

**October Q&R**  
**October 24, 2021**

**What if Jesus Turns Out to Not Exist?**

Well, I have 2 responses to this question.

**1. The historical Jesus cannot be denied**, if we honestly examine the evidence. I spoke on this two months ago but want to remind you briefly of the following.

We have as much, if not more evidence for the existence of Jesus, than any other person from the ancient world. Only 4 ancient authors wrote about **Julius Caesar** and no one doubts his existence, or the details of his life.

**Josephus and Tacitus**, were both ancient historians near the year A.D. 100. **Pliny the Younger**, was a Roman governor in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and the **Jewish Talmud** was completed in 350 A.D. They all write about Jesus and His teachings and validate the Gospel narrative in the N.T.

But we have more than secular historians and references. We also have the biographies written about Jesus in **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**. **Ignatius**, was another early Christian leader and disciple of Christ, who wrote about Jesus and verified the basic outline of His life.

We have more documented evidence, for the life of Christ, than for just about any other person from the ancient world. I just mentioned 8 reliable ancient authors, including the Jewish Talmud, yet there are over 50 ancient authors who wrote about this Jesus of Nazareth.

The evidence for the life and death of Jesus is so great, that the question of His existence is not in doubt. And no matter how hard the world has tried to silence Jesus, twist Jesus, or make Him disappear altogether, for 2,000 years the entire world has been unsuccessful.

So the question is not, “*Did Jesus Exist?*” He certainly existed, Jesus turned this world completely upside down, so much that even the global dating system 2,000 years later still goes by His name: B.C. before Christ, and A.D. in the year of the Lord. He just won’t go away. So the real question is, *Who so you say that Jesus is? Who is this Man? And what will your decision be?*

That’s my first response, the second area I want to address is,

**2. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I believe that He lived, died, and rose from the grave to offer humanity eternal life, through the resurrection of the dead.**

If Jesus doesn't exist, it means there is no hope of resurrection from the dead. But if Jesus does exist, it means He is the ONLY hope, of resurrection from the dead. If He didn't come out of the grave, we're trapped in death.

That's why Christ's empty tomb was necessary for the early Christians to understand the event. *It was an actual, historical event.* Had Jesus' body remained in the tomb, lifeless, the early Christians wouldn't have considered or believed that Jesus defeated death.

Of all the world's religions, ONLY Christianity is based on the resurrection of its divine founder. No other religion makes such a claim. Christianity is that unique and overcoming death through Jesus' DBR, is the core of our belief. The Gospels don't end with the death of Jesus, they speak of an empty tomb, and the great commission, given, by the risen Christ.

Paul writes in, **1 Corinthians 15:12-19**, "*Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; <sup>14</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. <sup>15</sup> Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; <sup>17</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."*

People wrestled with this concept even 2,000 years ago. It's not a new question or thought. It's a fair consideration for anyone thinking about making Jesus their Lord, King, and Divine Savior.

**Paul taught that if there is no resurrection of the dead: Not even Christ was raised, Our preaching is vain, Our faith is vain, We are false witnesses of God, Our faith is worthless, We are still in our sins, Those who have died in Christ have perished, We are of all men most to be pitied.**

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:12, that anyone who is separate from Christ has no hope. It is because of His resurrection that we hope for a resurrection just like His. **Romans 6:5**, "*If we have become united with Christ in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.*" Because He defeated death, Jesus defeated Satan at his own game.

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and I leave you with two Scriptures to reflect on. **Hebrews 2:14-15**, "*Through death Jesus might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*"

**1 Corinthians 15:54-57**, “*“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Jesus certainly existed and I believe that He is God, and there is nothing more important than repentance, faith, baptism, and centering our lives on His commands and teachings, until the day we die.

That wraps up question #1, now let’s turn our attention to question #2:

### **Is There Such a Thing as an Unforgiveable Sin?**

**Matthew 12:10**, “*They (The Pharisees) questioned Jesus, asking, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” – so that they might accuse Him.*”

Jesus immediately healed a man in response to the question. Instead of repenting and believing in the Christ, the Pharisees were infuriated, and began planning how they might kill Jesus.

A crowd of people watched this happen, but they weren’t angry, they became curious. Jesus’ miracles were for people to repent and believe in Him. And it was working, it was working so well, that in **Matthew 12:23**, we read, “*All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?”*”

When the crowds considered Jesus, it increased the Pharisees anger, and they tried to discredit His reputation in **Matthew 12:24**, “*When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of demons.*”

This remark is what prompted Jesus’ statement regarding blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ power didn’t come from Himself, He EMPTIED Himself, and His power had to come from reliance on the Father and the Spirit. The Pharisees lied to the crowd and made the bold claim that the Father and Holy Spirit, were really Beelzebul, the ruler of demons.

The Pharisees taught that Jesus, God, and His Holy Spirit were demonic in nature. You have to see this, in order to understand the question, as well as the answer to the question.

**Blasphemy:** against the Spirit, the unforgivable sin, is the *ongoing hardening of your heart* against the Holy Spirit who is trying to lead you into awareness of sin and repentance of sin.

The Greek Lexicon defines **Blasphemy:** as, to slander, revile, defame, speak irreverently/impiously/disrespectful of or about an associated entity. Blasphemy in Scripture, occurs towards God, Jesus, Angels, and People. Here, it is slandering and being disrespectful towards God’s Spirit, continuously, with a darkened and hardened heart. At it’s core, **Blasphemy is an issue of the heart that manifests in your words.**

Pay attention to the bolded words we're about to read as they indicate Jesus addressing the fundamental condition of the heart, rather than the words spoken, in a heated moment.

**Matthew 12:24-37**, *“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”*<sup>25</sup> *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.*<sup>26</sup> *If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?*<sup>27</sup> *If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.*<sup>28</sup> *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*<sup>29</sup> *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.*<sup>30</sup> **He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.**<sup>31</sup> *Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.*<sup>32</sup> *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.*<sup>33</sup> **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.**<sup>34</sup> *You brood of vipers, how can you, **being evil**, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*<sup>35</sup> *The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.*<sup>36</sup> *But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.*<sup>37</sup> *For by your words you will be **justified**, and by your words you will be **condemned**.*”

This helps identify that it's not about a solitary hateful, dishonoring word, it's about the ongoing state of one's heart before God. And this can be discovered by examining the words you use. For instance: What is the sum total of your words, for just one week? What about your words for a month? What about a year? This gets to the heart of the matter, when it comes to blasphemy.

A parallel with this passage, is **Matthew 3:7-8**, *“But when he saw many of the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees** coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of **vipers**, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore **bear fruit** in keeping with repentance.”*

Careful readers of the Bible should not only pay attention to details in the immediate chapter, but also in the entire letter. Matthew has already introduced the language of **vipers** and **bearing fruit in keeping with repentance**, in relationship to the **Pharisees**.

As Jesus preached His first sermon in Matthew, we see the same language in **Matthew 4:17**, *“From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Repentance is a theme in Matthew, to be kept in mind when considering the nature of blasphemy against the Spirit and the unforgiveable sin.

**So Is There Such a Thing as an Unforgiveable Sin?** Sure, there is. In fact, Jesus taught that there is one unforgiveable sin. In **Luke 13:5**, Jesus warns, *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*

The only unforgiveable sin is to be so hardened of heart, that one refuses to repent. Jesus says the lack of repentance leads to perishing and that means to be eternally destroyed. It doesn't mean there's no hope for a person in this condition, but their only hope, is to repent.

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is not simply saying something bad about the Holy Spirit, it's a persistent rejection of the convicting work of the Spirit, whose job it is to expose our sin and lead us into repentance. Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit in **John 16:8**, *“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”*

The unforgiveable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit, is not a quick word in a moment of anger. Nor is it some dramatic sin, like murder. We read of God forgiving ALL sins ALL throughout the Bible. The blood of Christ is not weak, it IS sufficient to eliminate, EVERY sin. The problem is NOT in the blood of Christ. The problem is in the heart of man.

**1 John 1:9**, *“If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

How much unrighteousness will a person be cleansed of when anyone confess sins? ALL of it!

God is not UN-WILLING to forgive. It is man who becomes so stubborn and hardened of heart that pride gets in the way of saying, *“I recognize that I was wrong Lord, I want to change, please forgive me.”*

One reason God gave His Son to die, is so we could be forgiven. What makes this sin unforgivable is the offender's unwillingness to obediently repent, and actively live the Christian life. And if a person is already baptized, it's time to bear fruit in KEEPING with repentance, as it's an ongoing process in the Christian life.

There is plenty more to say, but this is my response for today and it's only a snapshot of what the Bible says about the one identified unforgiveable sin.