

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
And
The Sin Unto Death
Notes by Franklin

Matthew 12:24

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.

- The Pharisees said it was by an evil spirit or satan that empowered Jesus and **NOT** by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:28

But if I cast out demons **by the Spirit of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- Jesus said it was by the Spirit of God that He cast out demons. So they are calling the Spirit of God, satan.

Matthew 12:31-32

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, **but blasphemy against the Spirit SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN**. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, **either in this age or in the age to come**.

- The **sin** is committed by saying that **the works of the Holy Spirit are the works of Satan**.

Compare Mark 3:28-30 Truly I say to you, **all sins shall be forgiven** the sons of men, and **whatever blasphemies** they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the **Holy Spirit never** has forgiveness, but is guilty of an **eternal sin**" — because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

- **They are calling the Holy Spirit, satan.**

1. Jesus is expressing His reverence for, and exaltation of, the Holy Spirit.
2. Any person **who believes** – has been born again – the Holy Spirit is "in him" and he has spiritual understanding. It is **doubtful** that this person would **knowingly**, with **full intention** to do so, **blaspheme and speak evil of the Holy Spirit**.

3. An **unbelieving person** may blaspheme (speak evil of) JESUS, which is forgivable, but it would be **rare** that an **unbeliever** would KNOW OF, and speak evil of, the Holy Spirit **on purpose**.
4. Unbelievers do speak evil of and **blaspheme believers, Jesus and God**, but **seldom, if ever**, the **Holy Spirit**.

Example: **PAUL WAS A BLASPHEMER!** 1 Timothy 1:12-14

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though **I was formerly a blasphemer** and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because **I acted ignorantly in unbelief**.

Paul **blasphemed** the **believers** and **Jesus**, but **not the Holy Spirit**. And it is obvious that **he WAS forgiven**.

THE FOLLOWING is FROM BARNES NOTES:

Matthew 12:31-32 In this place, and in Mark 3:28-30, Jesus states the awful nature of the sin of which they had been guilty was the **sin against the Holy Spirit**. It consisted in **charging Jesus** with being in league with the devil, or accusing Him of working his miracles, **not** by the "Spirit" or "power" of God, but by the aid of the prince of the devils. It was therefore a direct insult, abuse, or evil speaking against the Holy Spirit - the spirit by which Jesus worked his miracles.

That this was what He intended by this sin, at that time, is clear from Mark 3:30, "**BECAUSE they said he had an unclean spirit**." All other sins - all speaking against the Savior himself- might be remitted. But **this sin was clearly against the Holy One**; it was **alleging that the highest displays of God's mercy and power were the work of the devil**. The sin of which He speaks is therefore clearly stated. It was accusing Jesus of working miracles by the power of the devil, thus dishonoring the Holy Spirit.

It is VERY DIFFICULT to determine that a person today has committed this sin.

To commit this sin, must a person speak it directly to Jesus? **To speak it to Jesus is to deny who He is**.

Is saying the same thing to and **about a true believer** that is casting out demons in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, also "not forgiven in this age or the age to come?" No, I do not think so.

They would NOT be denying who Jesus is, but denying that the believer is sent by and under the authority of the LORD. There are true dedicated believers today who say that these and other gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit are of the devil. They believe in Jesus but do not believe some of the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" are for today.

To say that the "works" and miracles which Jesus did, are by the power of the devil, is to **deny who Jesus is** and to **deny His divinity**. To continue in this state – **rejecting Jesus Christ and who He is** - unto physical death, is to die in and without forgiveness "in this age and the age to come." They are blaspheming the Holy Spirit who is giving them revelation of the truth and calling Him a liar.

THE SIN UNTO DEATH

1 John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother committing a **sin NOT unto death**, he shall ask and he shall give him life to those who sin not leading to death. **There IS A SIN UNTO DEATH**; I am not saying that he should pray about that.

John is saying, or telling us:

1. The importance, the necessity, and authority of prayer in regards to the forgiveness of sin (James 5:14-16).
2. **There is a sin unto death.** I **AM NOT** telling you to pray for this sin to be forgiven, **as it will not help**. You can pray but it will be to no avail.

The question in this passage is:

what is meant by "a sin leading to death."

The word "death" is used in **three ways** in the New Testament:

- (1) **Physical**: the death of the body
- (2) **Spiritual**: separation from God, Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 59:2
- (3) The **second** or **eternal death**: Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8

The "**sin unto death**" question is a **VERY Difficult** question to understand. Bible scholars have worked and worked to understand clearly the meaning. But **the meaning is not clear**.

A **sin unto death** is **NOT** a **PHYSICAL DEATH** of the body caused by some **disease** which could be caused by sin (John 5:14). Jesus **prayed for**

healing and even raised the dead (Mt.10:8) and we are told to do the same. (Luke 10:9; James 5:14). And for **sin unto death** we are told **prayer is no avail so do not pray for it.**

A **sin unto death** is not **SPIRITUAL DEATH** - we are to pray for those in sin who are dead and separated from God (Eph.2:1) that they might be saved (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

A **SIN UNTO DEATH** seems to be referring to:

- The "**SECOND DEATH**" or "**ETERNAL DEATH**" - All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven – on the condition that they repent and believe. IF they **CONTINUE in the SIN OF UNBELIEF - they WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN.**

Therefore the "**sin unto death**" is the **same as "blaspheming the Holy Spirit"** - which is **NOT BELIEVING THE TRUTH** of who Jesus Christ is, thus rejecting Him and therefore not forgiven.

John 8:24 **Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you BELIEVE that I am He, you will die in your sins.**

The "**second death**," or eternal death of the one who **never believes** and rejects Jesus Christ as his savior seems to be the only possible meaning.

- **Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.** Revelation 20:14
- **But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.** Revelation 21:8

However, how are we to know if they will continue in unbelief? And until they die we SHOULD PRAY for revelation of the truth to be given them, so that they may believe and not die the eternal death.

As John said: I am **NOT** telling you to pray for this sin to be forgiven, as it will not help. And likewise, **I am not telling you not to pray.** You can pray but it will be to no avail if they do not repent.

That this is the reference here seems to me to be probable, if not clear, from the following considerations:

There IS such a sin referred to in the New Testament, a sin for which there is no forgiveness "[neither in this life nor the life to come.](#)" (Matthew 12:31-32 and Mark 3:29).

Therefore, that the reference here is to the **sin against the Holy Spirit**, and that John means to illustrate the **duty** and the **power of prayer**, by showing that for any sin short of that, however aggravated, **it was their duty to pray that a brother might be forgiven.**

There was clearly but **ONE** sin that was unpardonable - "[there is a sin unto death](#);" there are many which are not of this description, and in relation to them there is ample scope for the exercise of the prayer of faith.

It is not easy to define the unpardonable sin, and it is **impossible** for us to determine in any case with absolute certainty that a man has committed it. But there are multitudes of sins which people commit in which it is proper to pray that they may be forgiven, set free and/or healed, [he shall ask and he shall give him life to those who sin not leading to death.](#)

It is not clear to me who the second "he" is referring to: the one praying, or to JESUS - [he shall give him life](#). It could refer to **him who offers the prayer**; that is, his prayer would be the means of giving the offending brother life.

How faithful and constant should we be in pleading for our fellow-sinners, that we may be instrumental in their recovery! What joy will await those in heaven who shall see many who were rescued from ruin in answer to their prayers!

James 5:15-16 [and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. \(16\) Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.](#)

There were instances in the times of the prophets in which the sin of the people became so universal and so serious, that **they were forbidden to pray for them.**

- Isaiah 14:11 [Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good](#)
- Isaiah 15:1 [Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.](#)

These were cases in which the prophets were directly instructed by God **not to pray for a people**. We have no such instruction in the New Testament. And again, we can never be certain that anyone has committed the unpardonable sin, there is no one for whom we may not pray. There may be those who are so far gone in sin that there may seem to be little, or almost no ground of hope. They may have cast off all the restraints of religion, of morality, of decency; they may disregard all the counsels of parents and friends; they may be sensual, profane; they may be the companions of infidels and of mockers; they may despise the Sabbath; they may have been professors of religion, and now may have renounced the faith of the gospel altogether, but still, **while there is life it is our duty to pray for them**.

If perhaps God may grant them **repentance** leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2: 25-26

*"All things are possible with God;" and He has reclaimed offenders more hardened, probably, than any that we have known, and has demonstrated that **there is no form of depravity which He does not have the power to subdue**. Let us remember the cases of Manasseh, of Saul of Tarsus, of Augustine, of Bunyan, of Newton, of tens of thousands who have been reclaimed from the vilest forms of iniquity, and then let us never despair of the conversion of any, in answer to prayer, who may have gone astray, as long as they are in this world of probation and of hope. Let no parent despair who has an abandoned son; let no wife cease to pray who has a dissipated husband. How many a prodigal son has come back to fill with happiness an aged parent's heart! How many a dissipated husband has been reformed to give joy again to the wife of his youth, and to make a paradise again of his miserable home!"*

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It is also possible that John is referring to what he saw happen to Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5: 1-5 **But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**" And as he heard these words, **Ananias fell down and breathed his last**; and great fear came over all who heard of it.**

I am sure this made a strong impression on John and all of the disciples, which they did not forget. John remembers this **sin unto death** – (**physical death** is all we can conclude from this and **not eternal**) and John recognizes that prayer or request for forgiveness and life in a case such as this would be of no avail.

I believe that a "**sin unto death**" is also **the sudden physical death** of a believer – his life on earth abruptly ended by the LORD and called home - because of some grievous sin which the LORD wanted to reveal to all, the seriousness of that sin.

In 1 John 5:16 when John said:

"I do not say that he should make request for this"

I believe John is saying: there is no need to pray for this sin because it is not going to be forgiven. God called them home. Their time on earth was finished.

This would be John's logical conclusion from seeing what happened to Ananias and Sapphira and **he is not telling us not to pray, only that prayer would be of no avail.**

It is NOT easy to define the **sin unto death**, and it is impossible for us to determine in any case - with absolute certainty - that a man has committed it. But there are multitudes of sins which people commit, for which it is proper to pray that they may be forgiven. Therefore I believe that we can safely pray for all.

Old Testament Examples of a sin unto physical death:

Numbers 16:31-38 As he finished speaking all these words, **the ground** that was under them **split open**; (32) and the earth opened its mouth and **swallowed them** up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. (33) So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and **they perished** from the midst of the assembly. (34) All Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!" (35) Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense. (36) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (37) "Say to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he shall take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and you scatter the burning coals abroad. (38) "As for the censers of these men who have **SINNED AT THE COST OF THEIR LIVES.**

Sheol (Strong's Concordance #7585): Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat) KJV - grave, hell, pit. There is not a precise or clear understanding of this term as to where it is or exactly what all it refers to.

For example:

Aaron Numbers 20:24

Aaron will be **gathered to his people**; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, **because you rebelled** against My command at the waters of Meribah. . . . (28) After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

Moses Deuteronomy 32:48-52

The LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, (49) Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. (50) Then **die on the mountain** where you ascend, and **be gathered to your people**, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, (51) **because you broke faith** with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because **you did not treat Me as holy** in the midst of the sons of Israel. (52) For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.

All of these were a first time occurrence, that is: the first time that this particular sin was committed by the Lord's people, as it was with Ananias and Sapphira.

What happened to them was to impress upon all of us how the LORD sees our sin and it's seriousness.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; (2) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) and all ate the same spiritual food; (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

[all were the LORD's Blood Redeemed people. His people.]

(5) Nevertheless, with most of them God was **not well-pleased**; for they were **laid low** in the wilderness.

To the believers at Ephesus (5:10) Paul said: ". . . trying to learn what is **pleasing** to the Lord."

To the believers at Colossae (1:10) Paul said: "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, **to please Him** in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

All of us, as Believers, **can please or displease** the LORD by what we do. So, when 1Cor.10:5 says "God was **not well-pleased**" it does not mean they were disinherited or damned to hell.

Continuing with 1 Cor.10:6

(6) Now these things happened **as examples for us**, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. (7) Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "the people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." (8) Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand **fell in one day**. (9) Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were **destroyed by the serpents**. (10) Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were **destroyed by the destroyer**. (11) Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (12) Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. NASU

What happened to the LORD's people in the examples above were unique examples given for us to pay solemn attention to the serious consequences of sin. It is only in unique cases such as the above where our prayers for them would be of no avail, or of no help.

John 8:24 **Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you BELIEVE that I am He, you will die in your sins.**