

# OpenTheo

## Mark 3:20 - 3:33



### Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg explores Mark 3:20-33, highlighting the importance of the apostles' role in Jesus' ministry and their subsequent appointment as visible leaders of the church. He also addresses the false accusations made against Jesus by critics and the concept of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Gregg emphasizes the need for accurate discernment of the works of the Holy Spirit and for repentance and forgiveness of sins. Finally, he explains how Jesus redefined family loyalties and obligations based on obedience to the Father's will.

### Transcript

Let's look at Mark chapter 3. We left off with the appointing of the 12 apostles, which was in verses 13 through 19, and I think there's a couple of reasons that the apostles were selected at this particular juncture, because we read in the passage just before it and the passage just after it an emphasis on what large crowds were following Jesus, what large numbers of people there were, which means, among other things, that he had a rather large pool of folks from which to draw a group of leaders, because there were multitudes there. Certainly not all the multitudes were disciples, but a certain percentage of those who came were. And as greater numbers of people came to hear Jesus teach from those would be a greater number of persons also who would be added to his group of disciples.

And so by this time, he was not obscure at all. By this time, it was not as if he had just a handful of people to choose from. He may have had scores or hundreds of disciples, for all we know, to choose from.

And so it was not a premature season for making a choice. But also, I think he needed them now more than ever because of the crowds. You know, I haven't pictured it this way before, but in the movie that they made of the Gospel of John, it's rather interesting.

You know, in the Gospel of John, it often says that people took up stones to stone him, but he escaped from their midst and no one laid a hand on him. And there's no explanation in the Gospels, really, how that transpired, why people took up stone, stone,

but somehow Jesus ended up not being stoned. But the interpretation given by those who made that movie, which I thought was interesting because I had never seen it suggested before, was that every time it came to place in the Gospel of John, they took up stone, stone where they sought to kill him.

It although there's no lines in the movie other than the ones in the Gospels, many things are acted out visually. And at that point, you see the disciples standing up, you know, in front of between Jesus and the people who want to stone him so that it kind of works them as Jesus moves off into the crowd. You know, it's like the disciples are there to kind of protect him from the crowd.

Now, we don't know that they had any role like that. And certainly I'm not suggesting that they were protecting like ready to do, ready to fight, you know, for him, but rather just more like a shield between him and those who had hurt him at that point. And it may be that they did play something like that.

I thought it was rather I never thought of it that way before. So I'm moving. And that could could actually be the way things worked out.

And if it wasn't the case that they actually stood as a as a physical shield between him and other people, they could be a buffer in another sense in that people who would otherwise insist on talking to Jesus. Once he had a recognized group of lieutenants who were authorized and close to him, people, some people could go to them instead of to him. And that would keep him from being pestered by everybody who wanted something.

The disciples were given the power to cast out demons and to heal the sick, so not everyone who needed healing would have to come to him. And we find there are instances where they brought a demon to this boy, to his disciples, or they were unable on that occasion to heal him. But that nonetheless, people came who would have come to Jesus.

They actually came to his disciples. There's times when people come to the disciples, ask them questions about their master. Why does he do this? Why does he do that? And so because Jesus is being crowded, perhaps overwhelmed by the crowds.

This is a good time for him to get some guys who will be loyal to him and will be kind of, in one sense, a buffer between him and the multitudes, if not as a protective physical shield, at least just someone who can intercept those who would come to him on occasion. So we see the disciples saw that as their role, sometimes, sometimes inappropriately, like when people were bringing their children to Jesus to bless them. The disciples said, no, you can't do that here.

They're trying to protect Jesus from that kind of intrusion, although on that occasion,

Jesus said the disciples were wrongheaded in that they needed to let those children be brought to him. But the fact that the disciples felt that they could do that on that occasion may indicate that this is the kind of thing that was that they did. That if they thought Jesus was being too crowded, too overwhelmed, they were part of their presence, their presence served partially.

To create that buffer. But that's not really why he chose them. That might have been an added benefit of having chosen.

He chose them so that he could train them and send them out and empower them and let them be his. In a sense, his replacement as the visible leaders of the church, only a few days, only a few years, I should say, from this point, since Jesus was probably at least a year into his ministry at this point before he chose them. We could say that they were trained for two years, probably maybe two and a half years before their training had to be considered complete.

And therefore. He gets started at this point and he will spend much of his teaching time teaching them privately. And we'll find in Chapter four, when he's teaching the multitudes in parables, he teaches the disciples privately.

He explains the parables privately. Even after his resurrection, he met with his apostles privately in the upper room the day of his resurrection, and he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. They got special treatment.

They had special privileges because they had special responsibilities. Of course. We now come to verse 20, which also continues to emphasize the effects on Jesus of the crowds that were coming to him.

It says the multitude came together again so that they could not so much as eat bread. That is, Jesus and his disciples didn't have time to eat. The demands of the crowd were, you know, touch me, I'm sick, cast the demon out of my child or whatever.

And there is just so much work to do that Jesus didn't have time to take a break to eat. Now, that's not that unusual for a busy person, even in other kinds of work. Lots of people just get so busy in their work that it's noon before they've eaten anything.

Maybe it's evening before they've eaten things. They just don't have time and they don't even know that they're not eating. Remember, Jesus, when he and his disciples in John chapter four came to Sychar in Samaria, the disciples went into town to get food for them for the group.

Jesus got involved in a conversation with this woman at the well. And when the disciples came back with the food, he said, no, I don't need any food right now. My food is to do the will of him that sent me to finish his work.

Sometimes you just get wrapped up in the ministry or in other words. And food is the last thing on your mind. And so Jesus was so busy here, he couldn't eat bread.

And that is why we have verse twenty one. But when his own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of him, for they said he's out of his mind. Now, who were these his own people? Some would say it's just the people of Nazareth, his hometown.

But why would they care? Why would they go and lay hold on him? They had no, you know, commitment to him. They had no vested interest in his well-being, his own people. I think the King James is something like his own family or his own kindred, although the word people is more general and is the word that's used.

But nonetheless, it apparently was his kindred, because we find in verse thirty one sometime shortly after this. Then his brothers and his mother came standing outside and sent him calling him, we will find. He does not grant them an audience, which seems rather rude, his own mother and his own brothers.

But I believe the reason he didn't grant them the audience is because they were there for no good. They were the his people who are mentioned in verse twenty one is the ones who think he's not taking good care of himself. He's not thinking straight.

He's obsessed. He's out. He's beside himself.

He needs some rest and relaxation. No doubt his brothers were the ones who brought this up to his mother. But it's not hard to appeal to a mother's concern if her son's not eating.

You know, he's just not getting enough sleep. He's not getting enough food. And she's a Jewish mother.

She's the type to be very meddling, no doubt, which is maybe a motherly thing to do. Not a bad thing, necessarily. But she obviously decides that it is good for Jesus to take him out of circulation for a while, give him some rest, get him to eat a few good meals, give him some chicken soup and he'll be better soon.

But when she shows up with the brothers, Jesus knows what they're there for and he won't even grant them a conversation with him because they're there for the wrong reasons. Now, the other synoptic gospels also mentioned the story of the mothers and brothers coming in, Jesus not not being willing to see them. But only Mark tells us this other part in verse twenty two or twenty one that his own family members had decided that they had to intervene for his own good because he was acting irrationally.

He was acting obsessively. He was out of his mind, as they said. Now, there were other critics of his, too, besides them.

There were the scribes who came down from Jerusalem. Now, they weren't concerned about him. They weren't even concerned with the truth.

They were concerned about one thing only, and that is discrediting him. And this particular story in verse twenty two is also found in Matthew twelve. It says the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said he has Beelzebub and by the ruler of the demons, he cast out demons in Matthew twelve.

It says that this accusation was made on the occasion where Jesus had just cast out a demon, a notable case where a demon had made a man blind and dumb. And when the demon was cast out, the blind saw and the dumb spoke very remarkable case. And as a result, Matthew tells us the people were saying, oh, this must be the son of David, meaning the Messiah.

And it says when the scribes and Pharisees heard that, they were very displeased that the people were saying that. And that elicited this remark, no, he's doing it by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Now, Beelzebub is a kind of a strange word in the Greek.

I think it's Beelzebul, but the name has two forms. It comes from the Old Testament Beelzebub. Bael is like the God Bael and has the etymological meaning of Lord.

And the term Baelzebub, Baelzebul, yes, Baelzebul is the term that the worshippers of this God in the Old Testament used. It means Prince Bael, Bael the God, Prince Bael is what Baelzebul means. However, the Jews in the Old Testament, once they became loyal to God again, they despised this paganism and this referring to this deity as Prince Bael.

So they gave it a slightly different play on words. Instead of Baelzebul, they called him Baelzebub, which means Lord of the Flies, which obviously is a term of contempt. For him.

And so the Jews had come to refer to this deity of the pagans as the Lord of the Flies. Baelzebub is what that means, Lord of the Flies. Yet the real name by the real worshippers of that God was Baelzebul, which means Prince Bael.

Now, I believe in the Greek of Mark, it says Baelzebul, but the King James, the new King James, take it in the Baelzebub. And the scribes referred to Baelzebub as the Prince of the or the ruler of the demons. Now, Baelzebul is an actual deity of the pagans, but the scriptures teach plainly that the pagan deities are demonic.

In Deuteronomy, Moses mentioned that, that they worship demons, even in First Corinthians 10, verse 20. Paul says the things that the heathen worship, the things they offer up, they offer to demons and not to God. First Corinthians 10, verse 20.

And so the gods of the heathen were recognized by the Jews as having demonic

inspiration behind them. Not that the idols themselves had any power. And Paul makes that clear also in First Corinthians.

He said that idol is nothing at all. The statue doesn't have anything about it that is, you know, remarkable, but the worship of demons is a demonically, the worship of idols is a demonically inspired worship that the demons use idolatry in order to draw people into demonism. And therefore, the names of the deities were seen by the Jews actually being the names of the demons behind the deity, including Baelzebul.

Now, in the Jewish way of speaking, the rabbis had come to speak of that deity, Baelzebul, as the Prince of the demons or the ruler of the demons, which in a way they call him the Lord of the flies. And the Lord of the demons kind of equating the demons with flies, I mean, despicable, foul, loathsome, dirty creatures. Now, it is this Baelzebul that they say Jesus is working in league with.

Now, this wasn't a very sensible thing to say, and Jesus pointed that out immediately. He pointed out the nonsense of that claim, but they obviously had a desperate need to explain what was clearly supernatural. After all, there are supernatural things besides things from God.

The devil can work signs and wonders. I don't know how many he actually does work, but we know he can in the scripture in second Thessalonians specifically tells us so. In second Thessalonians.

Chapter two, it says of the man of lawlessness. In verse nine, second Thessalonians to nine, the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and lying wonders. So there are signs and deceptive wonders being done through the power of Satan, not through the power of fakery, not through the sleight of hand of a stage magician, but through actual demonic power.

And so since that was well known, the Jews knew that there was satanic power, demonic power. They had seen supernatural feats done by demon possessed people like break chains and things like that. So they said, well, OK, Jesus is doing supernatural things, but we cannot allow that these are works of God.

So we have only one other option. You know, maybe before we had seen so much, we could have said it's fakery, but but there's too many things happening right before our eyes. It's clearly miraculous.

So we have to give it some kind of explanation that is not of God. And therefore, the only option is that it's through the devil. And although it doesn't make much sense for them to say this about Jesus works.

They that's really the point that their desperation brings them to to try to discredit him at all costs against all the evidence. And so he called them to him and said to them in

parables, how can Satan cast out Satan if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand but has an end. Now, this is a rhetorical device. Jesus is a lot of well-known and identifiable rhetorical devices in his arguing.

This is called *reducto ad absurdum*, which you can tell what the Latin words mean. *Reducto ad absurdum*. It means reduced to absurdity.

And this is a this is a thing that Jesus did here and sometimes debaters will do legitimately. And that is to show that what your opponent has said, if you take it seriously, if you take it to its logical conclusion, it's absurd. It may not sound absurd on the face of it, but if you think of what it is implied and you apply that application consistently, then you're going to come up with an absurdity.

Namely, if I'm casting out demons by the power of demons. Well, maybe that sounds on the face of it like one possibility, but doesn't really make sense when you think about it. Satan must be very stupid if he is opposing himself, because any kingdom or house that divides against itself is bringing its own doom upon itself.

It's going to fall. And Satan, why would he do such a thing as that? Why would you think that would be the best explanation of what's going on here? He says, let me give you a different explanation that makes more sense. Verse 27, no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house.

Now. Some scholars say that the name Beelzebul, rather than being translated Prince Bale, should be translated Lord of the House. Apparently, the etymology of the word could allow that.

Remember, a lot of times the Hebrew is missing the vowels, and so the words can be translated somewhat differently in some cases. And there are scholars who say that Beelzebul means Lord of the House. If that's how the Jews understood that term, then Jesus statement about entering a strong man's house would be, of course, directly connected to the meaning of Beelzebul.

Now, you say that I'm acting in the power of the Lord of the House. Actually, I'm I'm plundering that man's house. I'm plundering the strong man's house.

I have bound the Lord of the House and I'm plundering his goods. This plunder is seen in the form of casting out demons. Before Jesus arrived in the house that is in the world, Satan had full sway over the world.

There really was no one who could resist him effectively. There was no power equal to

his. His deception was universal.

And he could keep people in bondage to him, of which demonic possession would be the would be the example par excellence of the devil having someone in bondage. Of course, even people who are not demon possessed, if they're not saved, are they're in bondage to the devil? May not. It may not be the specific kind of bondage that we see in demon possession, but it's a bondage of the mind.

It's a bondage of the of the will and so forth. In some measure, demon possession simply becomes the the most visible example of a person in bondage to the devil completely. And by Jesus delivering a person from demons, he is saying, see, I'm letting people go from Satan's bondage.

This is a graphic instance of it. But I mean, it's what I'm doing on a larger scale, too. What I'm doing is not acting on behalf of Beelzebul, the lord of the house.

I am acting against Beelzebul, the lord of the house. In fact, I'm doing so in such a way that I would not at all be capable of doing unless, as you should now deduce, I have bound. The lord of the house, I've come into the strongman's house, I have bound him, I'm plundering it.

A man cannot do to such a strong man as the devil what I am doing, unless you have done something to incapacitate him first. And that's Jesus saying, I've done I've done that. I am not acting in his power.

I'm acting because I have, you know, I've destroyed his power. I've made him powerless. And therefore, you have to find some other explanation for the power that is acting through me.

I would point out that. Jesus here gives a good example for us to pay attention to that he uses the word Satan, although we do know that Satan is an individual spiritual personality. He uses the word Satan more broadly here when he says if Satan has risen up against himself, what he's referring to is their charge that by the power of Beelzebub, demons are being cast out by saying that this is Satan rising against Satan.

He's saying the Beelzebub you're speaking of is Satan. The demons that you say he's risen up against is Satan, too. It's Satan against himself.

And we see here that Jesus uses the word Satan somewhat more broadly in addition to the individual who he is. We could say it's his organization. What is done by his organization is done by him.

And I generally think of it as when we say that, you know, George W. Bush invaded Iraq and captured Saddam Hussein. Well, George W. Bush didn't do this personally. The United States Army and Marines did these things, but they were under George Bush's



command.

He gave them the orders. They submit to him. He's there, his organization.

And therefore, it would be commonly said that, you know, George W. Bush invaded Iraq and captured Saddam Hussein, although it was those acting under his authority did so. And that's that's the same thing. I mean, Satan can legitimately be said to be acting through the demons.

They are his organization. And that's why when someone says, you know, Satan tempted me, they may be telling the truth, although it's maybe not technically the case that the devil himself has come to them. More likely, one of his henchmen has come.

But it's not not wrong to speak of that as Satan's work or Satan doing it because it's part of his organization. Now, verse 28. Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven, the sons of men and whatever blasphemies they utter.

But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation because they said he has an unclean spirit. That is to say, Mark tells us that Jesus gave this warning about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit on the occasion because they had said these words about him. Now, does that mean he is saying that they have now committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Or is it the fact that they said it, that makes him want to warn them that they are exhibiting a tendency that is dangerously close to the danger of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

And he gives them warning, fair warning, you know, don't go that far. It's hard to say. If his statements about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

His statement is made because they said he was casting out demons by Beelzebub, but that doesn't mean that he is saying they have already stepped across that line. However, what they are doing is so so dishonest. So evil.

So resistant to truth that. It either is or is dangerously close to what he's calling me blaspheme the Holy Spirit. And so we need to ask ourselves, what is he talking about? What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? He sets it out as a separate sin from all others.

He says, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men and whatever blasphemies they may honor. So that's all of except one. And so this this person is really troubled many people because there are a lot of actually there's a lot of Christians, actually, who in their past before they were Christians said very irreverent things about God, even about the Holy Spirit.

And they worry, did I blaspheme the Holy Spirit or or if blasphemy spirit isn't really so much just saying certain words, if it's a certain kind of attitude or action, maybe I'm

guilty of that. Obviously, if one would suspect that they have blaspheme the Holy Spirit and read these verses, you know, it'd be very, very frightening because you'd be in that in that class of people that are never going to be forgiven. However, I don't think that this is really a legitimate concern for anybody.

I think it's a good warning that it is a danger to do this, but anybody who's concerned about it, I would say, has not blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Anyone who is concerned about their soul. Is not completely under Satan's deception is still being convicted by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit would not continue to convict people who are incapable of repentance or who would be incapable of being forgiven. The Holy Spirit is not there to tease or torment. He's there to bring people to Christ.

And if he's convicting somebody that they need to be close to Christ, that they need to live for Christ, that Christ is God and that they need to submit him. And if that's what they want to do, then it's very clear that they have never done anything that has put them beyond the point of being able to be forgiven or else the Holy Spirit would give up on them. He wouldn't bother with them.

They wouldn't feel a thing spiritually. They'd be given over to a reprobate mind. They wouldn't have a sense of right and wrong in the matter at all.

There are people in that condition. There are people that Paul says have been given over to a reprobate mind, and they are known by the fact that they do every kind of wicked deed and they don't think a thing about it. There's no conscience there.

There's no conviction there. The Holy Spirit has given them up. You see, if you're feeling convicted about something, then God hasn't given up on you.

The scariest thing God can do is to give up on the sinner and just say, OK, I'm not even going to try to bring you around anymore. I'm going to just not even convict you anymore. When that sinner gets to a place where they don't feel any conviction or concern about their soul, that's that's a dangerous place more than any other place.

And I believe that if someone were guilty of this sin that Jesus speaks of. That they would feel no conviction at all and no interest in spiritual things, no desire to be a Christian, and therefore, anyone who's really worried about that, the very fact that they're worried about it is evidence that they're not in that category. However, that doesn't answer the question that's in all of our minds, what does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? You know, in Matthew's version, it's it's even a little more explicit.

I mean, Jesus goes into a little more detail. In Matthew, chapter 12, it's the parallel, it's the same occasion, the same time when the Pharisees had said he was casting out demons by Beelzebub. But in Matthew 12, verses 31 and 32, he says, Therefore, I say to

you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

And then he goes in verse three, Jesus, anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man. Now, this part's not in Mark. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him.

But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Now, he talks about speaking a word against the Holy Spirit, speaking a word against the Son of Man. What does this mean? Well, there's a variety of opinions have been offered because it's not obvious what the answer is.

One of the opinions offered is to take it directly from the context and say that Jesus is speaking directly to what the Pharisees have done. Mark tells us that this teaching about the blasphemy of the Spirit is given because the Pharisees said he was casting out demons by Beelzebub. And so the suggestion that these people make is that that's what blasphemy of the Spirit is.

The Pharisees had, in fact, done it. They had referred to the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ as the work of the devil. And that that is the ultimate blasphemy, to view the Holy Spirit as Satan, to say that the Holy Spirit is Satan.

This is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, they say. And that's a reasonable suggestion. Not everything about it is problem free.

For example, if we are to say blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is when you attribute to the devil what is actually the working of the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that some good folks could accidentally do so without any evil intention at all. For example, let's take the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.

Many of us believe that speaking in tongues is a legitimate gift of the Holy Spirit. That, you know, it's biblical and so forth. And some do speak in tongues.

There are some people who are Christians who do not believe it's a legitimate gift of the Spirit and who would be inclined to say it's demonic. Now, of course, there's a middle group of people who just say it's not from the spirit or from the devil. It's just people doing it out of their head.

But there truly are people who are convinced that speaking in tongues today is demonic. Now, in my opinion, those people are quite mistaken. And I don't think they have a good biblical reason for their belief, but no doubt they think they do.

And it may be I'm not going to be the judge, but it may be that they are attributing to the devil what is really the work of the Holy Spirit in a case like this. But are they blaspheme the Holy Spirit really? I mean, it would be a strange policy for God to say, I'm

going to forgive murderers and rapists and war criminals and so forth if they repent. But if you ever say that speaking in tongues of the devil, I'm not ever going to forgive you even if you repent.

And of course, a person who might say such things could repent. It could change their mind, but to say, I'm sorry, your repentance is not acceptable because you blaspheme the Holy Spirit. I just don't see that as being consistent with the character of God, especially if the people innocently or ignorantly made the statement.

It seems to me that there has to be something very evil in the hearts of the persons who do something like that that is unforgivable. And so I'm going to say that I think when the Pharisees said that he was casting out demons by the Elzebeth, that was a manifestation of a spiritual thing in them. That spiritual thing in them may have been a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit or at least indicated they were not far from committing such a blasphemy.

That blasphemy would be a matter of the heart, though, not a matter of what slips out of the mouth. Many times people speak wrongfully, but ignorantly. And I don't know, in times of ignorance, God winks, Paul says.

We've all said things we disagree with now, even as Christians, we've thought certain things to be true. And so I just don't think that God's going to bust somebody on an accidental combination of words that slips out of their mouth, which they think to be true. Which they they're not they're not set as enemies of God in their hearts.

They think they're on God's side. Now, the Pharisees may have thought they were on God's side, but they had no excuse for saying that Jesus was acting through Beelzebub. He was doing the very things that the prophets said would happen in the Messianic age.

And they were the kind of things that only true prophets of God had done in the past, and they were all the kinds of things that God would approve of. There weren't sinful or evil or occultic. Associations with these things, they had every evidence of being the works of God, and there was no reason to reject them as such, unless you had just decided you're not going to be open to that.

Unless you just decided that even if it is a work of God, I'm not going to accept it as such. In fact, I'm willing to take the risk of saying it's the devil. I'll say it's the devil, even though it might indeed be the works of God.

I don't know if it is or not, but in fact, I even think it might be, but I'm not open to that. I mean, these people were sinning against their own life. I don't believe that people commit a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit accidentally.

I don't think that people accidentally do something and later find out, oh, that was the one thing God will never forgive. It's the heart. You see, the Bible says that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all

unrighteousness.

The Bible says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sins. Those verses are 1 John 1, 9, 1 John 1, 7, and John doesn't seem to know about sins that the blood of Jesus cannot cleanse, but you have to confess them. You have to repent of them.

If a person comes to a place where they will not or perhaps even cannot repent any longer, then they cannot be forgiven. And I believe that whatever the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is, it is either coming to the place or doing something that demonstrates that you have come to the place where you are beyond repentance. That you are so much an enemy of truth that you have no shred of honesty left in your soul, not enough to acknowledge the truth ever.

You are so committed to a lie. You're so committed to your own agendas that the truth could never get through to you. And if the truth could never get through to you, you'll never repent.

And if you'll never repent, you'll never be forgiven either. That the condition that Jesus describes must be a heart condition is required by the very teaching of Jesus in general about what God's looking for in people. He's not going to condemn you forever and ever because you accidentally said something that was mistaken.

But if you said it because what's in your heart is evil. And that you do not love the truth and will never love the truth and you are simply set against truth. Then what does it say in 2 Thessalonians, those who did not receive the love of the truth, as God sends them strong delusion so that they may believe a lie.

See, that's the point. You suppress the truth because you don't love the truth. Then God says, OK, I'll make sure you never believe the truth.

I'm going to send you a lie. That's your judgment for hating the truth. We see the same thing in Romans chapter one in verse 18.

It says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and of men who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness. And we see these people who suppress the truth eventually gives them over to a reprobate mind, which is incapable of judging right from wrong. They are given over to delusion.

They're given over to a state of it's impossible for them to recognize the truth or didn't want to. Their hearts, they made a choice to be totally hardened toward God. If a person comes to that point in their heart, then they are never going to get saved.

Not because God would reject their repentance if they could do it, but because they can't do it. Their hearts are not amenable to repentance. And you can see in Matthew 12,

which goes further than Mark does on this subject.

Matthew 12, Jesus goes from there to explain the following verse 33. Matthew 12, 33, either make the tree good and its fruit good or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad, because a tree is known by its fruit brood of vipers. How can you be an evil, speak good things for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Now, here's what this is what he's talking about when you speak a word against the Son of Man or speak a word against the Holy Spirit. It's not so much just what words come out. It's what those words reveal about what's in your heart.

Now, not every word that comes out of your mouth really reveals what's in your heart. I know Jesus said out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And even later says in that same passage in verse 36.

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they'll give account of the day of judgment. Well, see, an idle word means a careless word. Your careless speech reveals what's in your heart.

Careful speech can conceal what's in your heart. And Proverbs makes that clear. The covetous man, the miser may invite you to come over and eat at his house.

He may act generous. He says, eat and drink. But it says his heart is not with you.

And what he is in his heart, that's what he really is. That's that famous verse that people misquote. They misquote it as, as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

It's not a bad misquote, but it's a misquote. It's talking about a specific kind of man in a specific kind of situation. It's a miser, a man who is not generous.

But he's extending what appears to be a generous invitation to you. Now, he says, eat and drink, but Solomon says his heart isn't with you. He's a miser.

You should know his heart's not with you. He's not generous. He's got an agenda.

You need to be suspicious of this person. Don't just take his words at face value. What's really going on in his heart, that's where he's really at.

Not what he's saying, but what he's thinking. That and so it makes it clear in Proverbs, and even Jesus makes it clear elsewhere about the Pharisees, that they can be hypocritical. People can say things they don't mean.

But those careless words, those things that slip out in unguarded moments. Those are the vent of what's in the heart. If you have a bad heart, but you're a good hypocrite, a good actor, you can say things to make people think you're a good person.

But when people see you in your unguarded moments, the things you say will reveal what's really in your heart. Now, Jesus, therefore, is saying that you can tell the tree by its fruit. You can tell what's in the heart by what it produces through the mouth.

And these people in making such an audacious lie that Jesus was acting through the power of the devil when there's no reason in the world to attribute the things he was doing to the devil, then out of character for the devil. And it's even an absurd suggestion that the devil is fighting against the devil. It doesn't make sense.

He says that is so absurd, that is so unjustified that you cannot possibly be making that remark with an honest heart. You clearly are resistant to the truth. You don't love the truth.

You're making every excuse to suppress the truth in your unrighteousness. You are if you're not there yet, you're near the point where you'll be having a reprobate mind. You'll have no conviction of sin.

You'll never be able to repent. You'll never be able to be forgiven. Now, he does make this distinction between one only in Matthew, not in Mark.

But in Matthew 12, 32, he makes this distinction between anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man can be forgiven. But anyone who speaks a word against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven in this age or in the age to come. What? Why is that distinction made? Well, that's always been confusing to me to tell you the truth.

But I think I I think I can make a suggestion that might work if he says you who are speaking as you are against me right now, I am the Son of Man. You are beholding the actions of me in my incarnate Son of Man mode. And you're resisting me.

You're speaking against me. But you know what? This isn't your last chance. I'm going to be gone and then it'll be the age of the Holy Spirit.

Right now, you've got the Son of Man and your your present stance is one of resistance. But when the Holy Spirit comes, if you continue in this mode of resistance, there's not going to be another chance after that. At least I'm not your last chance because I you'll even reject me and crucify me.

You can still be saved. You can still be forgiven in the next age when the Holy Spirit comes after Pentecost. And many of those people did.

Many priests and Pharisees got saved in the book of Acts. It's mentioned on the day of Pentecost. Many people came to Christ to whom Peter had said, you crucified Christ.

And so it seems clear that it was possible while Jesus was here for people perhaps to misinterpret his movement, to make the mistake of thinking this can't be of God. Maybe

not sure why they would, but they do say if you're making that mistake and speaking against the Son of Man, well, that's not the end of your opportunities. A few years from now, there's going to be another age come of the Holy Spirit.

He'll be convicting people that he'll be convicting hearts. And if you resist that, too, well, then no forgiveness after that. No opportunities after that.

The age of the Holy Spirit's the last age you're going to have any opportunity in. And if you reject it, then you're out. Two strikes and you're out.

And so that's why I think maybe the case, which is speaking against the Son of Man, he's speaking specifically about that present time not being the only opportunity they would have to repent that when Jesus would be crucified and leave the world, that wouldn't that wouldn't spell the end of their opportunities to be saved. But there would be another age of the spirit and when the Holy Spirit is convicting you and the Holy Spirit is testifying and you're still taking the same approach to that. Well, you're squandering your last opportunity.

And you see, there is a difference, too, because although one we might say, well, how how could they reject Jesus? He was so wonderful and doing miracles before them. But we have to remember, too, that one reason that we have come to Christ is not just because we heard the stories about Christ or as it were, are aware of what he said and did, but because the Holy Spirit came to us and convicted us. Jesus told his disciples in the upper room in John 15.

He says he says the Holy Spirit, when he comes, he will testify of me. And you will testify to the preaching of the apostles, testifies Christ, but also the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ. There have been times when I felt led when I was witnessing to someone who seemed to be acting like they weren't buying it.

There have been times I just felt led to say and I did say, you know, I don't need to argue with you because, you know, I'm telling the truth because the Holy Spirit is testifying right now that I'm telling the truth. I've done that more than once. I've never had anyone say, no, it isn't because I think it is.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will testify of me. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. That would happen after Pentecost.

There's a sense in which people who were making the wrong judgment of Jesus, they really didn't have logic on their side, but they didn't have the inward conviction of the Holy Spirit telling them to believe in Jesus either. So they're just making a bad judgment and maybe because they had a really bad heart. But even people with a bad heart, when the Holy Spirit comes, he can break their hearts.

The Holy Spirit can convict them and they can be broken and come to Christ. So he's



saying, I think that this present time, you're not quite as culpable as you will be when the Holy Spirit is coming and telling you in your heart that it's true. Right now, you're just looking at outward things, things I'm doing, you're hearing about me, seeing what I'm doing.

You're making a very poor judgment, a very stupid judgment and thinking it's by Beelzebub. But if the time comes when you're still saying these things and it's against what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world and his conviction of your heart, well, then you're resisting truth in your heart on purpose. And I could be wrong, but that's why I think he's I think that's the distinction that Jesus is making here.

OK, let's let's look back at Mark then. Chapter three, verse 31. Then his brothers and his mother came and standing outside, they sent to him, calling him.

Now, obviously, the multitude is too great, so they couldn't get physically near him. So they sent a message through the crowd saying, your mother and brothers are here in a multitude was sitting around him and they said to him, look, your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you. But he answered them saying, who is my mother or my brothers? And he looked around at the circle around in a circle of those who sat about him and said, here are my mother and my brothers, for whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister and my mother.

Now, there are some lessons to be learned from this, one of which is, of course, that biological relationship to Jesus does not automatically confer privilege. And we might say, well, that's that may be true, but it's not really very relevant today because no one today is biologically related to Jesus. He didn't have any kids and his brothers and their children.

We've lost track of who they are. So so what? But that is relevant today because there are people who say that the Jews are at least genealogically connected to Jesus, not that they descended from him, but that he and they descended from the same stock, just as his brothers descended from the same parents as he did, and therefore they were his brethren. At least they came from one of his two parents.

They had a common ancestor. So the Jews and Jesus have common ancestry and therefore they are his brethren. This is often said in connection with the story about the sheep and the goats.

Because Jesus said in that story in Matthew 25, if you've done these things to the least of these, my brethren, you've done them to me. And he says, and what you have not done to release these, my brethren, you've not done to me. And so obviously, Jesus makes there be something meritorious in doing something for his brethren that is good.

He takes it as if it's done for himself. But who are his brethren? Unfortunately, there are

some who are so committed to, well, frankly, to distance atrialism that they say his brethren are the Jews. And therefore, this judgment of the sheep and the goats is about people being judged by how they treated the Jews, his brethren.

And therefore, if you treat the Jews well, he takes it that you're treating him well. You treat the Jews badly, he takes it that you're treating him badly. Now, I certainly believe it's wrong to treat the Jews or anybody else badly.

I don't think anyone should be treated badly, Jew or Gentile. I don't think the Jews should be set up for any worse treatment than anybody else. Although there are people who are anti-Semitic and they should not be.

I don't understand. Anti-Semitism never has. But the point is, Jesus does not refer to the Jews as his brethren.

The only reason that we could call the Jews his brethren would be because they have common ancestry, but so did his brothers here. And he wouldn't even acknowledge them as his brethren. And they were even more closely related than the rest of the nation of Israelites.

Yeah, there's a biological relationship there of sorts. A remote one between him and the Jewish race as a whole. There was a much closer biological relationship between him and these people who are asking to see him, and he wouldn't even acknowledge that they were his family.

In fact, he said, I have new brothers and sisters now. Who are my brothers and my sisters? Says the one who does the will of my father. After all, isn't that what a family is? A family is headed up by a father.

And the ones who obey the father are clearly his family. And so those who do the will of my father, they are my mother and my brothers and my sisters. My family now is defined by who my father is, not who my biological ancestry connects to me.

Now, there's several other things important we can get to, especially about Mary. And they're important things because why? Well, because there's a lot of Christians, Roman Catholic Christians, who think certain things about Mary. By the way, the Eastern Orthodox think the same things about her.

That makes, I don't know, maybe two thirds of the Christians in the world. I don't know what the percentages are, but a very huge percentage of Christians believe certain things about Mary that would be refuted from this story. One is that Mary was a perpetual virgin.

That's a tradition of the Roman Catholics. And I'm not really I'm not sure, actually, that the Eastern Orthodox hold that particular view of her. They they hold some of the Mary

ology of the Roman Catholic Church.

I'm not sure the Eastern Orthodox hold that particular view, but that she was a perpetual virgin, which means she had no other children. But this refers to Jesus' mother and his brothers. If he had brothers, if these were indeed male siblings of his, then she had other children.

She was not a virgin forever. We do know that when Jesus was born, it says that she and Joseph did not have sexual relations until Jesus was born. That's the last verse of Matthew chapter one.

It says Joseph took Mary as his wife, but he did not know her, did not have relations with her until she had brought forth some men to play her firstborn son. Some leave out the word the firstborn son, but they just say she brought forth her son. But it still says they refrain from sexual relations until that time.

And there's no suggestion in the Bible which they refrained after that. And there's other references in Scripture to the mother, excuse me, the brothers and sisters of Jesus. In Mark chapter, in Matthew chapter 13, near the end there, there's a story about Jesus at Nazareth and the people said, are not, isn't this Joseph's son and isn't Mary his mother and aren't his brothers, James and Jude and Joseph and Simon and aren't his sisters here too? They're talking about his nuclear family, his dad, his mom, his brothers and sisters.

And there's not any reason in the world to believe that the word brothers here is used in the more generic sense of relatives. The Roman Catholics take it that way here, but there's no good reason to do so, especially the way they're listed in Matthew 13. Sounds like it's the nuclear family.

They're describing the immediate relatives. It's also evident that the Roman Catholics are mistaken when they say that Jesus would never deny a request from his mother. If you talk to Roman Catholics, they will often say this because if you say, well, why not just talk to God? Why, why not? Why talk to Mary about it? Why pray to Mary? And the answer usually given is, well, because Mary has a special place in Jesus heart and she's his mother and he would not deny a request to his mother.

Now, you have to realize what's implied by this. This means that Mary has a special place in Jesus heart, but we don't. He'll listen to her where he won't listen to us.

But what's more, it means that Mary has a special place in her heart for us. That Jesus would not be interested in what we have to say or what we request, but Mary, she's on our side. She's our advocate with Jesus.

I mean, if they're not saying that, then why not just go to God himself? You see, I don't even believe in going to Jesus. I believe in going to God because Jesus said to do that. Jesus said, when you pray, say our father, not our mother and not even Jesus.

Jesus said in that day, you will ask me nothing. Whatever you ask the father in my name, it'll be done for you. All the prayers in the Bible are offered to the father.

Jesus prayed to the father. He taught his disciples to pray to the father. And Paul mentioned his prayers in the book of Ephesians and elsewhere.

He prayed to the father. He bowed his knee to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said in the book of Acts, the prayers that record are addressed to the father, with the exception of Stephen at his death, saying, Lord, Jesus received my spirit, whom he was looking at at that very moment in a vision.

But that wasn't an ordinary prayer. The regular prayers of the saints are to the father, and therefore, they're not directly to Jesus, nor certainly to his mother. And I think it's sad enough that there are some Christians who feel that they can't approach the father, so they only feel comfortable going to Jesus and hoping he'll go for them to the father.

But Jesus even said in John 16, says in that day, you will ask the father in my name. And I do not say that I will ask the father for you, for the father himself loves you. In other words, don't think I'm going to go talk to him about it for you.

You go to him yourself. He loves you. Jesus is trying to remove any idea that there has to be any obstacles between us going directly into the presence of the father and laying out our request and receiving a full welcome just as a father with his own children.

Now, of course, we come in the name of Jesus. That means we come on his authorization. We come with his permission.

We come on his merits. We can't come on our own merits. But having the merits of Christ given to us for that purpose, we do go directly to the father.

But unfortunately, many people think that not only can they not go directly to father, they can't even go directly to Jesus because he's not that sympathetic, even. But Mary is. Mary's got a mother's heart, and therefore we can talk to her.

And God would never. Jesus would never deny his mother's request. Well, unfortunately, he did.

Not only here, but on the other occasion that we read of Mary, two other occasions, Mary seemed to express her thoughts to Jesus, and he seemed to express his thoughts counter to hers. On the occasion, for example, when he was 12 years old and he'd been misplaced by his parents, and she found him in the temple and she scolded him, said, Jesus, you had us worried to death. We've been searching all over for you.

And Jesus, I think, not disrespectfully, but with a bit of corrective intention said, why did

you have to search me? Why didn't you know I must be in my father's house? And, you know, in other words, mom, you you're just you're not thinking right. This this this scolding is not fit. It's not suitable.

It's inappropriate. You should have known where to find me. But there was that other time, his first miracle, the changing water to wine in John, chapter two, Mary came to him and said, you know, they've run out of wine.

And his answer is, woman, what do I have to do with you? Or as it's better transferred woman, what concern is that to me? Why would your concern in this be my concern? That's what he's saying. It's not yet my hour. And it seems clear that he wasn't trying to be disrespectful.

He's just trying to put her in the proper place. Listen, your concerns and mine are not necessarily the same because I have an hour and a time for everything I'm to do. And my father is the one who's telling me what to do, not you.

I just put those words in his mouth. But that's, I think, what underlay his his his statement. Or what about what have I got to do with your concerns? My hour is not yet come.

I'm on it. I'm on somebody else's schedule, not yours. But the point here is he didn't say, listen, mom, I'll look into it when I get a chance.

Because you asked me just because it's you. Well, she didn't have any special claim on his activities. Once he left home, he was following his father, not his mother.

And so here also, we have a direct request from his mother. We'd like to speak with you, Jesus. He says, well, sorry, you're not going to get it.

I don't like the reason you're here. I don't respect your motives. And there's people I respect more than I respect you.

Those who do the will of my father, they're my mother. They're my brother. They're my sister.

That strongly implied that Mary and the brothers were not among those at that moment who are doing the will of the father. Or else they too would be his mother and brothers, but he seems to disown them for the moment that way. And so we have these interesting ramifications here.

Jesus' brethren are not the Jews, nor are they his siblings. Mary did have other children, so he had siblings. It apparently also tells us that it does not dishonor your father and your mother when you put the work of God ahead of their requests.

Jesus elsewhere said he that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10, 37. And he was doing his father's will.

I'm sure he would have been glad to do his mother's will if he had the liberty, because I'm sure he didn't dislike his mother more than other people. And he was quite at the service of people. He was a servant to all, but he was a servant at at his father's command.

And his mother's wishes were not legitimate in this case. So he didn't honor him. So we see that Jesus doesn't always honor his mother's request.

The few times we have any record of her making requests, he denied him every time. Or postponed them, at least, or at least said, I'm not going to do this just because you say so, because although he was a dutiful son, and we do read in Luke chapter two after after that incident at the temple when he was 12, it says that he went home with them and was subject to them. He did submit to Joseph and Mary for the rest of his minority.

But once he reached the age to leave home, to set out on his father's business, his mother was just like anybody else in his life. We do not find in the book of Acts that the disciples ever made anything special out of Mary. She was in the upper room, and so were these brothers.

They apparently all got converted. When the Holy Spirit came, Mary was there, but we don't ever have anyone coming to her and say, would you talk to Jesus about this for us? You know, they prayed to the father. Apparently, Mary did, too.

She was just one of the girls, one of the sisters in the church. Jesus' mother and brethren are those who do his will. And that means all Christians.

And by the way, what this means in the context is it's as if Jesus is saying, OK, I acknowledge that a man has some obligation to his mother and his brothers, but I don't recognize these ones. I recognize these ones as my mother and brothers. These ones here are not doing the will of my father.

Therefore, their requests, I feel no obligation to honor. But these ones here are doing the will of father. And I by implication, I do feel obligated to honor their requests.

They are my true family. And as a man has an obligation to his family, I feel an obligation to these ones, not to those over here. So Jesus is redefining where his family loyalties are, and he's not denying that a man ought to grant access to himself by his mother and brothers.

He's just saying, I don't recognize them as my mother and brothers right now. I have a different way of defining who my mother and brothers are. And so we who are his disciples and are his mother and brothers and his own mother and brothers became disciples.

So they were included in this later. But we do have the access to him. To God through him, we do, we can talk to Jesus when I say we don't pray to Jesus, but to the father, I'm speaking particularly of making our requests.

Jesus said, when you make your requests, you know, you make them to God, you make them to the father. But that doesn't mean you can't commune with Jesus doesn't mean you can't fellowship with Jesus doesn't mean he won't listen. It just means that when you want something, you go to the father and talk to him about it.

And so we come to the end of that chapter and a good time to take another break.