

The Gospel of Matthew

Text: Matthew 12:22-32

- The miracle (vs. 22)
- The crowds response (vs. 23)
- The Pharisees response (vs. 24)
- Jesus' response (vs. 25-29)
- Jesus' concluding statement (vs. 30-32)

POINT 1 - THE MIRACLE (VS. 22)

A man brought to Jesus who had multiple problems. Demon possessed, dumb (unable to speak), and blind. Jesus had healed hundreds, if not thousands at the witness of many people. These miracles demonstrate His power of over disease and death. You could not question the supernatural powers of Jesus. The truth of who He was is evident. You can look the other way, but the facts remain, He was doing miracles never done before on earth. Never.

1A - Most of the sin-blinded people remained unmoved by what Jesus was doing. Many knew the Messiah was coming and with miracles, but they also expected the Messiah to bring about a great military and political movement. They expected royal fanfare and military might.

Instead they would not get regal robes, sovereign authority, a throne, trumpets, swords, horses, chariots, and a mighty army, they would see a man of compassion, gentleness, and humility.¹ Because Jesus did not appear to be the mighty conquerer they assumed, they simply did not believe, truly believe, His miracles and works. **NOTE:** today many are blind to the fact of who Jesus is, because they have a view of who they want Jesus to be.

The real danger in this was the fact the Pharisees and others had been following Jesus looking for any excuse to rise up and kill Him. They witnessed all the miracles. They saw all the healings. And yet they remained blind. In fact, they had collaborated with the Herodians, who were normally their arch foes, Mark 3:6, “The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.” Jesus seems to have performed this particular miracle on this occasion especially for the benefit of the Pharisees, forcing them to make their verdict concerning Him public.²

POINT 2 - THE AMAZEMENT FROM THE CROWD (VS. 23)

The word for amazed means to be “totally astounded.” One writer suggests that “it means to be literally knocked out of your senses.” This miracle must have carried with it a greater degree of supernatural power. The response of the crowd suggests this mighty miracle, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” This question reveals they recognized such miracles as messianic signs. The phrase “Son of David” was commonly used to reference the Messiah. The crowd began to move in a direction towards believing this was the coming Christ. **NOTE:** There are many today, in the church that hear, see and witness what God is doing. They are moved, but they are distracted by detractors or doubts. The centurion at the cross, “Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, truly this was the Son of God!”

¹ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 305

² The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 306

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POINT 3 - THE IRRITATION OF THE PHARISEES (VS. 24)

The multitudes drift towards believing Jesus is the Messiah, greatly upset the apple cart of the Pharisees established self righteous works religion. This happens in a lot of churches. Changes come to the establishment, and they are biblical changes, but it shakes their long standing traditions. The statement of the crowd sent the Pharisees into a panic.

3A - Remember there are two responses to truth, rejection or belief. The Pharisees knew there were two sources of divine supernatural power; God and Satan. The conundrum for the Pharisees is if they were to admit the supernatural works are from God, they would admit He was the Son of David. If they allowed the crowd to believe in Jesus, they would lose the very power and authority over them.

3B - The intent of the Pharisees was to poison the minds of the crowd. Don't believe this "Son of David" stuff. He is a demon. He is the ruler of the demons. Beelzebul was a ruler of the ancient Canaanite deity. **NOTE:** Today you may be on the verge of believing, but Satan has sent doubt your way not to follow the foolishness of Christianity.

POINT 4 - THE LORD'S ANSWER (VS. 25-29)

Jesus knew their thoughts. Yet, they would not confront Him directly, so He went to them. In this account from Mark 3:22-23, here is how Mark explains it, "And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables." Jesus didn't just shout out an answer, He called them and they came to Him. They were going to hear an answer to their ridiculous accusations.

4A - The accusation was absurd. The kingdom of Satan is a wicked one, but it's consistent in their work. They can't be divided against each other, or there will be chaos. Satan tolerates no division or disobedience, and therefore it was preposterous to say such a thing. **NOTE:** When confronted with obvious lies and accusations, you just begin to make ridiculous statements.

The Pharisees' response reflects the basic response of every person who intentionally rejects Jesus Christ. They did not reject Him for lack of evidence but because they were biased against Him. Their own deeds were evil and they could not handle the intimidating reality of Jesus' righteousness; they were children of darkness and could not handle the light. They were not looking for truth but for ways to justify their own wickedness and to destroy anyone who dared to expose it.³

4B - It's absurd to say Satan casts out demons and if by the Spirit of God they are cast out then you have to admit I am the Messiah. The dilemma for those who don't want the truth is they make up absurd statements about God, and yet, when those are exposed they reject the obvious truth that is left.

4C - In this condemning question about binding the strong man's house, Jesus proved He was the Messiah by His actions. It also exposed the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. First, everything that Jesus did opposed the working of Satan. All of these Satan could not do.

- Jesus healed the sick, blind, deaf and lame

³ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 309

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- Jesus raised people from the dead
- Jesus cast out demons, satan wouldn't do that
- Jesus forgave sin, no authority was given to anyone else

Every detail of the life of Christ never contradicted the teaching of Old Testament Scripture. Jesus violated their man made traditions, but never Scripture. This is never more clear than in John 8:45-46, “**But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.**”

Jesus illustrated this by the analogy of trying to rob a home while the owner was there. The point Jesus is making is He has demonstrated before them healing, miracles, victory and power over evil and darkness. He has demonstrated His authority over both sin and death. Who could have bound satan but the Messiah? Who could have done this?

POINT 5 - NO NEUTRAL GROUND (VS. 30)

It is not necessary to oppose Christ to be against Him. The fact is those who do not belong to Christ are His enemy, Romans 5:10 says we were enemies before He reconciled us. There are only two position concerning Christ, those that are with Him and those that are against. You cannot belong to the world and Christ at the same time. You cannot remain the same dead sinner and live that way, while belonging to Christ. There is a broad way and a narrow way.

POINT 6 - THE FINAL PLEA (VS. 31-32)

6A - Any sin can be forgiven. There isn't a sin that is too big for God to forgive. Blasphemy is a form of sin, but in this passage sin and blasphemy are treated differently. Sin in this text represents the full gamut of sin. Immorality, ungodliness in thoughts and actions. Blasphemy represents a conscious denouncing and rejection of God. Blasphemy is defiant irreverence, the uniquely terrible sin of intentionally and openly speaking evil against God or defaming and mocking Him, this was noted in Mark 2:7, “**Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming.**”

The Old Testament penalty for blaspheming was death by stoning, cf. Leviticus 24:16. In the last days blasphemy will be an outstanding characteristic of those who rebelliously and insolently oppose God, cf. Revelation 13:5-6; 16:9; 17:3, “**Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.**”

NOTE: An unbeliever who blasphemes God can be forgiven. Paul wrote to Timothy, “**even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus**” (1 Timothy 1:13-14).

6B - Blasphemy against the Spirit carried a far greater judgement. What does it mean? This reflects not only unbelief, but a determined unbelief. It's the refusal, after having seen all the evidence necessary. It reflects seeing truth, the Messiah incarnated, the virgin born Son of God, and knowingly rejecting Him and conceding Him. This results in a loss now and in the age to come.

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Those who spoke against the Spirit, saw all the miracles and divine working power, yet willfully refused to believe. **NOTE:** In two accounts so far, the Pharisees have done this exact same thing, cf. Psalms 14:1. They saw and heard everything He had done, and they said no.

Isaiah 5:1-6, the Lord pictured Israel as a vineyard he had carefully, cultivated, planted and tended. The Pharisees (mainly but others also) cut themselves off because they blasphemed the Spirit but refusing to believe, in spite of the miracles. I think we understand Hebrews 2:3-4 more clearly now, “How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”

CONCLUSION

In a similar way, people today turn their backs on God, even though they see and witness His works. You may not blaspheme but you simply turn away. In essence, the unforgivable sin is unbelief. I don't know when it will be, but there may be a time when you can't believe. John 9:4, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”

Consider this earnestly today, Romans 1:26, 28, “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions”, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind.” By definition, this is blasphemy. Simply, just won't believe. I don't know where you're at today, don't know how stiff necked you can be, there's hope for even the vilest of sin, but if you won't believe, there's not. 2 Corinthians 6:2, “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Today is the day of salvation.