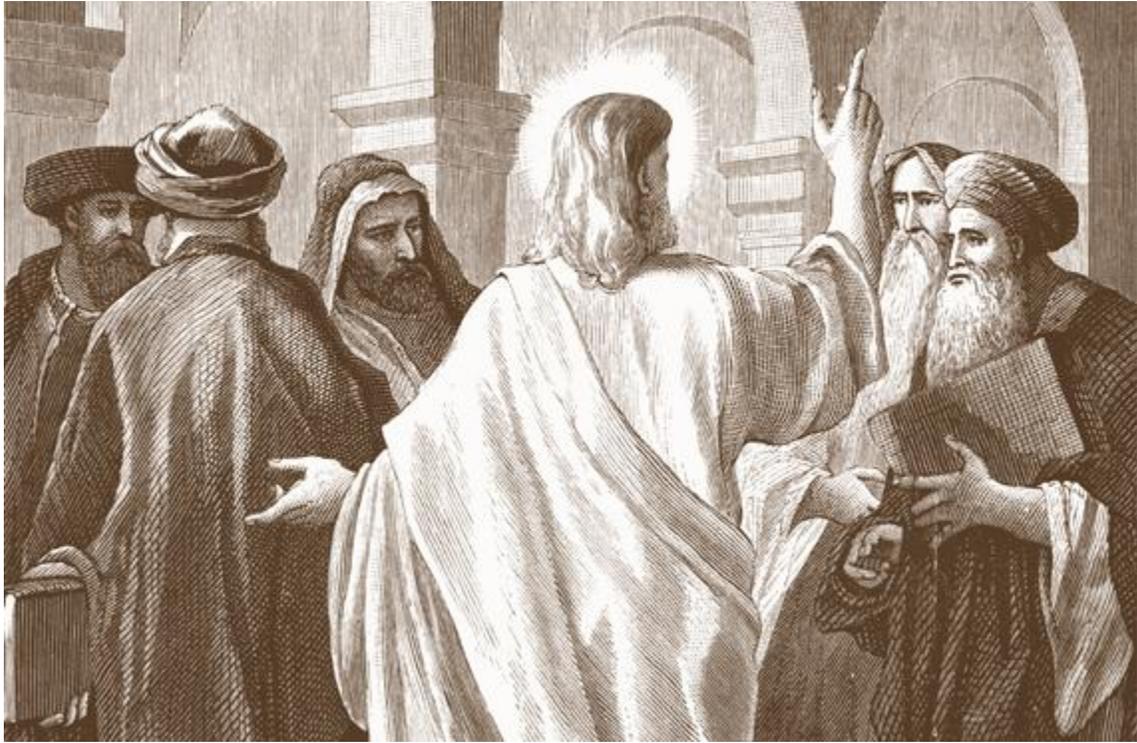


What is the Unpardonable Sin?



By Peter Salemi

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Just what is the “unpardonable sin? Many converted Christians believe that they have committed it. Can a Christian sin? If he does, will God forgive him?

Many Christians today believe that Christians cannot sin. If they do, then they have committed the “unpardonable sin.” Does God forgive a Christian for committing sins? Can a Christian sin even after he is converted?

What is a Christian?

What is the definition of a Christian? The Bible definition is totally different from the dictionaries definition of a Christian. The Merriam Webster’s Dictionary says, “... a person who believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ.” Interesting, the Bible says that, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and *tremble*.”(James 2:19). The demons themselves know and believe in God, but they “tremble.” Why? They know their fate because they sin “willfully” against God.

In John the 8th chapter here we read of believers. These people believed on Christ, but did not believe his words. They did not believe him! Many are like that today, they believe on Christ, but when you show them what Christ says which contradicts their beliefs about Christ, they don’t believe what the Bible says, notice, “And many of the people ***believed on him***, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?” (John 7:31).

These people believed he was a great teacher, they believed on the person, like millions today, but not in his message! Then Jesus said to those that believe on him, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*; “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... I know that ye are Abraham's seed; ***but ye seek to kill me***, because ***my word hath no place in you***... They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

“Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

“But now ***ye seek to kill me***, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

“***Ye do the deeds of your father***

“***Ye are of your father the devil***, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

“***And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not***.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.”

(John 8:31-32, 37, 39-41, 44-47). These are people who believed on him. They wanted to kill Jesus Christ, because they did not believe what he said! Though they were believers on him, their “deeds” were of Satan the devil.

Jesus warned his church about people like this. Christian in name, but they live their lives in sin. They are just that Christian, but in name only. There would even be ministries that were like this, Christian in name only, but Satanic in deeds. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that ***doeth the will of my Father*** which is in heaven.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not *prophesied in thy name?* and *in thy name* have cast out devils? and *in thy name* done many wonderful works?

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, *ye that work iniquity.*”(Matthew 7:21-24). Do you see? Christian in name only, but their deeds were evil. So what constitutes a real Christian? What does your Bible say?

Paul said, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). A Christian is a person who has the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of him. The first half of that verse says, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God dwell in you.*” This process is the “begetting” from God. This is how he begets children so they can be in his kingdom. This happens during the baptismal ceremony, as Peter says, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”(Acts 2:38). This is done by the “laying on of hands” (Acts 8:18).

Man has a “spirit” meaning his consciousness, his mind, and God puts his spirit together with ours, and we become his children, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Lit. Son ship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*” (Rom 8:15-16).

What of works? “That *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but *after the Spirit.*

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

“For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

“Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: ***for it is not subject to the law of God,*** neither indeed can be.” (Rom 8:4-7). These are the “fruits” of the spirit, God’s law! “...for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.” (Psalm 119:172). This is the evidence, the proof that the Christian has the spirit of God, by keeping the law of God. When we receive it, the law is carved on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3). Those that are Christian in name only, that do not have the spirit of Jesus Christ, have the fleshly mind, and mind the things of the flesh, which is contrary to God’s law, “for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4). So a real Christian is one who has the spirit of God, and keeps the LAW OF GOD!

We must “Bear” Fruit

One must understand God does everything with a purpose. God is active alive and loves to create and work. Once the Holy Spirit is in you, it will not stay dormant within you.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, “In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

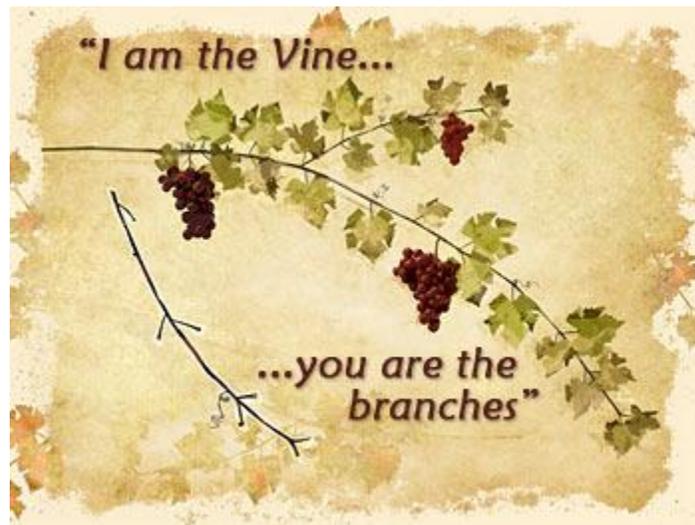
“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, ***out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.***

“(But ***this spake he of the Spirit,*** which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given;* because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”(John 7:37-39). The Holy Spirit is likened unto “living water.” Its alive, active and those works are the “works of

righteousness” which is his law. “But in every nation he that feareth him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).

God’s spirit is God’s love, “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:5). What is the Love of God? “For ***this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments***: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3). And “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, ***it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself***. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore ***love is the fulfilling of the law***” (Romans 13:9-10).

In the 15th chapter of the Gospel of John Jesus gives us the analogy. We are compared to branches on a vine. As the vine gives the branches the nutrients it needs to produce fruit, so God’s Spirit that flows from Christ to us to produce the “fruits” or “works” of righteousness. That is fulfilling God’s law!



Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5). How do we abide in him? “And hereby we know that he abideth in us, ***by the Spirit*** which he hath given us.” (1 John 3:24). It is the Holy Spirit that feeds the Christian the spiritual food needed to grow and produce the fruits of righteousness. Peter said, “But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18). That knowledge is of course the word of God, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the ***word***, that ye may grow thereby:” (1 Peter 2:2). Peter said not to be “led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.” (2 Peter 3:17), but to “grow in the grace and knowledge” of our Lord Jesus. What is Grace? “Be gracious to me THROUGH YOUR LAW” (Psalm 119:29 NIV). These are things of the spirit.

But Jesus warned us, “If a man *abide not* in me, he is cast forth as a branch, *and is withered*; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

“If ye *abide in me, and my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:6-7). We must continually be fed by Christ through the Holy Spirit. If this process is stopped, we will wither and die. Then be consumed in the lake of fire (Rev 20:13-15). Paul wrote, “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We must continually feed ourselves with the word of God letting Christ teach us through the spirit. If we do “quench” the spirit, this does not necessarily mean God will cut you off immediately, the first day or week or month you might let go by without producing active and positive fruit. There is, however, a limit somewhere along life’s way where, unless you are definitely growing spiritually, that God’s Spirit will no longer “dwell in you,” and if you let that time come, you shall, like a dead grape branch, be ultimately cast into the final “gehenna fire.”

But be sure of this: It is a DANGEROUS thing for a truly converted Christian to grow lukewarm and careless, and become a “passive” Christian. Perhaps most have temporary lapses in spiritual progress. But as soon as you “wake up” to such a lapse, repent immediately and seek God with your whole heart, for a CLOSER, more active spiritual walk with Him.

Can Christians Sin?

One fact that seems no one in the church wants to talk about, is the Christian, the spirit begotten Christian can sin!

In my time in the churches of God I have seen the lack of forgiveness, and the absolute shock that we Christians do sin! But there is a difference between the worldly sinner, and the Christian who sins. The difference is attitude! The worldly sinner just goes about his daily business thinking he has done nothing wrong. The Christian who sins is aware of what he has done, and repents of it, asks for forgiveness and struggles to overcome. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev 2:7).

Are there examples in the Bible of Christians sinning? Yes! Absolutely!

Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, how oft shall *my brother* sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”

“Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, *Until seventy times seven.*” (Matthew 18:21-22). This scripture I recommend those in the church of God should read and practice quite often. Notice Peter said, “my brother sin against me.” Who is he speaking of? Fellow Christians obviously! We are all in the church called brothers and sisters in Christ. John said, “If any man *see his brother sin* a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death...” (1 John 5:16). Jesus said to “forgive” your brother who sins because God always forgives, and Jesus said you want God to forgive you, you must be like God and forgive those who sin against you (Matthew 6:12, 14). This is the attitude we must have in the church to continually forgive. The Bible says God is, “...*ready to forgive*; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.” (Psalm 86:5). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, *and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*”

“For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 55:7-8). And when God forgives the slate is wiped clean, “I, *even I, am* he that blotteth

out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isaiah 43:25). As God says His ways are not our ways. God always forgives and always forgets. Men rarely forgive and never forget!

What is Repentance?

The Christian is in a constant state of repentance. When he or she sins, repents of their deeds. Jesus told his church, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, *and repent*” (Rev 3:19). This is his church and he told them to repent! What is repentance?

Repentance is a change of mind and attitude. One must stop going his way, and start walking in the ways of God, meaning his law. “The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul.” (Psalm 19:7). One converts from walking in his own paths, to the paths of righteousness.

The Bible speaks of two natures in man, one, the human nature which we acquire in our lives due to being exposed to this sinful world. Our parents, peer groups, schools, education etc...all attribute to developing human or sinful nature. When children are born they are like an empty page that needs to be filled in with words. Or a computer that needs to be programmed to work properly. God says, “Moreover your *little ones*, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, *which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil*, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.” (Deut 1:39). This is why God wanted the Israelites to continually teach their children the ways of God so they can put on the “divine nature.” “And thou shalt teach them *diligently* unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut 6:7).

Human nature is sin. This is the self-centered way of vanity, greed, envy; the way of getting, taking, and accumulating; the way of competition and strife. It is the WAY of Satan -- the way of sin. Paul said, “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom 8:7).

Then there is the divine nature. Peter said, “According as his *divine power* hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: *that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:3-4). What are “these” Peter speaks of? It has something to do with “escaping” the corruption in the world. It means the “things” “life,” “knowledge” and “goodness” “given unto us” by the “divine power” which is the Holy Spirit. Paul said to be “partakers of the Holy Ghost” (Heb 6:4). The divine nature is given to the Christian at baptism when he or she receives the Holy Spirit. Then you mind the “things of the Spirit.” (Rom 8:5). These things are, “That the *righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom 8:4). God’s law! Once this occurs you are in the repentant stage of walking in the spirit and not the flesh. You, when you receive the Holy Spirit are given a new nature, God’s divine nature.

The reception of God's Divine NATURE within us DID NOT remove the old Human NATURE, with its pulls and temptations. Nor will the HUMAN nature be completely REMOVED until the resurrection, and change into SPIRIT COMPOSITION -- until you are no longer composed of matter, but of spirit. This is the reason why Christians still can sin. The human nature is still present within them, and they have to overcome and ask for forgiveness and repent.

How to get rid of human nature or minimize it? One analogy I can give you is an empty milk bottle. Now we say its empty but really it is full of air. When we fill the milk bottle half way with milk, then its half air, and half milk. The more it fills with milk, the more the air goes out of it, and there will be less and less air till it's finally out. The Bible says to "grow" spiritually. The more we feed and grow the divine nature in us, and the more we quench the human nature in us, and let it die, the more the divine nature will take control of your life, as you continually feed and walk in the spirit and not the flesh. As Paul said, "And they that are *Christ's have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). Put the human nature to death!

Jesus said, "continue ye in my love.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:9-10). We must continue in the divine nature, God's law, if we do this we will not wither and die. Isaiah writes the same thing, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways... in those [God's ways] is **continuance, and we shall be saved.**" (Isaiah 64:5). We continue in the law of God and we shall be saved! That what your bible says! Why? When we continually feed the spirit by fulfilling the law of God, then the spirit grows, and the divine nature flourishes and lives in us, Christ in you. Jesus living his life over again in you! If we do not, it will wither and die. Jesus said "abide in my love." (John 15:10) "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" (Rom 5:5). His love is the law of God (1 John 5:3). Those who do not continue in the law of God will eventually, if they do not repent lose salvation! "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

The Mind of God

Many do not realize that receiving the Spirit of God, is receiving the mind of God. We have the "mind of Christ" "For who hath known the mind ["Spirit" Old Test quote Isaiah 40:13] of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But **we have the mind of Christ.**" (1 Corinthians 2:16). The book of Romans says, "O the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom and knowledge of God!* how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

"For who hath known the *mind of the Lord?* or who hath been his counsellor?" (11:33-34). The "Spirit of God" is contrasted with the "spirit of man" (I Corinthians 2:11). Man's mind contains his wisdom, creativity and his morality. God's mind, his spirit contains the same; his thoughts, his morality, and his nature which is his law.

Notice that the spirit of God and the words of God are practically one and the same, "Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, "The Spirit of the LORD *spake by me*, and *his word* was in my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:1-2). Notice the Holy Spirit spoke by David and his word was on his tongue. The spirit and the word spoken of here are one and the same. God's Spirit, his mind, his thoughts, his words spoke through David.

A few more places in the bible reveal this truth, “Turn you at my reproof: behold, *I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*” (Proverbs 1:23).

“As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; *My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth,* shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isaiah 59:21).

“And I will *put my spirit within you,* and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them.*” (Ezekiel 36:27). Now we can understand when Jesus speaks of the spirit and his word “abiding” in us are not two separate things, but one and the same thing. Words and thoughts are conceived in the mind, and then performed. So then if we continue in his law, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, if we do not, we will wither away. We must keep the Law of God to be saved!

The War of Two Natures

Paul struggled with sin as did many others in the church of God. Paul recognized that there is a struggle within the Christian. “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: *and these are contrary the one to the other:* so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Galatians 5:16-17). The RSV translates this part of the sentence, “the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are OPPOSED to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would” (Gal. 5:16-17).

What you WOULD, what you really want to do, now that you have become spiritually minded, is to DO RIGHT -- go the WAY of God's Law -- be LED by God's Spirit. But is it easy?

Paul dealt with this personally in his own life. He said, “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, ***I had not known sin, but by the law:*** for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Rom 7:7). The Law of God is the knowledge of sin. The apostle John wrote the same thing, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4). Man by himself can never know what sin is, right or wrong. Only God his creator can tell him what it is. God's nature, his law defines what sin is.

Paul continues, “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.” (v.8). The first part of the verse that says “sin, taking occasion by the commandment” Vines explains, “Emphatic, expressing the relation of the law to sin. The law is not sin, but sin found *occasion* in the law. Used only by Paul. See 2 Co 5:12; Gal 5:13; 1Ti 5:14. The verb ἀφορμάω means *to make a start from a place*. Αφορμή is therefore primarily *a starting-point, a base of operations*. The Lacedaemonians agreed that Peloponnesus would be ἀφορμὴν ἰκανὴν *a good base of operations* (Thucydides, i., 90). Thus, *the origin, cause, occasion, or pretext* of a thing; *the means with which one begins*. **Generally, resources, as means of war, capital in business.** Here the law is represented as furnishing sin with the material or ground of assault, ‘the fulcrum for the energy of the evil principle.’ Sin took

the law as a base of operations.” (Emphasis ours and theirs). Sin looks at the commandments of God as a starting point. From there you have knowledge of the commandment, then, “. . .when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:15). This process wrought in Paul “all manner” of “concupiscence” meaning “evil conduct.”

Then Paul says, “For without the law sin *was* dead” What does this mean? The phrase “without the law” is also found in Romans the second chapter. Here speaking of the heathen that do not know God, “For as many as have sinned *without law* shall also perish without law” (v.12). He goes on to say, “For when the Gentiles, *which have not the law*, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:” (v.14). So the context of “without the law” is that they have no knowledge of the law of God.

So Paul says without the knowledge of the law of God, “sin was dead.” Why? “. . .for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” (Rom 3:20). Without the knowledge of the law you don’t know what sin is! So sin is dead *through* ignorance. In the Old Testament there were laws of sinning through ignorance. “Then it shall be, if *ought* be committed by ***ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation***, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

“And the priest shall make ***an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance***: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and ***their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance***:” (Num 15:24-25). This is what Paul meant, he sinned through ignorance, and because he did, and did not realize it sin was dead because he had no knowledge that it existed.

Paul then says, “For I was alive *without the law* once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” (Romans 7:9). Paul was living without the knowledge of God’s law, but, when he realized that he broken the commandments of God “sin revived” and he came under its penalty for the “wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). Once the realization of sin comes to mind, it comes to life, the knowledge of sin is there. Notice what Paul says next, “And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.”(v.10). Why death? because he broke it, the “wages of sin is death.” Keeping the commandments of God are life, “And I know that his commandment is life everlasting:” (John 12:50). “but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

Clearly Paul is telling his audience about the struggles he has with sin, either by ignorance or purposely, as he reveals in chapter 7 verses 15-20, “For that which *I do I allow not*: for what I would, that do I not; but *what I hate, that do I*.

“If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans).

Notice, Paul is not talking about how he formerly DID, before conversion. He is speaking in the

PRESENT TENSE. He is telling us of the struggle against sin that even the apostle Paul experienced. So Paul says that in him -- in his human flesh -- his human nature -- no good dwells. The ONLY good that can be in us is CHRIST in us, by His Holy Spirit and that the "law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom 7:12).

Paul's Delight

Paul repented of sin. He knew human nature was evil and corrupt, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

"For *I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*" (Rom 7:21-22). The inward man, that begotten child that was in him, the holy spirit of God delighted and desired to do the law of God. But notice the struggle within him that every time he wanted to do good, the evil sinful nature was present as well.

"But I see *another law in my members*, warring against the *law of my mind*, and bringing me into captivity *to the law of sin* which is in my members.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then *with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*" (vv.23-25). Two laws warring against each other inside of Paul. All Christians that have the Holy Spirit have the same struggle. The law of God and the law of sin.

The Solution to the Problem

Paul had struggles with sin as do all of us. Paul said that he did, at times, SIN -- even in his converted state. He said, "... but the evil which I would not, that I DO." *And he did do it consciously – knowingly and willingly!* His mind, for the moment, did consent to it! He knowingly yielded! So knowingly that he wrote of it for you and me to read!

But he did NOT sin **wilfully**! The evil he says he DID was "the evil which *I would not*" (Rom. 7:19). His ATTITUDE -- his overall INTENTION -- was to do the RIGHT of God's Law.

He had NOT deliberately DESIRED to follow a life of evil -- just the opposite! His overall DESIRE - - his ATTITUDE -- was to obey God's Law. Yet when the pull of human nature -- in a single incident -- overpowered him, he was aware of what he was doing in his mind -- his mind therefore of necessity did, for the moment, consent and yield.

But THAT WAS NOT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN! It was NOT sinning WILLFULLY! And it did NOT condemn him! Nor does such an experience, if truly repented of, condemn YOU. Paul continues: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" (Rom 8:1). Those who have the spirit and the repentant attitude have no condemnation. When they repent, and ask God for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus we are forgiven of our sins. (See 1 John 1:7-9). Jesus paid that penalty for us, "Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse of the law*, being *made a curse for us*: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Gal 3:13).

In the old covenant sacrifices, the animals paid the penalty for the repentant sinner and there was no condemnation. This source explains that in the Old Covenant, there were sacrifices made for those who *sinned knowingly* and *willingly*, but were atonement for by sacrifice: "...sacrificial atonement is not barred to the premeditated or intentional sinner *who repents*. When the intentional/deliberate sinner's attitude 'changes to one of repentance, the whole situation is altered.' The high-handed nature of the sinner refers to his chosen state of defiance and unrepentance, 'but *not* to the deliberate sinner who has mitigated his offense by his repentance.'

"As a matter of fact, there are several instances in *which deliberate- sins can be atoned for by a 'guilt offering' (asam)*. The sins of acting deceitfully in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted, or robbery (vss. 2-3), may be forgiven and atoned for by means of a 'guilt offering' (Lev 6:1-7; [5:20-26 in Hebrew]). This ritual requires the offender to make restitution (Lev 6:5), to repent and confess his sins (Lev 26:40; Num 5:6-7), and to bring a ram for his guilt offering (Lev 6:6-7). It should be emphasized that the insistence of the prophets on repentance is not an end in itself but is to lead to action whereby the wrongdoing is rectified (Isa 1:13-17; 58:6-12; Mic 6:6-8). *This is an articulation of the Mosaic Law regarding deliberate sin.*

"In Leviticus 5:1-5 the law of the *asam* offering is promulgated. The sins enumerated distinguish them from Leviticus 4, where the unintentional sins are listed with the *hattat* offering, in that the sins are deliberate: (1) The withholding of evidence (Lev 5:1) is intentional. (2) The contact with an unclean thing, namely a carcass (5:2) or human uncleanness (5:3), gives the impression of being intentional. And (3) the uttering of a rash oath (5:4) seems also to be deliberate." (The Sanctuary and the Atonement, by Gerhard F. Hasel. p.102, emphasis added).

Remember God Law is Grace, "Be gracious to me THROUGH YOUR LAW" (Psalm 119:29 NIV) and we are "under Grace." That's the whole Law, *including* the sacrificial system. Now, however it is Christ who is our sin offering not the blood of bulls and lambs. The sacrificial system is still in place, but now transferred to the sacrifice of Christ and his priesthood, "For the priesthood being changed [Grk. *metatithēmi* "Transfer" (Strong's #3346)], there is made of necessity a change [Grk. *Metathesis* "Transfer" (Strong's #3331)] also of the law." (Heb 7:12). In the New Covenant the sacrifice of Christ pays the penalty for the repentant sinner and there is not condemnation.

When a Christian sins God, "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation [Grk. *hilastērion* "Atoning victim" (Strong's #2435)] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
 "To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom 3:25-26). The "remission of sins" means, " 'Passing over.' The word used here *πάρεσιν* *parestin* occurs *no where else in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint*. It means 'passing by,' as not noticing, and hence, forgiving." (Barnes Notes). Jesus is the Atoning victim, and God passes over our sins before and after baptism, without condemnation because of the blood of Jesus Christ. If we continue in his Law, we are under the blood of Jesus and there is no condemnation for the Christian when he or she sins. *One can see the grace in the law of God!*

So Christians no matter what kind of sins they have committed as long as they are in this repentant mode will be forgiven of their sins. Let's pray that the people of God will be just as forgiving as God is when a fellow member of God's church sins and asks for forgiveness as well, for Jesus said we are to forgive as God forgives us.

So what is the Unpardonable Sin?

Now that we have established from the Bible what is a Christian. We can understand what the unpardonable sin is.

Jesus spoke of the branch that withered and tossed into the fire. This branch was part of the vine, who is Christ. This is a Christian who sinned, but sinned "willfully." Paul speaks of this in the book of Hebrews, "For if we *sin wilfully* after that we have received *the knowledge of the truth*, there remaineth *no more sacrifice for sins*,

"But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

"He that *despised Moses' law died without mercy* under two or three witnesses:

"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."(10:26-30). The Greek word here for "willfully" is "hekousios" (Strong's 1596). This means, "...willfully...of free will. See lxx, Num 15:3. The willful sin is the abandonment of Christianity [of one's own free will]..." (Vines).

Notice the attitude of sinning "willfully." It is total rejection and hatred towards God of one's own free will, after he has received the knowledge of the truth. If he decides he no longer WANTS to go GOD'S WAY, deliberately and intentionally changes his OVERALL ATTITUDE, and desires, and CHOOSES the world and its ways -- *deliberately chooses a life of rebellion*, comes to have contempt and disregard for God's Law, then that man either has done or is in danger of doing despite to God's Holy Spirit which a merciful and loving God had GIVEN by grace! *It is a conscious decision that the person makes, and is the branch that withers away!*

SUCH A MAN is surely in grave DANGER of BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Hebrews the 6th chapter describes the falling away from the truth as well, Paul says, "For *it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,*

"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.

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

"But that which *beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*" (vv.4-8). Notice the two types of fruits that are produced. The good branch which produces good fruit, and the bad branch that produces nothing which in the end is burned. Who

are these people? Those who have tasted the heavenly gift and have rejected it! Paul said “For *it is impossible* for those..., to renew them again unto repentance” Now there may be degrees toward “falling away.” How shall we know how far is here meant? By the words: whenever it becomes “IMPOSSIBLE” to renew one to repentance -- well, he has “fallen away”-- completely!

Remember, God grants repentance (Acts 11:18; 5:31). Yet of course God never forces repentance on anyone. When one has come to the place where he WONT -- can't -- has totally, completely, lost all desire to repent -- is UNABLE to repent -- he has “fallen away” TOTALLY!

In the book of Revelation Jesus gave Jezebel, “... *space to repent* of her fornication; and she repented not.” (Rev 2:21). God knows the hearts and minds of people, and if he sees room for us to repent he will let us decide to repent until that room is gone, and then he will judge. How does one know the space to repent is gone? God through Jeremiah states, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? *nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush:*” (6:15). When people are not remorseful of their sins, and will not repent, the human nature has totally taken over, God will Judge!

Christ and the Pharisees

In the Gospels Jesus and the Pharisees on many occasions butted heads about God, doctrine and whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. But Nicodemus came to Christ and said, “*we know* that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3:2). Nicodemus was a Pharisee (v.1), and he said “we know.” The Pharisees knew Jesus was of God. Then, when Jesus healed someone, “But when the *Pharisees* heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” (Matthew 12:24). The Pharisees knew Jesus was from God and rejected the miracle. They knew it was from God yet called it the power of Satan! These hypocritical scribes and Pharisees *knew their accusation was a lie!* But tried to discredit Jesus anyways. So Jesus said, “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:” (Mark 3:29).

Another episode, when Jesus healed on the Sabbath a blind man, the Pharisees said, “Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day” (John 9:16). Again rejecting the miracle, Jesus said to them “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. “And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, ***Are we blind also?***

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, ***We see; therefore your sin remaineth.***” (vv.39-41). Sin and sickness are linked together in the bible. Blind spiritually means you are a sinner in need to be healed by God. When Jesus said “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin” meaning sinning in ignorance is not worthy of death by eternal fire. You can still repent when God gives you sight. Then he said to the Pharisees, “but now ye say, ***We see; therefore your sin remaineth.***” Notice, Jesus said since you say “we see” they know the truth and still said “he is not of God” there sin “remains.” The “wages of sin is death!” This is the “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.”

Earlier in the booklet we read in the Bible, sin by ignorance in the Old Testament. A sacrifice was given and the sin was cleansed because, “For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: *for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” (Lev 17:11). Now the perfect sacrifice is Jesus, he is the “...propitiation [Grk. “atonement” (Strong’s# 2434)] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2). “...*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7, 9). But as we have seen, Paul said about the “willful” sinner that there is “no more sacrifice for sins,” (Heb 10:26). In the Old Testament the law reveals the same thing, notice, “But the soul that doeth *ought presumptuously, 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.*” (Numbers 15:30-31). The person who does “presumptuously” is one who “despised” God and his word and was put to death, and there is no sacrifice for his sins. Paul described the same fate for the “willful” sinner in Hebrews the 10th chapter.

After this judgment from God, an example is given of a man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Num 15:32). This was a man who despised God and his law. This man was put to death for breaking the Sabbath, not ignorantly, but presumptuously, and he was put to death. If it was by ignorance, he would have repented and a sacrifice would have been given for his sins. This is the UNPRADONABLE SIN! IT’S IN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT!

What of Unbelievers?

What about the people in the world today who do not believe in Jesus Christ and are ignorant of his ways? What happens to them?

All people will have the same chance the Christian has in this life to receive the Holy Spirit and know the ways of God. God is calling people now to receive eternal life, and be a part of the first resurrection in which the second death has no power (Rev 20:4-6). The rest of the dead, all of human Kind will receive their *first chance for salvation*, and will still be subject to the lake of fire if they despised God and his commandments as Jesus said, “whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, *neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*” (Matthew 12:32). Those in the Kingdom of God who survive the wrath of God will learn his ways (Isaiah 2), and those in the Great white throne judgment, the second resurrection will receive their first chance for salvation as well. (Read our booklets on the resurrections for further details).

Those who are called now are blessed. “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev 20:6). Those called get their chance now, and live forever when Jesus comes what a blessing to be called by God now!

TWO ways into Unpardonable Sin

There are at least TWO ways in which a Spirit-begotten Christian may LOSE the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

1) By deliberate choice. A permanent decision as to his WAY OF LIFE; or, from allowing resentment in one's heart toward God. To allow resentment to embitter him, until he comes to change his whole life course, turning from God. Despising God and his law, knowingly, consciously falling away from the truth, and willfully not repenting of his way.

2) The converted Christian can lose the presence of God's Spirit by CONTINUED NEGLECT. Neglect of prayer, neglect of Bible study, neglect of spiritual fellowship with God's people. Or, by continuing to indulge into the world -- letting participation with the world in material interests, pleasures, entertainment that glorifies sin, this can cause NEGLECT of spiritual interests.

Don't misunderstand. And you cannot avoid all contact with the world. But never let it DOMINATE your interest and heart. "But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). Material things are not bad; it's how we prioritize them in our lives, and that they do not run contrary to God's law. John said, "**Love not** the world, neither [Love] the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15). Covetousness which is meant here is "idolatry" (Col 3:5). Money is not evil, "*the love of money* is the [a] root of all [kinds of] evil:" (1 Timothy 6:10). You putting material things, and loving material things in the place of God is the wrong attitude to have. The material things we have in this world are for us to use and work with to live and survive. Once we put those things in the place of God, then it becomes sin.

It is this kind of Christian James is referring to at the close of his book, "Brethren, if any of you do ***err from the truth***, and one convert him;

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20). This fallen away Christian who has let the world dominate his life, still has room to repent. Although he has fallen away is not hateful towards God, but just got "caught up" in the world. Like the parable Jesus gave of the "sower" The seed that fell among the thorns, "sprung up, and choked them... He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and *the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*" (Matthew 13:7, 22). The Apostle Peter said, "For if after they have *escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, they are again *entangled therein*, and overcome [by them], the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

"For it had been better for them ***not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.***

"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22). The cares of this world can "entangle" the Christian, choke the spiritual life in him that he wither and die.

To the Colossians, God says through Paul: "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). That is, instead of seeking an interest in television shows, actors or musicians, actively seek more knowledge of Christ -- more of the UNDERSTANDING that comes from GOD, in the Bible. Make this your MAIN interest. Never let occasional diversion compete with it as your overall interest.

The passage continues: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (verse 2). Make the SPIRITUAL things your dominant all-absorbing BIG interest -- until you LOVE the receiving of new spiritual knowledge, and set your affection on it. Digging out new spiritual TRUTH in the Bible is the most exciting interest there can be in life. It's not dry, dull, uninteresting, boring. It's exciting, thrilling -- and also profitable and uplifting!

Need Counseling?

If you are one who really wants to repent and obey God, and you believe God is calling you. The BICOG would be glad to council you in the word of God and answer your questions, and explain the Bible to you. Of course, none of them will ever call on you, unless you of your own free will request it.