

WHO COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Many sermons have been preached on “the unpardonable sin,” using as the text Matthew 12:31 and 32.

Before quoting these verses, let us note three other messages to Jews or Hebrews.

1. Note Stephen’s words to the Jews in Jerusalem, some months after the death of Jesus Christ.

“YE STIFFNECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS, YE DO ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT: AS YOUR FATHERS DID, SO DO YE. WHICH OF THE PROPHETS HAVE NOT YOUR FATHERS PERSECUTED? AND THEY HAVE SLAIN THEM WHICH SHEWED BEFORE OF THE COMING OF THE JUST ONE; OF WHOM YE HAVE BEEN NOW THE BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS.” “THEN THEY CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, AND STOPPED THEIR EARS, AND RAN UPON HIM WITH ONE ACCORD.” Acts 7:51, 52 and 57.

2. Note Paul’s words to the Jews, in Acts 18:5 and 6:

“PAUL WAS PRESSED IN THE SPIRIT, AND TESTIFIED TO THE JEWS THAT JESUS WAS CHRIST. AND WHEN THEY OPPOSED THEMSELVES, AND BLASPHEMED, HE SHOOK HIS RAIMENT, AND SAID UNTO THEM, YOUR BLOOD BE UPON YOUR OWN HEADS; I AM CLEAN: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO UNTO THE GENTILES.”

3. Note Hebrews 10:26 and 29 to 31:

“FOR IF WE SIN WILFULLY AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS.” “OF HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, SUPPOSE YE, SHALL HE BE THOUGHT WORTHY, WHO HATH TRODDEN UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND HATH COUNTED THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, WHEREWITH HE WAS SANCTIFIED, AN UNHOLY THING, AND HATH DONE DESPITE UNTO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE? FOR WE KNOW HIM THAT HATH SAID, VENGEANCE BELONGETH UNTO ME, I WILL RECOMPENSE, SAITH THE LORD. AND AGAIN, THE LORD SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

If any man so despises the grace of God that he refuses to trust Jesus Christ and accept His once-for-all sacrifice for sins, the vengeance of God will be his portion. But note the salvation condition, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31.

“THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS.” Do not misinterpret Hebrews 10:26 and teach, as some Christians have believed and taught, that the Holy Spirit said, “if a Christian sins wilfully after he has been saved, “there remaineth no more FORGIVENESS of sins.” No such statement is made in the Bible. On the contrary, God’s message to Christians is: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.” I John 1:9 and 10. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” I John 2:1.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians and to unsaved religious Hebrews. Some of them wanted to supplement the redemptive work of Christ with a religious program, adding something of Judaism to the finished work of Christ. The priests and religious Jewish leaders were still carrying on in the temple, at Jerusalem, teaching the religious Jews to continue their faith in the blood of animals, offered on their altar, according to the law of Moses. It was to these Jews that the writer wrote, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.”

As we study the message of Stephen do the Jews, in Acts 7:46 to 56, and Paul’s message to the Jews, in Acts 18:5 and 6, we see that the Jews were very definitely committing the unpardonable sin mentioned in Matthew 12:31 and 32. To this we shall presently refer. But first let us note, in Romans 11:8, Romans 11:11, Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:15, that when and because Israel committed the unpardonable sin, God sent Paul to the Gentiles with the ministry of reconciliation and the gospel of grace.

THE GENTILES AND THE GRACE OF GOD

Just a few words about the Gentiles and the gospel of the grace of God. “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:6 to 10. Here we learn that Gentiles who had been aliens from Israel were saved. How? By grace. What does this mean? Read Ephesians 2:4. “But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us.” God’s work—God’s workmanship. What was man’s part? Not of yourselves. Not of works. What was man’s condition? Dead in trespasses and sins. In the world without God and without hope. Ephesians 2:12. Alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18. What could such a dead man do for himself? Nothing. What did such a dead man have to do to be saved? Some say, “repent.” Yes, “repent” means “change your mind.” But God had to work on them. God, Who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead hath made us alive.

Think of all the sins charged to those ungodly wicked Gentiles. They learned the truth of Romans 5:20, “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” How many of their sins were forgiven? Read the answer in Colossians 2:13 and Acts 13:39

“AND YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR SINS, AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HATH HE QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH HIM, HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES.”

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Yes, every sin, thought, word, and deed, including the sin of unbelief was forgiven when those ungodly Gentiles believed the gospel of grace and received Christ. Note what happened—“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13. Their sins were forever put Away; all of their sins. Moreover, they stood in the presence of God as though they had never committed one sin.

All of their sins were pardoned. Which one of their sins was unpardonable? Some one says, the sin of unbelief. They were all guilty of that sin, but when all of their sins were pardoned that, sin was included. When they believed there was no sin of unbelief. All of their sins were

unpardoned until they were saved by grace. Then all of their sins were pardoned. If they had resisted the Holy Spirit, blasphemed against Him, and not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, all of their sins would have remained unpardoned; but none of them would have been unpardonable.

CAN A CHRISTIAN COMMIT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Let us note what happened to the saints who sinned in Corinth. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.” I Corinthians 11:29 to 32.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” These sinning saints could not be condemned with the world. Note again the sin of the Corinthians saints, in I Corinthians 6:6 to 8: “But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” In spite of their sins, the Holy Spirit wrote to them—“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” I Corinthians 6:19.

But how about Hebrews 6:4 to 6?—“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

How about Hebrews 6:17 and 18. God cannot lie. He promised us eternal life before the world began. Titus 1:2. And note II Timothy 1:9—“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” God wants Christians to know that they have eternal life. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” I John 5:13.

If a man receives Jesus Christ and accepts His sacrifice on the cross, he receives the Holy Spirit. If he could fall away, he could not be renewed.

Now read carefully, Galatians 6:1, Luke 17:3 and 4 and I John 2:1. Can a so-called backslider, a Christian who has sinned, be renewed? Most assuredly. Then why do Christians try to use the hypothetical case in Hebrews 6:4 to 6 to do their utmost to make the Bible contradict itself? Every Christian believes that a penitent backslider who confesses his sins will be renewed. Therefore Hebrews 6:4 to 6 does not refer to such an one.

Now read again Matthew 12:31 and 32. And read with these verses Luke 23:34—Acts 3:15 to 18—Acts 3:25 and 26.

ISRAEL’S UNPARDONABLE SIN

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever

speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

“Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what to do. And they parted His raiment and cast lots.”

“And His, name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.”

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Here then is the story of the pardonable sin of Israel, the sin against the Son of man. Gentiles did not sin against the Son of man. Note Acts 3:13 and Matthew 15:24.

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.”

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Pilate sinned; but Christ said to him—“Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.”

The Jews committed an awful sin when they had Jesus Christ put to death. Israel sinned against the Son of man. Note I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16—“The Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

The Lord Jesus pronounced an awful judgment upon Israel before He went to His death.

“Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Matthew 23:31 to 33. “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38.

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Luke 21:20.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” Matthew 22:7.

This seemed to be the end of the nation Israel. But something happened, for note the difference in the message of Acts 3:17—“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” Then the first three words of Acts 3:19, “REPENT YE THEREFORE” Your rulers did it through ignorance. And note Acts 3:18, the death of Christ had to be. In other words, the Son of man had to be sinned against.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:’ Acts 2:22 and 23.

“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, Whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:26 to 28.

So Israel, in fulfillment of Scripture, rejected Christ and slew Him with wicked hands. Note Matthew 26:24:

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Christ’s prayer availed. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” As a result, note Peter’s message to the rulers who ignorantly sinned against the Son of man.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and SO IS ALSO THE HOLY SPIRIT, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:29 to 32.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. Now compare Matthew 23:33 and 38, with Acts 3:25 and 26.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Before the Jews killed Christ, they were “serpents.” After their awful deed they were tenderly addressed as children. That sin was pardonable.

The Holy Spirit was God’s witness to Israel that He had made Jesus both Lord and Christ; that He had exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

But now, if Israel sinned against the Holy Spirit, what? The unpardonable sin. They did resist and blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and sinned. As the result. of the unpardonable sin Israel was set aside. There was a very great difference between “the generation of vipers and serpents” of Matthew 23:33 and “the children of the covenant and the prophets” in Acts 3:25.

Now let us compare John 12:37 to 40 with Acts 28:25 to 28.

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him; That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who hath believed our report: and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”

“AND WHEN THEY AGREED NOT AMONG THEMSELVES, THEY DEPARTED, AFTER THAT PAUL HAD SPOKEN ONE WORD, WELL SPAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET UNTO OUR FATHERS, SAYING, GO UNTO THIS PEOPLE, AND SAY, HEARING YE SHALL HEAR, AND SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND SEEING YE SHALL SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE: FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE IS WAXED

GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES HAVE THEY CLOSED; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT.”

The judgment of God was postponed until Israel had another chance, the opportunity to commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. Jerusalem was not destroyed until the year 69 or 70 A.D. The Lord’s prayer on the cross caused God to postpone the fulfillment of Matthew 22:7. Note this verse, “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” Israel’s house was not left desolate at the time Christ spoke that judgment. Note Acts 11:19—“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only.”

For some years after the death of Christ the disciples and apostles preached to none but Jews only. Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not.

John 1:11. Some of His own received Him while He was on earth. More of His own received Him during the first seven years after the Pentecost of Acts 2.

But, since the judgment of Romans 11:6 to 11 and Acts 28:25 to 28, Israel has been an outcast nation. But some day there will be the fulfillment of Hebrews 8:10 to 12

“For this is the covenant. that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people; And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother. saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Thus we see that no unsaved Gentile in this day of grace ever commits the unpardonable sin. Israel committed the pardonable and THE unpardonable sin, one before Christ went to Calvary and the other after the Holy Spirit came as a witness to Israel. Acts 5:32.