

“THINK ON THESE

Philippians 4:8

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Micky Galloway

“Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven” (Matt. 12:31). In Mark’s account we read, *“But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”* (Mk. 3:29). What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and why is it an unpardonable sin?

Definition: The word blasphemy (blasphemia) means *“Impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty”* (*Thayer*). In this context, it denotes an attitude of defiant irreverence. The idea of hurt or injury is always involved in blasphemy; the speaker intends to do harm or speak evil of the one he is blaspheming. To speak against any of the revealed attributes of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme. The one who speaks irreverently of God’s word is certainly speaking blasphemy. *“To rail upon, reject, refuse, misrepresent, and pervert the words or works of the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit”* (*H. Leo Boles, The Holy Spirit*, p. 155).

Blasphemy is illustrated many times during Israel’s history. David’s sin with Bathsheba gave occasion to the Lord’s enemies to blaspheme His name (2 Sam. 12:14). Israel blasphemed Jehovah (Isa. 65:7). Sennacherib, King of Assyria, defied Jehovah and blasphemed the God of Israel (2 Kgs. 19:6-22).

The New Testament contains numerous warnings against the sin of blasphemy. We must not give occasion for others to blaspheme. Paul warned the Romans regarding the sinful inconsistencies of the Jews, *“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written”* (Rom. 2:24). Paul commanded the older women to teach the younger women *“(to be) sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Tit. 2:5; cp. 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 26:11).

Context: Matthew’s account of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit includes verses 24 through 32 of chapter 12. Mark’s account includes verses 22 through 29 of chapter 3. Both accounts tell about Jesus demonstrating His divinity by healing a man who was demon-possessed. The Pharisees (certain scribes who had come from Jerusalem to Galilee—Mark 3:22) had attributed His power to Beelzebub, *“the prince of the demons.”* Jesus answered this charge by convicting them of their inconsistency. If *“Satan cast out Satan”* or, as stated by Mark, if *“Satan hath risen up against himself, and is divided,”* he cannot stand. Furthermore, if it was true that their sons cast out demons (a claim Jesus did not grant), and only Beelzebub could cast out demons, then it would follow that their sons also exercised diabolical power. Their argument was to deny that Jesus was able to cast out demons by the *“Spirit of God”* (*“finger of God”*, Lk. 11:20). Indeed, it was by God’s power that Jesus had entered into the strong man’s (Satan’s) house and plundered his goods.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, these scribes had willfully and deliberately assigned to diabolical origins what Jesus was actually doing. Then Mark sounded the warning, *“But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”* (*“eternal damnation”*, Mk. 3:29, KJV). Matthew wrote, *“Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven”* (Matt. 12:31).

Why Is Blasphemy A Sin That Cannot Be Forgiven?

Jesus made it very clear that every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven. *“And 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”* (Matt. 12:32). To speak against Jesus in the flesh was a terrible thing, but it was an evil that could be forgiven. Many, through ignorance or prejudice, spoke against Jesus, yet repented of their evil and received forgiveness. Peter denied the Lord in His hour of trial (Mk. 14:66-72) and repented. He received forgiveness, was restored, and later was able to strengthen others (cf. Lk. 22:31-32). Paul was *“before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,”* and thought of himself as chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13-15). He therefore marveled at the mercy and forgiveness the Lord extended to him.

Yet, Jesus said that the person who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit places himself beyond the reach of forgiveness.

*“There could be no reason why speaking against the Christ should be less fatal than speaking against the Holy Spirit, or that speaking against the Holy Spirit, should be more mortal than speaking against Jesus Christ, except for one thing: the element of time, of dispensation, of the gospel age, and of the Holy Spirit’s testimony. The rejection of Christ during his earthly and personal ministry was not final. But the repudiation of the Holy Spirit in the dispensation of his testimony to ‘reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment’ (Jn. 16:8), would be the final act of rejection. Jesus was speaking of the present with reference to Himself, and of the future as it applied to the Holy Spirit” (Foy Wallace, *The Mission and Medium of The Holy Spirit*, Pg. 110).*

The Holy Spirit is the agent of divine revelation (cf. 2 Sam. 23:2; Jn. 15:26; 16:13; Eph. 6:17; 2 Pet. 1:21). It is through the Spirit-revealed word that we come to know God, our need for redemption through Christ, and what we must do to receive that redemption. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable because it begins with an evil heart that deliberately repudiates the Spirit’s testimony, therefore consciously rejecting the truth that brings salvation. Jesus said this will not be forgiven **“neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.”** That is, it will NEVER be forgiven. One in this condition will never be forgiven because he is unwilling to follow the conditions of pardon. The only sin that God is unwilling to forgive is the sin of which man is unwilling to repent. One can become so calloused, he will not even hear the truth.

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul mentioned blaspheming God’s word in Titus 2:5 and blaspheming the doctrine in 1 Timothy 6:1. There could be no practical distinction between blaspheming the Spirit and blaspheming the Spirit’s word. Apart from the gospel, there is no power to save. **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith”** (Rom. 1:16-17). **“Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts...”** (Heb. 3:7).

A Sin Unto Death

John wrote, **“If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that”** (1 Jn. 5:16).

Unlike the previous texts – Matthew 12:31-32 and Mark 3:29 – in 1 John 5:16, John wrote about a **“brother”** who sins. The context indicates that a **“brother,”** a child of God, may commit sin. The sin under consideration is not a single sin that is unto death, nor a single sin that is not unto death. In this epistle, John spoke much about forgiveness. For example, **“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (1 Jn. 1:6-9).

If indeed the Lord is willing to forgive every sin that a brother confesses (1 Jn. 1:9), but there is a sin that He will not forgive (1 Jn. 5:16-17), then it would follow that the sin the Lord will not forgive, the **“sin unto death,”** is simply any and all sin that the brother will not confess. The brother who sins without restraint, who rebelliously persists, and who is without feelings that lead to repentance; the brother who will not turn away from the habitual practice of sin cannot effectually pray, nor can we pray for him. He, like the scribes of Mark 3, has rejected the path that leads to pardon. It is useless to pray for him. He lives with the possibility of impending doom. His sin is a heart malady that rejects the only cure and closes heaven’s door. However, if my brother sins and manifests a desire to repent, I must pray on his behalf. **“Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working”** (Jas. 5:16).

Conclusion

It is a fearful thing for man to reject God or His truth. All truth that pertains to man’s salvation came through the Holy Spirit. To reject the truth of God is to reject the Holy Spirit’s words, thus to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. We need not fear that we may have, at one time or another, inadvertently committed this sin. It is not a sin that one slips into; rather, it is a sin done in open defiance of God. The Gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). It is the seed of the kingdom (Lk. 8:11). But we must have honest and good hearts to receive it (Lk. 8:15). **“He that hath an ear, let him hear....”** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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