

Matthew Chapter 12:30-45 – The Pharisee Problem - Part 3 The Unpardonable Sin

Introduction

Matthew is an evangelical book written to Israel about the reality of Jesus being the Messiah and giving them the offer of the kingdom of God, the culmination of the promises and covenants of the Old Testament.

Matthew is neither written to nor about the church.

In Matthew 1-9, we have a record of Jesus' history, words, and works demonstrating that He is the Messiah.

Matthew 10 is the commission of the disciples, expressly the apostles, as the shepherds of Israel. They received both authority and ability from Jesus through the Holy Spirit to go to all the lost sheep of the House of Israel and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom with verification by their use of miracles and powers.

Chapter 11 is the pinnacle of Jesus' popularity. Many people and entire towns are prepared to receive the Messiah and the kingdom of God. But from this point on, His opposition is highlighted, culminating in the rejection of Jesus at the cross.

Matthew 12 is predominantly about the escalating spiral of rejection by the leaders of Israel and the Pharisees

Matthew 12:22-30 Review

There is a plan to destroy Jesus (Matthew 12:14). This is about stopping Jesus' message, His leadership, and His challenging their traditions. They fear losing power and influence, and they would do anything to keep it.

The first step in this conspiracy was to discredit Jesus.

The Pharisees do not deny His actions; they ascribe His power as being that of Beelzebul or, as Jesus attributes the slander, of Satan.

The action of the Pharisees was an insult and slander against both Jesus and the power behind the activity. Jesus does nothing of His own power or of His own decisions. The Father instructed the Son, and the Holy Spirit empowered Him to do what the Father has commanded Him to do.

Jesus' response is a reasonable one. The logic that He uses is clear and irrefutable.

1. Any city or kingdom divided cannot stand.
2. How do you determine the power?
3. If the power is the Holy Spirit, then the kingdom is right in front of them.

Jesus demonstrating power over the demons shows that He also has the power over Satan. For the kingdom to come in, Jesus must first enter into the kingdom of Satan, bind him, and then, He can take over and establish His kingdom. This is what happens in Revelation 20:1-3.

In Matthew 12:30, Jesus clarifies the consequences of not coming to His side. The ones who gathered with Him would ultimately avoid judgment and be brought into the kingdom, but those who did not would be scattered by the judgment and not participate in the kingdom.

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The question remains, did Jesus do miracles by Satan or by the Spirit? Would they follow the Pharisees or Jesus? Jesus is warning that those who say “by Satan” will be scattered.

Matthew 12:31-32 – The Unpardonable Sin

This warning is the subject of many debates. What does this mean? Can we be sure? First, let's define some terms.

Blasphemy – This is transliterated from “βλασφημία *blasphēmia*” which means to hurt, injure, or damage fame or report.

Blasphemy means to attribute something about someone that diminishes or causes others to think less positively about that one.

Mark 2:5-7 – Taking from God and attributing it to a man is considered a statement against God because it stole from the rights and glory of God; it diminished His fame and reputation.

John 10:31-33 – This is the highest form of defaming God, claiming to be Him. This is the ultimate blasphemy unless, as is the case here, it happens to be true.

Romans 3:8 – Harming the fame of someone is not blasphemy if it is true. Blasphemy is not only to defame someone but to do it falsely (1 Peter 4:4).

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to speak falsely so as to defame the Spirit of God.

This is confirmed in verse 32 – *speaks a word against* is a literal and good translation.

Forgive - ἀφίημι *aphiēmi* – This means to be released from an obligation. Sin places an obligation upon the offender that needs to be resolved.

In Matthew, the word *forgive* (a verb) or *forgiveness* (a noun) is used 48 times. The noun is only used once.

The verb is used in regard to sin a total of 18 times.

Matthew 6:12-15, 9:2-6, 18:21-35, 26:28

The context of this word must be considered when defining or understanding the implications.

Next, let's make some observations:

1. This blasphemy is addressed to those who are directly dealing with Jesus.
2. This sin is only attributed to when Jesus is on earth. This is not repeated in Acts, the Epistles, or in Revelation.
3. Any sin and blasphemy will be forgiven – Not every person who commits sin and blasphemy; rather, any other sin and blasphemy will be remitted.
4. Speaking against the Son of Man will be forgiven? This indicates that this sin was particularly egregious. Even if you speak against the Son of Man (i.e., Jesus the Messiah; Himself), forgiveness is available.

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5. Forgiveness in Matthew is not in the context of eternal reconciliation but of the Kingdom (save one use).
6. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this age. This age is the current life in this creation. The term “forever” is “unto the age” and is an idiom for without end (the word for age by itself).
7. Age to come – is not the eternal age but the Kingdom Age. In the Hebrew Scriptures, there are only two ages, the age of Israel and the age of the Messiah when the kingdom comes.

Conclusion

In this statement, Jesus is holding accountable those who dare speak against the Holy Spirit. No matter their eternal state, this sin will be held against them both at that time and in the Kingdom Age. If the kingdom would have come at that time, and if they survived the day of the Lord, they would still not be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Can this happen today?

The circumstances do not exist and cannot exist ever again. Jesus is no longer empowered by the Holy Spirit, He is in His glory; and when He returns, He will be working under His own authority.

Does not believing in Jesus leave a person in a state of being unforgiven?

Acts 10:43, 13:38, 26:15-18 Romans 4:1-7 Ephesians 1:7

Forgiveness in these contexts is a judicial statement that God will not hold sins against those who believe.

John 3:36 – Wrath abides upon the unbeliever. Why?

The reason that a person is subject to wrath is because of sin. But Jesus paid the penalty for sin to alleviate that wrath. But a person who does not believe chooses to be evaluated based upon the Law. Because they are evaluated by the Law, their action will be determined to be rebellious and sinful; therefore, their sin remains, their sins are not forgiven, and wrath is poured out because God must be just.

Is unbelief the unforgivable sin? No! An unbeliever will account for his sins, but unbelief is not unforgivable (John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 7:13-16).

Today, even if someone blasphemes the Holy Spirit, he will be forgiven if he believes in Jesus. Even if we, God forbid, blaspheme the Holy Spirit, we are forgiven.

1 John 2:1-2