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Body

1.

The Victory of the Spirit vv. 22-23. First, we see the victory of the Spirit in vv. 22-23.

1.

Text

1.

22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.

2.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"

3.

A Spiritual Victory. This victory was a spiritual victory. This demon-oppressed man's physical problems of being blind and mute were caused by the demon; his problem was spiritual first, and physical second. So when Jesus healed him, it was clear Jesus did not only solve the man's physical problems; He also must have cast out the demon as well. Jesus performed a spiritual work in this man. But because they are spiritual, you and I cannot see demons, and we cannot see the Holy Spirit. Rather, we can only see their effects. Christ said "
The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.
" (

John 3:8
) So it is with the Spirit.

4.

An Amazing Cure. This man in such an abject condition received an amazing cure. He was " bli
nd and mute
," but when cured he "
spoke and saw.
" Jesus worked a 180 degree turnaround in this man. His physical problems were immediately and completely reversed, point for point. Did Jesus do the same for him spiritually? The text doesn't say, but you should know the answer. "
All the people
" who were there knew the answer. The demon was the cause of the man's physical problems. So Christ must have cast out the demon, who was evil. Did Christ not also make the man good where he had been evil before? The crowd marveled, saying "
Can this be the Son of David?
" The Messiah? It must be! Who else could perform such a great miracle—healing a man in body and soul!

5.

The Work of the Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is to be victorious over evil in body and in soul. The Holy Spirit's work is precisely the opposite of Satan's, who is "
the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.
" (
Eph. 2:2
) The Holy Spirit makes you holy, makes you obedient to God. Satan tempts us through the lusts of our flesh, so "
the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other
." (
Gal. 5:17
) Without the Holy Spirit, we would be blind and dumb spiritually, just as this man was physically. "
Unless one is born again
" by the work of the Spirit "
he cannot
see
the kingdom of God
" (
John 3:3
), nor will he "

pray
in the Holy Spirit
" (
Jude 20
), as he ought. But praise the Lord that Christ came "
to destroy the works of the devil.
" (
1 John 3:8
)

6.

The Vindication of the Spirit vv. 24-30. Because we cannot see the Spirit, but only His effects, the Pharisees blasphemed the Holy Spirit, so to demonstrate their error Christ revealed the vindication of the Spirit
in
vv. 24-30
.

1.

The Pharisees' Blasphemy v. 24. First we hear the Pharisees' blasphemy in v. 24.

1.

Text

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24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."

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The Pharisees see they are losing their prestige in the eyes of the people, so they seek to ruin Christ's reputation by ascribing His miracle to the power of an evil spirit rather than the power of the Holy Spirit. They are jealous of Jesus. The true prophet John said "

He must increase, but I must decrease
." (
John 3:30
)
But the Pharisees say, "He must decrease, and I must increase." So they call the work of the Holy Spirit the work of Satan. This is such direct disrespect for God's honor, for God's holiness, His healing power, that it fully qualifies to be called "
blasphemy
."

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They were forced to admit that casting out demons was a miracle, and done by supernatural means. So they insinuate Christ has a pact with the Devil, so the Devil is not cast out, but willingly retreats, in order to lead men further into temptation to worship the Devil, rather than the Holy Spirit. They imply Christ uses the greater power of the prince of demons to cast out lesser demons. They imply that He who is Truth itself is in league with the father of lies.

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They turn Jesus' relationship with the Holy Spirit upside-down. They act as if Jesus does not have power in Himself, but receives it from Beelzebul. But the truth is in His divine nature as the eternal Son of God Jesus does not receive His power from Beelzebul, or even from the Holy Spirit. He has all power in Himself.

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Jesus' 3 Reasons It Was A Miracle by the Holy Spirit vv. 25-30. Jesus gives 3 reasons it was a miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit
in
vv. 25-30
.

1.

Because Satan wouldn't oppose himself vv. 25-26. First, this miracle was done by the Holy Spirit because Satan wouldn't oppose himself .

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Text

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25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

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26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

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In 1997 I spoke with a county administrator in Uganda who said there are enough fish in Lake Victoria to feed the whole country, but you can't get fish 10 miles inland from the lake because the roads are not good enough to allow the fish to be transported. That is because Uganda's dictators destroyed its infrastructure. "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste." Our own nation's civil war took a terrible toll on our people. Why would Satan do that to himself?
Satan wouldn't oppose himself
.

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If the house of God is divided against itself, that is not the work of the Holy Spirit. "If you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
" (
Gal. 5:15-16
)

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Because it did good vv. 27-28. Second, this miracle was done by the Holy Spirit because

it did good
. Christ cast out a demon, which is a good work that can be done only by the power of God.

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Text

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27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

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28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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Christ did what only God the Holy Spirit can do, so He asks the Pharisees, "How otherwise do your disciples cast them out?" Christ's question assumes some disciples of the Pharisees cast out demons by the power of the true God. Josephus speaks of this, and "Jewish exorcists" are mentioned in
Matt. 7:22
,
Mark 9:38
and
Acts 19:13
. Not all, but some, healed by God's power. It is of these whom Jesus speaks—the Pharisees must admit their disciples cast out demons by the power of God. But there can be no way to prove that fact if Jesus casts out demons by the power of Satan. In that case the Pharisees' disciples might as well be casting out demons by the power of Satan too! How do you know which is true? The only way to know is if demons can be cast out by the power of God alone. And if that is true, the Pharisees' disciples will rightly condemn the Pharisees for claiming Jesus cast out demons by any power but the power of God.

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So this miracle is proof that the kingdom of God has come. It is proof that not only that Jesus is the Messiah, but that the victory of His kingdom over the kingdom of Satan is at hand. "The seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head.
" (
Gen. 3:15
) Because this kingdom is now here in its
activity
, which is performed by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit is at work here and now—for that reason we despise it to our peril.

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Because it defeated Satan v. 29-30. Third, this miracle was done by the Holy Spirit becaus e it defeated Satan
.

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Text

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29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

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30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

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In Christ's illustration the strong man is Satan, and unbelievers are the possessions in his house. In order for Christ to establish His kingdom it was necessary for Christ to bind Satan first, because Satan is the ruler of sinful men, because they were given over to him by Adam's original sin. Christ must win a direct victory over Satan first before He can do the further work of His kingdom, and this is precisely what Christ did by casting out demons. He defeated Satan.

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In this battle Christ will not allow neutrality. In less important matters, "the one who is not against you is for you
" (
Luke 9:50
), but in the ultimate battle against Satan, Christ declares "
Whoever is not with me is against me
." If the Holy Spirit is at work in you, you should not be divided against one another, but should also not ally with the enemy. "
14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?
" (
2 Cor. 6:14-15
) You can form a partnership with an unbeliever in business, but not in religion, and not in marriage. Don't marry an unbeliever. The Masons claim to be a religion and require you to say that Muslims, Jews, and Hindus are saved, so don't become a Mason. To partner with Satan at any point is to oppose Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

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But Christ is plundering the strong man today by the work of the Holy Spirit. The nature of Christ's victory over Satan is that men "turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. " (**Acts 26:18**)

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The Veneration of the Spirit vv. 31-32. The Spirit's work is full of God's grace, full of God's glory. For that reason we should worship God the Spirit, and hold His work in the highest honor. This is the veneration of the Spirit, which Christ reveals in **vv. 30-32** .

1.

Text

1.

31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

2.

32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

3.

Now what is your focus when you read these words? Some of you worry you might commit the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Others don't worry because you know if you're concerned about committing the unforgivable sin, you give good evidence you haven't committed it. And that is true. But the point of Christ's words is far greater than a mere concern about this frightening sin that will not be forgiven. Christ's reason for telling you about the seriousness of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to motivate you to do the opposite of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Rather than vilifying the Spirit, you should venerate Him. Rather than count Him
worthless
, count Him
worthy
of all your
worship
.

4.

There is a great promise of God's grace in v. 31: "every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people." Every sin and even specifically every kind of blasphemy can be forgiven. The greatest sin will not prevent you from being reconciled to God if you repent and believe the gospel. God forgave Paul, who had "
been a blasphemer
." (
1 Tim. 1:13
)

5.

What then makes this sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable? It cannot be the greatness of the sin, because God can forgive the greatest sin, as he forgave Paul the chief of sinners. I believe what makes it unforgivable is the nature and place of the Spirit's work.

1.

The nature of the Spirit's work is that He is the immediate agent of all of God's activity in creation and redemption. God the Father, Son, and Spirit are always all involved in each of the works of the Godhead; each in their own way. God the Father saves through Christ the Savior by the immediate working upon us of the Holy Spirit. The Father's work is mediated through Christ, and Christ's work is applied by the Spirit. Because the Spirit works upon our hearts directly, immediately (though also with and through the means of grace), to oppose the Spirit is to rebel against God Himself in the most direct manner possible, and specifically this means we refuse to be convicted of our sin, we harden our hearts, we refuse to believe in Christ for salvation, we refuse to obey God's commands. There is no salvation for those who refuse to repent and believe.

2.

The place of the Spirit's work in history also makes rejecting it unforgivable. Christ has in view an historical progress in the works of His kingdom. First Christ would come, teach, preach, perform miracles, die, rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven. Then the Holy Spirit would be poured out at Pentecost, work miracles through the apostles, and work faith and repentance in men. If you rejected Christ and His works during His earthly ministry there was still hope you might repent and be saved when the Spirit came. But if you reject the Spirit and His works in the age of the church,
there are no more revelations, signs, or salvation beyond His work
. The salvation which the
Father promised
in the OT, the
Son produced
2000 years ago, and the
Spirit personally applies
today. There is no opportunity for salvation beyond the Spirit's work today of applying Christ's salvation to the hearts and lives of men. "
Today is the day of salvation.
" (
2 Cor. 6:2
) God has "
appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment
" (

Heb. 9:27
), "
and they will not escape.
" (
1 Thess. 5:3
)
Heb. 10:29
asks you, "
How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?
"

3.

Conclusion

1.

Today is not the time to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, but to worship Him. He has been poured out on the church not first to show signs and wonders but to make men holy by God's saving grace, to work in them faith and obedience, not for their destruction but for their healing, to grant them peace with God, to pour out God's love in their hearts and grant them joy in the Holy Ghost. He causes you to bear fruit in holiness and gives you gifts for increasing service in Christ's kingdom. By the Holy Spirit Christ is victorious over Satan's power in your life, He vindicates the honor of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and so deserves and receives the veneration
of His saints. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom full of the Holy Spirit, and for that we should give all praise to His name!