

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



February 22, 2015

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network

Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)

House to House, Heart to Heart

Mission Printing

Rohan Jones, Africa

The Truth in Love

World Bible School

Kernels of Knowledge From our Daily Bible Reading

Blasphemy — What Is this Great Sin?

For many people, one of the most fearful terms to be found in the New Testament is the word "blasphemy." Blasphemy is represented as a horrible sin, but what is it? Have I been guilty of it? Can one obtain pardon for it? These are serious questions that engage the attention of the devout person.

Blasphemy is an anglicized form of the Greek term *blasphemia*, which scholars believe probably derives from two roots—*blapto*, to injure, and *pheme*, to speak. The word would thus suggest injurious speech. Contextually, though, the noun *blasphemia*, and its kindred terms—the verb *blasphemeo* and the adjective *blasphemos*—can refer to a variety of attitudes and actions. Let us consider several passages:

Blaspheming God

That one can blaspheme God is apparent from several New Testament passages. For example, in Romans 2 Paul rebuked those wicked Jews who had been given a written revelation from God and who taught against certain vile practices, yet who nonetheless were guilty of the very sins they condemned. The apostle thus says, "*For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, because of you, even as it is written*" (2:24).

When the people of the world observe those who profess to be saints living immorally, they frequently speak injuriously against the Lord himself: "Some God he must be if his children live like that!" Can we learn anything from this?

Similarly, Paul admonished Christian servants to honor their masters in order that "*the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed*" (1 Timothy 6:1). So sacred is the authority of God and his doctrine, those early saints were obliged to be good slaves that such truths be not injured. [The sweet influences of the Christian religion would, of course, in time cause the vile business of slavery to lose much of its grip on humanity.]

But how can men otherwise blaspheme God? Certainly those who deny his very existence blaspheme him! "*The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God'*" (Psalm 14:1). Scripture speaks of those deluded souls who, in their senselessness, refuse to have God in their knowledge (Romans 1:18ff). To observe the great creation of which we are a part (Psalm 19:1), and then to attribute that to chance, fate, accident, or evolution is a vile form of blasphemy against its author!

Blaspheming Christ

As Christ was hanging on the cross, certain folks passed by his quivering body and "*reviled him*" (KJV), or "*railed on him*" (ASV), according to the record of Matthew 27:39. The Greek literally suggests they blasphemed (*blasphemeo*) him.

Here is what they said: "*Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days [cf. John 2:19ff], save yourself: if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (Matthew 27:40). The apostle thus informs us that these who repudiated the divine sonship of Jesus were guilty of blasphemy.

If such was the rage of those ancient rebels, what shall be said of today's rabid, slobbering modernists who deny that the humble Nazarene was born to the virgin Mary, as both Matthew and Luke affirm. What about those who rationalize the Savior's astounding miracles by saying they were but natural phenomena misinterpreted by a superstitious age, and those who insist that the Lord's body still lies in some unmarked Judean grave? Men who promote such ideas are blasphemers of the rankest variety, and yet, sadly, they occupy hundreds of pulpits in this nation of ours.

(Continued on page 2)

"Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death." **Leviticus 24:14-16**

Let us know if you want to study the Bible to know more about Christ and His Church.

(Continued from page 1)

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

Christ declared, “Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven” (Matthew 12:31). Within this context the Lord indicated that those who spoke against him could find pardon, but those who spoke against the Spirit could not (v. 32).

Since both Christ and the Spirit are deity (John 1:1; Acts 5:3, 4), why should it, within this setting, appear to be more serious to dishonor the Spirit than the Savior? We believe the emphasis here has to be on the chronological aspects of their respective functions.

Though the Jews would presently crucify their Messiah, nevertheless, with the great outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the proclamation of his message of grace, thousands of them would receive pardon (Acts 2). If, though, that kingdom of redemption, whose introduction was divinely verified by the workings of the Spirit (cf. Matthew 12:28), was repudiated, what else was there through which men could be saved? Absolutely nothing!

To harden oneself against the gospel plan is, therefore, blasphemy against the Spirit of God, and those who continue in such a disposition have no means of obtaining forgiveness.

But there are other ways of blaspheming the Spirit. Would it not be a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit to deny his very personality? Indeed! Yet this is precisely what several religious cults do. For instance, the Watchtower organization claims that the Spirit is but the impersonal “active force” of Jehovah. The Armstrong cult and Christian Science have similar bizarre notions.

Blaspheming the Word

We mentioned earlier Paul’s reference to blaspheming the doctrine of God (1 Timothy 6:1). In a similar admonition the apostle exhorts Titus to “speak the things which befit the sound doctrine” (2:1). He then proceeds to give instructions concerning the conduct that is expected of the maturer saints, both men and women.

He says, for example, among other things, that aged women are to be “sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (2:5). Here, a lack of Christian fidelity can cause the divine word to be blasphemed.

Let every child of God take care! We must always remember that we are the only “Bible” that many people will read, and if they see in us shallowness, apathy, and hypocrisy, they may attribute those unholy traits to the word which we profess to believe.

Others, who arrogantly contend that the Bible is merely a collection of human works, blaspheme that holy document which is “inspired of God” (1 Timothy 3:16). And those who allege their confidence in

the Bible’s divine origin, yet who confess they believe that it is nevertheless flawed with “jars, clashes, and contradictions” also revile the infallible word. Moreover, any person who perverts the sacred teaching of the Scriptures to accommodate his worldly lifestyle or his theological prejudices, is assaulting the holy volume!

Blaspheming the Church

In the book of Revelation, chapter thirteen, John saw a beast rising from the sea. Obviously representing an enemy of God, the beast had seven heads, upon which were “names of blasphemy” (v. 1). The apostle declares, “And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven” (v. 6).

The Old Testament tabernacle, which was a prototype of the temple, prefigured the church (Hebrews 9:8-9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21), composed of those who have been raised up with Christ to sit in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). It is possible, therefore, according to Revelation 13:6, to blaspheme the church of God.

How do men accomplish that abominable act? It may be done in any number of ways. Though the Bible clearly teaches that Christ is the saviour of the body, which is the church (Ephesians 5:23; 1:22, 23), numerous religious leaders boldly announce that that blood-bought organism is but an option, that a lost person does not necessarily need to enter the church in order to enjoy the blessings of redemption.

Others blaspheme the tabernacle of God by suggesting that most any church will do; just turn to the Yellow Pages and select yourself a good church! One would do better to turn to the New Testament and select Christ’s church, for all churches not planted by him will ultimately be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).

Can Blasphemy Be Forgiven?

Any sin for which one seeks forgiveness through God’s prescribed plan can be forgiven. This can be demonstrated by the case of no less a person than Paul. Prior to the time of his conversion to Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,” howbeit, he “obtained mercy” (1 Timothy 1:13). When he, in penitent faith, submitted to the Lord’s command to “be baptized,” his sins (including blasphemy) were washed away (Acts 22:16).

Furthermore, the same gracious promise of comprehensive pardon is available to every child of God—even those who have acted injuriously with reference to Jehovah and his cause—who will repent of his wrong, acknowledge it, and ask the Lord’s forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Wayne Jackson
(christiancourier.com)

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

Feb. 22 Leviticus 26-27

Feb. 23 Numbers 1-2

Feb. 24 Numbers 3-4

Feb. 25 Numbers 5-6

Feb. 26 Numbers 7

Feb. 27 Numbers 8-10

Feb. 28 Numbers 11-13

Mar. 1 Numbers 14-15; Psalm 90

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
(2 Timothy 2:15)



What does it mean to blaspheme? What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy is derisive language or any other insult against God, His character, and His system of proper worship. It is reflected in Old Testament law through the third commandment (do not take the Lord's name in vain), in the pre-Mosaic law against murdering those made in the image of God (Gen. 9:6), and in the straightforward command to not blaspheme God's name (Lev. 24:16). David considered it a grave offence to disrespect God by harming His anointed ruler (1 Sam. 24:6), even if that anointed one was trying to kill him. Ananias and Sapphira committed a type of blasphemy when they discounted God's omniscience and holiness and pretended to donate more to the church than they actually had (Acts 5:1-10). Jesus was executed because the priests and Pharisees believed He blasphemed by claiming to be God (Mt. 26:65).

"Disrespectful speech or representation of God" is a broad definition, and it's very easy to fall into. God is Creator of the universe, absolute Sovereign, and our human minds don't have the capacity to fully comprehend Him—how can we accurately represent Him? This very concern is what drove the Israelite scholars to condense God's name to the unpronounceable "YHWH."

Civil laws designed to prevent blasphemy have had mixed results. Scientists such as Copernicus and Galileo were charged with blasphemy for daring to posit that the earth was not the center of the universe. The Spanish Inquisition sought out blasphemers to punish. In many European countries, where religious and political leadership intermingled, blasphemy against God was equated with treason against the State.

From the perspective of Judaism and Christianity, true blasphemy can only be committed against the true God; however, other religions also raise charges of blasphemy. When Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the furnace, he was essentially charging them with blasphemy—in this case, the act of denying Nebuchadnezzar's deity (Dan. 3). Years later, when King Darius consigned Daniel to the lion's den, it was for the same reason (Dan. 6). Countless Christians lost their lives in the early days of the church because of their refusal to worship the Roman emperor.

State-sponsored protection of the name and character of the Christian-Judeo God is all but gone. Great Britain abolished laws on blasphemy in 2007; the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution effectively nullifies blasphemy laws, although states had such laws up until 1952. Currently, some the most active anti-blasphemy campaigns are carried out in the name of Islam. Christians are forced to walk a fine line when encountering blasphemy in the socio-political arena.

How should a Christian see the issue of blasphemy? We should start by worshiping our God as holy and doing our best to represent His true character to others. We should always be aware of how our own speech and actions reflect on Him, and never give others the occasion to blaspheme Him because of our sin.

Adapted from an article at coppellingtruth.org/what-is-blasphemy.html

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

February Birthdays: Cindy McCaghren (2), Johnny McCaghren (2), Peggy Chism (3), Carol Wilcox (5), Lunday Maninger (8), Aaron Stewart (11), Patti Bannister (14), **Jack Turner (22), Jonathan Fuller (28).**

February Anniversaries: Billy & Peggy Chism (26).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Feb. 8, 2015	Feb. 15, 2015
Bible Class	32	36
AM Worship	49	49
PM Worship	32	39
Wednesday PM	38	42
Contribution	\$1,514	\$2,139

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1)

This Week: 2/22/15		Next Week: 3/1/15		February 2015	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister		Make Announcements: Joe Dennis	
Greeters	Allen & Linda Griffith	Maninger Family		Prepare Communion: Peggy Moore	
Opening Prayer	Tom Wilcox	Allen Griffith		Clean Building: Johnny & Cindy McCaghren	
Communion	Allen Griffith*, Hank Wheeler Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell	Don Smith*, James Thomas Joe Dennis, Caleb Dennis		Keep Grounds: Tom Wilcox	
Closing Prayer	Billy Chism	Tom Wilcox		March 2015	
Attendance Cards	Chase Churchwell	Caleb Dennis		Make Announcements: Ken Maninger	
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: James Fuller	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		Prepare Communion: Don & Darlene Smith	
Opening Prayer	Joe Dennis	Gene Bannister		Clean Building: John Barnum Family	
Scripture Reading	Don Smith	John Barnum		Keep Grounds: James Fuller	
Communion	Allen Griffith	Don Smith			
Closing Prayer	Johnny McCaghren	James Thomas			
Wednesday Devotionals:	February 25 Joe Dennis	March 4 Prayer	March 11 Allen Griffith	March 18 Tom Wilcox	

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of February 22, 2015

Sunday Class Acts 2:42ff
Wednesday Class Personal Evangelism

<u>The Reality of Hell</u>
Through a series of parables in Matthew 25, Jesus confirms the reality of hell.
I. The Presence of Hell. (Mt. 25:31-46 – The Final Judgment)
A. Here Jesus gives us a glimpse of the Judgment Day and the separation of the sheep from the goats.
1. To those on His left He says, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels " (41).
2. Jesus declares, "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life " (46).
B. Few people deny the existence of heaven (a place of eternal bliss) – but there is a place of eternal torment and destruction.
C. Hell is as real as Jesus – to deny hell is to deny the Lord Himself.
II. The Peril of Hell. (Mt. 25:14-30 – The Parable of the Talents)
A. A man goes on a journey and when he arrives home and reconciles their accounts, he becomes angry with the servant who refused to use his gifts, saying, "And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (25:30).
B. Jesus affirms the presence of hell, but He also reveals its perils.
1. Hell is a place of eternal "weeping and gnashing of teeth."
2. Another peril of hell is eternal fire – the instrument of indescribable pain (41).
3. However, the greatest peril of hell is separation from God.
III. The People of Hell. (Mt. 25:1-13 – The Parable of the Ten Virgins)
A. Here Jesus warns everyone to be prepared because His return will be unannounced and unexpected.
B. Here we see hell populated by the unprepared and unprofitable.
Application
I. Hell tells us to choose life. (Deut. 30:19; Matt. 7:13,14)
II. Hell tells us to choose obedience.
III. Hell tells us to choose preparation.
IV. Hell tells us to choose profitability.
Many of us are afraid of the dark, but not enough of us are afraid of the ultimate darkness – the final darkness.
Why choose the terror of eternal darkness when in heaven, "Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light" (Rev. 22:5)?

<u>Jude 5-11</u>
II. WARNINGS 5-19
The evil men who were corrupting the church did not regard themselves as enemies of the church. They regarded themselves as <i>advanced thinkers, slightly above the ordinary Christian, the spiritual elite.</i>
5. <i>I want to remind you:</i> Adults, like children, easily forget. <i>You once fully knew it:</i> An admonition based on prior knowledge. <i>Saved...destroyed:</i> They had been saved, then became lost! <i>Did not believe:</i> Literally – were not believing. Cf. Jn 3:36.
6. <i>Did not stay [keep]:</i> To keep, to guard. <i>Own position of authority:</i> Position, office, dominion, authority. <i>If we do not keep our proper authority will we be lost? Yes we will!</i> <i>Proper dwelling [habitation, abode]:</i> Place of living, dwelling place. <i>Kept [reserved]:</i> Guarded, kept, irrevocably reserved. <i>Darkness:</i> Darkness, gloom. Cf. 2 Pet 1:19.
7. <i>And the surrounding cities:</i> Admah and Zeboim. Zoar was spared because that is where Lot went. Cf. Deut. 29:23. <i>Unnatural [strange]:</i> Another of a different kind. <i>Serve as an example:</i> We should be able to look at these and learn. <i>Undergoing [suffering]:</i> To undergo, to suffer. <i>Punishment [vengeance]:</i> Cf. Rev 14:9b-11. <i>Eternal fire:</i> It is not just <i>in or during</i> time, nor is it annihilation.
8. <i>These people = False teachers</i> (vs. 4). <i>In like manner:</i> just like Sodom and Gomorrah. <i>Relying on their dreams:</i> To dream. <i>Defile –</i> Both themselves and those who follow them. <i>Reject authority [despise dominion]:</i> Lordship is set aside. <i>Blaspheme the glorious ones [speak evil of dignitaries (dignities)]:</i>
9. <i>Archangel Michael:</i> Cf. 2 Peter 2:11; Revelation 12:7. <i>Reviling (railing) accusation:</i> Blaspheme. <i>Devil:</i> Slander.
10. <i>But these speak evil of whatever they do not know.</i> <i>Understand instinctively [whatever they know naturally]:</i> The only things they know "instinctively" are what "unreasonable" animals know. <i>Destroyed [corrupt]:</i> Spoil, ruin, corrupt, deprave!
11. <i>Woe to them!</i> Compare Matthew 23, James 3:1. Jude parallels these false teachers with <i>Cain, Balaam and Korah</i> along with their sins.