

# Blasphemy Against the Spirit

*Mark 3:22-30*

## Introduction

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law could not deny the reality of Jesus' miracles and supernatural power. But they refused to believe that this power was from God, because by doing so, they would have to accept Jesus as the Messiah! They thus accused Jesus of having power from Satan in an attempt to discredit Him. In doing so, they revealed their pride, unbelief, and unrepentance.

## For Study and Discussion

### 1) Doing the Work of God

a. Looking at an overview of Mark 2:1-3:21, take note of the events that Mark has purposefully recorded. What observations can you make of the trend that the author is highlighting with regards to Jesus, and the response of the people?

b. What can you say about the character traits of those who came to oppose Jesus? What is the essence of their accusations? What do you think are their motives? (3:6, 22)

### 2) Spiritual Warfare

a. In your own words, describe how Jesus refuted his opponents profoundly in v23-26. Articulate how illogical, incoherent their arguments were.

b. What implications can you draw from what Jesus said about the kingdom of Satan in v24-26 and his implicit view of the kingdom of God. Who is the "strong man" Jesus spoke about in v27 and who is the "robber"? Consider also Isaiah 49:24-25.

### 3) The Unforgiveable Sin

a. How would you explain the link from what Jesus said in v23-27, to the warning he gave on blaspheming against the Holy Spirit in v28-29?

b. "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin." These words are so absolute and severe, it sounds scary even to believers. In the context of who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish, why is that sin unforgiveable? Explain also why a true Christian has no need to be afraid of committing the unforgiveable sin.

#### 4) Man's Sinfulness and God's Forgiveness

- a. The Bible has much to say about man's sins and his deepest need for the forgiveness of God. What is the worst sin that you can ever think of? Do you think it is forgivable? Why and why not? Substantiate your answer with scripture.
  
- b. Mark 3:22-30 is sandwiched between two mentions of Jesus' family. Does it shock you that those who were supposedly closest in relation to the Messiah would think they should "take charge of him" and say that "He is out of his mind."? What significance might that have in the light of the Beelzebub verses?

#### Discipleship Pointers

- Mark records Jesus beginning his ministry after John was put in prison (1:14), proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, calling his disciples and doing the work of God in teaching, healing and casting out demons (2:1-3:20).
- Whilst the people were drawn to Jesus because of the good that he has done, the Pharisees, scribes and teachers of the Law grew increasingly unhappy. They felt threatened and responded to Jesus with skepticism and criticism, employed tactics of accusations and insinuations, escalating to evil plots to get rid of Jesus. The Jewish leaders who oppose Jesus began to send learned envoys all the way from Jerusalem to contradict Jesus' radical claims to divine authority and oppose the work of God.
- Jesus' answer came in 3 parts: First, it is absurd to suggest that Satan casts out Satan as it would be self-destructive. Second, if it is not Satan, then it must be someone greater than Satan. Jesus' proved that he has the power to bind the evil one and plunder his stronghold. Third, those who oppose Jesus have placed themselves in enormous danger for "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness." If Jesus is the one who brings forgiveness, then what forgiveness can there be for those who persistently oppose and reject Jesus?
- Jesus' family thinks that he has gone too far in doing God's work and decided that they needed to "put some sense into him".
- Significance: Opposition to Jesus can come in outright demonic attacks, it can also come in subtle "humane" ways. Rejecting Christ gently and respectably is still rejection of Christ.
  - Those who desire to do the will of God will face opposition.
  - Those who work against the will of God oppose God.
  - Those who oppose God unrepentantly will face the wrath of God ultimately (Hence, the unforgiveable sin).

#### Family/Group Moments

- Where do we stand? Are we for or against Jesus?
- Where would our family, friends and colleagues place us in this divide of for/against Jesus by our behaviour and actions?