



FRONTLINE ACADEMY

*"Equipped to Share: A Biblical & Apologetics Approach to
Online Evangelism"*

Session Ten - 2025

Ryan Lowe MDiv.



Answering Common Questions (from seekers) Three difficult Questions



The questions we struggle with the most, DO NOT, have clean quick answers!

I "Blasphemed the Holy Spirit"

I cannot be saved

- Matthew 12:22-37
- Mark 3:20-34

Context

- The pharisees in question are given definitive proof Jesus is the Messiah
- However, they would rather attribute God's work to Satan
- (They have seen Jesus in the flesh and still denied Him, this is A different context than we function in today)
- Jesus starts this discourse by saying every **blasphemy** will be forgiven (v.31 see Greek text)

Context cont.

- Keep our Greek tenses in mind
- This may not be a final condemnation of these people, but a warning if they continue in this state
- God is merciful and almost always presents such warnings so people have time to repent.

What is it?

- More than empty words but a state of the heart.
- **Continued** hardened denial despite clear evidence.
- The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8) the one who is not convicted of sin sees no need for a savior.
- If there is no conviction of sin there is no desire for repentance making salvation impossible.

What is it? Cont.

- 1) A clear knowledge of who Christ is and of the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him.
 - 2) A willful rejection of the facts about Christ that His opponents knew to be true.
 - 3) Slanderosly attributing the work of the Spirit in Christ to the power of Satan.
- Very specific and more than just unbelief

Messianic themes

- This all comes about as the people ask if Jesus could be the Son of David (the Messiah) (vv. 23-24)
- Jesus says those who are not with Him are against Him
- Therefore, it appears a denial of Jesus is also in view here

Messianic themes cont.

- Why does Jesus say those who deny the Son of Man will be forgiven? (John 5:31-32)

"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true."

- It becomes unforgivable when our hardened hearts clearly deny the work of God, and could even go a step further and attribute it to Satan

Has the seeker blasphemed the Holy Spirit?

- The heart behind the Pharisees in this scene is more severe than blasphemous words, intrusive thoughts etc.
- A seeker that is sensitive to their sin, is potentially being convicted by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating they have not in fact "blasphemed the Spirit."
- "I have blasphemed the Spirit, I am not elect."

May be "convenient excuses" to not follow Jesus. We still call on all people to trust in Jesus and follow Him

Has the seeker blasphemed the Holy Spirit?

- "The fact that the unpardonable sin involves such extreme hardness of Heart and lack of repentance indicates that those who fear they have committed it... certainly do not fit into that category." - Wayne Grudem
- We may be reasonably sure that those who fear that they have Committed it and worry about this, and desire the prayers of others for them, have not committed it." - Louis Berkhof

How I comfort the seeker

- We perhaps do not know the final state of all the Pharisees Jesus spoke to in this passage.
- But we see many pharisees trust in Jesus in the New Testament:
- Paul (Philippians 3:5-6)
- Nicodemus? (John 19:38-40)
- Joseph of Arimathea (Sanhedrin)
- The group of Pharisee believers (Acts 15:5)

If God is all powerful, good and in control, how could He allow sin to start?

- Not: I do not believe in God because there is evil
- Or: Why does God allow sin to take place now?
- This question looks closer at the provenance of sin and why God allowed this to begin with
- However, all these questions have large areas of similarity

The problem of evil

- Perhaps the most difficult problem in all of theology
 - John Frame
- Moral and natural evil.
- Natural evil results from moral evil (Genesis 3:17-19)

The problem of evil cont.

- Non-being argument (evil as absence of good)
- Sanctification? (Adam was created good)
- How the universe must function?
- Freewill?
- **The greater good defense** (Do the ends justify the means)
(the difference between us and God) (The length of evil)
- God's glory and Jesus
- Philosophical or counselling?
- We only know what is revealed

James and Faith!

- James 2:24 (context!) James is addressing Christians
- By verse 24 James is referring to "that faith" the empty one not real faith.
- "Bare-faith" / intellectual assent / empty faith, is not the same as **saving faith**
- True faith naturally produces works, Paul also warns about abusing grace etc.
- James 2:18b "I will show you MY FAITH by my deeds."

The same idea in other books

- Matthew 13:20-23 parable of the sower
- John 8:31, those who "believed" quickly turn on Jesus
- 2 Timothy 4:10, Demas
- James is simply not contradicting the rest of Scripture
- "Blessed is the one" drawing off Jesus (1:12)

The same idea in other books cont.

- Both James and Paul draw on Genesis 15:6 when discussing faith.
(Acts 21:18)
- James discusses Abraham offering Isaac which happens about 75 years(?) After genesis 15, demonstrating Abraham had lived by faith and then also acted on his faith.
- Paul and James are saying the same thing but from different angles: Justified apart from the law, doesn't mean we can do whatever we want. Faith without works, being dead, does not mean we are saved by works.