

Luke 12:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

Analysis

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven—This verse introduces the mysterious and sobering doctrine of the unforgivable sin. The contrast is stark: words against the Son of man (τὸν νιὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (βλασφημήσαντι εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα) cannot. The term blasphēmia (βλασφημία) means slander, defamation, or speaking evil—attributing to evil what is actually divine.

The distinction centers on the Spirit's unique role in conviction and regeneration. Rejecting Jesus during His earthly ministry could stem from ignorance or misunderstanding (Acts 3:17, 1 Timothy 1:13)—Paul persecuted Christians yet received mercy because he acted in unbelief. But blasphemy against the Spirit involves deliberately attributing the Spirit's work to Satan, calling good evil and light darkness (Mark 3:28-30 clarifies this—the Pharisees claimed Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub's power). This represents such hardened, willful rebellion that repentance becomes impossible. It's not that God won't forgive but that the blasphemer cannot repent, having seared their conscience beyond sensitivity to conviction (Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-27).

Historical Context

The context in Matthew 12:22-32 and Mark 3:20-30 shows Jesus spoke these words after Pharisees attributed His exorcisms to demonic power rather than the Holy Spirit. This was not honest skepticism but willful, malicious slander—they saw undeniable evidence of God's power yet deliberately called it satanic. First-century Judaism highly valued distinguishing clean from unclean, holy from profane. Calling the Holy Spirit's work demonic inverted all moral categories, demonstrating spiritual darkness masquerading as light. Church history records debates over whether post-baptismal sin could be forgiven. Some early rigorists claimed apostasy was unforgivable; others insisted only blasphemy against the Spirit fell into that category. The Reformation emphasized that those worried they've committed this sin demonstrate they haven't—concern about one's spiritual state evidences the Spirit's ongoing work of conviction.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the distinction between forgivable words against Christ and unforgivable blasphemy against the Spirit illuminate the Spirit's unique role in salvation?
2. Why does persistent rejection of the Spirit's conviction eventually make repentance psychologically and spiritually impossible?
3. How should the existence of an unforgivable sin shape Christian witness and warning about persistent rebellion against God?

Interlinear Text

καὶ πᾶς ὁς ἔρει λόγον εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ
And whosoever G3739 shall speak a word against G3588 the Son G3588
G2532 G3956 G2046 G3056 G1519 G5207

ἀνθρώπου ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ τῷ δὲ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον
of man be forgiven him G3588 but against G3588 the Holy
G444 G863 G846 G1161 G1519 G40

πνεῦμα βλασφημήσαντι οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται
Ghost unto him that blasphemeth not be forgiven
G4151 G987 G3756 G863

Additional Cross-References

1 John 5:16 (Parallel theme): If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

1 Timothy 1:13 (Parallel theme): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.