

In my previous post I discussed one of the passages of the New Testament that has traditionally been used to support the idea of Purgatory, the place that most of the “saved” go after death to be purged of their sins (Matt 5:26 “you won’t get out of there until you have paid the last penny”). In my judgment this passage is not talking about what happens in the afterlife, even though it has been read that way. With another passage, the matter is not quite so clear.

In a famous passage, again in Matthew, Jesus talks about the “unforgiveable sin”:  
“Therefore I tell you every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven; and whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven, either in this age or the ages to come.”

As you might imagine, over the Christian centuries there have been numerous interpretations of what that \*one\* sin was, especially by concerned believers who were worried to death that they had already committed it and so are destined to hell. I’ve heard all sorts of suggestions, some of them rather bizarre (It’s premarital sex! It’s masturbation!), and others not bizarre but equally scary (It’s any sin committed by a Christian after they have been filled with the Holy Spirit!).

As with most passages of the New Testament, the surest way to provide an interpretation of what Jesus is talking about is ...

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