

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Introduction Jesus rejoiced to proclaim salvation for the chief of sinners (Luke 15: 1, 7, 10), but he warned that there was **one awesome exception** in God's offer of universal pardon. This exception is the "**Unpardonable Sin**", which is referred to in Matt. 12: 31-32: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whoso speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

What did Jesus mean? Why should any sin be unpardonable? If Jesus Christ can save to the "**uttermost**", how can such a sin be possible?

There is much confusion about this question. Some people have tortured themselves needlessly through fear of having committed the unpardonable sin; yet none of us is exempt from the danger of committing it. For these reasons we owe it to ourselves to seek a correct understanding of Jesus' startling warning.

Discussion 1.—WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

In Lesson 7 we learned that He convicts of sin (John 16: 8); He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5: 5); He brings about the New Birth (John 3: 1-8); He guides into all truth (John 16: 13); He gives strength for obedience (Eph. 3: 16); He strives with stubborn hearts (Gen. 6: 3); He helps our infirmities (Rom. 8: 26).

All the close, personal, intimate work of God upon the human soul is performed by the Holy Spirit. Every impulse towards goodness and truth is implanted by Him. Every desire for holiness is nourished and tended by Him. His work is so indispensable to conviction, conversion, repentance, assurance, and every other operation of Divine grace that none of these could occur without Him.

2.—IS THERE A MAN-MADE LIMIT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK?

Yes, there is!

Gen. 6: 3: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

Rev. 3: 20: Jesus knocks—repeatedly—and patiently waits. But we may refuse to open the door.

Prov. 28: 9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

3.—IS THIS LIMIT REACHED BY A SINGLE STEP?

No. At least five steps towards this limit can be traced in the Bible.

Grieving
(Eph. 4: 30)

Quenching
(1 Thess. 5: 19)

Resisting
(Acts 7: 51)

Hardened
(Heb. 3: 13;
Eph. 4: 19)

Abandoned
(1 Sam. 16: 14;
1 Sam. 28: 6)