

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

G . The Second Tour of Galilee

2. Jesus is Publicly Rejected By the Jewish Leadership For the First Time (Specific Miracle #12)

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #088

Base Text: MT 12.22-37 (Parallel Text: MK 3.22-30)

^MAnd the multitude gathered together again to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

22 ^{MT}Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. 23 All the people went into a state of amazement and kept on saying, "Could this be the Son of David?"

24 But when the Pharisees ^Mand the scribes that came down from Jerusalem ^{MT}heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow is driving out demons."

25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them,

^M"How can Satan cast out Satan? ^{MT}Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I myself am driving out demons by Beelzebul, by whom are your people driving them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But since it is by the Spirit of God that I am driving out demons, then the kingdom of God has come right up on you."

29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

30 "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever is not gathering with me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the ^MHoly ^{MT}Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come, ^Mbut is guilty of an eternal sin.

He said this because they were saying, '*He has an unclean spirit.*'"

33 ^{MT}"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. 35 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him."

36 "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	2 nd Tour, Somewhere in Galilee

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

Timeline	May (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	G. The 2 nd Tour of Galilee
Title	2. Jesus Performs Miracle #12, And is Publicly Rejected for the First Time

COMMENT:

Jesus' second tour of Galilee began with one of the most remarkable specific miracles of Jesus (#12), for it was a triple-combination of an exorcism, healing of blindness, and muteness as well. It is hard to imagine the horror of being blind, unable to speak, and tortured by a demon to boot. Each of these conditions were enough to ruin a life--what about three? Jesus' compassionate love moved him to instantly set the man free indeed.

It is also hard to imagine that such a glorious miracle could become the cause for the accusation being a Satanist! Jesus' second tour started out with the first public rejection of him by the Jewish leadership, some of whom had come down from Jerusalem to deliver their verdict against him. The leadership accused Jesus himself of being demon-possessed, and thereby having Satan's power to cast out demons.

This public opposition to Jesus of the strongest kind from the leaders of the nation was a watershed event. It will lead to an increase in resistance, then opposition from the people as a whole. In just a few days Jesus' own family will come to take him home because they think thought he had lost his mind. The questions of John the Immerser, and opposition of so many people from the top down in society show us how much Jesus differed from the popular expectations and images of the Messiah. Requiring change, and not meeting people's expectations are twin torpedoes that can sink any leader's influence. Even Jesus faced these issues.

The Lord responded to the Pharisees by pointing out the logical inconsistency of their accusation. If Satan was using his own power through one person to destroy his work in another, then surely his kingdom was going to fall. The Accuser would destroy himself. Furthermore, the Pharisees occasionally practiced exorcism, but with great difficulty. They did not have the authority of Jesus over Satan, and it was usually a prolonged, pitched battle to cast out a demon, yet they did succeed at times. If Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Satan, then it meant that the Pharisees did, too. Is that really what the Pharisees believed about themselves? Then how could they think it about Jesus?

Jesus called this attitude toward him an act of **"blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, an eternal sin."** What did he mean by this?

It is our attitude toward Jesus that determines our state of relationship with the Holy Spirit. To reject Jesus as Savior and Lord is to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit whose work is to convince us that Jesus IS Lord. These Jewish leaders already hated Jesus, and had privately determined to kill him. When they publicly declared that he was possessed by Satan, not the Holy Spirit, they revealed that their hearts were too hardened against the work of the Spirit to ever repent.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit (12.28). The Holy Spirit worked in and through Jesus in everything he said and did. It is also the Holy Spirit who graciously works in the mind and heart of unbelievers to convince us of who Jesus is. In fact, it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that anybody can really call Jesus "LORD" with their whole heart. (1 Cor. 12.3) So its the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to truly repent and believe in Jesus, just as he gave Jesus the power to cast out demons.

Since it is the Holy Spirit's ministry to point us to the truth in Jesus, to reject Jesus is to actually reject the Holy Spirit who is wooing us to believe in Him. To take it one step further, if a person is so hardened to the work of the Spirit that they can look at Jesus and interpret his actions as being inspired and empowered by Satan, rather than the Holy Spirit, they have reached a point of hardness of heart from which they can never recover.

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This is why Jesus called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit “*an eternal sin.*” Any sin can be forgiven if we acknowledge it as sin and seek for forgiveness. However, blasphemy against the Spirit means that the blasphemer will never acknowledge their sin of rejecting the work of the Spirit. This is an eternal sin because the sinner refuses to seek forgiveness for it, not because God is unwilling to forgive it.

The Pharisees were guilty of sin against the Spirit for which they would never receive forgiveness. No wonder Jesus had to next resort to the use of parables to try to communicate with people who hated him to this degree.

APPLICATION:

Some times Christians worry that they might have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. It is encouraging to realize that it is the rejection of Christ as Savior and Lord that characterizes blasphemy against the Spirit.

A believer in Jesus is incapable of the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. Christians can resist, grieve, and even rebel against the Spirit. These are all terrible attitudes against the Spirit of which we should repent. However, they do not consist of blasphemy. A Christian could never believe that Jesus was controlled by Satan, instead of the Holy Spirit, and confuse God in Christ with the Devil. That, and that alone, is the blasphemy of which Jesus was speaking here.

How is your relationship with the Holy Spirit? Are you...

ignoring Him?

resisting Him,

or being filled with Him?