

What Does it Mean to Blaspheme the Holy Spirit?

By Melanie Stone

Main Text: Matthew 12:22-37

The verb to blaspheme means “to curse.”¹ Blasphemy is much more than simply saying something against God; blasphemy is the use of abusive language intended to damage or defame God and the influence of His kingdom. Blasphemy is an action that reveals the heart of a person, a heart filled with contempt for God with the desire to invoke destruction, calamity, or injury upon God with slanderous speech.

Matthew 12:22-30

In this passage of scripture, Jesus has delivered a blind and mute man from a demon, healing him so that he could both see and speak. The Pharisees were saying that Jesus had performed this miracle by the power of Beelzebub, a Philistine deity of Satan’s. However the real issue for the Pharisees’ malicious accusations was based on verse 23.

Matthew 12:23 “And all the multitudes were amazed and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’”

The people were considering that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the coming king that was prophesied to bring salvation to the nations of the world. The Pharisees were not simply speaking against Jesus; they were using their words to try to discredit His ministry and turn people away from the salvation that He was offering.

In verse 25 it says that Jesus knew the Pharisees’ thoughts. He didn’t know their thoughts any other way except through revelation of the Holy Spirit as a word of knowledge. Jesus, in the strength of a confident servant of God, confronted the respected spiritual leaders, supernaturally revealing their blasphemous conversation about Beelzebub, something He could have only known by the Spirit of God, and asked them how a kingdom that was divided against itself could stand. His point being, He cast out a demon by the power of the Spirit of God, not the power of Satan.

Matthew 12:31-32

In verse 32, Jesus says, “Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, if will be forgive him.” Blasphemy, speaking against, the man Jesus, can be forgiven. A person who slanders Christ may not know that He is the Messiah. However, “whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” There was no denying that some power had been manifested to deliver a blind and mute man of a demon. To knowingly speak against the demonstrated move of the Holy Spirit is an outright defiant act that reveals an illuminated heart rejecting God and positioning oneself in opposition to God.

¹ Websters New World Dictionary

Matthew 12:33-37

Jesus does not stop here. He continues to explain that words are direct reflection of the heart condition of a man or woman. You can only bring out of a heart from what is within a heart. A healthy tree will bear healthy fruit. If the fruit isn't healthy, the fruit isn't the cause; the fruit is an indicator that something is unhealthy about the tree. Therefore, "by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (vs. 37)" and "for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment."

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the undeniable demonstration of God's power, is an assault of words aimed at bringing injury to God with knowing and willful defiance and contempt. There is no forgiveness for that dark heart that has seen the power of God, knowingly rejected Him, and attempted to stop Him from reaching others with His salvation.

What about those who speak against the Holy Spirit in ignorance?

Those who have spoken against a demonstration of the Holy Spirit in ignorance are not guilty of blasphemy; they're guilty of ignorance. If they did not knowingly intend to curse God, their heart may not be hardened, and they can be forgiven. For example, consider the Apostle Paul, once Saul, a persecutor of Jesus Christ and His church.² When he realized he was wrong, he repented and turned around.

However, I believe the Lord would want us to know that even unknowingly coming against a move of a demonstration Holy Spirit could open a door to trouble for us and for our house. If a spiritual leader, such as pastor, is striving against the Spirit's promptings, especially in corporate gatherings, it could bring consequences on that leader, his family, or that church. Remember that attempting to control the Holy Spirit is an attempt to control God, and that is not a good position to be in. I Corinthians 11:30 tells us that people were sick and dying because they weren't discerning their sin. God wants us to know that resisting the Holy Spirit is a sin and could be why some are sick and dying in our churches.

A heart that is dependent on God, will not only yield to God and His Spirit, but will also be *in pursuit* of God and His Spirit. I know there have been people that have gotten off into error, calling things of the flesh to be things of the Spirit. I understand that their error has chased away the lost and the unchurched. However, we can't those who are in error hinder us from yielding to and being in pursuit of the real ministry of the Holy Spirit. We need to trust that the Holy Spirit knows what He is doing. When the move is real, when the move is tangible, God's power will draw people to know Him. We don't want to get in the way of the real thing. We don't want to hinder what God wants to do. Instead, we want to make sure that we are learning to follow His leading and obey His promptings. The church belongs to God, not to us. The church is His meeting place, not just ours. Of all the people we want to bring in, the One we should honor the most of all is the Spirit of God. When we honor the Holy Spirit, His presence will be tangible to bring people what they need.

² Acts 9:1-22