

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

²² Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and could not speak, was brought to Jesus. He (Jesus) healed the man so that he could both speak and see. ²³ The crowd was amazed and asked, “Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?” ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, “No wonder He can cast out demons. He gets His power from Satan, the prince of demons.” ²⁵ Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. ²⁶ And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. ²⁷ And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said. ²⁸ But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. ²⁹ For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house. ³⁰ Anyone who is not with Me opposes Me, and anyone who is not working with Me is actually working against Me. ³¹ Every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.” Matthew 12:22-32 (NLT)

One day, a demon-possessed man, who was both blind and unable to talk, was brought to Jesus (see Matthew 12:22). Demons – unclean spirits – sometimes inflict physical and mental sickness (e.g., see 1 Samuel 16:14-15, 23; Mark 5:1-5, 8; Luke 9:37-43). As so many times before, Jesus healed the demon-possessed man so that he could both speak and see (Matthew 12:22; e.g. see also Matthew 9:32-34; Mark 1:23; Mark 3:10-12; Luke 11:14). The crowds were amazed and exclaimed, “Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?” (Matthew 12:23; e.g., see also Matthew 1:1, 16-17; Matthew 9:27; Luke 11:15; John 4:29).

During Jesus’ public ministry on earth, He performed many miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him (e.g., see Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18-19; John 3:34; Acts 2:22; Acts 10:36-43). The living God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power (e.g., see Matthew 3:16; John 1:32-33; Acts 10:38; Romans 1:3-4). Then, Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were sick and oppressed by the devil for the living God was with Him (e.g., see Matthew 4:23-25; Matthew 12:15, 18; Luke 6:19; John 3:2; Acts 10:38). Jesus is the only begotten Son of the living God, and He came from the living God (e.g., see Daniel 6:25-27; Matthew 16:16; John 1:14, 18; John 3:16; John 20:31; Acts 17:24). Importantly, Jesus was full of God’s grace, glory, and truth (e.g., see John 1:14, 17) because the fullness of God dwelled within Jesus (e.g., see Colossians 1:15, 19; Colossians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:3-4).

Out of Jesus' fullness, we have all received one gracious blessing after another (see John 1:16).

However, when some Pharisees and others heard about Jesus' miraculous healing of the demon-possessed man, they said, "He can cast out demons because He is Satan, king of devils" (Matthew 12:24, TLB; see also Luke 11:15-16). Sadly, these Pharisees and some others believed that Jesus was in alliance with Satan and attributed Jesus' power to Satan's power at work in Him, not God's power (Matthew 12:24; see also Mark 3:22; Luke 11:18).

Jesus knew these Pharisees' thoughts and replied,

25 "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." Matthew 12:25-32 (NIV2011)

As God in human flesh (incarnate) (e.g., see John 1:1, 18), Jesus told the listening crowd that a divided kingdom will end in ruin because a city or home divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:25; see also Mark 3:24-25; Luke 11:17). Jesus knew that if Satan is casting out Satan, he is fighting himself and destroying his own kingdom (Matthew 12:26; see also Mark 3:26). Sadly, some of the Pharisees and other Jews believed that Jesus was healing and curing people of demons and other unclean spirits by invoking the powers of Satan (Matthew 12:24, 27; e.g., see also Matthew 9:34; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-16, 18-19; John 8:48-52; John 10:19-21). However, Jesus healed and cured many people by the power of the Spirit of God (see Matthew 12:28). Satan comes to kill, steal, and destroy but Jesus has come to give everyone the Spirit of life through faith in Him (e.g., see John 1:4; John 3:15-16; John 10:10; John 20:31). The fact that Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man was proof that He was stronger than Satan was and that Satan could not stop Him (Matthew 12:29; see also Mark 1:7; Luke 11:21-22; John 16:33). The fullness of God's power lived inside Jesus, and the powers of darkness could not overcome Jesus (e.g., see Luke 4:31-36; Luke 11:20; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossian 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:22). Jesus introduced God's Kingdom and rescued people from Satan's power through faith in Him (see Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13). Jesus entered Satan's kingdom, overcame his power, and claimed

healing and deliverance for this demon-possessed man. Jesus' victory was through the Spirit of God and not in the power of the evil one (see Luke 11:20). There is truly power in Jesus! As faithful followers of Jesus, believers share this same power of Jesus to defeat evil (see Colossians 2:20).

Then, Jesus informed the listening crowd, **“Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man (Jesus) will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come”** (Matthew 12:31-32, ESV; see also Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10). Teaching about the unpardonable sin stems from Jesus' teaching recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (see Matthew 12:31, Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10). Jesus' teaching brings a severe warning about the deep danger of attributing the grace and Spirit of God to an act of Satan. In Jesus and His miraculous powers, the true and living God and His Spirit were present and active (e.g., see Luke 4:18-19; John 3:34; Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38; Romans 1:4). To reject Jesus' ministry was to reject God and so to reject God's way forgiveness. The unpardonable sin means a blatant hostility and persistent rejection of God's divine presence with Jesus and His offer of new life and salvation by the Spirit of grace (see Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-29; 1 John 5:16-21). In this sin, the Spirit of grace is outraged, and there is no further access to forgiveness. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus, convicts everyone of sin, and draws people to God (see John 15:26; John 16:7-11). Those who deliberately reject the living God and the Holy Spirit's call to faith and obedience to Jesus have no hope for forgiveness! The rejection of Holy Spirit's call to faith and obedience to Jesus indicates a deliberate and irreversible hardness of heart and subjection to God's wrath (e.g., John 3:3-8, 15-18, 36).

The most important gift Jesus gives all faithful believers is the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:1-4), and Jesus promised to give all believers the Holy Spirit to those who trust and obey Him (John 8:30-31; John 14:15, 21, 23; John 15:9-10; Titus 3:5; 1 John 2:3-5; 1 John 5:3; Revelation 12:17; Revelation 14:12). The Holy Spirit brings life now and for eternity (see John 3:36; John 7:38-39; John 20:31; Acts 16:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4; 1 John 5:1). Even more, the Holy Spirit gives believers God's guidance, power, and the seal of salvation (e.g., see Romans 8:26-27; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit brings good gift from God that washes away our sins and gives us a new heart through faith in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection (e.g., see Luke 11:13; John 4:10; Acts 2:38-40; Hebrews 10:10, 22; 1 Peter 2:24). Moreover, the Holy Spirit also gives believers spiritual gifts (e.g., see Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-10; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

However, if a person deliberately continues sinning after receiving the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins (see Hebrews 6:4-8; Hebrews 10:26-29). There is only the terrible

expectation of God's eternal judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies (see Hebrews 10:27, 29). It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (see Luke 12:5; Hebrews 10:31). Jesus told the listening crowd that people of Nineveh repented and turned from evil when the Prophet Jonah proclaimed God's grace and love to them (see Jonah 3:4-5, 8-10; Jonah 4:2; Matthew 12:41). Jesus said that He was greater than the Prophet Jonah was as He possessed the fullness of God, and yet the people refused to repent and believe in Him (Matthew 12:41; see also Mark 1:14-15; Luke 11:29-30, 32).

Faithful believers of Jesus are God's children, and they do not make a practice of sinning for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them (see 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:1, 18). Anyone person who continually practices sin proves that he belongs to Satan (see 1 John 3:7-10). God says many times throughout the Holy Scriptures that He wants everyone wholeheartedly love and obey Him (e.g., see 1 Samuel 15:22, 23; Psalm 40:6-8; Psalm 51:16-19; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 9:13). The Holy Scriptures repeatedly teaches that God's good blesses come to those who hear and obey God's righteous ways (e.g., see Proverbs 8:32; Luke 6:47; John 14:21; James 1:22-25). We reject God and grieve the Holy Spirit when we live in sin and disobedience to God's righteous ways of living (e.g., see Isaiah 63:7-14; Ephesians 4:1-6, 20-24, 30; 1 John 1:5-10). The Holy Spirit is a Person who is sensitive and is hurt by the immoral behavior of those in whose hearts He lives through faith in Jesus (see Isaiah 63:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 11, 17, 19-20; Ephesians 2:21-22).

God graciously forgives all sins, blasphemies, and slanders if one humbly confesses and repents of one's sins and returns to the living God and His righteous ways of living (e.g., see Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13-14; 1 John 1:7, 9). Whoever genuinely repents and seeks God's grace found in Jesus will find God's forgiveness and mercy (see 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1-2). However, God does not forgive those who continual sin and reject God's gracious forgiveness and mercy found by faith in His Son, Jesus (see Mark 3:28-30). Such rejections of the Holy Spirit is crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace (see Hebrews 6:6).

References

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