

Meditation On Matthew 12:31-32

Matthew 12:31-32 [NIV] *“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”*

When we read this passage of scripture in the light of a Triune God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the question arises how can we sin against one person of the Trinity without sinning against the other persons in the Godhead?

Also, what is the unpardonable sin?

First, I would like to point out that the above questions contain a subtle but false assumption.

In this case this false assumption is the key to answering the questions.

The Holy Spirit is one Person of the Trinitarian God is true.

But it is **wrong** to think that the phrase “*Son of Man*” is equally Trinitarian.

Although Jesus used the title “*Son of Man*” to apply to Himself, He did **not** use that phrase to refer to being the second Person of the Godhead.

Rather, Jesus had in mind a figure less than fully divine.

Jesus was using the term “*Son of Man*” to refer to the prophecy in Daniel seven.

Daniel 7:13-14 [NIV] *“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was **one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.** He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*

This “*Son of Man*” was given authority, glory and sovereign power, by the Ancient of Days which is a general term for God, specifically in this case God the Father.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The resurrected God/Man Jesus Christ received this after His resurrection and ascension.

Jesus was still retaining His human form when relating to His disciples.

Luke 24:36-43 [NIV] *“While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, **“Peace be with you.” They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.** He said to them, **“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.”***

Jesus did this so as to relate to those humans He was leaving behind to continue His work as a human among human beings.

When we speak of Jesus we need to be careful, because He was and is not only fully God but also fully human.

Hebrews 4:14-16 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.** Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

Jesus being human, as well as God, makes the perfect High Priest to intercede on our behalf as a human being before God the Father.

Acts 7:55-56 [NIV] *“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, **“I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”**”*

Stephen in his vision of Jesus on the throne recognised Him as the “Son of Man” a human form of Jesus at God’s throne.

Revelation 1:10-16 [NIV] *“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.” I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. **And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.”**”*

John’s vision of Jesus Christ in His glorified state still related to John as like Jesus the “Son of Man” he knew so well.

Revelation 14:14 [NIV] *“I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one **“like a son of man” with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.**”*

Again in this end time vision John related Jesus as the “Son of Man,” preparing the earth for His second coming, this time in power and judgement.

Revelation 1:7 [NIV] *“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.”*

For this to happen Jesus has to return in a human form as the “Son of Man” for Him to be recognised by the Roman soldiers who pierced His body on the cross with a spear. [John 19:34]

With the above in mind let us study this passage in Matthew.

When we read these verses in context we see that it was part of Jesus’ response to those who falsely said He was Beelzebub’s disciple, was to discuss kingdoms.

Matthew 12:22-28 [NIV] *“Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” **But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”** Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his*

kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Any kingdom divided against itself will **not** last.

Matthew 12:29-30 [NIV] *“Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. **“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”**”*

Before you pillage the house of a strong man who first bind him.

Jesus was casting out demons, so He was implying that the strong man was Beelzebub [that is Satan] who had to be bound.

This was prophetic.

Revelation 20:1-3 [NIV] *“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.”*

This will happen at Jesus’ second coming.

As we see the title “*Son of Man*” is **not** a title for God, or for one of the persons in the Godhead.

When Jesus used the title He was referring to the human side that He took on to become our Saviour.

Philippians 2:5-11 [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

Only by becoming the “*Son of Man*” could Jesus, who was also the “*Son of God*,” shed His blood as an atonement for our sins.

As a human being, Jesus did **not** exercise all the characteristics of a person of the Godhead.

So to speak against the Holy Spirit that dwelled without limitation in Jesus and who was the One who cast out the demons was to speak against God.

Why is this sin of blasphemy so serious?

When we understand the work of the Holy Spirit this will clarify this unforgivable sin.

John 16:5-11 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

Here we see that part of the work of the Holy Spirit since the ascension of Jesus Christ is to convict us of sin.

If we reject this work of the Holy Spirit, we reject our only chance of repentance and salvation through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

In blaspheming against the Holy Spirit we are without question blaspheming against God.

In what form does this blasphemy take?

Matthew 12:24 [NIV] *“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, **“It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”**”*

The religious leaders, the Pharisees, attributed the healing work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, the “*Son of Man*” to be the work of Satan [Beelzebub].

Instead of this response to the healing of this man possessed by a demon, the Pharisees should have rejoiced that demons were being conquered.

Also the Pharisees with their knowledge of Old Testament prophecy, should have rejoiced in that that power of the Kingdom of God was working among them.

Matthew 12:30 [NIV] *“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”*

Jesus Christ assured the crowd that there is **no** “*middle ground.*”

We either accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour or they remain under the influence of Satan with **no** means of forgiveness.

Hebrews 6:4-6 [NIV] *“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”*

The attitude of these people is a key factor to their inability to renew their repentant attitude.

“They are crucifying the Son of God all over again.”

In other words they have, in spirit, entered into the ranks of those who slew Jesus Christ.

They wish that Jesus Christ was dead and would be willing to hammer in the nails that held Christ to the cross.

No wonder they cannot be renewed to repentance.

Hebrews 10:26-31 [NIV] *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

If we wilfully persist in sin after having heard and understood the truth, referring to gospel message of redemption, what are we doing?

We spurn the Son of God.

We profane the blood of the New Covenant.

We outrage the Holy Spirit, the Spirit through Whom we receive the Grace of God made available to us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Central to this rejection by God is the attitude these people have towards Jesus Christ, the “*Son of God*” and the “*Son of Man*.”

These people want no part with Jesus Christ, and the work He is doing through true Christians.

This is not describing anyone, who at this time, is ignorant of or does not understand the gospel message.

The time for these people to understand and accept or reject Jesus as their Saviour and the Holy Spirit as the One who will lead them to repentance is in the future.

Revelation 20:11-15 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

Even with a resurrection back to life and a personal experience of the loving work of Jesus Christ and His disciple/teachers, some may still choose to reject the mercy of their Creator God.

God will never force anyone to submit their lives to Him and accept His love and mercy.

We have to choose to believe what God is offering to all humanity through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as our Saviour and allow the Holy Spirit to produce in us the very loving character of God Himself.

Deuteronomy 30:19 [NIV] *“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live”*

God has always given humans the choice of following Him and His way of life or dying eternally.

Genesis 2:15-17 [NIV] *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

Here we see the same choice being given to the first human being.

Accept all blessings I have provided for you to live an abundant life.

But do **not** choose to decide for yourself what is good and what is evil, for that is for your Creator God to decide.

Acts 4:10-12 [NIV] *“then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

When we reject Jesus Christ we automatically choose what is evil, for Jesus Christ is the only One through Whom we can have access to the source of all life, God the Father.