“I have blasphemed the Holy Spirit…!”

Friedemann Werkshage · Matthew 12:31-32 · November 24, 2025



It is relatively common to hear Christians express concern about whether they have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. They are thinking of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:31–32:

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matthew 12:31-32)

This is indeed a very serious situation. There was no forgiveness for what the Pharisees had just said. They were guilty of eternal sin. God would not give them another chance to repent. That is truly dramatic. It may be difficult for us to understand this in the right way. This may be especially true when we compare what the Pharisees did here with other serious sins for which forgiveness was still possible. Let us think, for example, of what happened to the Lord Jesus on the cross. Here, the

Lord Himself even asks the Father for forgiveness. Or let us think of Saul's persecution of the church. But on the one hand, let us remember that the Lord Jesus is absolutely just and can rightly assess the gravity of this particular sin. We cannot do that, nor do we want to presume to do so. But on the other hand, we will also see that these sins are in fact of a completely different nature than the blasphemy against the Spirit, which we will deal with in the following.

When we now consider whether a child of God has committed this blasphemy, or indeed can commit it at all, it is important to keep in mind what this blasphemy against the Spirit consists of. It is not simply a sin against the Holy Spirit. Every sin is against God and therefore also against the Holy Spirit. Nor is it a matter of thinking or saying something inappropriate about the Holy Spirit, or of saying something wrong out of ignorance. Nor is it a matter of little faith. No, it is a matter of willfully and knowingly attributing to the devil the clear work of the Holy Spirit, as it was perfectly manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus, both in its effect and in its source.

But let us first look at the situation that led to these words of the Lord Jesus. The Lord had just healed a possessed man. This healing had then aroused at least a certain amount of admiration among the crowd. People wondered if the Lord was not the Son of David. Obviously, the people associated this display of power with the person of the Lord Jesus and therefore wondered if he was not the Messiah.

But it was precisely this reaction of the people that provoked the Pharisees to make the fatal statement: (v. 24). It was pure jealousy and envy that drove the Pharisees to make this statement. They could not deny the miracle itself; after all, the man stood before them as living proof. Somehow, however, they had to explain the miracle of the healing of the possessed man.

Therefore, they attack the person of the Lord directly and try to discredit him. When they say “by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons,” the Pharisees are expressing that Jesus had used no other power than that of Satan. Could someone who conspired with the devil be the Messiah? Thus, they blasphemed against the Holy Spirit by attributing the power of the Holy Spirit, in which the Lord Jesus had healed the possessed man, to demonic powers, indeed to Satan himself.

If we refer to Mark 3:30, we see that the Pharisees went even a decisive step further. There, the Lord Jesus justifies his judgment by saying that the Pharisees had said, “He has an unclean spirit.” So this is not just about the effect, but about the source. They are not only attributing the effect of the Holy Spirit to Satan, but identifying the Holy Spirit himself with Satan.

In his following words, the Lord Jesus not only makes it clear how illogical and absurd this accusation is, but above all how abysmally evil it is—so evil that there is no forgiveness for it.

We will now examine the question of whether a child of God can still commit this blasphemy against the Spirit today, and we will address four points in doing so.

1. It is about a particular situation

This situation consisted, on the one hand, of an obvious sign and, on the other hand, of the presence of the perfect servant of God. If blasphemy against the Holy Spirit were still possible today, it would have to be connected with such an obvious miracle as was performed at that time. However, when children of God today worry whether they may have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, this is not the case. Therefore, it cannot be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

But the situation at that time was also characterized by the presence of the Lord Jesus. Why is this an important point? Unfortunately, it is possible for us that the Holy Spirit cannot fully unfold His effect. Therefore, we need the exhortation not to quench the Spirit, i.e., not to dampen or suppress His effect (1 Thessalonians 5:19). But with the Lord Jesus, it was completely different. The Holy Spirit was able to work perfectly in and through him. When the Lord Jesus healed the possessed man, it was once again perfect proof of this. That is why the Pharisees were inexcusable. The deliverance of the possessed man was not accomplished by one of the disciples, but by the perfect servant of God through whom the power of the Holy Spirit was perfectly manifested.

2. It is about two ages

With his words “not in this age nor in the age to come,” the Lord Jesus limits the time in which the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can occur at all. Both “this age” and “the age to come” refer to periods of time in which the Lord Jesus Himself is on earth. This was the case when the Lord Jesus was here on earth as a humble man, and it will be the case again when He appears as a glorified man to establish the 1000-year kingdom here on earth. Today we live in the time of the Lord's absence. Of course, the Holy Spirit is still at work today. But who among us would claim that the Holy Spirit can work through us with the same clarity, purity, and perfection as He did through the Lord Jesus?

3. It is about the enemies of the Lord Jesus

The Pharisees were outspoken enemies of the Lord Jesus. Shortly after the Lord accused them of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, He said to them, “You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (v. 34). With this, the Lord makes clear what was at the heart of those who had spoken such evil words: evil, hardened hearts; and their words were just as evil. They belonged to an “evil and adulterous generation” (v. 39).

Now let me ask you: if you are a child of God, then you love the Lord Jesus, right? No, you are not an enemy of God. A child of God is sad and dismayed when his Savior, when divine persons, are disparaged. Where do such feelings come from? Are they the feelings of an enemy of God, or rather of a child of God who has new life within him? The same applies to children of God: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!”

4. It is about words

And that brings us to the last point. This is not about inappropriate feelings or thoughts. Nor is it about a careless word that was spoken a little too quickly, as if by mistake. The Lord Jesus justifies his judgment in Mark 3:30 precisely with this: “because they said.” This evil assertion did not just slip out of the Pharisees' mouths. It is about words spoken deliberately, about public teaching. To return to the previous point, these words only made it clear what an evil, hostile heart the Pharisees had: “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!”

I hope that every child of God who is worried that they have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit will find peace again. If that is not yet entirely the case, then think again about the following points:

1. What exactly does blasphemy against the Spirit consist of?
2. At what time can it exclusively happen?
3. There is a world of difference between a sensitive heart that loves the Lord Jesus and an evil heart that loudly mocks the work of the Spirit out of hatred, envy, and jealousy!

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