

**WHAT IS BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT?**  
**By Clinton Arnold**

In the midst of his public ministry on earth, Jesus made a startling pronouncement that has struck fear into the hearts of many people since that time. Jesus exclaimed, "And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven" (Mt. 12:31). It is stated even more starkly in Mark's gospel: "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mk. 3:29). What is this terribly heinous sin that God will not forgive? How can we be sure that we have not crossed over this dangerous line?

**Who was Jesus speaking to?**

Jesus uttered this saying to a group of Pharisees, not to His disciples. Jesus had just performed a miraculous healing of a demonized man who was blind and unable to speak. In response to this amazing demonstration of the Kingdom power of God, these particular Pharisees did not merely entertain some doubt about what Christ had done, they actually attributed His work to Satan! They defiantly remarked, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons" (Mt. 12:24).

These people had already heard and seen what Christ had done. They had already heard Christ's teaching and who He claimed to be. Their minds were made up. Jesus was not the Son of David, the Messiah. Jesus was not the one through whom God was working to provide forgiveness of sin. These people openly and antagonistically expressed their rejection of Christ and portrayed Him as a demonically inspired liar and wonder worker. These were people who could look Jesus in the face and arrogantly call Him a devil.

This was "blasphemy against the Spirit" because Jesus was the Father's Spirit-anointed agent. Jesus came and ministered in the power of the Spirit in fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah (see Is. 42:1-4; 61:1-2). It was "by the Spirit of God" that Jesus cast out demons (Mt. 12:28). Luke says that "the Spirit of the Lord" was on Jesus as He came to "proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind" (Lk. 4:18; Is. 61:1).

**Who would do this today?**

If you are worried that you may have committed this unforgivable sin, then this concern alone is sufficient proof that you have not. A sensitivity to sin and to God is a demonstration of the Spirit's work in your life (even if you have a

long way to grow to maturity). Blasphemy against the Spirit is not...

- . merely swearing or uttering a curse (e.g. "God \_\_\_\_\_ him")
- . going through a time of disappointment with God (e.g. over the death of a loved one)
- . having done some awful things before becoming a Christian
- . falling into a period of sinful behavior as a Christian

Blasphemy against the Spirit is an overt rejection of who Christ is and what He has done. One might say it is rejecting Christ to His face.