

Scott's Thoughts

Attempts at explaining various subjects of Scripture

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No. 5, February 22, 2007

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

When I was a young Christian I had a fear of accidentally committing the unforgiveable sin, i.e., Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (from now on I will abbreviate as "BHS"). I was never sure quite what it was but knew I didn't want to do it. I've heard many explanations, some interesting, some bizarre.

Many Christians are afraid they may have already blasphemed the Holy Spirit. The charismatics often use this fear to keep people from questioning their doctrines. Yet 1 John 4:1 tells us to make sure that we test the spirits and prove them true.

We must keep any portion of Scripture we read in it's proper context. Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking? Under what circumstances? etc. These are all questions we must ask ourselves to correctly interpret Scripture.

When dealing with the BHS we are looking at two passages of Scripture: Matthew 12:25-37 and Mark 3:20-30. We must look at both to gain a proper understanding. Take a minute to read these two passages as a whole before we dissect them. Go ahead and I'll wait..... Done? OK.

Mark sets the scene for us in 3:20 & 21:

And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."

Jesus, with His teaching and preaching, was drawing a large crowd. But His teachings were such that even his own family was questioning His sensibility.

Mat 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. Notice it says that this man was healed, not exercised. Two things that the demon did to this man were to make him blind and mute. (For an excellent study on the nature of demons see Alexander Campbell's discussion at www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/acampbell/mh1841/DEMON1.HTM#Page457.

Also see Joe Beam's book, *Seeing the Unseen*)

²³All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" This question had a meaning to it that we in the 21st century may not grasp at first. This question could easily be worded: "This cannot be the Messiah can it?" And if it was the Messiah then this must be the beginning of the Messiah's Kingdom. It was prophesied that the Son of David would come and sit on His eternal throne. (This is a major thought in Peter's sermon on Pentecost - Acts 2:25-32). This question forced a drastic showdown. Nobody could deny what Jesus had just done. A great miracle had just taken place before those who believed and those who didn't believe.

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." Beelzebul literally means the "Lord of the flies." In my opinion, that's an appropriate name for the devil. In other words they were saying, "This man has a Kingdom alright! It's the Kingdom of Hell." You see, they were admitting that Jesus had the power to do these things, but were claiming it was a Satanic power. There was no way they could deny the miracle that everyone saw, so they claimed He used a Satanic power.

In Mark's account we're told (3:22) The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." ²³And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"

Jesus immediately begins to let them know how contradictory their claims are. Matthew put it to us this way: (12:25) **And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?** Jesus tells them that you guys aren't making any sense. Jesus' argument was that if He were actually using the

I invite you to comment on my interpretation or make comments in general. If you wish to be removed from my address list just let me know and you will be removed immediately. Thank you.

All quoted Scripture is from the NASB Updated

power of Satan He would be possessing people with demons, not casting them out.

²⁷ **If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.** The Jewish leaders claimed to cast out demons. Whether they actually did or not, we are not told, but they claimed to. So if they were doing it, what or who was giving them their authority. If their sons did it through God's power, certainly so did Jesus. We have no response recorded for us in the Gospels. That is probably because they could not respond without condemning themselves.

Then we come to one of the most important verses in understanding this text: ²⁸**But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.** If Jesus was casting out demons by the power of God, which He was, then they must admit that Messiah's Kingdom was here. That was the issue. Is Jesus the Son of David? Does He have a Kingdom? If what Jesus was doing is from God, then the answer is a resounding Yes He is! The Kingdom had come upon them. What did John the Baptizer preach? "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 3:2). What did Jesus preach? "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 4:17). The Kingdom began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It had indeed come upon them.

Jesus is letting them know that if He is casting out demons by the Spirit of God, they must accept His Kingdom. And that it was His Kingdom. He is speaking to the Jewish rulers but is addressing the nation of Israel through her leaders.

²⁹**Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.** "Anyone" would be Jesus. The strong man is Satan and "carry off his property" is the act of taking back the possessed man. Jesus, by casting out demons, was showing His authority over Satan.

³⁰**He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.** ³¹**Therefore I say to you (don't forget that they had admitted His miracle), any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.** And here we come to our question. What is the BHS? If you read 10 different commentaries you will probably get 10 different interpretations.

You see, the Jewish leaders were admitting that a miracle had taken place, but that they were evil, Satanic miracles. They were not godly miracles. Jesus tells them to be careful, because what they say about Him now could be forgiven, but

³²**Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.** ³³**Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.** Jesus, in effect, says to them, You see what I am doing, that it is good. This is my fruit. If you call the fruit good (the casting of the demon) then you must call the tree (Jesus) good. Either call Me and my fruit good or call Me and My fruit bad. Quit walking the fence and make up your minds.

The claim the Jewish leaders made about Jesus' Kingdom, i.e., the Church, was that it was from Hell. That became the official position of the Jewish Leaders. We know this from the Mishnah (the Hebrew oral traditions). It says that Jesus learned the black arts while He was in Egypt as a child.

Paul, before he met Jesus, had this attitude about the Church. He felt the Church was so evil it had to be destroyed and persecuted. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-16.

³⁴**You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.** Of course they could not call Jesus good. To do so would incriminate them as evil. For the Jewish leaders, it was better for them to attack Jesus and the truth of who He is than to admit His power and authority. They were taking what was obviously good and trying to make it evil. They knew this was of God and still they chose to call it evil and of the devil. In John 3:2 Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Notice he said, "we." Yes, the Jewish leaders knew exactly who Jesus was and chose to deny Him and His Kingdom.

These Jewish leaders knew and made a conscious decision to lie and claim it was of Satan. Remember what happened to Ananias and Sapphira when they lied. Peter didn't say that they lied to him. No. They made a conscious decision to lie to the Holy Spirit. They were struck down dead (Acts 5). They knew what was right yet they lied about it. So it is with these Jewish leaders. They knew the truth but chose to lie about and to the Holy Spirit.

On the Day of Pentecost the Baptism of the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles and when Peter preached, he preached of the judgment that was coming because they had killed the Messiah. A national judgment. Speaking in Tongues was also a sign of the national judgment that was to befall Israel. (If this teaching is new to you please read my article concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Speaking in Tongues located here: www.crownhillchurch.com/Bhs.pdf.)

The BHS is similar because it has to do with a national sin. Jesus is speaking to the Jewish leaders to the nation as a whole. Not every single person in Israel nailed Jesus to the cross. But in Peter's sermon on Pentecost, the nation as a whole would be held accountable.

In the same way, Jesus, speaking to the Jewish leaders, was teaching the nation. These leaders were adamantly denying that Jesus had the power of God even when it was demonstrated in front of their very eyes. What did they do when they had to try and explain away the empty tomb? They denied the power of God. They couldn't explain the tomb so they persecuted the Church. Much of the Book of Acts is an accounting of the Apostle Paul running from town to town to avoid being killed by the Jews.

The official view of the Jewish leaders was that the Church was the Kingdom of Hell, yet they knew who Jesus was, what Jesus did, and that the Church was His Kingdom. The Birth of the Church came with great power that could only come from God. The crowd recognized this for 3000 of them became followers of Jesus that day. Yet the official version was that it was from Hell.

The BHS was a national sin, not a personal sin. A sin that could only be committed by an eyewitness to the power of God through His miracles and then consciously lying and attributing the power to Satan.

The nation of Israel was destroyed in 70 AD. As a whole, it had committed the BHS. That does not mean that individuals could not repent. Paul did. So did many un-named others. But the nation was destroyed.

Does the issue of BHS ever come up in the New Testament again outside the Gospels? No. The early Church did not struggle with this issue. Why? Because it was a national sin.

³⁵The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. ³⁶But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

You may ask, but what about the sin that leads to death in 1 John 5:15-18? Let me try and answer this with the short version. Maybe this is worth an article by itself, but I don't really think so.

Doesn't all sin lead to death? If it didn't we wouldn't need the grace of God. But isn't all sin forgivable? With the exception of the BHS, yes. So what is a sin that leads to death?

In Matthew 18 we are taught the concept of Church discipline. If someone sins, they are to be confronted, first privately. If he/she does not repent, then confronted

with witnesses. If he/she does still not repent then it is to be brought before the congregation. If no repentance takes place after that he/she is to be put out of the Church. The New Testament teaching is that to be out of the Church is to no longer have salvation. Why would a person be in such a situation? Because this is a person committing a sin that leads to death, i.e., unrepented sin. However, if and when this person does repent we are to welcome him back as a brother (2 Thes. 3:15).

The BHS is not something we need to fear. Just be faithful and trust in God's grace.

SCOTT



Here's some comments from the last edition concerning Hebrews 10:25:

GF in IN: I think your article is good stuff. I have heard the day approaching may be the Destruction of Jerusalem, second coming but you teach what I teach.

I do think you put a but where it does not belong. I think we should provoke one another to good works by not forsaking the assembly. How can we talk if we are not together. It is at the assembly that we edify, admonish and comfort. 1 Cor. 14: 2 That is why we encourage people not to miss the assembly because that is where this provoking occurs.

I do think it is a great text to beat people over the head with. Ha. I definitely believe missing the assembly is part of the sin that we must not commit. If a man missed Passover he died without mercy at the hand of witnesses. Not every law of Moses brought death. But if he missed the sacrifice of the Passover he died without mercy.

However when we miss the assembly we are;

Trodding Jesus under foot.... I do not care if you were sacrificed or not I am not going.

Count the blood of the covenant that sets us apart unholy.... I know the supper is the sign of the blood of the covenant but I am not going to remember that covenant.

do despite to the spirit of grace... this is not the Holy Spirit... It is the attitude of grace.... no body is going to come and kill me if I am not there like they would if I missed Passover.... I am under grace.... (they are turning grace to license.)

such people forget God is a consuming fire. Those that turn back and continue to trod him under foot and despise his grace and count the blood of the covenant that sets him apart unholy will be judged and vengeance taken. So they are encouraged to remember the old days when they suffered for him and remain faithful. Missing the assembly is the first sign of a backslider.

DR in WA: Hey Brother Scott.....

There are three of your thoughts that I wrote down and they appealed to me instantly. First: "The New Covenant brings us into the presence of God in a way that was never

possible before.” Second: “We Christians are to think about ways to stimulate”. And third: “It is sometimes easy to forget that God is more than a Loving God. He is a jealous God, absolutely Holy and absolutely Just”.

In looking around at the “church” today I don’t see much in the way of definite growth happening. Numerical growth is highly admirable and is always welcome. But “Spiritual” growth seems to be stagnant as well. How can we “stimulate” the believers that we have to really “own” their place that the new Covenant affords them? How can they/we look at it as such an awesome and grand privilege “into the presence of God...that was never possible before”. How can we inspire each of us to personally own their rightful place in our Holy God’s presence? These questions run in my head as I consider this first sentence of yours that I wrote down.

Then the third sentence that I wrote down is very true that, “it is very true and easy to forget that God is more than a Loving God”. The immediate sense I gather from this is that “today”...people; even those in the church; simply “forget” about God...most of the time. They are too busy with their living and concerns that they find themselves forgetting to “consider” God...and His Love and Jealousy and Holiness and Righteousness! How could we in the church reinforce “our” Love for God to become preeminent throughout **every** moment of our living? Then your second sentence which I wrote down, “How could we Christians think of ways to stimulate” ... one another!

The priority that comes to my heart and mind is.....to **Pray** for it. I try to share my Faith with my co-workers whenever I can. They may not ever darken the doorway of the Church, but I look at it as my responsibility to let the Holy Spirit continue with them after I have shared my Faith. It isn’t always easy to discuss matters of Faith with others, but I find that somewhere in their past, they have considered matters of Faith honestly and openly. I gather that by their heartfelt responses to my sharing and discussions with them. I remember hearing once that it takes several “hits” or “exchanges” of ideas before someone makes a decision to repent and become a Christian. “We” are but one of those hits along their path to Christ. So we can and always should be... “Faithful”!

How about those already in the Church...how can we edify and stimulate each of us in ways that makes matters of Faith much more important than daily matters of life? I happen to know that your Wednesday evening class presently on the book of Revelation...is one of those marvelous ways to stimulate one another. This was only the second class, but already, Revelation is much “clearer” to my understanding than ever. I enjoy the class...so “Thank You” for holding them!

Pray...Pray...and Pray some more! This may be all that some of us can do right now, but I don’t think it can hurt.

Thank You Brother Scott for sharing “Scotts Thoughts”. I tend to “think” when reading through them