

# Jesus – King of the Jews #32

## The Unpardonable Sin

Matt 12:22-37

### Introduction:

1. By nature God is forgiving.
  - a. The OT abounds with teachings about His forgiveness.
    1. David declared in Ps 86:5  
5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
    2. In Ps 103:3 he reminds us that God pardons all our iniquities  
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
    3. Daniel spoke of God's compassion and forgiveness – 9:9  
9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;
    4. In Ex 34:6-7 God described Himself to Moses →
    5. Micah extolled God's forgiveness – Mic 7:18-19
  - b. The OT also abounds with examples of His forgiveness.
    1. When Adam and Eve committed sin, God forgave them.
    2. When Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sinned, God forgave them.
    3. When Moses sinned God forgave him.
    4. When Israel under the judges and under the kings repeatedly sinned, God forgave her.
    5. Israel's history is a history of God's forgiveness.
  - b. Likewise the NT pictures God as supremely the God of forgiveness.
    1. That is the essence of the gospel: God's divine and gracious provision for the forgiveness of man's sin.
    2. Paul says in Eph 1:7 →
    3. John assures us in 1Jn 1:9 →
3. The *degree* of sin does not forfeit forgiveness, because even killing the Son of God was forgivable
  - a. The worst conceivable sin would be to kill God's own Son. Nothing could possibly be more heinous, vicious, and wicked than that. And, of course, killing Him is exactly what men did to the Son of God.
  - b. Yet, while hanging on the cross and about to die, Jesus prayed and affirmed the forgiving mercy available to His executioners, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do" ([Luke 23:34](#)).
4. Nor does the *volume* of sin end the possibility of mercy.
  - a. A seventy-year-old profligate who has lived a life of debauchery, stealing, lying, profanity, blasphemy, and immorality is forgivable
  - b. He is just as forgivable as a seven-year-old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood naughtiness.
5. Nor does the particular *kind* of sin cancel grace.
  - a. In Scripture we find God forgiving idolatry, murder, gluttony, fornication, adultery, cheating, lying, homosexuality, covenant breaking, blasphemy, drunkenness, extortion, and every other kind of sin imaginable.
  - b. He forgives self-righteousness, which is the deceiving sin of thinking that one has no sin.
  - c. He even forgives the sin of rejecting Christ; otherwise no one could be saved, because before salvation *everyone*, to some degree, is a Christ rejecter.
6. The rejection of Jesus as Messiah and King gradually escalated as His ministry continued.
  - a. Doubt → Criticism → Indifference → Open rejection.
  - b. The religious leaders of Israel then added blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to their rejection of Christ.
7. For centuries God's people had longed for the Messiah, their divine Deliverer.
8. Yet when He arrived He was denied and rejected.

Ex 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Mic 7:18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## I. The Activity – vs 22

22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

1. This man had 3 problems – demon possessed, blind, dumb
2. Perhaps he was even deaf since that is often associated with the inability to speak
3. Jesus healed hundreds of people of these afflictions
4. Here He demonstrates His power over the spirit world and over the physical world
5. Jesus unquestionably had power to heal every kind of disease, to cast out any number of demons and even to restore life to the dead
6. He had performed thousands of instantaneous, total, permanent and verifiable healings
7. Still many sin-blinded people failed to see Jesus as Messiah
  - a) *They knew that he would perform miracles*
  - b) *They also expected royal fanfare and military might*
  - c) *In Jesus they did not see regal robes, a throne, trumpets, swords, horses, chariots, a mighty army*
  - d) *Instead they saw compassion, gentleness and humility*
  - e) *They saw 12 uneducated disciples and a multitude of hangers-on*
8. The religious leaders were no longer merely skeptical and resentful, but they were becoming adamantly hostile to Jesus
9. The irrevocable decision to destroy Jesus had already been made – 12:14
10. Jesus healed this man for the benefit of the Pharisees, forcing them to make their verdict concerning Him public

## II. The Amazement – vs 23

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

### A. What They Were

1. The astonishment was unusual, because this man was not only a demoniac, but also blind and dumb.
2. Some of them had seen Jesus heal before but they were especially amazed by this miracle
3. *Existēmi* (to be **amazed**)
  - a) *Means to be totally astounded, beside oneself with amazement and wonder.*
  - b) *One writer suggests that "it means to be literally knocked out of your senses," and another that "it means to be out of your mind with amazement.*
  - c) *In ways that we may not fully see from the narrative, this particular miracle was unusually overwhelming, as if Jesus meant to intensify its demonstration of supernaturalness.*
4. It was a triple cure.

### B. What They Said

1. By their question, "Is not this the son of David?" the people expressed in a tone of triumph their faith in Jesus.
2. MacArthur says, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"
3. The people recognized miracles like this as possible messianic signs
4. "Son of David" was one of the scriptural titles for the Messiah - [2 Sam. 7:12-16](#); [Ps. 89:3](#); [Isa. 9:6-7](#)
5. This was the title later ascribed to Jesus by the crowds who welcomed Him into Jerusalem as their Messiah and King – 21:9
6. Isn't it sad that some saw this great miracle as proof that Jesus was Messiah and others said that Christ was in league with Satan

BYZ **Matthew 12:22** Τότε προσηνέχθη αὐτῷ δαιμονιζόμενος, τυφλὸς καὶ κωφός· καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτόν, ὥστε τὸν τυφλὸν καὶ κωφὸν καὶ λαλεῖν καὶ βλέπειν.

BYZ **Matthew 12:23** Καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον, Μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ;  
Is this the Son of David? (mēti houtos estin ho huios Daueid;). The form of the question expects the answer "no," but they put it so because of the Pharisaic hostility towards Jesus. The multitudes "were amazed" or "stood out of themselves" (existanto), imperfect tense, vividly portraying the situation. They were almost beside themselves with excitement.

### III. The Accusation – vs 24

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

1. The fact that the multitudes were seriously wondering if Jesus might be the Messiah drove **the Pharisees** to panic
  - a) They unwittingly reacted with the foolish accusation that Jesus cast out demons only by Beelzebub the ruler of the demons.
  - b) These Jewish religious leaders, of whom the Pharisees were always the most zealous and vocal, could not tolerate the thought that this man who denounced them as unrighteous hypocrites and trampled on their human system of traditions could be the prophesied and long-awaited Deliverer of Israel.
2. Beelzebub - *the god of the fly*, a deity of the Ekronites
  - a) How this old god of the fly, who was worshiped by the Philistines of Ekron to protect them from the flies and other pestiferous insects, came to be identified in the Jewish mind with Satan is not known by modern scholars.
  - b) In their explanation of this miracle, the Pharisees displayed some thought and ingenuity.
3. There are only two possible methods of evading the logical force of a miracle:
  - a) One is to deny the reality of the miracle
  - b) The other is to refer the effect to some other cause than the power of God
4. The Pharisees, being unable to deny the reality of the miracle, and knowing that demons are under the command of Satan, resorted to their only alternative by affirming that the power was satanic.
5. They did not affirm this in regard to all of Christ's miracles
  - a) It would have been absurd to represent Satan as a healer of diseases and a friend of man; but it was affirmed only of casting out demons.
  - b) The assertion, if believed by the people, would not only have destroyed their confidence in the divine mission of Jesus
6. Matthew's telling us that Jesus knew their thoughts (v. 25) indicates that the Pharisees were some distance from Jesus
  - a) Perhaps on the fringe of the crowd
  - b) Or standing outside as Jesus ministered within a house.
7. Their intent was to poison the minds of the people against Jesus by answering their question about Him with a resounding no.
8. They said, in effect, that He was the antithesis of the Son of David. He was the servant of **Beelzebub the ruler of the demons**.

### IV. The Answer – vs 25-30

#### A. The Accusation Was Absurd – vs 25b-26

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

- Here we have the first argument of Jesus in reply.
1. Jesus first showed His accusers that their charge was a logical absurdity.
    - a) It is axiomatic that a kingdom divided against itself would soon be laid waste by self-destruction.
    - b) The truism also applies to any city or any house.
    - c) If one or the other becomes divided against itself, it obviously shall not stand.
  2. Applied to the spirit world, the principle is just as clear:
    - a) If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall his kingdom stand?
    - b) Outside of the Trinity, Satan is the most intelligent being in existence, and he certainly does not assign his forces to fight against each other and internally destroy his own program.

BYZ **Matthew 12:24** Οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον, Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια, εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων.

The Pharisees (hoi de Pharisaioi). Already (Matthew 9:32-34) we have had in Matthew the charge that Jesus is in league with the prince of demons, though the incident may be later than this one. The Pharisees feel that the excited condition of the crowds and the manifest disposition to believe that Jesus is the Messiah (the Son of David) demand strenuous action on their part. They cannot deny the fact of the miracles for the blind and dumb men both saw and spoke (Matthew 12:22). So in desperation they suggest that Jesus works by the power of Beelzebub the prince of the demons.

BYZ **Matthew 12:25** Εἰδὼς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται· καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται.

**σταθήσεται.** verb ind fut pass 3ps **ἵστημι** - the meaning often derived from the context, tense, and surrounding relations; I. transitively (present active, imperfect active, future active, first aorist active) basically, as causing to stand still; (1) of persons *place, put forward, appoint, cause to come* (MT 4.5; AC 1.23); (2) of things, generally *set up, arrange*; (a) as arranging payment by putting things on the scales and bringing them to rest *weigh out, pay* (MT 26.15); (b) of time *set, appoint* (AC 17.31); (3) of abstract things, as law, covenants, plan for righteousness, etc. *bring into force, establish, make valid, confirm* (RO 3.31;

BYZ **Matthew 12:26** Καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς τὸν Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλει, ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη· πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ;

**ἐμερίσθη** verb ind aor pass 3ps from **μερίζω** - *divide, separate*; (1) as separating into component parts *divide* (MT 12.25); (2) as apportioning out something to someone *distribute, divide out, assign* (RO 12.3), opposite **συνάγω** (*gather*); middle *share* with someone (LU 12.13)

## B. The Accusation Was Prejudiced – vs 27

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

1. Jesus pointed out the Pharisees' prejudice by showing that they approved exorcisms by their Jewish **sons**
  - a) *They would never have claimed that those activities were ungodly, much less satanic.*
  - b) *Yet when Jesus not only cast out demons but also healed every sort of disease, they accused Him of being in league with the devil*
2. The Pharisees' response reflects the basic response of every person who intentionally rejects Jesus Christ.
  - a) *They did not reject Him for lack of evidence but because they were biased against Him.*
  - b) *Their own deeds were evil and they could not handle the intimidating reality of Jesus' righteousness; they were children of darkness and could not tolerate His light ([John 3:19](#)).*
  - c) *They were not looking for truth but for ways to justify their own wickedness and to destroy anyone who dared expose them.*
3. To put His opponents further on the spot, Jesus suggested that the Pharisees let their exorcist **sons** be their **judges**.
  - a) *The implied suggestion was that they ask those practitioners by whose power they cast out evil spirits.*
  - b) *If they said, "By Satan's power," they would condemn themselves and the religious leaders who supported them.*
  - c) *But if they said, "By God's power," they would undercut the Pharisees' accusation against Jesus.*

## C. The Accusation Was Rebellious – vs 28-30

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

1. If He did His work by the Spirit of God, then His miracles were of God and He had to be the Messiah just as the multitudes had said
  - a) *Every religiously literate Jew knew that the prophets predicted that just such signs would accompany the Messiah's coming*
  - b) *They also knew that the Messiah was to be Israel's supreme and eternal King ([Ps. 2:6](#); [Jer. 23:5](#); [Zech. 9:9](#)).*
  - c) *Jesus was saying, "if I am the Messiah, I am also the coming King, and if I am the King, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."*
2. Satan is the strong man, his house the body of the demoniac, and his goods the evil spirit within the man.
  - a) *Jesus had entered his house and robbed him of his goods*
  - b) *This proves that, instead of being in league with Satan, he had overpowered him.*
3. Could not the Pharisees see that everything Jesus said and did was opposed to Satan?
  - a) *Jesus healed sickness and disease, which came because of sin which, in turn, was brought and promoted by Satan.*
  - b) *Jesus raised people from death, which was also a consequence of sin and indirectly the work of Satan*
  - c) *Jesus cast out demons, which, as He had just pointed out, was in obvious opposition to Satan.*
  - d) *He even forgave sins—and verified His authority to forgive sins by His power to perform miracles ([Matt. 9:5-6](#)).*
  - e) *Every detail of what He taught and did corresponded to the teaching of OT Scripture.*
  - f) *And although the scribes and Pharisees often charged Jesus with opposing and violating their man-made traditions, they could never convict Him of committing sin or of teaching falsehood*

<sup>BYZ</sup> **Matthew 12:27** Καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; Διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ ὑμῶν ἔσονται κριταί.

<sup>BYZ</sup> **Matthew 12:28** Εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>BYZ</sup> **Matthew 12:29** Ἡ πῶς δύναται τις εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ διαρπάσαι, εἰ μὴ πρῶτον δήσῃ τὸν ἰσχυρόν; Καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει.

Of a strong man - Rev. rightly gives the force of the article, the strong man. Christ is not citing a general illustration, but is pointing to a specific enemy—Satan. How can I despoil Satan without first having conquered him?

**διαρπάσει.** verb ind fut act 3ps from **διαρπάζω** - plunder thoroughly, despoil, carry off as plunder

<sup>YZ</sup> **Matthew 12:30** Ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ, κατ' ἐμοῦ ἔστιν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ, σκορπίζει.

## V. The Anathema – vs 31-32

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. 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.

- Few passages of Scripture have been misinterpreted and misunderstood more than these

### A. All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy Shall Be Forgiven

1. Sin here is the full gamut of immoral / ungodly thoughts and actions
  - a) *Some believe murder, suicide, adultery are unpardonable sins*
  - b) *“all manner of sin” includes those mentioned can be forgiven*
2. Blasphemy is defiant irreverence, the uniquely terrible sin of intentionally and openly speaking evil against holy God or defaming or mocking Him
3. OT penalty for blasphemy was death by stoning -[Lev. 24:16](#)
4. In the last days blasphemy will be a characteristic of those who oppose God

*Re 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*
5. But even blasphemy, Jesus says, is forgiven, just as any other sin is forgiven when it is confessed and repented of.
  - a) *An unbeliever who blasphemes God can be forgiven.*
  - b) *1Ti 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

### B. The Unpardonable Sin

1. Technically, blasphemy is any kind of injurious speech.
2. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit here denounced is the evil speech just made by the Pharisees, in which a work performed by the Holy Spirit was attributed to Satan.
3. Whether a man can commit this blasphemy in any other way, does not appear from the text.
4. It is most likely that John refers to this sin when he says: "There is a sin unto death: I do not say you should pray for it." ([1 John 5:16](#).)
5. There has been much superstition and some idle speculation connected with this subject, which we will not pause to consider in detail.
6. It is best in this, as in all other matters, to be content with what is clearly taught.
7. Why it is more certainly fatal to speak against the Holy Spirit than against the Son of man, may be in part beyond our powers of comprehension; but this much we know, that one who speaks against the latter may subsequently be convinced by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and become a believer.
8. But if he reject the evidence given by the Holy Spirit and ascribe it to Satan, he rejects the only evidence on which faith can be based; and without faith there is no forgiveness.
9. If it be answered that a man might do this at one period of his life, and subsequently be convinced and repent, we reply that this is precisely what the Savior, in effect, says he can not do; and we therefore suppose that one who is so desperately wicked as to be guilty of this sin, is already beyond the reach of redemption.
10. Such was the condition of some of the Pharisees. ([23:33](#); [John 8:21](#).)

BYZ **Matthew 12:31** Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, Πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

BYZ **Matthew 12:32** Καὶ ὃς ἐὰν εἴπῃ λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ· ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ, οὔτε ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι.