

Matthew 12:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

'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.' Jesus distinguishes between forgivable and unforgivable blasphemy. Speaking 'against the Son of man' (κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου/kata tou huiou tou anthrōpou) can be forgiven—even rejecting Jesus in ignorance (like Paul before conversion, 1 Timothy 1:13) finds forgiveness through repentance. But speaking 'against the Holy Ghost' (κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου/kata tou pneumatos tou hagiou) won't be forgiven 'in this world' or 'world to come' (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι...ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι/en toutō tō aiōni...en tō mellonti)—absolute, eternal unforgiveness. Why distinction? Jesus appeared in humble humanity; misunderstanding His identity was possible. But the Spirit's testimony to His deity through miracles is clear, undeniable. Rejecting that clear evidence demonstrates hardened, reprobate condition. Reformed theology: this isn't one-time utterance but persistent state of hardened rebellion.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke these words after Pharisees attributed His Spirit-empowered exorcisms to Satan (v.24). Context clarifies the sin: not mere insult but willful attribution of Spirit's work to Satan. Throughout history, confused theology

debated which specific words constitute this sin. But context shows: it's not particular phrase but heart condition producing systematic, persistent rejection of Spirit's clear testimony to Christ. Many believers have feared committing this sin—the fear itself proves they haven't, as true blasphemers are unconcerned. The phrase 'neither in this world, neither in world to come' uses Hebrew idiom meaning 'never, under any circumstances.' Some erroneously used this verse to support purgatory (sins forgiven in world to come), but Jesus's point is opposite: this sin won't be forgiven in either age—temporal or eternal. Early church fathers (Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine) wrestled with this text. Reformers clarified: unpardonable sin is persistent, final rejection of gospel.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this sin as persistent rejection (not one-time utterance) provide assurance to worried believers?
2. Why is blasphemy against the Spirit worse than blasphemy against Christ—what does this reveal about the Trinity's work in salvation?
3. What warning does this give about the progressive hardening that results from repeatedly rejecting the Spirit's conviction?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὃς	ἂν	εἴπῃ	λόγον	κατὰ	τοῦ	υἱοῦ	τοῦ
And	but	whosoever	speaketh	a word	against	G3588	the Son	G3588
G2532	G3739	G302	G2036	G3056	G2596		G5207	
ἀνθρώπου	ἀφεθήσεται	αὐτῷ	ὃς	δ'	ἂν	εἴπῃ		
of man	be forgiven	him	but	G1161	whosoever	speaketh		
G444	G863	G846	G3739		G302	G2036		
κατὰ	τοῦ	πνεύματος	τοῦ	ἁγίου	οὐκ	ἀφεθήσεται	αὐτῷ	
against	G3588	Ghost	G3588	the Holy	not	be forgiven	him	
G2596		G4151		G40	G3756	G863	G846	
οὔτε	ἐν	τούτῳ	τῷ	αἰῶνι	οὔτε	ἐν	τῷ	μέλλοντι
neither	in	this	G3588	world	neither	in	G3588	the world to come
G3777	G1722	G5129		G165	G3777	G1722		G3195

Additional Cross-References

Mark 3:29 (Holy): But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

John 7:39 (Holy): (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Job 36:13 (Parallel theme): But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

Ephesians 1:21 (Parallel theme): Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Matthew 12:31 (Holy): 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.

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.

Luke 12:10 (Holy): 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.

Acts 3:19 (Parallel theme): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Mark 10:30 (Parallel theme): But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Matthew 11:19 (Parallel theme): The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.