



WILL BLASPHEMY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DAMN YOUR SOUL FOREVER?

"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matt 12:31-32 (ESV)).

Note: The accountability for this sin is time-limited to the old covenant 'age' (before Jesus), and beyond to the 'age to come' (since Jesus). However, it did not foreclose grace and mercy or even post-mortem repentance. It should also be noted that inasmuch as the divine Trinity is ONE, it is not possible to blaspheme one member without blaspheming ALL. Conversely, if one member of the Trinity (Christ) forgives those who speak blasphemy against him (as he did at the cross) so, too, must the Father and Holy Spirit forgive blasphemy lest there be division of agreement between the 'Three-in-One.' Impossible!

It is also important to understand how the ancient Jewish rabbis looked upon this particular kind of sin. They wrote, '[H]e who has been guilty of profaning the NAME, repentance has no power of being in suspense, the Day of Atonement has no power of bringing expiation, and sufferings have not the power to purge; but they all remain in suspense and [only] death purges him' (*Joma 86a*).

Jesus was not suggesting that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit could *never ever* be forgiven. There is no sin too great for grace to erase! This dynamic truth is made plain by the Apostle Paul, who said, "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Rom 5:20b). Speaking in the tradition of the rabbis, Jesus was simply saying that divine judgment and forgiveness for certain serious and persistent sins might be deferred to a later date (i.e., until after "this age or the age to come" when "death purges them" – see also Isaiah 22:14; Matthew 23:35-39; and especially 1 John 5:16-17 for examples of how this type sin was understood by the Jews.

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