

AN ETERNAL SIN

“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin. He said this because they were saying ‘He has an evil spirit’” (Mk. 3:29,30).

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is called the “unforgivable sin”. It is discussed by Jesus in Matt. 12:22-37; Mk. 3:20-30; and Lk. 12:8-10. Jesus taught on this subject because they were saying “He has an evil spirit”. The importance of this subject cannot be over emphasized. Jesus said: **“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” (Matt. 12:31).**

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is therefore unique. It is in a different category from every other sin and every other blasphemy. Every other sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, but not this! In the words of Jesus it is “an eternal sin”. As we have said, Jesus spoke about it because **“they were saying He has an evil spirit”**.

Let us seek to understand this “eternal sin” that we might avoid it!

WHAT WE KNOW

In seeking to solve any problem it is wise to start with what we know and then seek to try and understand what we do not know. Once we have listed what we know we will be better prepared to understand the unknown. Let us therefore start with the obvious.

- We know that God loves the world and gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).
- We know that God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:17).
- We know that God is patient and does not want anyone to perish. God wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).
- WE KNOW THAT GOD DOESN'T CHANGE! (Mal. 3:6; Ja. 1:17; Heb. 13:8; etc.)
- WE KNOW, THEREFORE, THAT ANYONE WHO REPENTS OF ANY SIN WILL BE FORGIVEN! WHOSOEVER WILLS MAY COME AND NOT BE CAST OUT (MATT. 11:28-30; JOHN 6:37; REV. 22:17; ETC.) GOD DOESN'T CHANGE!
- THE ETERNAL SIN, THEREFORE, MUST INVOLVE PEOPLE WHO CANNOT REPENT AND WHO WILL NOT COME TO JESUS!
- THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TRUTH IS CRITICAL! WHEN ANYONE REPENTS GOD FORGIVES! GOD EVEN FORGAVE A BLASPHEMER AND VIOLENT MAN LIKE SAUL OF TARSUS (1 TIM. 1:13). IN FACT, GOD FORGAVE SAUL TO DISPLAY HIS UNLIMITED PATIENCE WITH THE WORST OF SINNERS (1 TIM. 1:15,16). SAUL, HOWEVER, REPENTED, BUT SOME ARE SO HARDENED THAT THEY CANNOT REPENT! THESE ARE THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT COMMIT AN ETERNAL SIN!
- The book of Hebrews deals with this very situation. Note: **“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace” (Heb. 6:4-6).**

OUR CONSCIENCE

- The word “conscience” is a compound of two words: “con” which means “with,” and “science” which means “to know”.
- Adam and Eve had a conscience. They were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Like God, they intuitively knew right from wrong. Note that when they sinned their conscience caused them to be ashamed and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:8). People without a conscience do not hide when they sin!
- WHILE GOD DOESN'T CHANGE, HOWEVER, WE DO!
- Everyone starts with a “good conscience” (1 Tim. 1:19), but we can change. With neglect and abuse our good conscience can be defiled and destroyed. Please consider these Scriptures:
 - Our good conscience can become weak and defiled (1 Cor. 8:7).
 - Our good conscience can be seared with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:2).
 - Our good conscience can become so calloused that we lose all sensitivity (Eph. 4:19)
 - Therefore, we must never do anything to destroy anyone’s good conscience (1 Cor. 8:9-13).
 - Neither should we do anything to destroy our own good conscience. For example, whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). This means that when we deliberately do something we believe is wrong we commit a sin and damage our conscience!
 - Conversely, when we know to do good and do not do it, that is also a sin (Ja. 4:17). Consequently, when we know we ought to do something and do not do it we also sin and damage our conscience!
 - We need to pray therefore in the words of Scripture, that we will all have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way (Heb. 13:18).
 - We need to be like Paul who said: **“I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16).**
- Please consider that in order to commit the eternal sin you must first destroy your conscience!
- This is done by repeatedly doing things your conscience tells you are wrong!
- This actually happened to the descendants of Adam and Eve. That’s why God destroyed the earth with a flood.
- Animals and fish who live in caves go blind because they never use their eyes.
- Those who never use their conscience can become spiritually blind in the same way.
- The Psalmist said it like this: **“An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin” (Ps. 36:1,2).**

OUR MIND

Everyone not only starts out with a good conscience, but also with a good mind. Our mind, however, can also become defiled just like our conscience can be defiled. There is a sense therefore, that “who we are” is more important than “what we do”. Please consider: **“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure, both their minds and consciences are corrupted” (Tit. 1:15).** People with a corrupt mind and a corrupt conscience cannot

do anything pleasing to God. You cannot get good fruit from a bad tree! Those people who are corrupt to the core are the very ones in danger of committing an eternal sin.

Victoria Falls is one of the most famous waterfalls in the world. It is located on the Zambezi River in Zimbabwe, Africa. It is 5,600 feet wide and falls some 344 feet into a deep gorge. The huge volume of water falls with such ferocity that it sprays mist 100 feet higher than the top of the falls. Up stream, however, the river is quiet and peaceful. Children can safely swim and fishermen can paddle their boats in the Zambezi River without fear. This is only possible, however, as long as they are far enough upstream. Downstream there is a point of no return. If you drift beyond that point the river is so swift that you are powerless to avoid being swept over the falls.

This illustrates what can happen to your mind. There is a time in every life when we can direct our thoughts to any subject we choose. If we drift too far downstream, however, and carelessly allow our minds to think only evil thoughts, our minds can also go beyond the point of no return. This is what happened in the days of Noah. That wicked generation became so addicted to evil **“that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (Gen. 6:5).**

Peter described men like that who **“blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.” (2 Pet. 2:12).**

A brute beast cannot hear the Word of God and repent. That’s why Jesus said not to give something holy to a dog or to cast pearls before a pig (Matt. 7:6). The people of Noah’s generation had lived like animals for so long that it was impossible for them to repent. Solomon said that the way we think is the way we are (Prov. 23:7). Consequently, Noah was preaching to people whose thoughts were only evil and whose lives were also only evil. So, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do what ought not to be done (Rom. 1:28). Thus after preaching for 120 years Noah was only able to convert seven members of his own family. The rest of the world lived and died like animals.

Paul warned not to **“live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts” (Eph. 4:17,18).**

We repeat! The way we think is the way we are. Adam and Eve thought wrong and did wrong. They did not sin by accident. The scribes and pharisees did not sin by accident. Judas Iscariot did not betray Jesus by accident. Invariably, we act the way we think! If we want to change our actions, therefore, we must change our thinking. This is why conversion involves repentance. As you know, the Bible word for repentance is “metanoia” which literally means to “change the mind”. The renewing of our mind results in the renewing of our life. We can be literally transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). Conversion involves God writing “His laws” in “our minds” (Heb. 8:10). The carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. 8:17), that’s why we need to be renewed in the spirit of our minds (Eph. 4:23).

Sadly, as we have said, just as our conscience can be defiled beyond the scope of redemption, so also can our minds. When our minds are corrupt to the point that we call evil good, and good evil (Is. 5:20), then we are candidates to commit an eternal sin.

SATANIC GENERATIONS

- Satan has been a murderer from the beginning and he is also the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Satan is the personification of evil. He has no conscience. His mind is corrupt. He delights in doing wrong. He never feels a twinge of conscience when he commits a sin, for he has no conscience. Satan personifies complete and total rebellion against God. No amount of evidence will convince satan to change. In fact, he cannot change. He is beyond the point of redemption and is therefore guilty of committing the eternal sin. He is so depraved that he not only “will” not repent, he “cannot” repent! Since this kind of sin ultimately leads to death there, is no reason to pray about it! (1 Jn. 5:16,17). Sadly, sometimes satan is so successful that whole generations think and behave like he does.
- As we have said, Noah lived in a satanic generation. **“The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart only evil all the time” (Gen. 6:5).**
- Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). Based on Gen. 6:3 it is thought that he preached 120 years. During all that time he never made one convert out side of his own family. It was a satanic generation. Their minds were so corrupt that every thought was only evil continually! Satan can hear God’s Word and not repent, and so could that satanic generation!
- Jesus also lived in a satanic generation.
 - In Matthew 12, when teaching about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Jesus made 5 references to the satanic nature of His own generation.
 - Matt. 12:34 - they were a generation of vipers incapable of saying anything good.
 - Matt. 12:39 - they were a wicked and adulterous generation.
 - Matt. 12:41- the men of Nineveh would stand in the judgement and condemn that generation. Nineveh repented, but they wouldn’t.
 - Matt. 12:42 - the Queen of the South would also rise in the judgement and condemn that generation. She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but Jesus was greater than Solomon and that perverse generation wouldn’t listen to Him.
 - Matt. 12:45 – that generation was like an evil spirit finding 7 other evil spirits more wicked than itself and bringing them all to live in a single dwelling.
 - Apparently no one can commit an eternal sin by accident. It is a deliberate decision.
 - That wicked and adulterous generation in which Jesus lived asked for a sign (Matt. 12:39). Jesus promised them the sign of the prophet Jonah. That was the sign of His resurrection. The time Jonah spent in the belly of the fish would be like the time Jesus spent in the grave. Just as no sign can change the mind of satan, no sign would change the minds of those Jewish leaders. Remember what Jesus said to the rich man in hell. That doomed sinner wanted someone to witness to his five unbelieving brothers. He was convinced that if someone arose from the dead they would believe. Jesus said: **“If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead” (Lk. 16:31).** Jesus was right! Jesus was raised from the dead and his brothers still didn’t believe.

Please consider how calloused and unchangeable was that generation:

- At the very time these hypocrites asked for a sign, Jesus had just healed a man who was blind and mute. Instead of believing in Jesus, however, they accused him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Matt. 12:24). This, as you know, is why Jesus taught about committing an eternal sin!
- When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead they still didn't believe. Furthermore, their hearts were so hard they even made plans to kill Lazarus (Jn. 12:10).
- As further evidence of their depravity **"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death" (Matt. 26:59).**
- That generation was so saturated with evil that upon them came all of the **"righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation" (Matt. 23:35,36)**
- It was also during that generation that the Temple was so completely destroyed that one stone was not left upon another that was not cast down (Matt. 24:2).
- Remember that when Jesus was raised from the dead they still didn't believe. Instead of believing the "sign" of His resurrection they bribed the soldiers who guarded His tomb to lie and say that His disciples came and stole Him away while they were sleeping (Matt. 28:12,13).
- These hardened sinners further demonstrated their lack of conscience by promising that if word of His resurrection reached the governor they would bribe him too (Matt. 28:14).
- These wicked men wouldn't believe no matter how many signs they saw! Jesus said: **"How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God"?** (Jn. 5:44).
- Jude described such men like this: **"These men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish" (Jude 1:12).**
- These wicked men did not sin by accident. Their wicked actions came directly from wicked hearts. **"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him" (Matt. 12:35).**
- The book of Acts relates the healing of a crippled man by Peter and John (Acts 3:1-10). The poor soul was born crippled and was over 40 years old. Every day he was laid at the Gate called Beautiful and was therefore well known in Jerusalem. When the Sanhedrin saw the man standing with Peter and John they knew that a miracle had taken place which they could not deny. Yet, they still wouldn't believe! Instead they commanded Peter and John to stop preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:16-22).
- These wicked men were corrupt to the core!
- No wonder Peter warned the people with many words pleading: **"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40).**
- Just as a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, these wicked men were incapable of doing good. Jesus said: **"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit" (Matt. 12:33).** They were so wicked and void of conscience that they produced only bad fruit. Every vestige

of good was gone from their lives. They were totally evil. As we have stressed repeatedly, it was while dealing with men like this that Jesus warned of an eternal sin.

- Jesus was not wrong about these men for He knows what is in man (Jn. 2:25).
- That's why Jesus said to them: **“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell” (Matt. 23:33).**
- Remember! God wants everyone to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). If these men would have repented they could have been forgiven. These wicked men, however, had apparently destroyed their minds and consciences so completely that it was impossible for them to repent (Heb. 6:4-6).
- The book of Revelation tells of wicked men so hardened and corrupt that nothing could make them repent. Even when they were being scorched and seared by such intense heat that they gnawed their tongues in agony, they still cursed God and refused to repent (Rev. 16:8-11).
- These were the kind of men who saw Jesus perform miracles and attributed His power to the devil (Mk. 3:30). They were guilty of an eternal sin because they knew who Jesus was but rejected Him just the same. They could gnaw their tongues in agony and still not repent.

WHO IS JESUS?

Moses taught that God is “one” (Deut. 6:4). The Hebrew word for “one” in this verse is “echad” which means to be “unified” or “collected together”. It is used in the Bible to describe “more than one” so united that they are considered as “one”. For example:

- It is used in Gen. 2:24 to describe the way that Adam and Eve became “one”.
- It is used in Gen. 11:6 to describe “many” people who became “one” and began building the tower of Babel.
- It is used in Ezekiel 37:17 to describe “two sticks” becoming “one”.
- Etc.

The point is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are so united that they are “one”. This truth is taught in many times in the Bible. From the very beginning the plural nature of God is evident. For example, when God decided to create man He said: **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Gen. 1:26).** Making man in “our” image and likeness makes it clear that there is more than one person in the Godhead.

The Hebrew word meaning absolutely “one” is “yachid”. It is found 12 times in the Scriptures and not once is it ever used of God. God is not “yachid”, He is “echad”.

The Scriptures are clear that Jesus is God!

- His name was “Immanuel” which means “God with us” (Matt. 1:23).
- Jesus came to make God known (Jn. 1:18).
- Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).
- In Jesus dwells all the fulness of the Godhead in a body (Col. 2:9).
- Jesus is the Word of God, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn. 1:1).
- Christ is “God over all” (Rom. 9:5).

- Etc.

How then is it possible to be forgiven for speaking a word against the “Son of Man”, but not be forgiven for speaking a word against the Holy Spirit? (Matt. 12:32; Lk. 12:10)

This is a profound question. While the following thoughts will probably not provide a complete answer, perhaps studying these Scriptures will be helpful.

First note that Jesus describes Himself in this statement as the “Son of man”. The word here translated as “man” is “anthropos”. It does not refer to a “male” it refers to “mankind”. An anthropologist studies all of mankind not just men. The word for “man” as opposed to “woman” is “aner”. It is never used to refer to a woman. Speaking against the “Son of man” can be forgiven for it is difficult to see a “man” as “God”!

The Jews understood that Jesus was claiming equality with God and that’s one reason they tried so hard to kill Him (Jn. 5:18).

Remember! God is a just God and makes a distinction between those who sin “unintentionally” and those who sin “defiantly” (Nu. 15:27-31). Thus there is a difference between those who “unintentionally” speak against Jesus because of ignorance, and those who know who Jesus is and speak “defiantly” against him. The word “blaspheme” involves speaking. It comes from “blapto” (to injure) and “pheme” (speech).

- On the cross Jesus prayed for the soldiers who crucified Him saying: **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34).**
- Jesus did not, however, pray this way for the scribes and the pharisees for they did know what they were doing! They knew what they were doing was wrong and even sought false witnesses to cover their corruption.
- So there was a difference! The soldiers were sinning “unintentionally” and the Scribes and Pharisees were sinning “defiantly”.

As we have said, it is difficult to comprehend the miracle of the incarnation. The incarnation involves our God Who is so vast that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him (1 Ki. 8:27), becoming a microscopic life form in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is merciful when we do not immediately understand this! He sympathizes with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). He knows it is not easy to grasp the magnitude of such a miracle. Remarkably, the thief on the cross understood more about Jesus in a few hours of agony than the disciples did in three years of teaching. The disciples believed that Jesus was dead, but the dying thief realized that Jesus was going to triumph over death and come into His Kingdom (Lk. 23:39-43). Still, it is not easy to believe that Jesus is God!

- Jesus asked the rich young ruler: **“Why do you call me good . . . no one is good except God alone”? (Mk. 10:18).** As we have said, it is easier to believe that Jesus is “good” than to believe that Jesus is “God”.
- Peter confessed that Jesus was the **“Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16).** He obviously, however, did not have a complete understanding of who Jesus was. This became clear a few days later on the Mount of Transfiguration when Peter put Jesus in the same

category as Moses and Elijah (Mk. 9:5-7). Peter did this because he didn't know what he was saying (Mk. 9:6). Moses and Elijah are not in the same category as God! So God interrupted from heaven and said: **“This is my Son Whom I love, listen to Him” (Mk. 9:7).**

- Peter's deficient understanding about Jesus was again revealed in the garden when he drew his sword to defend Him (Matt. 26:50-54; Jn. 18:10,11). The Omnipotent God Who created the universe does not need to be defended by a fisherman with a sword.
- Peter, as you know, also denied Jesus three times: (Matt. 26:69-75; Mk. 14:66-72; Lk. 22:54-62; Jn. 18:15-27) Peter was forgiven for his denials because they were made in ignorance of the true identity of Jesus. A blasphemer like Saul of Tarsus was also forgiven because he sinned in ignorance and unbelief (1 Tim. 1:13).
- The fact that Peter and the other apostles lacked a clear understanding of the deity of Jesus is reflected again in their refusal to believe Jesus was resurrected. When Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others told the apostles that Jesus was raised from the dead: **“They did not believe the women, because their words seemed top them, like nonsense” (Lk. 24:10,11).**
- Later, of course, all of the apostles realized that Jesus was truly the Omnipotent God Who created all things. What a difference this made in the way they viewed everything. With a correct understanding of Jesus, Peter and John could laugh at the power of human governments. Based on the fact that Jesus is God the impotence of human governments reminded them of the second Psalm (see Acts 4:23-31). That psalm correctly points out that when the kings and rulers of the earth try to threaten God, He that sits in the heavens shall laugh and hold them in derision.
- Do you see the difference? Yes, Peter spoke a word against the “man” Jesus because his understanding was incomplete. But “No!” he would be committing spiritual suicide to deny the true identity of Jesus after He was raised from the dead.
- Paul's concluding words in his first Corinthian letter provide insight into the way calloused sinners think about Jesus. Paul wrote: **“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha” (1 Cor. 16:22 KJV).** This verse teaches that anyone who doesn't “love” Jesus is condemned! We need, however, to look closer at this word translated “love”.
- The primary word for “love” in the Bible is “agapao”. The Greek word translated as “love” in this verse, however, is “phileo”. It means to “like” not “love”. According to W. E. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: “Phileo is never used in a command to men to love God”. “Phileo” means to have “tender compassion” and to “like” someone. God commands us to “love” our enemies but He doesn't command you to “like” anybody. You either “like” someone or you don't! Jesus was kind, loving, reliable, compassionate, faithful, forgiving, helpful, and generous. If you do not “like” Jesus you are so morally and intellectually corrupt that your condemnation by God is assured!
- Satan, of course, does not “like” Jesus. That's why he had Him crucified. According to Hebrews 6:4-6 those whom it is impossible to renew unto repentance don't “like” Jesus either. That's why **“to their eternal loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace”.**

PETER AND JUDAS

Perhaps comparing Peter and Judas will help to clarify what it means to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

- Both were selected by Jesus to be apostles (Lk. 6:12-16).
- Both heard the same teaching directly from Jesus.
- Both had the power to **“heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, (and) drive out demons” (Matt. 10:8).**
- Both preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was near (Matt. 10:7).
- Both were warned that they would deny Jesus.
 - Peter was warned that he would deny Jesus three times (Jn. 13:38)
 - At the last supper Jesus also warned Judas and said: **“The one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would have been better for him if he had not been born. Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said, ‘Surely not I Rabbi?’ Jesus answered ‘Yes, it is you’” (Matt. 23-25).**
- Peter repented of his sins and became a famous apostle who is listed first every time the twelve apostles are mentioned in the Bible (Matt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:14-19; Lk. 6:12-16).
- Judas did not repent, but went out and hanged himself. His name appears last in the lists of apostles.
- Matthew mentions that Judas was filled with remorse, returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests, confessed that he had sinned, and then went out and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-5). Note that he did not return to the upper room like Peter did! The word translated as “remorse” in this passage is “metamelomai” which means to “regret”. As we have already pointed out, however, the Bible word for “repent” is “metanoeo” which literally means to “change your mind”.
- Sadly, Judas “regretted” what happened, but didn’t “change his mind”. That’s why it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born (Matt. 26:24). Jesus said that Judas was lost (Jn. 17:12). The Bible says that after Judas left the apostolic ministry he went to “his own place” (Acts 1:25). “His place” is obviously not heaven.
- Please consider that Judas had so damaged his conscience that it was impossible for him to repent.
 - We assume that Judas had a good conscience when Jesus called him to be an apostle. Remember, Jesus prayed all night long before selecting His apostles (Lk. 6:12).
 - His reputation among the apostles was good for they selected him to take care of their money (Jn. 12:6).
 - At some point in time, however, Judas began stealing money from their treasury (Jn. 12:6).
 - His greed began building a barrier between him and Jesus, and the other apostles. It had to! Every time he stole some money and lied about it he was isolating himself a little more from Jesus and the other apostles.
 - He was obviously hiding the stolen money for to spend it would have exposed his crime to the others. His duplicity became a way of life for he had to be deceptive 24 hours a day to avoid discovery.
 - We are creatures of habit. Once we couldn’t walk, and now we can walk in our sleep. Once we couldn’t talk, and now we can talk in our sleep. The first time Judas stole money it must have been difficult. The more he did it, however, the easier it became. Ultimately it became a way of life that defined him. As John said: “he was a thief” (Jn. 12:6).

- What Judas did fulfilled a prophecy: **“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Ps. 41:9; Jn. 13:18)**. With a “friend” like Judas, who needs an “enemy”?
- As we have said, along with stealing came constant lying and deception to cover his crimes.
- When Peter sinned he never separated himself from Jesus and the other apostles. He returned to the upper room where he “belonged”. In that blessed fellowship Peter was forgiven and restored.
- When Judas sinned he was already separated from Jesus and the other apostles. He had been in their midst but was still spiritually isolated because of his greed and deception. That’s why he didn’t return to the upper room like Peter did. In his own mind Judas knew he didn’t belong there. Remember! Satan had entered into Judas (Lk. 22:3). Consequently, he didn’t really repent but instead went out and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-10).
- If Judas had repented, he would have been forgiven. Remember! God wants all men to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). The fact he didn’t repent leads to the conclusion that his mind and conscience were so defiled that he couldn’t.
- His ingrained covetousness is clear. Remember when Mary anointed Jesus with a pint of pure nard. Judas criticized this “waste” and said the perfume could have been sold for a year’s wages and given to the poor. John explained: **“He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it” (Jn. 12:6)**.
- It is interesting to note that Mary realized that Jesus was going to die. Jesus had been trying to get His disciples to understand this for six months. After Peter’s “good confession” at Caesarea Philippi, Matthew explained: **“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (Matt. 16:21)**. For some inexplicable reason the apostles didn’t understand this but Mary did.
- Jesus defended Mary for her selfless generosity and said she had anointed him for the day of His burial (Jn. 12:7). Since His crucifixion was only a few days away it is probable that Jesus still smelled the fragrance of her perfume during His prayer in Gethsemane, the long night of His trial, and the agony of Golgotha. How beautiful and helpful was her gift!
- Mary anointed Jesus because she loved Him. Judas criticized her because he loved himself.
- As a deceiver, Judas was good. His months of deception had perfected his duplicity. Jesus, of course, saw through his hypocrisy, but no one else did. In fact, when Judas left the upper room to betray Jesus no one suspected him. John wrote: **“Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor” (Jn. 13:29)**.
- The fact that no one suspected Judas is significant. It demonstrates his total absence of conscience. He had stolen and lied so much that it defined who he was. It apparently didn’t bother him at all.
- Dr. Josef Mengele was known as “The Angel of Death”. In 1943 he became the chief camp physician at Auschwitz. He routinely performed operations resulting in the death of his patients without even giving them anesthesia. He even collected the eyes of his murder victims for research. Both Judas and Mengele sinned so much that their wickedness defined their nature. As Jesus said, you cannot get good fruit from a bad tree!

- Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail so that after he had turned back in repentance he would strengthen his brothers (Lk. 22:31).
- Jesus did not pray for Judas for in His infinite wisdom He knew it was too late. In less than three years Judas had become so calloused and defiant that he had no faith and it was impossible for him to repent. **“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death”** (1 Jn. 5:16,17).

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

As we have already pointed out, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God!

- All three were present at creation. Everything in heaven and earth was created by Jesus (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). Nothing was created until God spoke (Gen. 1:3,6,8,9,10, etc.) And the Spirit of God hovered over the waters (Gen. 1:2).
- When Isaiah saw the Lord he said **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty”** (Is. 6:1-3).
- All three were manifest when Jesus was baptized. Jesus was in the water, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove (Matt. 3:13-17).
- Christian baptism is to be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). Note “name” not “names”!
- A typical biblical benediction is: **“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”** (2 Cor. 13:14).
- A similar benediction is: **“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life”** (Jude 1:20,21).
- Through the Spirit of holiness Jesus was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).
- **“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men”** (Rom. 14:17,18).
- We become included in Christ when we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and thereby become God’s possession (Eph. 1:13,14).
- There is one Spirit, one Lord, and one God (Eph. 4:4-6).
- We have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood (1 Pet. 1:2).
- Lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God (Acts 5:3,4).
- **“Now the Lord is the Spirit”** (2 Cor. 3:17).
- Etc.

Jesus explained the coming of the Holy Spirit with these words: **“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father,”**

where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgement because the prince of this world now stands condemned” (Jn. 16:7-11).

WELCOME THE HOLY SPIRIT

For three years Jesus had been a teacher, helper, and guide to His apostles. When He died and went to heaven He promised to not leave them as orphans (Jn. 13:18). He was not going to abandon them, but promised to continue to be their teacher, helper, and guide by means of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained: **“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (Jn. 16:7).**

This “Counselor”, of course, is the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that anyone who truly loves Jesus will welcome the Holy Spirit!

One major difference, however, is that during His earthly ministry Jesus guided His apostles from without. He went before them and they followed. W. E. Vine states that the word “akoloutheo” (to be a follower) *“is used 77 times in the Gospels of following Christ, and only once otherwise, Mark. 14:13”*. As the Holy Spirit Jesus would continue to teach, guide, and help them but now He would do it from within.

When Jesus was in a human body He could only be one place at a time. When He returned as the Holy Spirit, however, He could be everywhere at the same time. The Greek word “mone” refers to an “abode” or “dwelling”. It is only found two times in the Bible. While various versions translate the word “mone” differently, the meaning of these two verses is clear. In the first verse Jesus promised to prepare an “abode” for His disciples in heaven (Jn. 14:2). In the second verse Jesus asked that we prepare an “abode” for Him in our hearts (Jn. 14:23). How beautiful! When we receive the Holy Spirit our bodies actually become temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16).

We repeat. When Jesus was in a human body, as on the Mount of Transfiguration for example, he could only be “with” Peter, James and John (Matt. 17:1). While on the mountain with those three He could not be “with” the other apostles down in the valley. When He return as the Holy Spirit, however, He could be “inside” every true believer on earth at the same time.

Inviting Jesus into your heart is the same as inviting the Holy Spirit into your heart. Jesus said: **“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).** What a wonderful thing it is to welcome Jesus into your heart in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us power. Jesus specifically commanded His apostles not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Spirit. He said: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).** This “power” is able to accomplish immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20).

Remember! **“God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline” (2 Tim. 1:7).**

Please welcome the Holy Spirit into your heart because He is the key to your salvation. He can provide you with the power to accomplish the will of God in your life. Paul went so far as to say to believers: **“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom. 8:9).**

The Scriptures mention at least three ways we can receive the Holy Spirit. These are not exclusive, or three different ways. They are merely three different parts of the same process.

- First, we can ask God to give us the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:1-13 records the teaching of Jesus on prayer. In verses 2-4 He taught them a model prayer. In verses 5-10 he taught them to keep praying and not to give up. In verses 11-13 He reminded them that earthly fathers are kind to their children and said: **“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM! (Lk. 11:11-13)**
- Second, we need to repent and be baptized. Peter said it like this: **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins. AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Acts 2:38).**
- In the third place we must obey God. When Peter and the other apostles were on trial before the Sanhedrin they said: **“We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead – whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, AND SO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO GOD HAS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIM” (Acts 5:29-32).**

Here are a few reasons you should welcome the Holy Spirit into your life:

- No one can be saved without the Holy Spirit for it is He who convicts the world of sin righteousness and judgement (Jn. 16:7,8).
- We are not saved by righteous things we have done, but we are saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).
- When we are saved it is the Spirit that adds us to the Body of Christ **“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:13).**
- It is the Spirit that enables us to purify our souls and obey the truth (1 Pet. 1:22).
- It is the Spirit that acts as a seal proving that we belong to God (Eph. 1:13).
- It is the Spirit that guides us **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).**
- It is the Spirit that gives us encouragement (Acts 9:31).
- It is the Spirit that enables us to avoid sin so **“live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16).**
- It is the Spirit that distributes spiritual gifts for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7-11).
- It is the Spirit that produces His fruit within us of: **“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control” (Gal. 5:22).**

- It is the Spirit that transforms us into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).
 - It is the Spirit that empowers us to have joy, peace, trust and hope (Rom. 15:13).
 - It is the Spirit that helps us to preach the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).
 - It is the Spirit that gives us inner strength (Eph. 3:16).
 - It is the Spirit that confirms truth in our conscience (Rom. 9:1).
 - It is the Spirit that brings freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).
 - When we do not know how to pray as we should it is the Spirit that intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Rom. 8:26,27).
 - When Jesus comes again it is the Spirit that will give life to our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:10,11).
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- ✓ THESE ARE JUST “SOME” OF THE THINGS THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN DO FOR YOU!
 - ✓ NOTE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT ONLY DOES THINGS THAT ARE GOOD!
 - ✓ ONLY CONFUSED AND CORRUPT PEOPLE CAN CALL EVIL GOOD, AND GOOD EVIL (IS. 5:20).
 - ✓ ANYONE WHO CALLS GOOD EVIL MAY ALSO SPEAK AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BE IN DANGER OF COMMITTING AN ETERNAL SIN!
 - ✓ CONCERNING THOSE WHO SPEAK AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, JESUS SAID: **“LET THEM ALONE: THEY BE BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND. AND IF THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND, BOTH SHALL FALL INTO THE DITCH” (MATT. 15:14 KJV).**
 - ✓ PLEASE DO NOT CONTINUE TO DRIFT DOWNSTREAM FOR THEIR IS A POINT OF NO RETURN!
 - ✓ IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR HEART, DO IT NOW BEFORE IT IS ETERNALLY TOO LATE!
 - ✓ WHEN YOU RECEIVE CHRIST **“THE SPIRIT HIMSELF TESTIFIES WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE GOD’S CHILDREN. NOW IF WE ARE CHILDREN, THEN WE ARE HEIRS – HEIRS OF GOD AND CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST, IF INDEED WE SHARE IN HIS SUFFERINGS IN ORDER THAET WE MAY ALSO SHARE IN HIS GLORY” (ROM. 8:16,17)**

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