

## The Unpardonable Sin (Matthew 12:31-32)

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A while back someone asked me if I feared blaspheming the Holy Spirit since I was speaking against some of the errors and unbiblical teachings promoted in the Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements. Apparently they thought that questioning the alleged miraculous works of the Holy Spirit that were occurring in the charismatic chaos of today was an unforgivable sin. Essentially, they



believed I was ascribing the works of the Holy Spirit with Satan and therefore would be cursed and condemned to Hell for doing so. This brings up the important question. Can blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which Jesus identifies as an unpardonable and mortal sin, be committed today?

In short, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was the conclusion that Christ performed His miracles in the power of Satan through sorcery. It was a sin that could only be committed by unsaved people who rejected Christ as their Messiah and Savior while Christ was physically present on earth.

Matthew 12:24 records the blasphemous words of the unsaved Pharisees:

“But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils (demons), but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”

Beelzebub was actually a heathen deity, referred to earlier by Jesus in Matthew 10:25, and one who supposedly had authority over the demons. So, Beelzebub became another name for Satan and centered upon his leadership of the demonic world. The name is derived from the Hebrew word that means “lord of the flies,” with “flies” serving as a euphemism for “manure.” It was a derogatory name assigned by the Pharisees to the Son of Man.

These Pharisees said Jesus had an evil spirit (Mk. 3:30) when they should have said He had the Holy Spirit. So, identifying the Holy Spirit with Satan and His work is blasphemous. This ominous indictment was the first open accusation that the Lord Jesus was demon empowered or possessed by demons and not by the Holy Spirit. The claim of the Pharisees is that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Satan and not by the work or power of the Holy Spirit. They did not agree with Nicodemus' evaluation of His miracles (John 3:2). Nicodemus, another Pharisee, saw that Jesus was the Messiah for no person could perform miracles as He did without being the Messiah. The Jews expected the Messiah to perform miracles (Matt. 12:38), but most of the Pharisees were blinded in their hatred of Christ.

In Matthew 12:25-30, Jesus explains how illogical their reasoning was that He was casting out demons by the power of Satan and not the Spirit.

Matthew 12:22-24

**“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? *(The crowds reacted with Messianic expectation, but the religious leaders responded by attributing Jesus' power to the prince of demons)*. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils *(demons)*, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils *(they concluded in their hardened hearts that the Holy Spirit's power working through Christ, when casting out demons, was really Satan's power, which was essentially a charge of sorcery)*.**

Next, Jesus gives a logical rebuttal and condemns their ignorant propaganda by saying in essence, “Use your heads! What sense would it make for the Devil to empower me to deliver people from demons who are doing the Devil's work?”

Matthew 12:25-30

**“And Jesus knew their thoughts *(wicked, vile, evil, Christ-rejecting thoughts – as in Matt. 9:4)*, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? *(Satan is not casting out his own demonic followers and dividing and destroying his own kingdom)* And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do**

**your children** (*followers of the Pharisees*) **cast them out?** (*the Jewish exorcists of Acts 19:13-16*) **therefore they shall be your judges** (*they will show that the Pharisees are hypocrites for if casting out demons was a sign of demon possession, then their own Jewish people, perhaps other Pharisees, were in league with the Devil*).

**“But if I cast out devils** (*demons*) **by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you** (*Messiah is at hand to offer and potentially establish the kingdom to Israel*). **Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods** (*Satan's house or domain on earth which would include people possessed and controlled by demons – Matt. 12:43-44; 7:21-23*), **except he first bind the strong man?** (*Satan*) **and then he will spoil his house”** (*a reference to Christ's defeat of Satan, the prince of demons, since it was prophesied that Messiah would one day enter Satan's kingdom, overcome him, and reclaim Satan's spoils - the souls of men - during His earthly messianic kingdom – Zech. 13:2; Rev. 20:1-2*). **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad”** (*you cannot be neutral – either you are with Me or against Me, either you are saved or not saved*).

Jesus' final words remind us that no person can be neutral when it comes to receiving or rejecting Christ.

“What will you do with Jesus?  
Neutral you cannot be;  
Someday your heart will be asking,  
“What will He do with me?”

Douglas O'Donnell said: “... you are not on neutral ground. You are in hostile, enemy territory. There are only two kingdoms and one choice. Stay where you are, call it your own kingdom if you like (if that makes you feel better or safer), and think of yourself as Mr. Middle-of-the Road or Mrs. Broadminded, but in reality you are teeter-tottering on the devil's playground. Jesus dispels the myth of religious neutrality.” It's Christ or the devil, Heaven or Hell, salvation or damnation. You cannot be neutral!

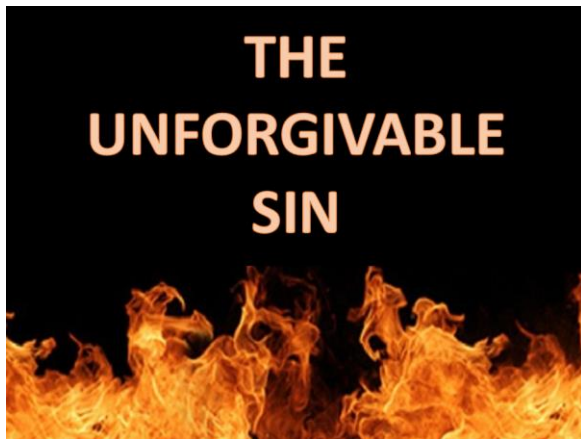
To state it succinctly, Jesus pointed out that their statement was illogical. Why would Satan fight against himself? Jesus affirmed that Satan had a kingdom, for he

is the god of this age (Matt. 4:8–9; John 12:31). Therefore, if Satan casts out his own demonic helpers, then he is opposing himself, dividing his kingdom, and destroying his own house. The point Jesus was ultimately making was that His victory was through the power of the Spirit of God and not in the power of the Evil One.

In Luke 11:20, we read that Jesus concluded:

“But if I with the finger of God (*the expression of God’s power and work*) cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.”

The point Jesus was making is that Satan was not casting out Satan as they suggested. Jesus was teaching that Satan was shooting himself in the foot if He was being used by Satan to cast out his own followers! Satan is not going to liberate persons he has enslaved. This means that if demons were cast out by Christ, then it must have been by the Spirit of God, since no other power exists except God’s power. In saying this, Jesus proved that the kingdom of God had come unto them or had been officially introduced to them because they were in the presence of the King!



Matthew 12:31-32 records the solemn words of Jesus: “**Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men** (*ascribing the work of the Holy Spirit with Satan’s work and essentially identifying the Holy Spirit as Satan*). **And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be**

**forgiven him** (*extreme slander of Jesus was forgivable in His day provided it did not go as far as attributing His works to Satan, which constituted blasphemy of the Holy Spirit*): **but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost** (*affirming that the Holy Spirit and his work is actually satanic in origin, attributing the Holy Spirit to Satan*), **it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world** (*the pre-messianic age that was soon to end*), **neither in the world to come**” (*not a reference to Heaven*)

*or the unbiblical place of Purgatory but the messianic kingdom age when Jesus will be physically present on earth – Rev. 20:1-7).*

Few passages have caused as much fear and anxiety as the verses where Jesus states that there is an unpardonable or unforgivable sin. This sin is mentioned in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10). Many questions arise in the minds of concerned readers: What exactly is the unpardonable sin? Have I committed the unpardonable sin? Can the unpardonable sin still be committed today? Can we know if someone commits the unpardonable sin, and if so, is there absolutely no possibility of repentance and forgiveness when committing this sin? I think we can answer all these questions when understanding the timing, background, and hearts of those who committed this particular sin during the days of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

The unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was to conclude that Jesus was performing His miracles, such as casting out demons, by the power Satan instead of the power of the Holy Spirit. It was a sin to claim that Jesus was performing all His miracles by Satan's assistance instead of the Spirit's power. This was blaspheming the



Holy Spirit and His work. The blasphemy (evil speaking) was committed against the Holy Spirit because the Spirit's work was attributed to Satan instead of God the Holy Spirit. This was an insult and blasphemous conclusion. In effect, this was calling the Holy Spirit Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.

The Pharisees claimed that Jesus' power was from Hell, not Heaven. This became their public policy statement regarding Jesus. This propaganda statement was that Jesus was essentially a sorcerer under satanic influence and not the influence of Holy Spirit when casting out demons. As a result, their conclusion was blasphemy against the Spirit's sacred work in bringing deliverance to people.

David Guzik wrote:

"Yet true blasphemy against the Spirit is more than a formula of words; it is a settled disposition of life that rejects the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding Jesus."

But why did Jesus say during His days on earth that the blasphemy against Himself could be forgiven but not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him” (Matt. 12:32). Since Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both members of the Godhead, why should blasphemy against one be more serious than against the other?

Hagner answers in this way:

“Given Matthew’s christological interests and the unique and central position held by Jesus throughout the Gospel, one may understandably be surprised that Matthew has not said the reverse of what stands in the text, i.e., that blasphemy against the Spirit is forgivable but not that against the Son of Man. The gravity of the blasphemy against the Spirit, however, depends upon the Holy Spirit as the fundamental dynamic that stands behind and makes possible the entire messianic ministry of Jesus itself . . .” In other words, the Holy Spirit was the underlying person and power behind Jesus’ messianic ministry. To reject the regal credentials of Christ’s miracles and reassign them to Satan was a blasphemy against the work of the Holy Spirit who was operating within the Messiah.

**a. The reason why this sin cannot be committed today.**

The reason this specific sin CANNOT be committed today is because Jesus is no longer here in the flesh (His incarnation) performing miracles as He did during His earthly ministry. The difference is between “then” and “now.” This specific sin cannot be reproduced today for it required Jesus’ presence on earth while He was performing miracles through the Spirit’s power. It would be IMPOSSIBLE to commit this sin today since Jesus is not here in His flesh on the earth. A person cannot blaspheme the Spirit in the same sense in which Jesus’ contemporaries could. In order to do so, a person would have to literally observe Jesus doing His miraculous works, while He was on earth, and then attribute these works to Satan instead of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Spencer Carpenter summarizes:

“Can the unpardonable sin be committed today? It is reasonable to think that this sin cannot be committed today because the exact historical situation cannot be repeated and could only happen during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit worked in and through Him.”

Tom Constable adds:

“Can a person commit this sin today? One can reject Jesus Christ, but one cannot blaspheme the Spirit in the same sense in which Jesus’ contemporaries could. To do so one would have to observe Jesus doing His works and attribute them to Satan. One could say therefore that blasphemy against the Spirit was an unforgivable sin during Jesus’ earthly ministry.”

The Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day committed the unpardonable sin by accusing Jesus Christ (in person, on earth) of being demon-possessed. They had no excuse for such an action. They were speaking out of ignorance. They saw Jesus’ wonderful works and they heard His clear presentation of truth. Yet they deliberately chose to deny the truth that He was the Messiah and slandered the Holy Spirit by claiming He was working on Satan’s side. Standing before the Light of the World (John 8:12), manifesting His glory, they defiantly closed their eyes and became willfully blind (John 12:36; 2 Thess. 2:10). In view of this, Jesus pronounced that their sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (identifying the work of the Spirit through Christ with the work of Satan) to be unforgivable.

Once again, this type of blasphemy against the Spirit, as it pertains to the specific situation of the Pharisees, cannot be duplicated today. Jesus Christ is not on earth, and no one can personally see Jesus perform a miracle and then attribute that power to Satan instead of the Spirit.

A man once came to me and said that he had committed this unpardonable sin (blasphemy against the Holy Spirit), but I reassured him that it was impossible for him to commit this sin, since Jesus was no longer present on earth, but had departed into Heaven (Acts 1:9).

Harry Ironside once remarked:

“Many dear souls have tormented themselves, or have been tormented by the devil, with the awful thought that they are guilty of the sin here described.”

The Holy Spirit is no longer working miracles through Jesus as He did while Christ was visibly and bodily on earth. Therefore, Jesus ties blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to the “age of miracles” when the Spirit’s power could be directly perceived but rejected while He (Christ) was present on earth. In short, the special circumstances involved in this blasphemy (Christ on earth and the Holy Spirit

working through Him) cannot be duplicated today. Therefore, this particular sin cannot be committed.

**b. The reason why this sin cannot be forgiven.**

The reason this sin cannot be forgiven is because of the condition of the people's hearts who committed this particular sin during Jesus' days on earth. The hearts of the Pharisees were so calloused and hardened in their sinful rejection of Christ and His ways that they would not repent and be saved. Therefore, there was no hope for them to be forgiven. Their fate and doom were forever sealed by their willful rejection of God's Son and His offer of salvation (John 5:40).

Jesus had already condemned the self-righteousness and superficial religiosity of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20; 6:1-18) and their extra-biblical rules and traditions were categorically rejected by Christ (Matt. 9:14-17). Finally, things came to a breaking point over the Sabbath where Jesus declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath and healed a man (Matt. 12:1-13). The Pharisees' hard-hearts and burdensome additional laws were exposed as being evil, therefore they "went out and held a council against him (plotted against Him), how they might destroy Him" (Matt. 12:14). So, they sent a delegation that proclaimed, "This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons" (Matt. 12:24). Their words and attitude reveal that their hearts were hardened beyond belief and they were beyond returning to any rational sense.

Jesus already concluded in Matthew 11:22:

"But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

The people, who committed this terrible sin, connecting Christ's miracles to the power to Satan, while He was performing miracles before their very eyes, could never be forgiven of this wicked and deplorable sin. Why? It's because they were "past feeling" (Eph. 4:19) and "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28; 2 Tim. 3:8), confirming them in their own choice, which in this particular case sealed their fate. This is what Jesus is getting at when speaking of their future judgment. Their doom was sealed because of the hardness of their hearts. This particular sin demonstrated an absolute and permanent refusal of these religious people to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior, which resulted in loss of



opportunity to ever be forgiven. As a result, they were confirmed in their unbelief (2 Thess. 2:10-11).

Other texts reveal that apostates can sin away the day of grace by becoming hardened and calloused against Jesus Christ and the Gospel truth (Heb 6:4–6; 10:27–29; 1 Jn. 5:16). This was a similar situation in the days of the Pharisees during Jesus’ earthly ministry. They were confirmed in their unbelief and choice in rejecting Christ, His salvation offers, and His righteous ways (Rom. 1:24, 26).

Numbers 15:30-31 is an Old Testament example of sinning away God’s grace: “But the soul that doeth *ought* presumptuously (willfully and defiantly rebels against the truth – knowing the truth but refusing to embrace it), *whether he be* born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity *shall be* upon him.”

Although there was an unpardonable sin that could be committed when Jesus was on earth, the reason for the sin not being forgivable was because of the hardness of hearts within those who committed it. Their conscience at one point had become insensitive as if it had been seared or cauterized by a hot branding iron (1 Tim. 4:2). Therefore, with a hardened heart, they had passed the point of no return. Their decision to reject Christ was final and their destiny was sealed. Their sinful depravity had led them to blaspheme the work of the Spirit, ascribing it to Satan, and this became the confirming sin that their hearts were beyond reach.

Jesus words in Matthew 12:33-37 confirm their defiance and damnation: “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

There is an old saying that goes like this:

“There is a time, we know not when;  
There is a place, we know not where,  
That seals the destiny of men  
For glory or despair.”

Although the specific unforgivable sin cannot be repeated today since Jesus Christ is not physically on earth performing miracles, there is another unforgivable sin that people can commit today, and this sin is rejection of Jesus Christ as their Savior. Today the only sin one can commit that God cannot forgive and that will result in a person’s damnation is rejection of Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior. The only unpardonable sin for today is that of unbelief in Christ’s redemptive work on Calvary’s cross (2 Pet. 2:1).

Jesus taught in John 3:36:

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

Since people living today do not have the undeniable physical presence of Jesus Christ in the world, the Pharisees’ unforgivable sin does not apply to our present generation and time. However, it is possible for people to end up in an unpardonable state. This happens when a person repeatedly rejects the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin (John 16:8) and the clear revelation of Jesus Christ as the Savior. With each rejection, the heart becomes harder, eventually the calcification prevents it from sensing any impression God’s Spirit tries to make. In short, there is no pardon for a person who dies being confirmed in their unbelief and rejection of Christ.

Aortic valve calcification is a condition in which calcium deposits form on the aortic valve in the heart. These deposits can cause narrowing at the opening of the aortic valve. This narrowing can become severe enough to reduce blood flow through the aortic valve — a condition called aortic valve stenosis. People might not possess calcification of the physical heart, but they can possess the calcification of their spiritual heart and become totally desensitized to God’s plan of salvation through Jesus Christ?

Richard DeHaan wrote about this:

“The longer you postpone, the less likely your ultimate salvation. Though it is true, ‘while the candle holds to burn, the vilest sinner may return,’ the person who continues to resist the gracious workings of the Holy Spirit may well bring himself into the state of complete indifference. If he dies in this condition, he will go into eternity as a lost sinner.”

Hebrews 9:27 declares:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

Jesus taught in Luke 13:3-5:

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Without repenting of one’s sins (admitting to God you are a sinner and in need of salvation through Christ alone) and placing faith in Jesus Christ (trusting or relying in Christ’s death and resurrection to save you) there can be no forgiveness or pardon. In reality, the only unforgivable sin is a refusal

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to believe on Jesus Christ to be one’s Savior (Acts 16:31). This was true in Christ’s day and our own day. Behind the unforgiving sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was the unforgiving sin of unbelief. To not believe on Christ will ultimately seal a person’s fate in the fires of Hell. The Pharisees were never saved and forgiven of any of their sins. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was just another sin added to a large stockpile of sins (Rom. 2:5) which they would be judged for on Judgment Day. But today the only sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin of unbelief, which is failing to express faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before one dies and enters the afterlife.

Jesus also said in John 5:40:

“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”



Jesus did not say these people could not come but that they chose not to come and embrace Him as their Savior. Here is the point. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world today, convicting the unsaved of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). If a person resists this conviction and remains unrepentant, then he is choosing Hell over Heaven. So, in one sense, there is no forgiveness for someone who dies without faith in

Christ. Today unbelief in Christ is the only sin that God cannot forgive since a person has chosen to reject God's way of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We must remember that God has provided for our salvation in His Son (John 3:16). Forgiveness is found exclusively in Jesus (John 14:6). To reject the only Savior (Acts 4:12) is to be left with no means of salvation. Therefore, to reject the only way of pardon through Christ is, obviously, unpardonable. Essentially, unbelief in Jesus Christ to be one's Savior is the only sin that cannot and will not be forgiven by God. Sadly, it's the only sin that will keep a person out of Heaven and make sure they wind up in Hell (2 Thess. 1:8-9).

On August 30, 2005, Coast Guard Lieutenant Iain McConnell was ordered to fly his H46 helicopter to New Orleans and to keep that machine flying around the clock for what would turn out to be a heroic rescue effort. None of his crew were prepared for what they were about to see. They were ahead of every news crew in the nation. The entire city of New Orleans was under water. On their first three missions that day they saved 89 people, three dogs and two cats.

On the fourth mission, despite twelve different flights to New Orleans, he and his crew were able to save no one. None! All those who were stranded refused to board the helicopter. Instead, they told the Coast Guard to bring them food and water. Yet they were warned that this extremely dangerous. The waters were not going to go away soon. Sadly, many of those people perished because of their refusal to be rescued. The same is true regarding people today. Because of their utter refusal to be saved, they end up dying the sinner's death and going to Hell. They could have been pardoned but stubbornly refused (John 3:19). Sadly, the

unforgivable sin has always been the same. Ultimately is the failure to believe on Jesus Christ to be one's Savior from hell.

**c. The reason why Christians should not fear God's judgment.**

Christians should not live in fear that they might commit this sin because it cannot be committed today. Furthermore, and even more importantly, a Christian cannot be judged in Hell after he has been saved and cleansed of all his sins forever (Eph. 1:7; 1 John 3:4; 4:10). Christ gives to us the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23, John 6:47) and free justification before His presence (Rom. 3:24). This means that we do not have to live in fear of committing so-called mortal sins (suicide, adultery, divorce, etc.) or some alleged unpardonable sins that will bring God's eternal judgment upon us. No sin, apart from rejecting God's provision for salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, can bring the condemnation of God's wrath against us.

The reason we no longer must live in fear is because when we believe on Christ, we become one of God's children who are eternally sealed (Eph. 1:13; 4:30), positionally accepted before God's throne based upon the merits of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3) and are destined for Heaven (Phil. 1:21; 3:20). Jesus repeatedly promised that we would never experience His wrath and judgment when we express faith in His finished work on Calvary's cross (John 3:15-16; 36; 5:24; 6:47).

2 Timothy 1:7 encourages us to not fear as God's children:

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

**d. The reason why reprovng charismatic error is not wrong.**

As mentioned in my introductory statement, I was accused of speaking against the Holy Spirit's miraculous works by questioning the phony miracles occurring within the Charismatic Movement. But one must realize that speaking against the errors of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement has nothing to do with blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, those who have been rooted in this movement for many years have been taught to never doubt the experiences people have, nor attribute any of them to the work of the Evil One, since they might be speaking against the true work of the Holy Spirit and commit this unpardonable sin

(blaspheming against the Holy Spirit). Hence, there are many Pentecostals who do not possess the assurance of salvation through Christ alone. They embrace the idea that there are mortal sins one may commit which would cause people to walk away or drift away and lose their salvation.

To summarize, committing this specific sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit would be an impossibility for Christians to commit for several reasons. First, Christians are already forgiven of every sin they would ever commit before God on the basis of Christ's shed blood on Calvary's cross (Col. 1:14) and they have been reconciled to God (Col. 1:20). When we believe on Christ to be our Savior, all our sins (past, present, future) are forgiven forever (Acts 26:18). Second, as we already observed, no person could ever commit this particular sin today since Christ is no longer on earth performing miracles through the Spirit's power. Third, only unsaved people could commit this sin during the earthly ministry of Jesus. These Biblical facts are very important to understand. No true Christian who has believed on Christ can suffer God's eternal wrath (Rom. 5:1; 8:1, 33-34). Fourth, exposing error is the obligation of every Christian ("prove all things" - 1 Thess. 5:21), errors related to Soteriology, Eschatology, Christology, and Pneumatology (the Holy Spirit).

Error cannot be overlooked on any theological level. It must be dealt with, or it will spread like wildfire and overtake the truth. The discerning Christian (Heb. 5:14) must examine everything including doctrine, experiences, and even Bible messages to determine their truthfulness (Acts 17:11). If they do not align with God's infallible Book, the Bible, then we are obligated to denounce them (2 Tim. 2:4), correct the erring ones (2 Tim. 2:24; James 5:19), and "hold fast" (Rev. 2:25) to the absolute standard of truth in these last days of compromise and confusion.

Those who embrace the teachings of the Charismatic Movement have fallen into the great melting pot of mystical experiences (Col. 2:18) and must be reprovved for these errors. Paul reprovved the Corinthians for substituting pagan ecstasies (pseudo experiences) for the true work and ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14) and was not afraid to reprimand them for *confusing the work of the Holy Spirit with the work of Satan* (1 Cor. 12:3). What the Corinthians thought was Spirit-directed was Satan-directed through his deception (2 Cor. 11:3). They believed the Spirit was working but Satan was actually working in some measure in the mystical encounters that they experienced and their disorderly conduct. Paul was not afraid of blaspheming the Holy Spirit when reprimanding the saints for their

Pneumatological errors and correcting them for their disorderly conduct (1 Cor. 14:29, 40). Rebuke is sometimes healthy and necessary (Titus 1:13; 2:15).

The Charismatic/Pentecostal Movement is leading many people into a type of subtle bondage, as they seek to pass through esoteric experiences that were never promised to be part of the Body of Christ (Col. 2:18-19), and as they try to measure up to a certain standard that others have artificially set for spirituality and fulfillment in life (2 Cor. 10:12). The process of continually seeking the next spiritual high and plateau robs believers of their true freedom in Christ. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is it to point us to Christ (John 16:13-14), causing us to live in daily communion with Him and experiencing Christ's sufficiency (Phil. 1:21; 3:10; Col. 2:10), as we grow in grace through our relationship with Him (2 Pet. 3:18).