

Matthew Chapter 12 Continued

Verses 31-38:

“The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” is deliberate rejection of Christ, His Spirit-wrought miracles, and His salvation.

It is the ultimate sin that by its very nature puts a man beyond the opportunity of salvation.

The Holy Spirit brings the offer of salvation to the heart of man.

To reject Him is to act “presumptuously” and thus to “blaspheme” God.

Those who reject His offer of salvation are in reality blaspheming the very nature of God Himself and the genuineness of His grace.

Verses 31-32:

All sin is serious, and to some degree challenges and attacks the character and authority of God.

But six sins are specifically identified as sins against the Holy Spirit.

Since the Holy Spirit is a person, He may be sinned against.

Matthew 12:31 "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy [against] the [Holy] Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

“Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost”:

The sin He was confronting was the Pharisees’ deliberate rejection of that which they knew to be of God (John 11:48; Acts 4:16).

They could not deny the reality of what the Holy Spirit had done through Him, so they attributed to Satan a work that they knew was of God (verse 24; Mark 3:22).

Since He is also God, it is an extremely serious matter to be guilty of sinning against Him.

These six sins are blaspheming (verses 31-32; Luke 12:10), lying or tempting (Acts 5:4, 9); despising (Heb. 10:29); resisting or striving with (Gen. 6:3; Acts 7:51), vexing or grieving (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30), and quenching (1 Thess. 5:19), the Holy Spirit.

Because of the severity with which Jesus describes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, some people unnecessarily fear that they may have committed the unpardonable sin.

One of the characteristics of such sin is that the Holy Spirit ceases to convict of sins in a person's life, so the fact that someone may be concerned about a particular sin indicates that he is not beyond grace.

He should immediately repent of that sin to restore fellowship with God.

The keys to not sinning against the Holy Spirit are to:

1. Be led by the Spirit;
2. Be filled with the Spirit;
3. Be illuminated by the Spirit.

This is probably, the most misunderstood Scripture in the Bible.

My own dad felt he had committed this sin.

Billy Graham said, on one of his broadcasts, that his dad felt he had committed this sin.

Just the fact that a person is very concerned about it, proves he has never committed the unpardonable sin.

The word translated means evil speaking.

Then it goes on to say speaking evil of the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven.

My interpretation of the Scripture is as long as you are alive; you can get forgiveness for sin of any kind.

However, if you die rejecting the salvation offered, there is no forgiveness for that.

People are too concerned about this.

God wants our faith that everything is ok, not doubt.

Matthew 12:32 "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the [world] to come."

"It shall be forgiven him":

Someone never exposed to Christ's divine power and presence might reject Him in ignorance and be forgiven, assuming the unbelief gives way to genuine repentance.

Even a Pharisee such as Saul of Tarsus could be forgiven for speaking against Jesus or persecuting His followers, because his unbelief stemmed from ignorance (1 Tim. 1:13).

But those who know His claims are true and reject Him anyway “sin against the Holy Spirit” because it is the Holy Spirit who testifies of Christ and makes His truth known to us (see John 15:26; 16:14-15).

No forgiveness was possible for these Pharisees who witnessed His miracles first hand, knew the truth of His claims, and still blasphemed the Holy Spirit, because they had already rejected the fullest possible revelation.

I think to really understand this; we would have to know and understand who the Holy Ghost is.

Jesus said He would send a comforter (Holy Ghost – “same as the Holy Spirit”), to come and dwell with us.

The Holy Ghost teaches us, directs us, and comforts us.

To deny the Holy Ghost would be to deny our salvation.

We are saved by faith, not doubt.

To speak against the Holy Ghost in this manner spoken of here, we would have to be unsaved, thus lost!

No Christian is guilty of that sin.

Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by [his] fruit."

A man that is unprincipled with the grace of God, has an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel of Christ.

And is guided by the Spirit of God into all truth, as it is in Jesus, cannot knowingly deliver, maintain, and abide by any doctrine that is contrary to the glory of God's grace.

And the person of Christ, the work of the Spirit, the fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

Or what is repugnant to the experiences of God's people, and prejudicial to their souls.

Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

A corrupt preacher, one destitute of the truth of the Gospel, reprobate concerning the faith.

Who never had any experience of the doctrines of grace, and denies them in the theory of them, cannot, consistent with himself, and his own principles, deliver, or preach good doctrine.

Or that which tends to produce any good fruit, either in the experience or lives of men.

Yea, a man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (James 2:18).

Matthew 12:34-35 "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

“O generation of vipers!”:

Christ here applies the argument which he had suggested in the previous verse.

They were a wicked race; like poisonous reptiles, with a corrupt and evil nature.

They could not be expected to speak good things, that is, to speak very favorably of both him and his works.

As the bad fruit of a tree was the proper effect of its "nature," so were their words about him and his works the proper effect of their nature.

The "abundance" or fullness of the "heart" produced the words of the lips.

“Out of the abundance” (the overflowing), of the heart”:

Wicked words and sinful actions may be considered as the overflowing of a heart that is more than full of the spirit of wickedness; and holy words and righteous deeds may be considered as the overflowing of a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit, and running over with love to God and man.

Matthew 3:7 “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

Matthew 12:36 "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

“Every idle word”:

The most seemingly insignificant sin, even the slip of the tongue, carries the full potential of all hell’s evil (James 3:6).

No infraction against God’s holiness is therefore a trifling thing and each person will ultimately give account of every such indiscretion.

There is no truer indication of a bad tree than the bad fruit of speech (verses 33, 35).

The poisonous snakes were known by their poisonous mouths revealing evil hearts (verse 34, Luke 6:45).

Every person is judged by his words, because they reveal the state of his heart.

Matthew 12:37 "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

“By thy words thou shalt be justified”:

That is, "words" are the indication of the true principles of the heart; by "words" the heart shall be known, as the tree is by its fruit.

If they are true, proper, chaste, instructive, pious, they will prove that the heart is right.

If false, envious, malignant, and impious, they will prove that the heart is wrong, and will therefore be among the causes of condemnation.

Acquitted or condemned in the Day of Judgment.

To justify is the opposite of “to condemn”.

Those who confess Christ with the mouth (Rom. 10:9), shall be saved; those who deny him will be lost.

Words have a weighty influence on our eternal destiny.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Matthew 12:38 "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee."

“We would see a sign from thee”:

They were hoping for a sign of astronomical proportions (Luke 11:16).

Instead, he gives them a “sign” from Scripture.

These scribes and Pharisees were like so many people of our day who say "Lord, just show me Noah's Ark with my own two eyes, and then I will believe it existed".

Fact is not faith.

If you can see it with your own eyes, it takes no faith to believe.

This was almost ridiculous for them to call Him Master.

A person does what his Master says without having everything explained.

This was not the case here.

Verses 39-42:

The word “adulterous” means unfaithful to God.

It was a metaphor frequently used in the Old Testament for spiritual “adultery.”

“The prophet Jonah.”

Jesus uses Jonah’s burial in the fish for “three days and three nights” as an illustration of the three days and three nights that Christ would spend in the grave Himself.

The actual period was from Friday evening to Sunday morning (covering parts of three days idiomatically).

The reference to the “whale’s belly” in verse 40 of the Authorized Version is unfortunate.

The Greek word *ketos* means “a great sea creature,” not necessarily a whale.

The Old Testament references are to a “great fish” (Jonah 1:17).

Notice that the Lord placed this entire account on the same level of historical reality as that with which He Himself was dealing.

Matthew 12:39 "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:"

“An evil and adulterous generation”:

This speaks of spiritual adultery, unfaithfulness to God (Jer. 5:7-8).

Jesus reprimanded them for always wanting a sign.

Jesus wants our faith.

He called those who continuously had to have a sign an evil and adulterous generation.

This adultery here, is spiritual rather than physical.

The sign Jesus was speaking of here, was Jonah being in the belly of the whale both three days and nights.

Jesus would be in the belly of the earth 3 days and nights.

Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

“Three days and three nights”:

Quoted from (Jonah 1:17).

This sort of expression was a common way of underscoring the prophetic significance of a period to time.

An expression like “forty days and forty nights” may in some cases simply refer to a period of time longer than a month.

“Three days and three nights” was an emphatic way of saying “three days,” and by Jewish reckoning this would be an apt way of expressing a period of time that includes parts of 3 days.

Thus, if Christ was crucified on a Friday, and His resurrection occurred on the first day of the week, by Hebrew reckoning this would qualify as 3 days and 3 nights.

All sorts of elaborate schemes have been devised to suggest that Christ might have died on a Wednesday or Thursday, just to accommodate the extreme literal meaning of these words.

But the original meaning would not have required that sort of wooden interpretation.

Matthew 12:41 "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah [is] here."

“Men of Nineveh ... repented”:

The revival in Nineveh under Jonah’s’ preaching was one of the most extraordinary spiritual revivals the world has ever seen.

Some have suggested that the repentance of the Ninevites stopped short of saving faith, because the city reverted within one generation to its old pagan ways (Nahum 3:7-8).

From Jesus’ words here however, it is clear that the revival under Jonah represented authentic saving conversions.

Only eternity will reveal how many souls from that one generation were swept into the kingdom as a result of the revival.

Jonah was a reluctant preacher.

He did not think the people of Nineveh were worth saving, but after being swallowed by the whale, he obeyed God and warned Nineveh.

The people fasted in sackcloth and ashes, and God spared them.

Matthew 12:42 "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon [is] here."

“Queen of the south”:

The queen of Sheba came to see Solomon’s glory and in the process encountered the glory of Solomon’s God (1 Kings 10:9).

The wisdom of Solomon was a gift from God.

Jesus possesses all wisdom.

The Queen of Sheba came to Solomon who had less wisdom than Jesus, and yet no one recognized the vast wisdom of Jesus.

In fact, only a hand full of His followers was there when He was crucified.

Verses 43-45:

Jesus gives a striking parable of the precarious spiritual condition of the nation.

The parable is that of a house well “swept” but unoccupied.

The demon having been driven out, but finding no place to rest, returns with seven other spirits, resulting in an even greater degeneration.

Only by inviting Christ to be the honored guest and head of the home, could Israel know the full blessing of God.

Matthew 12:43-45 "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none." "Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth [it] empty, swept, and garnished." "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

The application of these three verses is found in even so it shall be unto this wicked generation, the Jews.

With an occasional tendency to repentance, as under the preaching of John, they became worse and worse until they crucified the Lord and were destroyed.

A man with an unclean spirit, a demon, is chosen to represent them.

He goeth out (transient repentance), returns with seven other evil spirits worse than himself (a relapse into sin), and the last state is worse than the first, more wicked and more wretched.

So generally, with those who dally with sin.

This parable represents the case of the Jewish church and nation.

It is also applicable to all those who hear the word of God and are in part reformed, but then not truly converted.

The unclean spirit then leaves for a time, but when he returns, he finds Christ is not there to shut him out.

The heart is swept by outward reformation, but garnished by preparation to comply with evil suggestions, and the man becomes a more decided enemy of the truth.

Every heart is the residence of unclean spirits, except those which are temples of the Holy Ghost, by faith in Christ.

This is saying that when a person is delivered from a demonic spirit, the very first thing to do is to fill the vacancy with the Holy Spirit of God.

The person delivered must immediately start reading the Bible and getting filled with the Words of the Bible.

If the vacancy, where the evil spirit comes out of, is not immediately filled with the good Spirit, the evil will come back and bring more evil spirits with him.

Verses 46-50:

The chapter closes with a reference to “my mother and my brethren.”

These brothers are presumably the children of Joseph and Mary that were born after the virgin birth of Jesus.

While some have attempted to view them as cousins, this certainly is not implied in the Gospels.

By asking, "Who is my mother?" Jesus called attention away from earthly relationships to more important spiritual relationships.

This saying was not intended to be one of disrespect to Mary or to His brothers, for they too would come to share the spiritual relationship.

However, there is no suggestion here at all that Jesus' mother had any special access to His presence or any particular influence over Him.

By using this startling question, Jesus prepared the crowd to receive the precious truth that "whosoever shall do the will of my Father" was, in fact, His mother, His brother and His sister.

Matthew 12:46 "While he yet talked to the people, behold, [his] mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him."

"Brethren":

These are actual siblings (half-brothers), of Jesus.

Matthew explicitly connects them with Mary, indicating that they were not cousins or Joseph's sons from a previous marriage, as some of the church fathers imagined.

They are mentioned in all the gospel (Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19-21; John 7:3-5).

Matthew and Mark give the names of 4 of Jesus's brothers, and mention that He had sisters as well (13:55; Mark 6:3).

Matthew 12:47-49 "Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!"

Jesus was not repudiating His earthly family (John 19:26-27).

Rather He was emphasizing the supremacy and eternality of spiritual relationships (10:37).

After all, even His own family needed Him as Savior (John 7:5).

Matthew 12:50 "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

"Do the will of my Father":

This is not salvation by works.

Doing the will of God is the evidence of salvation by grace.

All of this was said and done to make us know there is a physical family, and there is a spiritual family.

The family that God counts as a family is the relationship of brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a physical Israel and a spiritual Israel.

Matthew Chapter 12 Continued Questions

1. Will blasphemy be forgiven men? Explain.
2. Which is the most misunderstood Scripture in the Bible?
3. If a person is concerned about having committed the unforgivable sin, what does that tell us?
4. What is there really no forgiveness for?
5. To deny the Holy Ghost would be to deny what?
6. What are three things the Holy Ghost does for us?
7. A tree is known for what?
8. If you are a Christian, what should tell it for you?
9. Out of the _____ of the _____ the mouth speaketh.
10. What will come out of our mouths when we open them?
11. What justifies us, or condemns us?
12. What did the scribes and Pharisees ask for?
13. What did they call Jesus?
14. Fact is not _____.
15. Who seeks after a sign?
16. What kind of adultery is meant by this?
17. What is the only sign they would get?
18. Why did Jonah change his mind about bringing the message to Nineveh?

19. Why did this queen come to see Solomon?
20. The gift was given Solomon by whom?
21. This unclean spirit, mentioned in verse 43, was doing what?
22. Where do these disembodied spirits like to stay?
23. How many more spirits will he bring back, if the one delivered allows him to return?
24. What would be the last state of that person?
25. Who came to see Jesus?
26. What did Jesus say about these relations?
27. What 2 things should we learn from this?
28. What are 2 types of Israel?