

The heart of man plans
his way, but the Lord
establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16:9 ESV



Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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The Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit: Matthew 12.31-32

“Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come” (see Matthew 12.22-32; Mark 3.21-30).

When Jesus cast out a demon, restoring sight and speech to one who had been blind and mute, the people (as a whole) were amazed and said, Is not this the Son of David (Messiah)? But *when the Pharisees heard* (the peoples reaction) they said He cast out demons by Beelzebub, prince of demons. *Knowing their thoughts* Jesus presented three arguments which erased all excuse for such a charge. (1) Through wicked, Satan is no fool; and this would pit Satan against Satan. (2) Without affirming or denying the validity of their claims, He asked “By whom do your children cast them out? (Why charge me with Satanic power, when lesser works of exorcist Jews are thought to show up the power of God?) Then, picking up the “Son of David” theme, (3) “But if I *by the Spirit of God* cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.” The Lord’s power over Satan was clearly demonstrated, yet they rejected the Messiah who could give them victory. *At this point He issued His solemn warning regarding blasphemy.*

There were three classes of people in His presence. (1) Those who accepted His works at face value and leaned toward a logical conclusion — Messiah! (2) Mark records some friends saying “He is beside himself” (alluding to His zealous activities). These were foolish charges, made in ignorance or through lack of a fully developed faith. (3) The Pharisees, who could deny neither His works nor His logic, but for wicked and malicious purposes railed against Him. Note, their slander was prompted through envy, by the praise of others; and Jesus knew their thoughts. Could we, envious of God’s work in others, assign that work to Satan?

Robertson and McGarvey think these Pharisees *committed* blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in making their “Beelzebub” charges. McKnight thinks they were being *warned* that following the resurrection (the ultimate confirmation by the Spirit, Romans 1.5) such charges could not be forgiven. Foy E. Wallace Jr., thinks the distinction in blasphemy against Jesus and the Spirit relates to *time*. He broadens blasphemy against the Spirit to include *repudiating the Spirit’s testimony in the gospel age*. Compare this view with Hebrews 6.4-8; 10.26-29; 1 John 5.16. (See *Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit*, F.E.W. Publications, 1967).

Jesus is not making a distinction in God the Son and God the Spirit (i.e., you may blaspheme one but not the other). The contrast is between “Son of Man” *in His earthly work*, which some did not understand and in ignorance and unbelief might blaspheme; and in that which some *perceived to be God*, but which, for wicked purpose, they deliberately and maliciously defamed. In many ways this is the difference in sin done “unwittingly” and that done “with high hand” (Numbers 15.22-31). Paul said he was before “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Timothy 1.13). What he did was no less sin. It was called blasphemy, but it was obviously different from “eternal sin.”

Alford says it is not a particular species of sin which is here condemned, but a definite act of showing *willful determined opposition* to the present power. Meyer says the impossibility of forgiveness is grounded in the sinner’s state of heart, which has become extremely hostile toward God. When someone asks, fearfully and concerned, if they may have committed a sin against the Holy Spirit, I usually tell them their very concern indicates they have *not*. The act (defamation by verbal declaration) must not be lightly dismissed, but it is more that unseemly words. The context couples this with the attitude or source of the sin. In Matthew’s account Jesus continues His warning by saying, “How can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (verses 33-37).

Only an “honest and good” heart can bring one to the Lord (Luke 8.11f). Having come, we must serve Him with the heart, mind and spirit (Romans 1.9; 2.29; 7.25). We will miss the mark at times, and all sin is against God (Luke 15.21), but God forgives the confessing penitent heart (Hebrews 4.12-16). *This is accepting and abiding in God’s Spirit*. But there is a “flip side.” Rejection and blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, although bound to specific conduct in the example set before us, has a wide range of application. *It is a fatal “heart disease,”* to which those with a proud and stubborn heart are most subject. Sinful hearts may resist the work of the Spirit for a time (Acts 7.21), and yet be forgiven (verse 60). But when one, out of a wicked and rebellious heart, assigns the work of God to Satan, knowingly and deliberately rejects every legitimate offer of mercy; treats evil as good, and good as evil — that one separates himself from all hope of forgiveness. He has sinned the “eternal sin” and sealed his destiny in hell.

Written by; Robert F. Turner

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