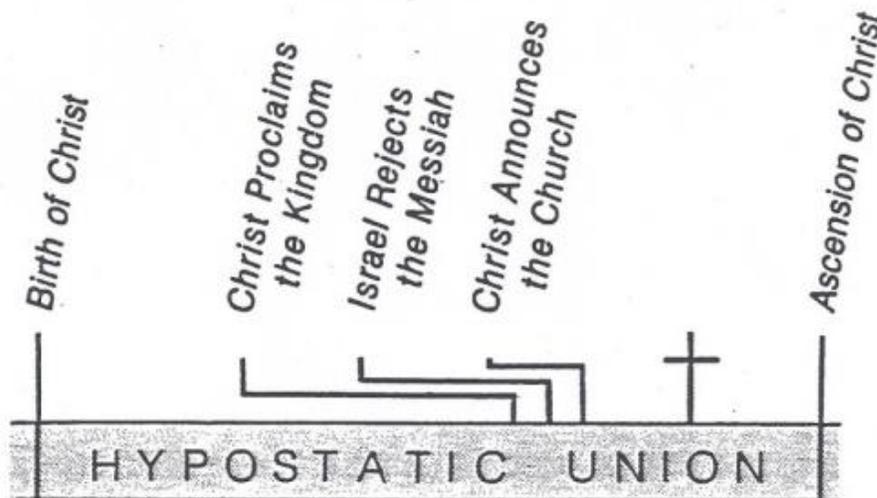
15. Their considerable instruction made their responsibility great; their previous hostility showed their determined unbelief. The scribes were uniquely accountable because of their considerable knowledge of what the prophets had said of Israel's Messiah. By their rejection of Christ's kingdom offering and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, were thus, in danger of:

- willful sin
- blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
- resistance to the Holy Spirit,
- and insulting the Holy Spirit.

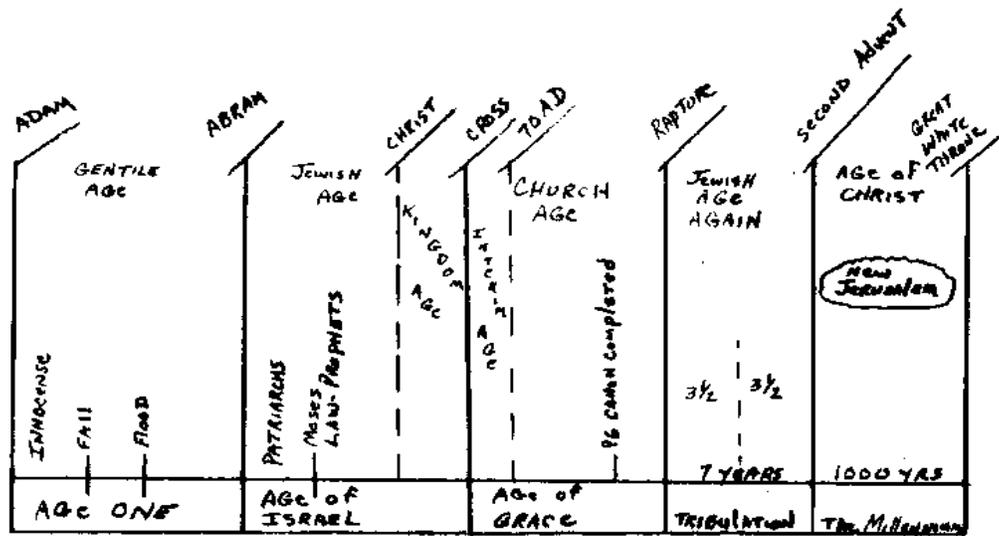
Commentary

1. Expositors writes: “No longer does He attempt to reason with them. Now he solemnly warns them. ‘You do not really believe your own theory; you know as well as I how absurd it is, and that I must be casting out devils by a very different spirit from Beelzebub. You are therefore not merely mistaken; you are men in a very perilous moral condition.’”

2. H. A. Ironside has concluded and rather well, “To Sin against Him as Man is pardonable—but to reject Him as God is fatal.”
3. Kenneth Wuest concludes, “The words recorded in Mar 3:28-30 speak of the actions of the scribes, who deliberately and knowingly attributed the work of the Lord to Satan, and to do this is to break the attesting power of the miracles that Jesus was performing. This is the so-called **unpardonable blasphemy.**”
4. No less a Bible teacher than Col. R.B. Thieme has concluded the unpardonable blasphemy was a blasphemy unique to the age of the **hypostatic union**. Col. Thieme also has taught that the unpardonable sin is a failure to heed the convicting ministry of God the Holy Spirit, ergo, a failure to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.



5. I think we can safely conclude the so-called **unpardonable blasphemy** could only have been performed in the **Age of the Hypostatic Union**.



Conclusion

1. Sustained by the Spirit, Jesus had set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. As at the beginning, so at the end, Jesus resisted Satan's ever-present temptation to save His people and establish His Kingdom by means other than that of dying in their place for their sins.

2. Our Savior was sustained by the Spirit in all of His redeeming work. With the assistance of the Spirit He could say: "It is finished" and could commend His spirit unto the Father.

Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

2.1 It was finished indeed. Jesus died but rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven. Now He is glorified. In accordance with His promise He did send forth His Spirit.

3. At the first New Testament Pentecost the church entered into a new age.

3.1 Before leaving for heaven, Jesus said to the Twelve: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

3.2 The wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was now finally removed and the unity of the Spirit was not only possible but should be preserved.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Eph 4:3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

4. In spite of persecution nothing could stop the people of God as they preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

5. By the renewing power of the Holy Spirit human minds can be liberated and renewed in their attitudes.

Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.