

## **WHAT IS THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

Numerous answers have been given to this question throughout time. It is a question that deserves our attention, for Jesus said this is a sin for which man cannot be forgiven. Something that serious certainly demands our study. What is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Can we blaspheme the Holy Spirit today? Why is this a sin for which man cannot be forgiven?

First, let us notice what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is. It is important to notice the context of Matthew 12:22-37. To blaspheme means to speak against. The Pharisees on this occasion spoke against the Holy Spirit. There was brought to Jesus a blind, dumb man possessed with a demon. Jesus healed this man in the presence of a large group of people. The Pharisees, even though they had witnessed the miracle, refused to attribute this power to God. Rather, they attributed Christ's power to perform miracles to Satan. They were so quick to deny that Jesus had this power because he was God in the flesh that they failed to think through their accusation against the Christ. Jesus picked up on their mistake. It was foolish to think that Satan had empowered the Christ in order to combat the forces of Satan! Yet this was the position the Pharisees took. They blasphemed the Holy Spirit by attributing His power to Satan!

Is it possible to blaspheme the Holy Spirit today? In the exact manner the Pharisees did, the answer would be "no." However, one can blaspheme the Holy Spirit in principle. Miracles no longer occur today. Because of that fact, we cannot witness a miracle being performed and then attribute that to the Devil. However, we can read the word of God (which was delivered to man by the Holy Spirit-inspired writers of God's word), and we can read about the miracles performed by those empowered by God to do so, and brush them aside, refusing to believe God's word. In principle, then, we may blaspheme the Holy Spirit when we refuse to believe the evidence He has left for us in God's word. In like manner, we may exhibit a hardness of heart similar to that of the Pharisees in our refusal to accept the obvious evidence before us.

Why did Jesus say that this was a sin for which man could not be forgiven? Initially, God dealt directly with man. First, He dealt with the patriarchs, then the leaders of Israel, and finally through the prophets. When the time came, God sent His Son into the world to deal with man so that man might come to know the Heavenly Father and be reconciled to Him through the Christ. Man rejected God's direct dealing with man, and he rejected the Christ. The last message from God to man is His word. This word has been delivered to men inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21), and this word has been confirmed by the miracles of those empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform such (Mk.16:17-20). Those who reject this message reject God's final message. There is nothing more to come. If man refuses to believe the confirmed word of God, there is no hope for forgiveness. The Pharisees refused to believe the word of the Lord, even though it was confirmed right before their eyes in the miraculous healing of the possessed man. Unless they

came to believe this word, they remained lost in their sins. Whether or not you agree that one can blaspheme the Holy Spirit today, it is possible to become so hard of heart that we refuse to obey the will of God. May we ever keep our hearts tender and receptive to the Gospel message (Heb.3:12-15).

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