

Matt 12:24-32 NIV

24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

25 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. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

29 "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.

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but **the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.** 32 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.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

The sin Jesus was confronting was the Pharisees' deliberate rejection of that which they knew to be of God (cf. Jn 11:48; Ac 4:16). They could not deny the reality of what the Holy Spirit had done through Him, so they attributed to Satan a work that they knew was of God (v.24; Mk 3:22). Someone never exposed to Christ's divine power and presence might reject Him in ignorance and be forgiven---assuming the unbelief gives way to genuine repentance. Even a Pharisee such as Saul of Tarsus could be forgiven for speaking against Jesus or persecuting His followers---because his unbelief stemmed from ignorance (1 Ti 1:13). But those who know His claims are true and reject Him anyway sin "against the Holy Spirit"---because it is the Holy Spirit who testifies of Christ and makes His truth known to us (Jn 15:26; 16:14,15). No forgiveness was possible for these Pharisees who witnessed His miracles firsthand, knew the truth of His claims, and still blasphemed the Holy Spirit---because they had already rejected the fullest possible revelation.

From the MacArthur Study Bible