



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

September 2019

## FROM US TO YOU

Are you afraid of the future and wondering why the whole world has gotten so crazy these days? There never used to be so much crime or as many natural disasters as there are today. Some of you may remember the power failure that covered most of the northeastern part of the United States in 1965. Much of New York State was affected, as well as many other states. Yet we didn't hear anything in the media about looting or widespread break-ins. The whole thing went very smoothly and only lasted about thirteen hours. The moon was so bright that it provided light to those who needed it. It was as if the Lord was saying, "I'm still here watching over you. Everything will be alright!"

However, the New York City blackout of 1977 was very different. There was major looting all over the city. Television showed looters carrying out major appliances from the stores they had broken into. They laughed at the cameras. One of them stated, "This is like Christmas!" How things changed in just a few years! Back in the 1950's and '60's there wasn't such animosity toward elected officials. People seemed more polite and had greater respect for the police. The Bible tells us why society has changed. It's because Satan's time of ruling the earth (that he finagled away from Adam) is nearly up. "Therefore... woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (Rev. 12:12 NIV). "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [humans], but against the [spiritual] rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**" (Ephesians 6:12 NIV). Therefore, the devil and his demons are stirring up people's emotions to a fever pitch!

The good news is that God only gave Adam control of this world for a limited period of time. So Satan doesn't have much time left! The demons know it. One day when Jesus arrived at Gadarenes, "...two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met Him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 'What do you want with us, Son of God?' they shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us **before the appointed time?**'" (Matthew 8:28-29 NIV). They knew that when their time of control was up, they would be cast into Hell (Matthew 25:41, 22:13) and ultimately, "...thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10 NIV).

The "beast" refers to the coming Antichrist who will seek to rule the world in Satan's power. The "false prophet" refers to a man who will help the Antichrist. The false prophet will have amazing magical power to deceive people (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). And he will promote a false religion. Together they will rule most of the earth and persecute anyone who will not yield to them. They will do their evil (Revelation 13:1-18) just a short time before Christ returns to earth (Revelation 19:11-16) to reclaim God's kingdom. But more good news is that before things get to that state, the Rapture of the Church will come first (1 Corinthians 15:50-55). Jesus will return in the clouds for His beloved flock. His feet will not touch the earth until Satan's

time of rule is up. But He will come for His Own people, to take us to a place of safety until the devil's cup of iniquity is full.

"For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NIV). However, lukewarm Christians (Revelation 3:16-19) will not be among those who go up in the Rapture. For Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:21-23 NIV).



"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!' Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to

those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But He replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour'" (Matthew 25:1-13 NIV). And, "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15 NIV).

The oil Jesus was talking about is the Holy Spirit. Let the worldly folk laugh at our faith. They laughed at Noah too. Then the flood came. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (Matthew 24:37-42 NIV).

Blessings to those who trust in Christ, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

# The Unpardonable Sin

By Anne Kaestner

Many years ago a prison inmate wrote to us. He had a question about the “unpardonable Sin.” Many people have been confused about this subject over the years. So I would like to explain it. Most of you know that Jesus had a healing ministry (Matthew 4:23-24) and would cast evil spirits out of people who were demon possessed (Matthew 8:16). This made the religious leaders of His day jealous and very angry. They hated Jesus because of His popularity with the people. (Some things never change. The same devil exists today.) They resented Jesus because He exposed their hypocrisy (Luke 20:46-47 and Mathew 6:5, 16). He knew they were filled with hatred against Him, even to the point of looking for a way to kill Him (Matthew 26:3-4). During a vicious verbal attack by the Pharisees one day, they insinuated that the Lord was born out of wedlock, and therefore, a bastard. They implied that Jesus was born in sin and bragged that they were more godly because they were descendants of Abraham, and therefore sons of God.

Knowing what hypocrites they were, Jesus told them, “*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44 NIV). The religious leaders were also lawyers. However, they couldn’t deny the miracles of Christ, blind eyes opening (Matthew 9:28-30), the lame were being healed (Matthew 15:30), demons being cast out of people (Matthew 8:28-32). Therefore, “*...teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons He is driving out demons’*” (Mark 3:22 NIV). In other words, they were claiming that Jesus received His powers and miracles from the devil (Luke 11:15 and Matthew 10:25)! In reality Jesus left all His own power and glory behind in Heaven when He left His Father and entered into this world (see John 17:5). If He still had His own power, everyone would have been afraid of Him. Even His own disciples were terrified when He temporarily took it back briefly, during the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-7). So the miracles that Jesus performed were through the Holy Spirit!

In fact, one day, when Jesus was healing people, the crowd was all around Him. “*And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch His clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering*” (Mark 5:25-29 NIV). Jesus had not even known about her. It was the Holy Spirit upon Him, a separate and distinct part of the Holy Trinity (see Matthew 3:16), who healed her because He saw the faith she had in Christ.

“*At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched My clothes?’ ‘You see the people crowding against you,’ His disciples answered, ‘and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched Me?’*” But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at His feet and, trembling with fear, told Him the whole truth. He said to her, “*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering*” (Mark 5:30-34 NIV).

Therefore, when the religious leaders said that Jesus performed His miracles under the power of the devil, they were in fact, blaspheming the Holy Spirit. “*So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: ‘How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come’*” (Mark 3:23-26 NIV). It is the devil, Satan, who is the perpetrator of all disease and suffering in this world. He likes making people miserable because he hates mankind. That’s because God loves us so much that He “*...gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16 KJV). Jesus suffered horrendous agony to pay for the sins of those who will accept Him, repent of their sin to God (Matthew 6:9-14), and ask for His forgiveness. And we need to change directions and, with the help of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), sin no more (John 8:10-11).

Therefore, Jesus told the men who had accused Him, “*...all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin*” (Mark 3:28-29 NIV). That’s called “the unpardonable sin.” They of all people, should have known whom Jesus was. They were the scribes and scholars of God’s Word. And there was Jesus in the flesh before them (John 1:1-14). He fulfilled all the prophecy about Himself. He was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), through a Jewish virgin (Isaiah 7:14). He had a ministry of miracles (Isaiah 35:1-6), and was preceded by a forerunner (Isaiah 40:1-3), John the Baptist. Isaiah 53:1-4 says the Lord would be rejected of men and the Bible says that God has a Son (Proverbs 30:4).

However, the hatred many religious leaders had toward Christ was so strong, and their hearts were so hard, that even the Son of God with all His miracles, could not melt them. They knew better, but their jealousy was so venomous that it was impossible to ever reach them with salvation. Because, no matter what, even when Jesus rose people from the dead, they would not acquiesce to Him. They had

rejected their only hope of salvation. And they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit, the gentle Spirit of God who reaches the hearts of people and turns them toward Christ. Jesus knew that it would be a permanent condition. They would never repent. It’s not that God had rejected them (2 Peter 3:9). They had rejected Him! And so there was no way that God could ever penetrate such stony hearts and lead them to repentance!

The Apostle Peter wrote about this terrible sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit in 2 Peter 2:10-22. He was speaking of latter day preachers of the Gospel! They claim to be Christians themselves (see Matthew 7:22-23), and some of them may have been Born Again at one time, but fell away from the fold (Galatians 5:4, 2 Peter 3:17, and 1 Timothy 6:10). Paul gave an example of this when he said “*Alexander the metal-worker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message*” (2 Timothy 4:14-15 NIV). Alexander was an educated, religious Jew (Acts 19:33-34), so he should have known better!

Alexander had once been a part of the church, because Paul wrote to Timothy saying, “*...I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some*



have rejected these and so have **shipwrecked their faith**. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to **blaspheme**" (1 Timothy 1:18-20 NIV). Paul made a similar statement about a member of the church in Corinth who had contaminated the faith of the other believers there and was leading them into sin. He said "*hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 5:5 NIV). What was Alexander's sin? It was blasphemy! Paul's work, and his miracles were done through the Holy Spirit. Alexander could not shipwreck a faith that he never had. So we know that at one time, he did have faith in Christ as his Savior. But, despite all that he knew about the Gospel, he rejected the ways of God!

This sin is so bad because it is responsible for sending so many people to Hell! The false prophet who comes in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15) is a deceiver who poses as a servant of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Did Paul pray for Alexander to return to the fold? It would depend on whether or not Alexander's attitude had gone beyond the point of no return. Paul's statement about him in 1 Timothy 1:20 leaves open the possibility that there was one last opportunity for Alexander to repent before it was too late. That's what Paul may have been referring to when he spoke of turning Alexander over to Satan. I believe Paul meant that he was in favor of Alexander being put to death in the hope that knowing, that he would die, Alexander would repent of his sin and turn back to God.

Paul was also concerned that "...a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Corinthians 5:6 KJV). For the false prophets, like Alexander, were leading new believers in Christ back into sin (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)! That's why Paul wanted Alexander out of the way so that he would not be able to cause such vulnerable infants in Christ to backslide from the fold and lose their salvation. For new believers are like newborn babies to God (1 Peter 2:2). Jesus was referring to such a thing when He said, "...if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!" (Matthew 18:6-7 NIV) For Jesus had said, "If anyone does not **remain in Me**, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, **thrown into the fire and burned**" (John 15:6 NIV).

The Apostle Peter had been referring to men like Alexander, when he stated, "...**have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness**" (2 Peter 2:15 NIV). Also, see Matthew 7:13-15). I wrote about Balaam in a previous newsletter article, entitled "Cain, Balaam, and Korah." He was supposed to be God's representative to Balak, King of Moab. But Balaam was more interested in pleasing Balak, a pagan king, and receiving Balak's gifts, than in pleasing God. Consequently, Balaam helped Balak lead Israel into sin (Numbers 22:1 thru 25:5). Nevertheless, for Alexander, there was still a sliver of hope he would repent. However, Peter also discussed men who would go even deeper into sin than Alexander. Their hearts would become so hardened to the Word of God that they would be beyond all hope of redemption, the unpardonable sin. He was discussing latter day false prophets who would know the Gospel, for they have been exposed to the Light of Christ. Nevertheless, they reject the Truth (John 14:6). Like the religious leaders in the days of Christ, they deliberately refuse to accept the ways of God, and try to twist scripture around in order to attack the true church! The Pharisees even accused Jesus of being a sinner because He healed someone on the Sabbath day (Luke 13:14 and

John 5:10). They used the Bible to their own advantage, even taking a self-righteous attitude toward God's Son, by saying of Him, "...*Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners'*" (Luke 7:34 NIV).

Jude also wrote about this unpardonable sin. Some believe that the writer of the book of Jude was really Judas, the half-brother of Jesus Christ spoken of in Matthew 13:55. He later accepted the Lord (see Acts 1:14), after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Almost the entire book of Jude is about this sin of religious hypocrisy! The thing that makes these blasphemers of the Holy Spirit so dangerous is that they offer Christians a false sense of security by telling them that they can sin against God with impunity! Jude warned the church, saying, "...*certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a **license for immorality** and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord*" (Jude 1:4 NIV). Jude did not mean that they deny that Jesus Christ walked the earth. What many of them deny is that He was the Son of God. Yet there are others who will even call Jesus their Lord (Matthew 7:21-23 and Luke 6:46), but it is just lip service (Mark 7:6-7) for they do not obey the commandments of God (Matthew 5:17-18).

In like manner, the writer of Hebrews wrote about these individuals when he said, "*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to*

*be brought back to repentance, because to their loss*

*they are crucifying the Son of God all over*

*again and subjecting Him to public disgrace*"

(Hebrews 6:4-6 NIV). It means that those

who bring the greatest shame on Christ are not

the pagans who don't know any better, but

those who claim to love Him, and do evil in

His name. They have previously repented of

their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior, but

they refuse to live by His Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25).

In fact, they blaspheme and mock the Holy Spirit

who works through the lives of those who truly

do love and serve Jesus Christ!

I once had a disagreement with a preacher who insisted that once a person is saved, they can never lose their salvation. He quoted the scripture to me that says, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV). That's true. However, note the wording, "...if anyone is **in Christ...**" As I mentioned previously, Jesus said, "**Remain in Me**, and I will remain in you..." (John 15:4 NIV) and, He said, "If anyone does not **remain in Me**, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, **thrown into the fire and burned**" (John 15:6 NIV). Although God will not leave us if we love and serve Him, we can still leave Him, and lose our salvation! The Apostle Paul was worried that he could lose his own salvation! Speaking of the Olympics, he wrote, "*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize*" (1 Corinthians 9:25-27 NIV).

Paul wrote of these last days, "*Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected*" (2 Timothy 3:8 NIV). Jannes and Jambres were the magicians in Pharaoh's court who were able to copy some of the miracles God performed through Moses. False prophets these days can

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have demons in them that also try to imitate the works of God! This is what I meant when I said they mock the Holy Spirit. Jesus alluded to this when He said, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:22-23 NIV). Satan is the one who rules over the demons.

Some of these people may have committed the unpardonable sin if their blasphemy went too far! Saul, the first king of Israel, was once a man of God. The Bible says, “When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying” (1 Samuel 10:10 NIV). Then, when Saul turned toward sin, and stopped living for God, “...the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him” (1 Samuel 16:14 NIV). No longer was Saul under God’s protection. And God can allow an evil spirit to enter the heart of anyone who prefers to live in sin. Some think that God would never send an evil spirit to a person. However, 1 Kings 22:19-23 gives an example of the Lord sending an evil spirit to deceive a king!

As Paul prophesied in 2 Timothy 3:8 and Jesus prophesied in Matthew 7:22-23, demon possessed false prophets can deceive many people with their counterfeit miracles. I’ve seen false prophets pray over someone and the person falls backward, as if through the power of the Holy Spirit. But I can tell it is phony! How did I know? Jesus said, “By their fruit you will recognize them...” (Matthew 7:16 NIV). He never said, “By their gifts.” The fruit is explained in Galatians 5:19-25. Also, many ministers may disagree on minor matters of doctrine. However, if they preach anything that is diametrically in opposition to the Word of God, that should set up a red flag in your mind.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul wrote, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:6-8 NIV). So read the Bible for yourself from cover to cover. Don’t depend on denominational Bible studies that are taken out of context and written to promote a particular doctrine. Read the Bible consecutively!

Many worry that they have committed the unpardonable sin. But if you are one of them, don’t worry, because if you had, you wouldn’t want to come to Christ in repentance. Preachers who have committed the unpardonable sin are the worst and most dangerous of the false prophets! That’s because they are usually controlled with demon spirits, like the false prophets in the days of Christ. “For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end

than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud’” (2 Peter 2:18-22 NIV).

God will forgive us when we sin against Him, if we are sincere in our repentance Him (Luke 18:10-14). In the testimony section of our website, there’s a number of [testimonies](#) of current or former prison inmates who came to Christ after committing terrible sin. However, they repented of their sins and came to Christ. God will forgive anyone of sin, if the person comes to him in contrition and sincere repentance (Psalm 51:17). But after sin has been committed, even by a Christian, it draws the person further away from God and the Light of Christ. So it is more difficult for a person to see that they have committed sin. For, in the case of severe sin, they have moved away from the “straight and narrow” (Matthew 7:13-14) and into the darkness of Satan’s domain.

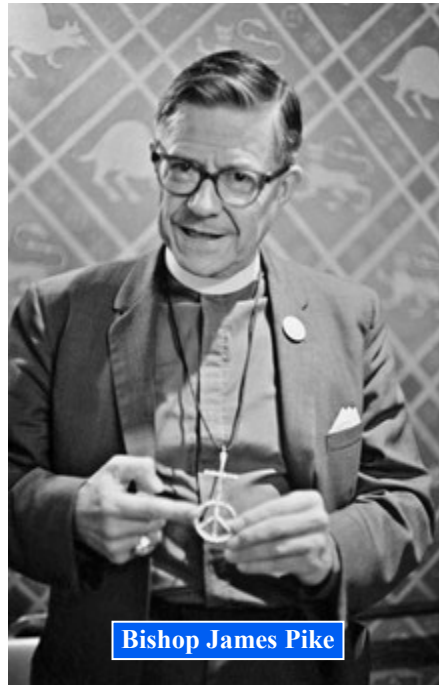
Therefore, it is hard for a person to repent and come back to Christ, for sin sets up a barrier between God and us (Isaiah 59:2).

That’s why those who preach and teach that Christians can embrace the world, have become enemies of God (see James 4:4), even though they may claim to love Christ. Jesus indicated that the unpardonable sin is the sin that goes beyond the point of no return in the heart of a person who once knew God. Or in the case of the Pharisees, had been exposed to the truth of His written word and turned their back on it. For when the person deliberately chooses to reject God’s Word and be brought back to repentance, they become valuable weapons in the hands of Satan.

Bishop James Pike was an example of someone who most likely committed the unpardonable sin. Pike was born in Oklahoma City on February 14, 1913. His father died when he was two, and his mother remarried. As a young man Pike was a Roman Catholic and considered the priesthood. But later decided he was an agnostic. Pike was a very educated man and attended many prestigious universities. Yet, he never seemed

quite satisfied with his life. Despite this, he eventually became an Episcopalian bishop in California in 1958. However, he began to reject central doctrines of the Bible, such as the virgin birth to Jesus, the existence of hell, and the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless, his church became popular. His sermons focused on social issues like LGBT rights and racial policies.

Pike had two failed marriages when he began an affair with his secretary, Maren Bergrud, who became upset with their relationship and committed suicide. Then Pike became interested in the occult, especially when his son, Jimmy, who was addicted to LSD, committed suicide. Then Pike started experiencing strange demonic activity around his home, which he concluded was his dead son sending him messages. Like King Saul (see 1 Samuel 28:3-25 and 1 Chronicles 10:13-14), he turned from God, and hired a medium, even going so far as to have a televised séance to contact his son. He married his third wife, Diane, in 1968, with whom he traveled to Israel on a quest to disprove the Bible. Ultimately, their car broke down in the Judean desert. They only had two cans of soda with them and no water. When Pike couldn’t walk any further, Diane went on alone. Three days later, Pike’s body was found dead.



Bishop James Pike