



# UNPARDONABLE

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Hell, Guaranteed

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Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit receives sharper emphasis and greater coverage in the Gospels, and in more vivid language, than the doctrines of election, baptism, and communion. However, it is the single most distorted, rejected, and neglected major doctrine in the history of the church. All who call themselves Christians, even when they disagree on other things to the point of violence, somehow unite against Jesus on this doctrine. It is also the most dangerous doctrine to be treated this way. The sin results in an irrevocable verdict of damnation, so that repentance is outright denied to the person even though he might live for many decades after the offense and even if he cries out for mercy for the rest of his life.

Thus it is far more devastating to distort and neglect this doctrine than other issues such as predestination and eschatology. Any false step is terminal. Still, throughout history, people have wanted to change what it means to blaspheme the Spirit so that they can dismiss it and bury it in the sand. This makes them complicit. In fact, some of them do this so that they can criticize the works of the Spirit, such as healing the sick and speaking in tongues, and still assure themselves that they have not committed the unpardonable sin, but that they are even doing God a service. This makes them reprobate. According to Jesus, these people have never been Christians and they can never become Christians. They are damned. They will burn in hell forever.

This is a collection of four previously published articles on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. They are offered in this special edition as a contribution toward three purposes:

1. Restore the correct understanding of the doctrine, which is nothing more than a straightforward acknowledgment of what Jesus said.
2. Restore the fear of God in the church and in the world, so that fewer people would commit the unpardonable sin and venture pass the point of no return.
3. Restore this weapon to the faithful disciples of Jesus, so that they may combat unbelief and threaten the enemies of the works of the Holy Spirit.

## **BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matthew 12:31-32)**

Jesus had healed a demon-possessed man. The people were astonished and wondered if he was the Son of David, whose coming was predicted by the prophets. When the Pharisees heard this, they said that Jesus drove out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. However, since Jesus in fact drove out demons by the Holy Spirit, the Pharisees had indirectly insulted the Holy Spirit by calling him Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

In reply, Jesus first set forth a theological refutation to their assertion, and then added a warning – anyone who speaks against Christ could be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit could not be forgiven. Most explanations on the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit stress how difficult or even impossible it is to commit this unforgivable sin. But since Jesus intended his statement as a realistic threat, we shall consider how easy it is to commit this sin, a sin for which there is no forgiveness.

Blasphemy against Jesus Christ is categorized as the same kind of sin as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Even if we can think of the latter as another level of blasphemy, although the text does not suggest this, the thoughts and actions involved are similar. The main difference is the object that receives the insult. To commit blasphemy against Jesus Christ is to speak against Jesus Christ. To commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to speak against the Holy Spirit.

Christian scholars are professionals at neutralizing biblical teachings that they dislike, and they dislike this very much. So they scramble to define this sin as so difficult and remote that it is practically impossible to commit. But in the same context, Jesus added, "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (v. 36-37). The sin is not difficult or impossible to commit, but it might be so easy to commit that even a careless word could do it.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is often portrayed as only a more stubborn or a final rejection of Jesus Christ. But this does not fit the context, which has to do with the ministry of miracles and the casting out of demons. And it does not fit the explicit teaching, which distinguishes blasphemy against Christ and blasphemy against the Spirit as two different offenses. The objects that receive

the insults are different. Jesus said that speaking against the Son is forgivable, but speaking against the Spirit is unforgivable. So it is possible to speak against the Son instead of the Spirit, and it is possible to speak against the Spirit instead of the Son.

The effort to merge the two so that the different offenses become only different points on a scale seems intended to doom Jesus' teaching to irrelevance. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would become less frightening if it could be absorbed by the blasphemy against Jesus Christ. But Jesus himself distinguished the two. Using words against Christ is not the same as using words against the Spirit. The teaching is intended to be frightening, and as a warning against committing this unforgivable sin. To weaken its fearfulness would only heighten the possibility of committing it.

It begs the question to place the two sins on the same scale in a way that they become only different degrees of the same sin. Speaking against the Holy Spirit could very well be considered a worse sin, but this does not necessarily mean that it becomes only a more stubborn and final rejection of Jesus. He could have said, "Whoever speaks against the Son could be forgiven, but whoever litters the street with chewing gum could not be forgiven." The statement is entirely intelligible, and the latter would be the unforgivable sin, but the two would not be only two different points on the same scale, or different degrees of the same offense.

Another attempt to render Jesus' teaching irrelevant suggests that this unforgivable sin was possible only during the ministry of Jesus, because only he demonstrated the truth and power of God without mixture, ambiguity, and imperfection. This argument is unintelligent and self-defeating, since God sends millions upon millions upon millions to burn in hell because they have rejected our imperfect preaching of Christ. God does not think that rejection of the truth is possible only when the truth is perfectly presented. Although we might not preach Jesus Christ with perfect clarity, force, and accuracy, it still counts as blasphemy when someone speaks against him.

Thus although we do not manifest the Holy Spirit with perfect faith, power, or order, it must still count as blasphemy when someone speaks against him. But we are becoming more and more suspicious that the theologians are setting up an excuse for their own disobedience. In addition, when Jesus stated the teaching on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in another place (Luke 12:10), he had in mind a time when the disciples would be ministering on their own and suffer persecution (v. 11-12). Therefore, it is not true that the sin is possible only during the ministry of Jesus.

Scholars insist that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit must be an informed and deliberate offense. However, this is not the nature of blasphemy as the Bible describes it. Paul indicated that although he acted in ignorance, he was still a blasphemer (1 Timothy 1:13). He did not truly perceive the identity and deity of Christ, but what he said about Christ still counted as blasphemy.

And as mentioned, in the same place where Christ taught about this, he warned that "every careless word" would be judged. Therefore, it is possible to commit blasphemy that is not informed and deliberate. Otherwise, an atheist, or almost any non-Christian, could never commit blasphemy against God or Christ, but only an informed believer could do it. But Paul blasphemed when he was ignorant and an unbeliever.

It is possible for a man to blaspheme Christ even if he does not know or admit that Christ is the Son of God. To say or imply anything negative about Christ would count as blasphemy. In fact, one does not even have to strictly suggest anything negative. Jesus himself was accused of blasphemy because he said something that suggested he was equal with God. And if he had not been telling the truth, it would have counted as blasphemy. It was not blasphemy only because he was indeed equal with God, and that God was indeed his Father. But this shows that it is easy to commit blasphemy.

Then, it is said that if one fears that he has committed this unforgivable sin, then it is the strongest indication that he has not committed it. This is based on the assumption that the sin can be committed only by an incurably hardened individual, and in an informed, deliberate, and malicious manner. Thus someone who commits this sin is entirely given over to unbelief and has no fear of the wrath of God. However, by now we have destroyed this assumption. The biblical texts on the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit do not suggest any of this, and even demons are afraid of God, although they cannot be saved. Moreover, the fear that one has committed this sin is no indication that he has not committed it, because this fear could very well be nothing more than worldly sorrow that leads to death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

A man has not committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit only if he has not committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The way to ensure that you have not spoken against the Spirit is to ensure that you really have not spoken against the Spirit. And if you have spoken against the Holy Spirit, then you have spoken against the Holy Spirit, and you have committed the unforgivable sin. There is no way around this or to avoid the issue. The solutions of the theologians – to make the sin harder to commit, to merge it with the rejection of Christ, to designate fear or guilt as the sure indication of innocence – offer false comfort.

The Pharisees called the work of the Holy Spirit the work of a demon, thus indirectly calling the Holy Spirit a demon. This indirect insult was sufficient to incite Jesus' teaching on this unforgivable sin. But it is likely that even less specific or extreme insults would count as blasphemy against the Spirit. Consider what would count as blasphemy against Jesus Christ. Of course it would be blasphemy to directly or indirectly deny his deity. But it would also be blasphemy against him to deny the necessity or the success of the atonement, or to suggest that he

was dishonest when he made a certain statement or that he made a mistake about something. It is easy to commit blasphemy.

The Bible instructs us to test spiritual manifestations, and it is conceivable that after careful examination, we would conclude that some manifestations are false or even demonic. Jesus' teaching cautions us to test spiritual manifestations with knowledge and integrity, and not to oppose something just because it threatens our theological and ecclesiastical traditions. Now, what if a man truly speaks in tongues by the Holy Spirit, and someone mocks him for it? What if, without an irrefutable biblical basis, he states that the Holy Spirit no longer does something like this? What if he calls all speaking in tongues gibberish and nonsense? What if he declares that the gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy and healing have ceased, so that whatever happens now cannot be genuine? If he is mistaken, then he has insulted all such manifestations of the Spirit since the passing of the apostles up to the future coming of Jesus Christ. He has slapped the Spirit across all the centuries.

Cessationists are in imminent danger of committing the unforgivable sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit. They regard themselves as watchers of the cults, defenders of the faith, and guardians of orthodoxy, heading the charge against heretics and fanatics. So did the Pharisees, but they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit left and right, because what they considered as orthodoxy was in fact their own theological tradition and ecclesiastical heritage. Jesus Christ came in the power of the Holy Spirit, and threatened to take away their respect from the people, their status as scholars, and their place as authorities of the faith. So they called Jesus a deceiver, and they called the Spirit a demon.

Do we not need to test the spirits? But how can you test the spirits, when you do not even believe in the true manifestations of the Spirit? You say, "I believe God performs miracles when he wills, but I believe that the sign gifts have ceased, or this and that have ceased." But the Bible does not separate some powers as "sign gifts," and most of the Bible does not even refer to the miraculous powers given to believers as spiritual gifts. Gifts or no gifts, Jesus said anyone who has faith can command a mountain to move. And if one can command a mountain to move, he can command a fever, a cancer, or a demon to leave. All this talk of gifts is just a subterfuge, a "divide and conquer" tactic against the power of God.

Jesus said that the Pharisees were like vipers on the inside, and out of their evil hearts they spoke evil words (v. 33-35). You also speak against the Holy Spirit because your heart is full of unbelief and poison. Like the Pharisees, you call yourself a defender of orthodoxy, but you are a liar, because yours is not the biblical orthodoxy of the Spirit. You take what pleases you, and you reject what threatens you. You exalt what makes you look good, and you oppose what makes you look weak.



When someone mentions the Holy Spirit's power at work today, you say, "Yes, but even Satan works miracles." Why is this your reaction? Why do you say this as if to dampen the significance of the Holy Spirit's work? The Bible teaches that even Satan can appear as an angel of light, and I realize that he can appear as a cessationist theologian as well. Rather, when I hear you say that Satan works miracles, I say, "Yes, but the Holy Spirit works miracles! And he can defeat the power of Satan." In any case, instead of calming the miracle claims, now we end up with miracles all over the place, with you in praise of Satan's power, and I in praise of the Holy Spirit's power.

Just as theologians have for centuries undermined Jesus' teaching on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, of course I expect opposition when I repeat the Lord's teaching. But I am more afraid of Jesus' warning than I would ever be afraid of some nobody like you. What you are going to do, do quickly. As for me, I will see to it that I revere the works of the Holy Spirit, including his mighty manifestations of power. "For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Come on, let us be witnesses to the words that you will speak and write. Show the world what is in your heart. Perhaps to this point you have not blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and this is God's way to incite you to do it, so as to fill up the measure of your sins and to seal your damnation.

## THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Now it is common for Satan to harass people by suggesting that they have committed the unpardonable sin. At this point, theology will either sink us into a deeper level of deception, or it will offer a clear statement that removes all deception, to relieve those who ought to be relieved. Almost 100 percent of historically accepted orthodox theology has added to the deception. Christian preachers and thinkers respond by calling the spiritual attack a deception, but their explanation amounts to either reducing the words of Jesus to irrelevance or outright contradicting him on the subject. They claim that this sin is either a persistent and permanent rejection of Christ or it is something that is impossible to commit. This is supposed to be the truth that sets people free. However, this universal teaching is false. Jesus said that if you blaspheme the Son, you can be forgiven, but if you blaspheme the Spirit, you cannot be forgiven. He did not say that if you blaspheme the Son intensely and endlessly, then eventually that is to blaspheme the Spirit. He clearly distinguished between speaking against the Son and speaking against the Spirit. He was referring to those who opposed his ministry of healing and called the work of the Spirit the work of a demon, so that they indirectly spoke against the Spirit and called the Spirit himself a demon. These are different sins because they speak against two different objects or persons. The Pharisees were doing it left and right, in front of everybody, and spreading the blasphemy around like butter. It was easy to commit. It was so easy to commit that when he warned about this sin, Jesus said that “on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.” He did not say that the Pharisees were making scholarly premeditated blasphemies. He warned that a “careless word” could be blasphemy. This is the truth about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

The popular antidote for this attack is in fact poison. It attempts to comfort people by dismissing what Jesus said. Some people have indeed committed this sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit, and they will burn in hell forever and ever and ever. The proper way to face the spiritual attack is to study what Jesus said about it to obtain the correct definition. Then if you have never committed it, you will know for sure because any sin you have done will not fit the definition. And the truth has set you free. If you have committed the sin, then it does not change anything even if someone lies to you about it to make you feel better. If you have indeed done it, then no one can help you. I have no authority to change what Jesus said. And if you have committed this sin, I have no power to save you. What I know is that it is possible to commit this sin. Perhaps your pastor does it every Sunday when he criticizes those preachers on television as you shout “Amen!” Perhaps your shelf is full of books by scholars who blaspheme the Spirit in every volume as they persecute those who have faith in God for the ministry of healing and miracles. I don’t know what trash you read. What I know is that you cannot fight deception with deception. When you do, Satan wins. Either the second deception replaces the first, so that the person thinks he is no longer deceived when he is taken even deeper, or the second deception reinforces the first deception, and also takes the person deeper. Either way, compound deceptions make the person more stubborn in his delusion and it

becomes harder for him to escape. Satan knows this, and Christian preachers and thinkers have been his accomplices.

This is often a very religious sin. The people of the world usually do not care to speak against the Holy Spirit, if they even know there is a Holy Spirit. If they witness a ministry or miracle of healing and such, they might marvel at the reality and compassion of God, and often become followers of Christ, while others might remain skeptical without calling the ministry the work of demons and wickedness. Some might indeed commit the unpardonable sin at this point, but they are rare in comparison. Most of the people who commit this sin are church leaders and church members. Like the Pharisees, they are those who consider themselves experts in religious matters, and zealous to defend the orthodox faith. It would not occur to them that they have committed this sin, and that they will burn in hell forever. They are so self-righteous that this is the last thing on their minds. They consider themselves the most educated and the most faithful, the Christian elite. Theologians extraordinaire. Apologists supreme. They will harden their hearts and continue their wickedness. And they will burn in hell. If you tell them this, they will become enraged with you, do some of their apologetics on you...and then burn in hell. They did that to Jesus too, and then they burned in hell.

Of course, Satan incites some people to think that they have committed this unpardonable sin when the truth is that they have not. They become pressed down and extremely fearful. Some of them become crazed and obsessed. Some choose the way of denial. Others choose to resign themselves to a life of wickedness. Some commit suicide. It is possible for Satan to cause such damage because people are not clear about what this sin is. The solution is to restate the correct definition of the sin, rebuke the devil in the name of Jesus, and set them free. The most common reaction is destructive. Preachers would rush to offer false assurance, nullifying the words of Jesus in the process, so that even those who have committed this sin would think that they have not done it. This response in itself is blasphemy against Jesus Christ, because it shoves him out of the way in order to introduce a lie to make people feel better about themselves, whether or not they should have relief. And the lie makes it more likely for people to commit the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. People would assume that whatever they have done or whatever they want to do, it is not the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, or that they can be forgiven even if they were to speak against the Holy Spirit, to imply that he is a demon, to call his work in healing the sick and casting out demons deceptive, fanatical, against orthodoxy, or some such thing. They would not think to avoid the sin. In fact, they would think that they perform God a service by doing some of their apologetics on those who follow the example of Jesus, when their whole enterprise is a ministry of blaspheming the Holy Spirit! All this certainly sounds ridiculous to them. See, it is because they are deceived, and they are deceiving others.

For our purpose I have no interest in specifying individuals or groups that might have committed this sin. I might have my opinion, but you can judge for yourself based on what they say. Examples are easy to find. Here I am only telling you what Jesus said. If you do not want to hear it from me, read what he said about it. He said that if you speak against the Holy Spirit, such as to imply that the ministry of healing is the work of a demon, a work of evil, then you are finished. Taking what he said elsewhere about God's judgment against sin, we deduce that if someone makes a habit of doing this or even build a ministry dedicated to calling the Holy Spirit demonic, then he will suffer more extreme punishment when he burns in hell. All this is a direct application of what Jesus said. You are not accountable to me. If you do not believe me, forget about me and go read this from him. Believe him. But if he said the same thing I am telling you, then more than a few people are in deep trouble. Oh, they are in so much trouble. They will suffer and hurt in ways that I cannot describe or imagine. The pain and anguish will never end. It will never become dull for them. It will be as fresh and intense ten thousand years later as it shall be on the first day. And it will keep going and going and going.

Some people have criticized me for agreeing with Jesus on the definition of this sin and on the fact that it is possible to commit. They blame me for troubling the faith of some and instilling a sense of hopelessness in them. But...I am not troubled and I am not hopeless. How come? Because I have never committed this sin! If the people are troubled by a clear definition of the sin rather than liberated by it, then they are the ones in the wrong, not me. In fact, I have done very well. The ones who blame me are those who perpetuate the lie, and thus continue to allow more and more people to commit this unpardonable sin. I have troubled some people by repeating what Jesus said and agreeing with him, and this is because I have done well. In contrast, my critics are smoothing the way for people to slide into hell and burn forever. They are the problem, not me. Let those who ought to be disturbed, be disturbed. Let those who ought to lose hope, lose hope. In fact, many people instinctively know that the common teaching on this sin is false, so that even if they take hold of it as the only lifeline, the worry remains at the back of their minds. On the other hand, anyone who has not committed this sin no longer needs to wonder, because we know what this sin is, and so anyone who has not done it is fortified by the truth. Satan can no longer find any vulnerability to trick us into thinking that we have done something unpardonable when we have not done it. This is what I have done for the people.

If you are disturbed when I define the sin of adultery directly from the words of Scripture, how is that my fault? Why blame me? Is it not because you have probably committed adultery? If you have not committed adultery, you would be liberated by a proper definition of it, especially if you have been confused about it before. A burden would lift from your shoulders. The dark cloud of condemnation would depart. You would thank me. You would share the teaching with other people. If you become troubled and blame me, you bring condemnation upon yourself, because it is as if you are admitting to something. To criticize me for this would be more like a confession

than some heroic attempt to defend everybody's faith and feelings. Either you have committed adultery, or you have not defined it correctly, and you are angry because I have made you look bad. As Paul said, "Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" The more you complain, the more guilty you appear. Why are those people disturbed by a definition of sin? Have they done something that they should be worried about? If so, why weren't they disturbed before? No one showed them the truth. You see, I have done so well. Perhaps you should blame your conscience instead, because it agrees with me more than you will admit. I must talk about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and tell it like it is. People are so dismissive about this ultimate sin, and some are even eager to commit this sin, and I do not want their blood on my hands.

Practically all Christian preachers and thinkers that mention this topic condemn Jesus' definition of this sin, and also against the possibility of committing it. They would assure people that they have not committed this sin without even asking what these people have done. This does not come from compassion, for true compassion cannot break ranks with Jesus. They are zealous to do away with what Jesus said about it probably because they have done it or they want to do it. Why are you so eager to establish a right to speak against the Holy Spirit? Have you done it yourself? Do you want to do it again? Is this why you are like this? Hmm. The more you deny the definition or the possibility of this sin, the more problems you allow because there is no clarity. The way to fight Satan is with the truth, and not with more deception. The way to fight doubt is not by covering up the conscience, but by the knowledge of the truth and the assurance of the Spirit.

Even Peter's triple denial of Christ was not unpardonable. What he did was not good, but it was not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He did not speak about the Spirit, speak against the Spirit, or make disparaging implications about the Spirit. He spoke about Christ. He denied Christ. He even cursed while he denied Christ to add emphasis. But he did not speak against the Holy Spirit. He did not call the Spirit a demon. He did not say that the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons was evil, or any such thing. If someone sins like Peter did and becomes disillusioned, the truth would set him free from condemnation and hopelessness. The truth would be that his sin can be forgiven. As the Scriptures say, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." As he repents and returns to Christ, he is restored. This is the solution for those who are being deceived by the devil to think that they have committed the unpardonable sin, when the truth is that they have not.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is what it is, and it is unpardonable. If you have done it, you will never be forgiven. If you have not committed this sin, then whatever you have done, you will be forgiven if you repent and confess that Jesus Christ died in your place. The whole thing is not complicated. You say, "But Jesus died for all sins." Well, don't tell me that. Tell him! See how far that gets you. He is the one who said, "The blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven" and "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age

to come.” Tell him: “You died for all sins. So why don’t you shut up, Lord!” Go. Go tell him that. Leave me out of it. If Jesus died for all sins in the sense you mean, then he also died for the sin of the final rejection of Christ, and there is no need to believe in him. You say, “He died for all sins, but each one must receive what he has done by faith.” But if he died for all sins in the sense you mean, in a sense that can even overturn Jesus’ own explicit exception to forgiveness, then he must have also died for the sin of refusing to receive what he has done by faith.

Of course, the Bible is clear that faith is necessary to receive the benefits that Jesus Christ achieved for his people. Anyone who does not receive Jesus by faith will burn in hell. The notion that he died for all sins does not overturn this, but it is understood in the context that salvation is received by faith. Likewise, the Bible is clear that the one who speaks against the Holy Spirit, such as calling the ministry of miracle healing demonic, evil, or some such thing, will never be forgiven. The notion that he died for all sins does not overturn this, but it is understood in the context that blasphemy against the Spirit will never be forgiven. In fact, another way of looking at this is that the one who speaks against the Holy Spirit has never been given faith in Christ and he will never be given faith in Christ. You can declare that Jesus died for all sins in any sense you wish to mean it, as long as the gospel saves only those who have faith, a person who speaks against the Holy Spirit is still locked out forever.

It follows that another attempt at false comfort is also futile, which is to declare that a Christian will never commit the sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit. This is marvelously stupid. This solves nothing. Suppose I say, “God can never die.” This is true. But then I continue, “Therefore, John Smith can never die.” This would be true only if John Smith himself is God. The first premise does not show that John Smith is God, and it does not show that John Smith will never die, because John Smith might have nothing to do with this first premise. But if John Smith dies, it shows that he has never been God in the first place. The first premise is true — God can never die. But we cannot establish that John Smith is God by this premise. The second premise is missing: “John Smith is God.” In an argument, the first premise is never meant to establish the second premise, but they are both supposed to be known as true, so that the conclusion follows from them. If we can establish that John Smith himself is God by some other way, then we can use the first premise to deduce that John Smith will never die.

We can say that a believer will never fall away, because God will keep him by divine power, and a believer will never commit the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. However, this premise does nothing to show if a specific person is a believer. It provides assurance only if we can establish that a person is a believer by some other way. Only then can we deduce that this person has never committed the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and that he never will commit this sin because God will keep him from it. Otherwise, if he has spoken against the Spirit, and if a Christian would never commit this sin, then obviously he has never been a Christian. All claims and

appearances are then irrelevant. For him, the doctrine that a believer will never commit the unpardonable sin becomes a pronouncement of ultimate damnation instead of assurance.

All of this is simple and impossible to refute, but people will still resist and criticize me. Why? It is because I am correct about this, and as much as they want to attack Jesus openly, they do not want to expose themselves as false disciples. They dislike the idea of an unpardonable sin. They refuse to honor the Holy Spirit as much as God does. They resent God for extending this unique jealousy toward the Spirit. They resist because their own historic and modern heroes might have committed this sin, and have convinced many to do the same. It is because they themselves might have done it, repeatedly and gleefully, full of mocking words and condescending tones. Now someone tells them they will reap what they have sown, and they are afraid and angry. As Jesus said, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Even the sinful rich man said, "Father Abraham, at least send someone from the dead to warn my brothers, so that they will not come here to suffer with me." These "Christians" are worse than this rich man who went to hell. They strive to tell everyone, "Be comforted. What Jesus said does not apply. You have not committed this sin. In fact, it is probably impossible to commit." When the blind leads the blind, they will both fall into the ditch. They wish to lead others to hell with them. The result is that these liars will suffer even more than others in hell, where they will burn but they cannot die.

We talk about the unpardonable sin not because we wish to frighten people and rub it in their faces. We have a duty to talk about it, so that their blood will not be on our hands, so that God will not hold us accountable for their damnation. We wish to warn people about it, so that they will not commit this sin, and so that they will not endorse those who claim to be teachers but who diminish the seriousness of this sin. The accepted orthodoxy, characterized by a man-made theology of unbelief and defeat, actually increases the rate of depression, apostasy, blasphemy, and by extension also increases the rate of terminal tragedies such as suicide and damnation. This is because man-made orthodoxy does not believe in the promises of God for deliverance, and it does not accept the words of Jesus about sin. From the view of biblical orthodoxy, this traditional orthodoxy is in fact heretical and demonic. The good news is that it has no authority over us. If you flush it down the toilet, people cannot do much to you. As Jesus said, "Do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." Even if I twist the words of Christ to destroy his teaching, he still said what he said, and even you would still know he said what he said. God will not send you to hell based on my words, but his words. So it does not help you at all to criticize what I said. If you wish to sin, but still save yourself, then refute God. That's all you need to do. Destroy him if you can, and you will be saved. But if you have not committed this sin, then you have not committed this sin. And now that we are clear about it, you are free in Christ Jesus.

## **CESSATIONISM: WORSE THAN SORCERY**

- 1. What do you think about the people in Acts 2:13? Why didn't they commit the unpardonable sin?*
- 2. And Simon the magician insulted the Spirit (Acts 8:19). Nevertheless, Peter commanded him to repent.*
- 3. As for the cessationists, they do not seem to be joking when they say certain things about the Spirit, so how can I know when a cessationist has committed the eternal sin?*

How do you know they did not commit the unpardonable sin in Acts 2:13? Perhaps they did, and they were damned forever. The text does not say that all of the people mocked the disciples, but only some of them. It says the people were amazed and wondered, "What does this mean?" (v. 12). And then others mocked and said that the disciples were drunk (v. 13). There were many thousands of people there, and about three thousand of these people were saved (v. 41). It is possible that the mockers were not among the three thousand. However, if their insults and attitudes did not amount to blasphemy against the Spirit, then they were not forever damned, and perhaps some of them were among the three thousand. Both possibilities are consistent with a straightforward acceptance of what Jesus said about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Now if a limited group of people who questioned a particular manifestation of the Spirit incites us to discuss if they had committed the unpardonable sin, what must we say about a whole tradition or creed that makes the sweeping claim that all of this has ended? Cessationism is worse than what the people said in Acts 2:13.

How did Simon insult the Spirit in Acts 8:19? It is not obvious why you would think he did, so it is not easy to respond directly. Nevertheless, while we are on this passage, we should correct a common distortion. Philip had preached Jesus Christ to the people, and those who believed were saved. Then Peter came to the people to impart the Holy Spirit to them, so that they would receive power as Jesus promised. Simon did not ask to buy the Holy Spirit. He offered money to Peter, not to influence the Spirit, but to influence Peter to confer the ability or the ministry of the laying on of hands to impart the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said, "Give me this power." What power? He did not say, "That I may receive the Holy Spirit," but he said, "That anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 19). To use healing as an illustration, Simon would not be offering to buy a miracle of healing to heal himself, but to buy a ministry of healing to heal others. The "gift of God" (v. 20) that Peter said he could not buy was not the Holy Spirit, but the ministry to impart the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Certainly Simon was wrong. But in his perverted way, he admired the Holy Spirit and the ministry of imparting the Spirit. In fact, he was much closer to a proper attitude than the cessationists.



Peter told him to repent, but you must read the text you use. Peter told him to repent so that "if possible" or "perhaps" he might be forgiven (v. 22). When you speak carelessly about the Holy Spirit, you are treading on dangerous grounds. Of course there would be no room for repentance if a statement amounts to blasphemy against the Spirit. Even when it is unclear to us, it is always clear to God. However, when it is uncertain to us that a statement amounts to blasphemy against the Spirit, even an apostle could only say it might be "possible" for the person to be forgiven. Simon did not call the manifestations the work of demons. He did not say Philip or Peter preached false doctrine. He did not say the manifestation was "strange fire." He did not say that what Jesus promised about the Spirit had ceased. He did not make accusations of counterfeit or fanaticism. Cessationists have said all these things and more, but Simon did not say these things. He did not utter any criticism at all about what was happening. He acknowledged the reality of God's power and wanted to participate. He had only praise and desire for it, but his perverted attitude was enough to earn a rebuke, with enough room for only a "possible" forgiveness. Consider what this means for the cessationists.

Simon was arguably in a better place both theologically and spiritually than the cessationists. He grasped the distinction between receiving the Christ (Acts 8:12-13) and receiving the Spirit (Acts 8:14-16). He also grasped the distinction between receiving the Spirit (Acts 8:17) and imparting the Spirit (Acts 8:18). Theologically, this makes him superior to almost every Christian tradition and scholar in the past two thousand years. The fact that he understood both of these distinctions establishes him as not only incrementally superior, but paradigmatically superior, to almost every single Christian tradition and scholar in all of church history. Nevertheless, this was the basic gospel that the early converts everywhere learned on the first day (Acts 2:38, 19:2, 5-6). He was also spiritually and ethically superior. Although his attitude and motive were surely defective to the point of sin, at least he was — wickedly, selfishly — stumbling toward the direction of endorsement and participation of the work of God, rather than making it a matter of creed and policy to resist the Spirit!

What? Do you say that whereas Simon was probably unsaved, at least the cessationists believe in Jesus? The Bible says that Simon also believed and was baptized, and even continued with Philip (Acts 8:13). Do you think that Philip was stupid? If Simon was a false convert, this does not make the cessationists look any better. If Simon was a false convert, and he possibly was, what is there to prevent the immediate worldwide excommunication of every cessationist without trial? If Simon was a false convert, what about the cessationists? Their criticisms are explicit, deliberate, self-aware, and full of unbelief and malice. They leave no excuse for themselves. How do you know when a cessationist has committed the unpardonable sin? There are cases when it is obvious. There are indeed cessationists who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit as clearly as the Pharisees did, sometimes even more explicitly than the Pharisees did. There is no repentance and no forgiveness

for them. They are damned. They will burn in hell forever. But when it is less clear, we do what Peter did. We rebuke them harshly and command them to repent, so that "if possible" God might forgive them.

There is nothing in these texts that contradicts our straightforward acceptance of what Jesus said about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. If you speak against the Spirit, you are finished. It does not matter how much you appear to have contributed to the advance of the gospel in the world. It does not matter if you have been faithful to this or that historic creed — a creed that probably also blasphemes the Spirit. It does not matter that you are famous as a defender of the faith. It does not matter if you have preached thousands of sermons and written volumes of biblical commentaries. It does not matter if people regard you as one of the most significant preachers in church history. If you have committed this sin, you will burn and burn and burn in hell. This is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Some people might criticize me when they attempt to hide the fact that they refuse to agree with Christ, but I have no authority to recant the doctrine. I am just as powerless as they are when it comes to arriving at a different conclusion. It cannot be done. Jesus said what he said. Attacking me does not refute him. But if I say what he said, then to attack me is to attack him.

The texts that you mentioned do not weaken the doctrine of Jesus on the topic, but they emphasize the spiritual depravity of the cessationists. They show that a cessationist's understanding and appreciation of God's power is worse than a sorcerer who was possibly a false convert, and possibly unsaved. Jesus said that his religious critics did not know the Scriptures or the power of God. We face the same situation today. The modern religious critics of Jesus — the cessationists who call themselves Christians, and those who espouse other forms of unbelief, such as those who reject the physical healing and material blessing promised by Christ — do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. From the intellectual perspective, in the face of what the Bible teaches, to maintain the doctrine of cessationism implies a level of reading comprehension below many mentally disabled individuals. From the spiritual or ethical perspective, the cessationists are worse than sorcerers and occultists, because they refuse to extend the respect and acknowledgment that even satanists offer to the power of God.

Again, they answer that at least they believe in Jesus Christ. But the Bible explicitly declares that Simon also believed, and received enough recognition for this that he was baptized in water. Then he followed Philip, who most likely could have detected a fraud better than we can. So if Simon was a false convert, then the cessationists can also be false converts. But then Simon had more knowledge and appreciation of God's Spirit than the cessationists. Rather than accepting and obeying the word of God, they make up their own doctrines and make traditions out of them, setting them in stone in their historic creeds, and hiding behind their idol theologians, who were also wrong. After that they speak from their traditions and creeds as their actual starting point,

casting aside the gospel of Christ and the word of God. The religious experts did the same thing in the time of Christ, and finally murdered him so that they could continue their way.

We are not afraid of them. As Joshua said concerning the heathens, "Their defenses have departed from them. The Lord is with us. Fear them not." The Spirit of God has long departed from them, and they do not know it, and refuse to admit it. They are helpless. They cannot do anything to us. They cannot stop us. But even if they manage to kill us, our teachings from the word of God move forward — automatically, it seems — propelled by the Spirit of God, entirely devastating centuries of false doctrines and traditions. Still, God is merciful. Just as God is able to miraculously heal mental diseases by faith in the name of Jesus, he can perform an even greater miracle and restore sanity and intelligence to the cessationists, so that they may at last approach the starting line of faith, no longer as false leaders who deceive, but as unlearned spiritual children and weaklings who will begin to know the true gospel and power of Jesus Christ.

## **THE DOCTRINE THAT JESUS WEAPONIZED**

### **Restoration of the Doctrine**

The wonderful doctrine of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit appears in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 12:22-32, Mark 3:22-30, Luke 12:8-12). The idea is arguably suggested or assumed in several other places, but we shall focus our attention on the direct statements from Jesus. All three writers offer significant space and context to the doctrine, but Matthew's account is more convenient. Thus we often use his text when discussing the topic. When the task at hand is to read through the Gospel of Mark or the Gospel of Luke, then we would address the topic using the passages from those Gospels instead.

Compared to Matthew, the Gospel of Luke appears to accommodate additional material between the accusation against Jesus (Luke 11:15) and his statement on the unpardonable sin (Luke 12:10), but it is easy to see that these verses between the two sustain a consistent theme (Luke 11:16-12:9), that is, the damnable religion of unbelief and tradition. This kind of religion stems from hostility against God, leads to misery for those burdened by it, and then hellfire for its adherents. In their pursuit of a faithless religion, many end up committing the unpardonable sin. In fact, if we take time to consider those verses, we might conclude that even more people have committed the unpardonable sin than a study of Matthew's passage alone. Thus all three Gospels maintain a tight relation between the criticism against the healing ministry of Jesus and the damning response that came from him.

The doctrine of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a major teaching in the Gospels. It is no less extensive than the doctrines of marriage and communion, and more explicit than the doctrines of water baptism and church government. And whenever this doctrine applies, there is more at stake than all of these other doctrines combined multiplied by a trillion. Why is it not a major teaching in our churches and our creeds? How is it not a test for doctrinal orthodoxy and church membership? Rather, it is rarely mentioned, and when mentioned, it is vehemently denied. It is regarded as a problem (that Jesus created!) to be suppressed in counseling.

Let me say this. To neutralize the doctrine is to make way for more people to commit the sin. And although to neglect the doctrine is not as devastating as to commit the sin, it is...how should I say this...it can mean to dance awfully close to it. When it comes to this doctrine, the place of negligence, ignorance, and dismissiveness are dangerous positions. This is because, in the same context, Jesus said, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." The only safe place is a conscious endorsement of the ministry of miracles and of the doctrine of the unpardonable sin.

Here was a man who was afflicted by a demon, so that he could not see and could not speak, and Jesus "healed him," so that the man could both see and speak. So we are referring to a ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons. The religionists said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub" (Mark 3:22) -- we can say "Satan" -- and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." Thus they called the spirit within Jesus a demon, or Satan, and they called the power that Jesus wielded the power of a demon. Since it was the Holy Spirit that was within Jesus, and it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, these people indirectly called the Holy Spirit a demon.

They were the most ostentatiously religious people at the time. Do you think they would have called the Holy Spirit a demon directly? No. They would not have done that if only for the sake of their reputation. Do you think they believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and then still referred to the Holy Spirit as a demon? No, they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Whatever their motivation was, it was not a direct or entirely knowing and intentional insult against the Spirit. Moreover, the target of their attack was Jesus and not the Holy Spirit at all. They were not even attacking Satan or the demons. The indirect suggestion that the Holy Spirit was a demon was only incidental to their statement against Jesus. They attacked Jesus, not "Beelzebub." The Holy Spirit was collateral damage. But even that was enough to trigger the doctrine of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

What will happen to the church leaders and theologians throughout history who had castigated the work of the Holy Spirit in healing the sick, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, and in granting visions, dreams, prophecies, and various signs and wonders? Today people regard some of them as spiritual heroes. Why, some of them wrote your creeds! If the extent of the apostasy seems too farfetched to you, it is because you have decided that certain persons and traditions are beyond reproach, and then you use that assumption to interpret the word of God. If they did it, then what they did must not be what Jesus meant by this sin. This is backward, and it reveals that your faith is corrupt. If you use the word of God to judge these persons and traditions, then they would not pass the test.

Then there are people in our time, including many who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, who claim to be knowledgeable Christians, or scholars and defenders of the faith, who have made equivalent statements as those made against Jesus by the Pharisees. In fact, there are those who have said things that are even worse, things that are more scathing, more deliberate, more explicit, more detailed, and more sarcastic and demeaning against the work of the Holy Spirit. There have been whole volumes dedicated to this subject. There have been entire ministries established for this purpose. Their statements against the Holy Spirit in healing the sick, speaking in tongues, and such things, were made after the ministry of Jesus had been published in the Gospels, including

this incident that triggered the doctrine of the unpardonable sin. This makes them even more culpable than the Pharisees. Do you see how serious this is?

This brings to mind another point, which is the claim that very few people could be in the same position as the Pharisees. However, Jesus said nothing to suggest that it required a Pharisee to commit this sin. And the truth is that, due to the completion of Scripture and the dissemination of its knowledge – again, including the record of this very incident in all three Synoptic Gospels -- even an ordinary unbeliever or church member nowadays is in an even more inexcusable position than the Pharisees, so that if one's background matters at all, this makes it even more likely for violations to occur. In any case, blasphemy is blasphemy. By definition, it refers to the words and implications. The individual's backstory is irrelevant as to whether a statement counts as blasphemy.

Someone whined to me that "intention matters." So...did you intend to endorse the ministry to heal the sick and cast out demons by calling it a work of Satan? Did you intend to encourage the manifestations of the Spirit when you insisted that tongues and prophecies have ceased? What if someone intended to worship the true God when he bowed down to Satan instead? Just say "oops"? If your intention is contrary to truth, Scripture does not define it as good intention. You cannot rape someone with good intention and call it holy communion. You cannot worship an idol with good intention and call it misdirected zeal. You cannot crucify Jesus Christ with good intention and call it a spiritual accident. Paul said that he was zealous and ignorant before he followed Jesus, but he still called his words blasphemy. He was able to receive forgiveness, because although he blasphemed Jesus, by the grace of providence, he did not blaspheme the Spirit.

The Pharisees themselves intended to speak against Jesus, not the Holy Spirit, just as many people today intend to speak against the preacher who heals the sick or speaks in tongues, not the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin refers to evil statements, not evil intentions. Blasphemy refers to the words and implications. As far as the definition goes, intention is irrelevant. Evil intention could make it worse for the offender, since it would be an additional sin, but good intention – if it can be called good at all – does not change blasphemy into something else. The attempt to excuse the sin is itself another sin. If you excuse unintended and uninformed statements against the Spirit, it might even mean that you now commit the unpardonable sin a second time, only that this time the statements are intended and informed. And by your own standard, this time intention matters, and it translates into even more extreme tortures in endless hellfire. Before you say, "What about..." just stop. It does not matter what other variable you introduce into the situation. The answer is that it does not change anything. When the words or implications amount to blasphemy, then they count as blasphemy.

All this is me indulging a desperate objection just to practice my typing, because it was a useless discussion as far as whether something counts as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This is because, in the same context, Jesus declared that people will be judged for "every careless word" that they speak. And he said, "by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." End of debate.

There is more. The sin refers to the act of insult, to denigrate, or to speak against a person or thing. It is called blasphemy when the insult is against deity. Jesus said that the sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, not specifically calling the Holy Spirit a demon. Any insult against deity is blasphemy. He did not restrict the sin to calling the Spirit a demon. Of course, to call the Holy Spirit a demon would be blasphemy, but this is not the only way to insult or speak against the Spirit. You do not have to call Jesus a demon for it to be blasphemy. You can call him a mere man and deny his deity, or you can call him weak or foolish, and that would be blasphemy. The same applies to the Holy Spirit. Just as there are many ways to insult or speak against Jesus, there are many ways to insult, to denigrate, or to speak against the Holy Spirit. There are many ways to criticize his ministry in healing the sick and casting out demons, his work in speaking in tongues and prophecies, and in granting visions and dreams. Imagine how many people have committed this sin. Do we still want to pretend that this is a non-existent issue?

Jesus answered that a kingdom would not fight against itself, and so Satan would not cast out Satan. Therefore, it did not make sense to say that Jesus would cast out Satan by the power of Satan. When Christians read this text, this is as far as they go. Of course, this conclusion is on the face of the text, so there is nothing wrong with it. However, this conclusion about Satan is not the principle itself. The conclusion is reached by an application of a general principle, which is, a kingdom would not fight against itself. And there are two kingdoms here -- the kingdom of Satan, and also the kingdom of God, or of Christ. If Satan would not cast out himself, then neither would God attack himself. God would not oppose the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons. This means that any force that attacks the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons cannot belong to the kingdom of God. Watch it, if you even lift a finger to suggest that I can be wrong about this, you would have to say that Satan would indeed cast out Satan, that Jesus was wrong about the situation, so that perhaps the Spirit by which Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons could be Satan. Do you really want to go that route?

Satan would not cast out Satan, therefore Jesus did not cast out Satan by the power of Satan. A kingdom would not oppose itself. Since Jesus came from the kingdom of God, the fact that the Pharisees opposed his ministry in healing the sick and casting out demons proved that they did not belong in the same kingdom -- the Pharisees did not belong in the kingdom of God. Can you think of other people in history, perhaps those considered heroes of the faith, who opposed the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons? Can you think of other people today, perhaps authors

you have admired and preachers that you have supported, who have opposed the work of the Spirit in speaking in tongues and prophecies, in visions and dreams, and in various signs and wonders? By the principle that Jesus stated, which kingdom did these people come from? And if you stand with these people, then which kingdom do you think you belong to? Is this too scary? But it can be more scary, because there is even more in what Jesus said. I cannot be wrong about this. If I say that the text does not tell us all these things, then I would be fighting against Jesus, and everything would be wrong. A kingdom does not fight against itself. Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, because he was not from the kingdom of Satan. The Pharisees attacked Jesus when he healed the sick and cast out demons, because they were not from the kingdom of God.

Jesus said, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." And he also said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." People often read these statements without the context in mind. These things were said in the context of the ministry of healing and miracles, and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Context determines the meaning. We can apply these statements to broader concerns whenever appropriate, but we must at least apply them to the ministry of healing and the work of the Spirit. Until we apply them in this context, we have no right to apply it in any other context, because we would have decided to disregard what the statements truly intend.

Let us rephrase the statements to force our attention on the context. Thus Jesus said, "Whoever is not with me [in this ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons] is against me, and whoever does not gather with me [in this ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons] scatters." To use the words of another translation: "Anyone who is not working with me [in this ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons] is actually working against me." Support for the ministry of miracles is not optional, because support for Jesus is not optional. Everyone is required to agree, and everyone is required to join. This is the first and original meaning. Unless we acknowledge this, we have no business wresting it out of its context to make it say that we must work with Jesus in some general sense, such as following him as disciples or preaching the gospel. What does it mean to follow him as disciples anyway? In this passage, it must mean working with Jesus in healing the sick and casting out demons. What does it mean to preach the gospel? In this passage, it must mean working with Jesus in healing the sick and casting out demons. And then Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak [about the ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons], for by your words [about the ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons] you will be justified, and by your words [about the ministry of the Spirit, in healing the sick and casting out demons] you will be condemned."



## **Retribution by the Doctrine**

The unpardonable sin is a lovely doctrine if you are on the right side of the issue. It was a doctrine that Jesus weaponized against unbelief. Then he inspired all three Synoptic writers to emphasize it, equipping us to launch a counterattack against the continuing opposition toward his ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons. What's not to like about it, unless you are on the side that is attacking him? It also equips us to expose the imposters who have infiltrated the communities of faith. Without this doctrine, these cancers often hide in plain sight. What's so scary about it, unless you are one of these imposters? It is a lovely doctrine.

Jesus has entrusted to us this doctrine as a weapon to combat unbelief. Christians indeed love to fight, but instead of fighting unbelief using this doctrine, they fight Jesus about this doctrine. Listen, if you are going to fight Jesus on anything, never fight him on this doctrine. Are you stupid? Didn't you read what he said about it? This is the most dangerous thing to fight Jesus on. If you want to keep your life and your soul, do not fight him on this. Do not argue with him. Do not dilute it. Do not explain it away. Do not get in front of the doctrine to confront it and debate it. Join Jesus in the ministry of the Spirit and of miracles, stand behind doctrine, and point it at the unbelievers and the religionists.

The doctrine is a mandate to get on the offensive. It is a directive to attack unbelief, rather than only to defend faith. If he had only wanted to defend himself, Jesus could have stopped after explaining that it did not make sense to say that he would cast out Satan by the power of Satan. Instead, he kept talking. He drew a clear line between friends and enemies, excluding from the kingdom of God all those who would not stand with him. Then he weaponized the doctrine of the unpardonable sin and deployed it against the people who challenged him. And he kept talking. He likened them to evil trees, so that because their essence was corrupt, they produced evil fruit. In this context, the evil fruit did not refer to things like greed, adultery, and murder, but derogatory speech against the Spirit in the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons: "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." By what they said, they showed that they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, that they did not belong in the kingdom of God, and that they were evil to the core. His response to their unbelief about the ministry of healing consisted of a multi-layered pronouncement of damnation. He is our teacher and our example.

The doctrine is a divinely commissioned weapon against the critics of healing and miracle ministry. It is something to be honored and utilized to the fullest extent. It is a sin to suppress it. The ministry of healing is a ministry of kindness and compassion, especially toward the believing and the teachable. Just because it is a ministry of compassion does not mean that we are doormats to be trampled by the agents of Satan. God's kindness does not imply weakness toward unbelief.

The truth is that a ministry of kindness is also a testimony against unbelief. In fact, a ministry that destroys diseases and demons is a ministry of violence against the kingdom of Satan. It is concerning this kind of ministry that Jesus said the strong man that was Satan would be subdued by one who was even stronger (Matthew 12:29, Luke 11:22). This is said in the same context as the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the work of the Spirit in prophecies and miracles can also carry the power of judgment. Never suppose that the ministry of the Spirit is something passive or defensive that can be attacked with immunity. It might be the last mistake you make.

We know that the ministry of healing is genuine and legitimate. We know that we can cast out demons, prophesy, receive visions and dreams, and speak in tongues. We know that these things are true because of the testimony of God's word. And by faith in God's word, we have been performing these works and experiencing their results. There are millions of people around the world, on our streets, in our churches, in our families, in our friend circles, who in one way or another are suffering under the oppression of Satan. And we have the answer right here. We have it now. Many of these people will live in misery and then perish without learning about it. They could be healed if they were to obtain God's solution from us. But whenever they venture near the solution, there are religionists and unbelievers who discourage them, even threaten them. Who will fight for these people when they are surrounded by skeptics and mockers, even from their own churches and seminaries? It is cowardly and selfish to remain on the defensive and refuse to deploy a weapon that God himself has ordained. It is spiritually and ethically repugnant.

Satan can never win a theological argument against the doctrine of the unpardonable sin or the ministry of healing the sick. He can only inspire his agents to dilute the doctrine to reduce the perceived danger, and to deceive God's people so that they settle into a passive and protracted defensive position. The correct strategy is to turn up the doctrine of the unpardonable sin to maximum, and launch an all-out attack against critics and skeptics. Invade en masse into their territory and blow it up with the word of God. Then do it again. And again. And again. And again. Then walk away, and return the attention to the suffering and the believing ones. When the next attack comes, do not allow it to marinate for months and years before you make a counterattack. Retaliate instantly. Attack thoroughly. Kill everything that moves. Jesus gave us a weapon -- the doctrine of the unpardonable sin. Point it right in the face of the critics and fire it over and over again. Do not hesitate. Do not stop. It takes very little effort, and they have no defense against it, because the doctrine is true and clear, and it applies to exactly what they are doing. They are the ones who must answer us. Each time they oppose us, they are the ones who must prove that they have not committed the unpardonable sin. Let every attack against us trigger an immediate and disproportionate response. March into their territory. Blow up everything by the doctrine of the unpardonable sin -- their churches, their seminaries, their creeds, their pastors, their idol heroes and scholars, their families and friends, and all others who might think like them. Then walk away.

This is how you deal with critics, and how you prevent Satan from robbing the attention needed to rescue those who are suffering and those who are believing.

It is unwise to invest too much time in contending with people who would never believe the truth, but who are addicted to the excitement of debate. They debate the issues as a religious exercise, and by the very act of debate, they feel that they are engaging in something that is spiritual and productive. They are deceived, especially if they stand on the wrong side of an issue when they debate. But you are also deceived, if you allow yourself to become trapped in their lifestyle, even if you stand on the right side of the issue. If you argue with a dog or a pig five hours every day, even if you are always right, it does not mean that you are spiritual or intelligent. In the end, you are just as unproductive as these people, and you become just as ineffective for the truth of the gospel. Thus Jesus said, do not throw your pearls down before swine, because they will not appreciate your insights and good intentions, but they will turn to attack you instead. If it is unwise to invest too much time in these people, it is just as unwise to settle into a defensive position, because when there is nothing to discourage their attacks, and when they are not forced to put their own eternal welfare on the line, they will continue to derive a sense of excitement and accomplishment from the interaction.

Therefore, when you are challenged, feel free to offer an explanation for the ministry of the Spirit, of healing and such, and then stop. Just stop it. Get up from that defensive position and get on the offensive. And stay on the offensive without looking back. Do not let them trick you into returning to the defensive. Make them defend their salvation instead of allowing them to make you defend the ministry of healing. Refuse to keep explaining yourself, but keep the unpardonable sin in their face. If they call themselves Christians, or scholars, or even just decent human beings, they ought to support the ministry of healing. If they do not support it, then obviously they do not belong on the same side as Jesus Christ. They are foreign to, and outside of, the kingdom of God. If they respond with anything other than immediate and complete compliance, we hit them again. Before they can come up for air, we hit them again. And then we hit them again. And after all that, we hit them again. Next time you come across them on the street, if they dare to even glance at you, hit them again. Let them come face to face with the unpardonable sin day and night, week after week, year after year. Every time you come at me with unbelief and criticism about the Spirit's work in healing the sick, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, and such things, I will slam you over the head with this doctrine of the unpardonable sin over and over again until you bleed from every orifice. Then I will take this sword of the spirit and thrust it into your eyeball...slowly, and then I will twist the sword just to hear you scream.

## **Participation in the Doctrine**

As I mentioned in the beginning, the doctrine of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a major teaching in the Gospels. It is more explicit than some of the doctrines that people care very much about, such as water baptism, church government, and the sabbath. It is certainly far more graphic. In this doctrine there is more at stake to any individual than the doctrines of the Lord's supper, marriage and divorce, biblical prophecy and the last things, and numerous other things combined multiplied by a trillion. Entire denominations had been established upon doctrines that were less detailed, less explicit, with less biblical support, and which had less significance. Yet this doctrine has been worse than neglected. It has been twisted almost to its opposite, as if it is somehow forgivable to speak against the Holy Spirit. But Jesus indicated it was unforgivable even when the Holy Spirit was incidentally insulted. The consequence for committing this sin is an immutable verdict of damnation -- to forever burn, and burn, and burn in hell -- without any possibility of forgiveness, whether in this life or in the life to come. How in the world had something like this become the most shunned and rejected doctrine in Scripture? How? It is not because the doctrine is obscure. In the Gospel of Mark, we run into it by the third chapter. Any literate person can read about it for himself and understand it in less than a minute. The doctrine is in this condition because people refuse to accept that such a sin can exist. Like it or not, the sin exists, and it has been committed by numerous people. Satan is not nearly as afraid of many other doctrines as this one. This doctrine can single-handedly restore the fear of God to the church and to the world. It can restore power and honor to the ministry of the Spirit in healing the sick and casting out demons. As Jesus explained, this ministry is the one that destroys the kingdom of Satan, so that it cannot be the work of Satan, for Satan would not destroy himself. Thus this is the doctrine that can make way for a ministry that destroys the kingdom of Satan. No wonder he wishes to make it disappear.

Christians are eager to preach that every person must believe in Jesus to be saved, and anyone who does not believe in him will burn in hell. Preaching salvation in Jesus alone increases assurance in those who ought to have assurance, in those who follow Jesus. However, it removes assurance from those who should not have assurance, those who think that they have no need to be saved, or that they can be saved some other way. Why not censure this? Enemies of the Christian faith indeed reject the doctrine, but why don't Christians also oppose it? Presumably many more people have been sent to hell for rejecting Christ than for blaspheming the Spirit. The doctrine threatens the disbelieving and disobedient just as the doctrine of the unpardonable sin threatens the disbelieving and disobedient. Is the doctrine concerning Christ more palatable because the damnation is not confirmed until the person's death? How is this much better, if that person indeed never believes? The difference is that someone who hears about Christ can repent and believe, but it remains that many people would never believe. It is ridiculous to regard the doctrine concerning the Spirit as something especially despicable, just because it could expose a reprobate sooner. How does that make any sense? The doctrine that any person who does not believe in Christ will burn in hell

poses no problem to me, because I believe in him. It only poses a problem to the person who refuses to believe. The doctrine that any person who blasphemes the Holy Spirit is guaranteed a place in hellfire poses no problem to me, because I do not speak against the Holy Spirit. There is no danger if we honor his work in everything that we say. It is dangerous to even remain a spectator about this, because Jesus said that whoever is not working with him is working against him. But there is no danger if we participate in this work of healing the sick and casting out demons, in speaking in tongues and prophecies, and in visions and dreams. There is no danger if we stop being skeptics or spectators of the Spirit's work, but if we stand with the Spirit to attack the critics.

Sometimes people complain that I have disturbed their peace by teaching this doctrine from Jesus. Well...HOW IS THAT MY FAULT? If you had not been mocking God day and night, would you be in this predicament? Blame yourself. I refuse to apologize, recant, or weaken the doctrine by one iota. And even given your strange addiction to speaking against the Holy Spirit, if you could refute me on what this sin means – if you could refute what Jesus said -- you would still be at peace. So the only villain here is you. To blame me for what you did makes you look like exactly the kind of religious scum who would blaspheme the Holy Spirit without much misgiving. And if I have disturbed your friends by this doctrine from Jesus, as the complaints sometimes go, you should rebuke your friends, not me. Or rebuke Jesus, if you dare. Why are you talking to me, if they are the ones who blasphemed the Spirit? If they have done it, it is out of my hands. No one can save them.

You say, "I have believed in Jesus Christ, so I couldn't have committed this sin, nor will I ever commit it!" Why are you talking to me then, if there is no problem? What I know is, if you had committed this sin, then regardless of what you claim, you have never really believed in Jesus, nor will you ever. You say, "Well, I was an unbeliever when I said those things." And that is my fault again? If you had committed this sin, then you are still an unbeliever, and that is not my fault. If Christians had been teaching about this sin, so as to strike the fear of God even into the hearts of those outside the church, then fewer people would have committed this sin. Fewer people would have been disturbed when they heard the truth about it. If people are disturbed when I talk about the unpardonable sin, then let them blame the other Christians through the centuries and in this generation who had shoved it aside. They are the ones responsible for the disturbance by permitting the issue to fester. But do we care only about ourselves? If Christians had been teaching about this, then God would not have been insulted so often through these centuries. If we begin to restore this doctrine to its proper place and give it due attention, then we can expect fewer problems in the future. The effect would not be immediate. The doctrine needs to become a common teaching, and even a test of orthodoxy and discipleship to show that we agree with Jesus and that we endorse the Spirit. However, it is unlikely to become a common teaching until we become diligent and forceful in talking about it.

Whenever this doctrine is mentioned, Christians usually dedicate their effort into providing assurance, as if they do not care whether the Spirit has been blasphemed in the first place. Should we preach on hell and then say that no one goes? Or, is hell an oppressive doctrine? It is oppressive only to the one who rejects Jesus. As for assurance, read the passages on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. They are not secret texts. Read them. Do they make it sound like Jesus intended to provide assurance? He made one attack and threat after another. If anything, he intended to destroy assurance. Nothing in these verses offer any assurance, any escape, any comfort, any excuse, any hope, any repentance or restoration toward those who attack the ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons. How can I conjure up one meaning, when the words convey another? How can I create assurance for the critics and the mockers, when the texts intend to destroy it? I am a preacher, not one of your scam theologians -- I preach what is there, not what is not there.

The doctrine is what it is whether or not you admit it or preach it. Someone who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit will burn in hell even if you do not tell him about the doctrine, and even if he would never feel the hopelessness in knowing that he has committed this unpardonable sin. He will know soon enough, when he burns in hell. The point is that even before he knows about it, he has still committed it. He will still burn in hell. But if you preach about it, you might prevent some people from committing the sin. If every time someone is about to make a reckless statement concerning the ministry of healing, or speaking in tongues, or some such thing, he is reminded of this doctrine, then it could restore a holy fear of God into him and make him hesitate. The doctrine can save just as easily as it can damn. Yet if we do not preach it, it can only damn, but if we preach it, it can save.

Moreover, God said to the prophet, "If I say to the wicked, 'O wicked one, you shall surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul" (Ezekiel 33:8-9). Do you want to be blamed when other people commit the unpardonable sin? I would never want God to say to me, "This fellow spoke against the Spirit fifteen times in one hour, right to your face, and you did not tell him about the unpardonable sin. You even complimented him here and there in your discussion on healing the sick and speaking in tongues, and you comforted him in your differences. Now he is damned forever. He is burning in hellfire, writhing and convulsing in agony, screaming in pain and despair. He deserves this, but his blood I will require at your hand." Ah...no way I will let that happen to me. Given how people seem to enjoy mocking the Spirit nowadays, I am going to sling this doctrine in every direction and tell people about the unpardonable sin everywhere I go. If God so much as glances my way, I will throw up my hands and say, "Lord, I told them! I told them not to do it. I told them what would happen to them. I talked about this straight out of what Jesus said more than anybody that I know of in the past two thousand years. This is not my fault."