



ZWTF

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2012 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

What about the “unforgivable sin”?

What about the so-called “unforgivable sin”? Did Jesus really say there is a sin that will never, ever go away? Obviously He didn’t, or He would deny His own mission, described by a celestial messenger as: “He shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). If but one of His people retains but one of their sins, He will have botched His mission.

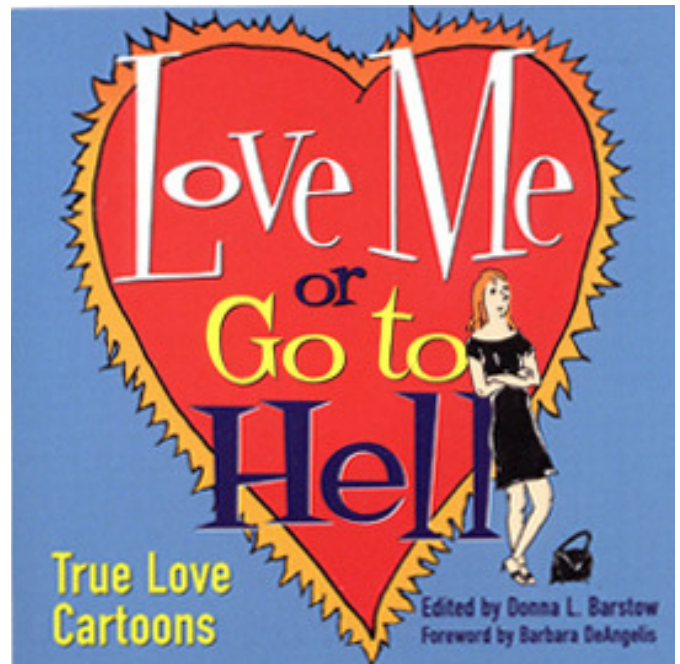
What our Lord did say was that there was a sin that wouldn’t be forgiven. There’s a big difference between that and a sin that will never, ever go away. This is much simpler than it sounds. I’ll explain what I just said in a moment. Here are the three passages that fuel the argument, quoted from the *Concordant Literal New Testament*:

Luke 12:10— “And everyone who shall be declaring a word against the Son of Mankind, it shall be pardoned him, yet the one who blasphemes against the holy spirit shall not be pardoned.”

Mark 3:28-29— “Verily, I am saying to you that all shall be pardoned the sons of mankind, the penalties of the sins and the blasphemies, whatsoever they should be blaspheming, yet whoever should be blaspheming against the holy spirit is having no pardon for the eon, but is liable to the eonian penalty for the sin.”

Matthew 12:32— “And whosoever may be saying a word against the Son of Mankind, it will be pardoned him, yet whoever may be saying aught against the holy spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending.”

It is clear that the persons committing the sin of blaspheming the holy spirit will not be released from whatever penalty God has fit for it. The obvious question now



should be: what is the penalty for this sin? People assume that it’s eternal separation from God in a flaming pit of torture. Hmm. Am I not reading closely enough between the lines? Where do any of those texts say that? Nowhere. Yet such an unscriptural penalty is read into these passages. I refuse to say less about these passages than what the Lord has said; I won’t deny His words. But neither will I add to them.

Mark 3:28-29 contains a clue: the penalty for this sin is eonian, not eternal. That means it is limited to time. (“Eonian” is the proper English translation of the Greek word *aionion*. This is the adjective form of *aion*, properly translated “eon,” which always describes a period of time.)

Let's look further, noting the progression of detail in Matthew 12:32.

This sin will not be pardoned, "neither in this eon nor in that which is impending." Which eon is impending? The 1,000-year kingdom of Israel's earthly reign, the very kingdom Jesus came proclaiming. Those committing this sin, then, will miss that kingdom. It's that simple. In rejecting the spirit, they forfeit the life that endures for that eon. A stiff penalty?

Yes. But not a stupid one. One sin sown does not eternal torment reap. Otherwise, the Savior who died to save His people from their sins didn't quite do it.

Let's say a man robs a grocery store and serves a two-year jail sentence. Is he forgiven? No. His sin is not pardoned. We might say: "Whoever robs a grocery store will not be pardoned." And he's not. He goes to jail, does his time, and then he's released and we see him eating lunch one day at Wendy's. Are we shocked? Appalled at a travesty of justice? No. This man paid his debt to society, and now he's free.

Get the point? It does not follow that because this man was not pardoned, he is never released from prison. Neither does it follow that because an Israelite is not forgiven his blasphemy of the holy spirit, he will never be saved. Remember, God is the Savior of all humans (1 Timothy 4:10), and Jesus came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Besides, this threat of no forgiveness during the coming kingdom eon for this particular sin applies only to those Israelites who ignored the counsels of Jesus¹, and only for the time specified. This has nothing to do with the body of Christ, so don't wring your hands over someone else's bill. (How many have imagined that they've committed this sin and blown their salvation? Blame the clergy for the ensuing mental trauma.) Neither has it anything to do with the time subsequent to the kingdom eon.

Every Israelite knew about the coming eon. That would be the eon when they, with Messiah, would rule the earth for a thousand years. They all wanted in on that. But most didn't know that Jesus Christ was the Way.

What Jesus was saying to these Israelites was: "Look, you people can trash Me all you want. But if you trash the spirit empowering Me, you're in a bad way. There is no forgiveness for that sin either now, in this eon, or in the coming eon, which you know well to be the 1,000 years of peace."

¹ Jesus said in Matthew 15:24, "I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." During His earthly ministry, Jesus did not preach to all humanity. After Christ was resurrected, He inspired Paul to preach to the other nations.

Those words would have twisted an Israelite's gut. Israelites ate, breathed, and slept that eon, to "reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

I could wish some soul had raised his hand at this point and asked: "Sure, Jesus. Understood. No forgiveness for that sin now or then. Got that. No kingdom glory for spirit blasphemers. Serves them right. It's the eonian penalty for them. They'll miss all the hoopla of that great eon. I've got no problem with that, Teacher. You won't find me blaspheming the spirit. But, Teacher. What happens *after* that? What happens to these people and their sin *after* that kingdom eon?"

That would have been a great question. Likely, Jesus would have answered in accord with Matthew 1:21—"I'll be saving them from their sins, of course."

Once the 1,000 years conclude, there is to be a new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). This is the eon that will follow the Millennium. Paul calls it "the eon of the eons" (Ephesians 3:21). Those spirit-blasphemers whose names are not written in the book of life (the great white throne judg-



Every good Israelite ate, breathed, and slept the coming kingdom.

ment will determine this), *still* won't have eonian life; they will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15; the second death is just like the first death, only more of it; it is unconsciousness). After this, however, comes the consummation (1 Corinthians 15:24), when God abolishes death to become "All in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). At the abolition of death, even those Israelites whose names were not written in the book of life (eonian life, that is) finally live again, fulfilling Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:22—"Even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also in Christ shall all be vivified."

("Vivified" comes from the Greek *zoopoieo*. It is not mere resurrection—which would be *anastasis*—but the imparting of life beyond the reach of death.)

Blaspheming the holy spirit won't need forgiven then, because at that point Israel's work will have finished and all those who missed out on eonian life (including Israelites) will have been justified (Romans 5:18). Justification blows forgiveness to bits; justification denies guilt while forgiveness assumes it. See the cross at work?

In Romans 5:20 ("where sin increases, grace superexceeds"), Paul is simply looking ahead to this time of justification. The grace that these stubborn Israelites will one day enjoy (when they are no longer stubborn) is ours now for the basking (Romans 5:1). It's a timing thing. It's now for us, later for them.

So stop worrying about it and enjoy it.

Before leaving this section, I'd like to say something about the translations. I quoted the three pertinent passages from the *Concordant Literal New Testament*, one of the most accurate translations available. The CLNT, in Mark 3:28-29 and Matthew 12:32, rightly puts "eon" for the corresponding *aion* and "eonian" for *aionion*. How did the King James translators translate Matthew 12:32? Here is one of the many places they unaccountably put "world" for *aion*. The KJV reads, concerning the "unforgivable" sin: "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Bloody poor translating, I'd say

If I may address these King James translators for a moment: This translation of yours in Matthew 12:32 demonstrates to us your untrustworthiness. I have consulted my concordance, to check up on you. You already used "world" 187 times in the New Testament to translate the Greek word *kosmos*. Once you figured "world" worked for *kosmos* (which it does), why didn't you leave it there? In other words, why did you use it for *aion*, too? When

we read "world" in your version, are we reading *kosmos* or *aion*? Thanks to you, we don't know without a concordance. Yours is a classic case of inconsistent translating. Even Curly from the Three Stooges knows that an *aion* is different from a *kosmos*. Please note:



Martin: Curly, do you realize that an *aion* is different from a *kosmos*?

Curly: Why, *soiten-ly!*

A *kosmos* is a world, an *aion* is a duration of time. Is a world different from a duration of time? I hope so. Do I look at my watch to find a world? Do I buy a globe to discern the time? God employs different words on purpose, to reveal different truths. Why didn't you respect God's vocabulary?

Why didn't you put "world" for *kosmos* and "eon" for *aion*, then keep it that way throughout? Why didn't you give God credit for knowing what He wanted to say? Why did you think you could help God by interpreting for Him rather than simply translating His words? Had

“Does one mistake get a person damned for eternity?”

you simply translated, we could have distinguished God's thoughts without a ten-pound reference tool. Instead, you cross-wired the Divine vocabulary and short-circuited our understanding.

Why do I broach this here? Because of the confusing ways you translate *aion* and *aionion* elsewhere. Maybe the difference here isn't so huge. Lack of forgiveness in this or that world still doesn't allow for eternal damnation. But elsewhere, where you put "forever" (instead of "eon") for *aion* and "eternal" or "everlasting" (instead of "eonian") for *aionion*, you darken God's counsels for humanity.

Mark 3:29, for instance. Here, you translate:

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." A dandy, that. Is God so irrational? Does one mistake get a person damned for eternity? Not only did you translate *aionion* "eternal" (which it cannot be), you failed to translate *aion* at all in the previous clause. Where the Greek has "no forgiveness for the eon," you ignore *aion* completely and say, "hath never forgiveness." Tell me:

How does “no forgiveness for the eon” suddenly become “never”? What exactly were you men drinking besides tea?

If you thought “world” was such a good translation for *aion* in Matthew 12:32, why didn’t you use it here? Why not say: “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath no forgiveness for the world, but is in danger of worldly damnation”? That would be senseless, yes. But at least it would be consistent. Yet you lacked the nerve even for foolish consistency. Emerson could commend you—maybe. Bible students cannot.

Fiendish and impossible doctrines seep from your blunders. The false doctrine of eternal torment spreads like gangrene, because of you. People read “everlasting punishment” in Matthew 25:46, because of you. Millions writhe over the fate of loved ones, because of you. The world laughs at God, because of you. Yet you sipped your evil beverages. And you hypothesized your way through the “translation” process, spurning all method.

To close this section: The immature reasoning that concludes, “those who are never forgiven will never be saved,” is a good example of why immature reasoners shouldn’t teach Scripture. What emotional havoc they have wreaked on unsuspecting saints! As for those who use these verses to “prove” that Jesus does not save His people from their sins, and that God isn’t the Savior of all humans, they have committed the worst crime of all by pitting one passage of God’s Word against another, to make God out a liar.

Judgment

Of course there is judgment ahead. I know about the Tribulation. I know about the great white throne. I know about the lake of fire. But God’s judgment is measured, temporary, and remedial. It is not rabid, eternal, and vengeful. God’s judgment benefits the judged—it doesn’t satisfy some

bend of His for torture. God is not crazy. I know this is breakthrough revelation. If you think this is the only age of grace, you’re mistaken. We will not see the riches of grace until the eons to come (Ephesians 2:7).

Is this how it all ends?

How utterly sad to suppose that, after God sacrificed His beloved Son on a Roman stake—after the whips, the thorns and the holy spittle bathed His precious body—the universe winds up worse after the coming of Christ than before it. Before it, no one could commit “the unforgivable sin.” Before it, no one could “reject a Savior.” After it, it’s “accept Him or burn.” And few, so very few, will make the “right decision.”

After God gave over His Beloved to the most nightmarish death imaginable, we are asked to believe that the universe ends up splattered and pock-marked, fouled with eternal cauldrons of pain, death, and sin. If Christ hadn’t come, I could entertain the thought. Entertaining it now is an act of blasphemy.

It doesn’t amaze me so much that Jesus Christ suffered the shame of Calvary to save murderers, robbers, and adulterers. What shocks me the most is that He suffered the shame of Calvary to save religious people, to save Christians, to save the robed and the pious who claim that His sacrifice on that hill was only good enough to save the wise and the “reverent,” such as themselves. I worship God for doing that. Someday, they will too.

(... to be continued ...)

Thank you, everyone, for reading what I write. Thank you for loving me and being with me these many years. I love you, too, and I will not forsake you. —*Martin*

