

a study of the *Holy Spirit*

Lesson 9: The Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

1. 📖 "What one word describes the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?" (Mark 3:29). Note: You can use the various responses to show the class how distorted this subject has become.
2. This is another aspect of the Holy Spirit that has suffered from a lack of knowledge and study of the Bible. A number of theories are suggested to explain this unforgivable sin:

- a. 📖 **The rejection of "modern miracles."**

Those who advocate the miraculous gifts continuing will claim that those who question or deny "miracles" are guilty of blasphemy. But such is NOT so! We are urged to test the spirits and warned that Satan will work false signs (1 John 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

- b. 📖 **Past sins that are tragic (i.e. murder, adultery, etc.).**

The thought of them may be hard and we may think them to be "unpardonable" but they are forgiven *if* we have repented. Many biblical texts reveal that any sin, that is confessed and repented of, can be forgiven (1 Timothy 1:12-15; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Acts 2:23; etc.).

- c. 📖 **A rebuff of the Holy Spirit's "inner-striving" with man.**

This suggests the Holy Spirit "works directly" upon one for salvation. However, the sinner that "resists" the Holy Spirit's prodding toward salvation blasphemes God and is guilty of the unforgivable sin. Such an idea is error and will be discussed in a later lesson dealing with errors about the Holy Spirit and conversion (lesson twelve in this series).

- d. 📖 **Calling the Holy Spirit wicked and evil, claiming that the Holy Spirit is from Satan.**

This theory comes from the context of Matthew 12:22-32. The Pharisees were so calloused they would not accept Christ's deity and actually referred to the Holy Spirit as a devil (verse 24). In this view, the sin cannot be committed today. It was limited only to those who talked with Jesus!

- e. 📖 **A total apostasy of believers.**

Reference is made to Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 2 Peter 2:20-22. Those at this point are so hardened they are unwilling to repent by which they would gain forgiveness and restoration to a saved position. Hence the persistence in sin is an "eternal sin."

- f. 📖 **A repeated rejection of God's offer of salvation with bold arrogance which "speaks against" God.**

Note: The last three theories do not teach any error and thus can be believed without sinning. What we must do is study and conclude if one of the last three presents a greater argument for acceptance than the others. But, any of the last three can be held without compromising Scripture.

- 3. 📖 A study of "**blasphemy**" through the Bible helps us understand this subject better.
 - a. 📖 The term is defined to mean **a rejection in word (or deed) of God's rightful sovereignty**. So intense is this rejection that one practices impious and irreverent manners toward Jehovah God.
 - b. 📖 Notice how this behavior is addressed in Scripture.
 - 1) Numbers 15:29-31—the intentional sin is identified as "blasphemy." Thus it refers to a defiant resistance to and disobedience toward God.
 - 2) Isaiah 65:7—Israel was guilty of blasphemy when she rejected God (Jeremiah 6:16b).
 - 3) Revelation 16:9—some will be so hardened with sin that they will never give the Almighty God honor and glory!
 - 4) Titus 2:5—Believers can so live that their influence will be detrimental because they are not under submission to God (1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Titus 1:13).
 - 5) Matthew 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28, 29; Luke 12:10—The Holy Spirit can be greeted with such a bitter rejection that the Scriptures will be discarded and all hope lost!

Note: In each of the above instances the will of God is acknowledged but disregarded. There is a deliberate choice made to reject God. "The sin of blasphemy began in the heart; it grew in purpose; it was completed in a deliberate, overt act. It was the final rejection ... "(Boles, 158).

- 4. This tragic sin does not happen all at once. It is the tragic end of a process resulting in the complete rejection of God and a total insensitivity to the Divine will.

Note the progression:

- a. 📖 **One begins by "GRIEVING"** the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). This occurs when one fails to "put on" the character of the new man in Christ.
- b. 📖 **One continues by "RESISTING"** the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). The Scriptures reveal the necessary changes but one resists the call to repentance.

- c. ☞ **One progresses to "DESPISING"** the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). After repeated invitations are made the sinner treats them with contempt and disdain.
 - d. ☞ **Ultimately he "QUENCHES"** the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). It is here that all sensitivity to God's will is suppressed. The "prick" of the Holy Spirit's Word ceases to have any impact on the conscience of the sinner.
5. The Pharisees in Matthew 12 were totally insensitive to spiritual things. They had witnessed an undeniable miracle but refused to admit Christ's deity. They charged Him with being a partner with Satan (Matthew 12:24). The Lord's response explains their error and warns them about their fleeting hope of salvation. Should they continue to defy and treat God in an irreverent manner they could never be forgiven!
6. ☞ Christ's words (Matthew 12:31, 32) reveal the seriousness of rejecting the Spirit's invitation to salvation. Notice why the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is unforgivable:
- a. ☞ Man had often blasphemed God the Father (Isaiah 65:7; 2 Samuel 12:14; 2 Kings 19:6-22; etc.).
 - b. ☞ Man had also blasphemed God the Son (Mark 2:5-7; Luke 23:39).
 - c. *Note:* Those who rejected God the Father or God the Son had another opportunity to repent and be saved when God the Spirit came. Some did this (Acts 2:36-38). But others refused (Acts 3:18).
 - d. ☞ If man blasphemes God the Spirit, there is NO other opportunity! This is the last one! Hence it is an "eternal sin"! If the invitation of the Holy Spirit is met impiously there is no possibility for forgiveness. The dispensation of the Holy Spirit is the last; a rejection of the Holy Spirit is thus a final rejection of God's offer of salvation.
 - e. Illustrate with story about man given only three chances to be saved from disaster—when he rejected the third offer he had no further hope!
 - f. Hence the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the final condition of all who do not feel any sensitivity toward God's will. They have given repeated rejection to the Lord's call for repentance and their hearts are hardened (Hebrews 3:7, 8), consciences seared (1 Timothy 4:2), and calloused (Ephesians 4:19).
7. ☞ Upon whom can this tragedy befall?
- a. ☞ Mark 3:29—"whosoever" shows that it can be committed by anyone in the Christian Age.
 - b. ☞ John 12:39—"could not believe" refers to anyone who refuses to convert. They have refused for so long that it is hard for them to repent.

- c. 📖 Hebrews 6:1-6—even those "once on fire and red hot" with devotion can commit this sin (2 Timothy 4:10).
- d. 📖 Luke 8:12—those who have not obeyed can become so hardened that they never will respond!

8. Concluding Thoughts

- a. 📖 Those that are anxious about this sin should not worry about it—their sensitivity to spiritual things will assure them of their safety.
- b. 📖 Christ warns us that it is a matter of our "heart" (Matthew 12:33-37). Guard your heart and you will not be guilty of this sin!
- c. 📖 If you do not feel the prick of conscience when God's Word is studied; if you feel no need to repent; if you are satisfied with where you are in spiritual growth—you need to fear lest your attitude "grieves" the Holy Spirit and leads you to "resist" the Spirit's exhortations to the point you will "despise" the Bible's instructions and find yourself "quenching" the Holy Spirit of Truth!