

## THE CONVERSION OF A BLASPHEMER

If you were dying, would you expend your last moments railing against God? Then, having railed and ridiculed the Creator, would you have the nerve to make a request of Him? Luke records a couple of lowly thieves blaspheming the only begotten Son of God.

**“Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left... In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach” (Mat 27:38, 41-44 ASV).**

Amazing! The first thing that amazes us is that this thief is being crucified, but nevertheless, puffs up enough gall to rail upon another who is in the same predicament. It makes you feel like saying, “Hey, fellow! Look where you are! You are hanging on a cross!” Yet even more amazing is the fact that these two crooks are *guilty* of the crimes *they* have committed. The Christ is innocent, declared such by the rulers who held the kangaroo court and the soldier who nailed Him to the tree.

Even more amazing is this blasphemy that is allowed. God did not strike the men dead on the spot before the foul words soiled their lips. The King of Kings did not order His army of angels to stop their mouths. That’s what kings of France and kings of England did! I am afraid that is what we would have done. Such irreverence deserves death from the mighty hand of God, but how does the Lord respond? Before we answer, let us study the idea of irreverent words and actions.

### The Bahurim Blasphemer

When the blasphemer sees he has the upper hand or is not called on the spot for foolishness, he may show nerves of steel. Absalom, David’s son, led a rebellion against his father, the king of Israel. In David’s distress, the boisterous Shimei adds insult to injury.

**“...when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence...Shimei,...and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David:... And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow:...Shimei went along on the hillside over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust” (2 Sam. 16:5-13 ASV).**

David’s general, Abishai, responds the way most of us would respond. He said, **“...Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head” (2 Sam. 16:9 ASV).**

After the victory is won against Absalom, as David triumphantly returns to Jerusalem, he meets the blasphemer again. David is not the only one going in the opposite direction. Shimei **“fell down before the king...[and] he said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me...”(2 Sam. 19:18-20 ASV).** David did not sentence him to the judgment of the Law, at this time. He let him go free.

### The “Bahurim” Blasphemers Are Still Allowed To Rail

Blasphemy was not restricted to David’s enemies or the cross. In his song “Dead God,” Marilyn Manson “courageously” sings, “The only good god is a dead god. The only god good for me.” Courageously? I don’t think so! “Foolishly” better describes such arrogance. Manson is not alone. Mark Bakke proudly displays his disgust against God by charging that God lied, “If one thinks about it for a bit, one can easily see that the serpent was absolutely right in his statement to Eve. That means that God is a liar and that Man is suffering for it. This hardly qualifies as any form of ‘justice.’” Such arrogance!

Because of the tsunami in 2004, one writer begins his tirade with, “God is a Terrorist,” adding, “Personally, I find comfort in the notion that there is no such being. Given a choice between believing in a malicious or impotent or indifferent deity, and a universe in which everything happens by mere chance...I’ll take my chances with chance.” What will he whine when he meets God?

I wish I could say that these quotes were difficult to find, but the electronic World Library is filled with such haughtiness. What will become of such men? What if God refused to forgive scoffers? Then the thief is doomed forever.

### Who Is Blamable For Blasphemy? How?

Brethren who preach one thing while living another bring reproach upon the Lord of Lords.

**“Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written” (Rom. 2:21-24 ASV).**

**“...that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit 2:3-5 ASV).**

Long, long before our own society uttered its railings, Isaiah lamented, **“...my name continually all the day is blasphemed” (Isa. 52:5).**

### The Blasphemer May Become Blameless

What shall blasphemers do? The Law of Moses clearly condemns the irreverent to death (Lev. 24:15-16). The Law of Christ warns that matters may even be worse. **“A man that hath set at nought Moses law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb 10:28-29 ASV).**

The thief on the cross was condemned to die. Before he died, however, the blasphemer repented. This amazing turn of events and the Lord’s response is only recorded by Luke. **“And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom” (Luke 23:38-43 ASV).**

Mark the change in the malefactor. He blames and rebukes his fellow thief, believes in law and justice, expresses belief in God, believes in Jesus and His power to reign, and beseeches the King for mercy. But what will the King of Kings do? Mercy! That is the Lord’s amazing response.

Jesus said, **“...Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43 ASV).** When the Lord of Glory forgave the once arrogant, but now penitent, thief, it sent a message of mercy and hope to the rest of mankind who may have lived and spoken carelessly. All may be forgiven (Mark 3:28-29).

### Conclusion

The penitent thief is not the only railer forgiven of indignities against God and His people. Saul of Tarsus stands at the head of the line — a line that depicts who is the greatest of sinners. The thief and all the rest of us have to stand behind Saul the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13-15). Once the sinner fully understands and commits in faith by being baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18), he will not regret.

As Polycarp said, “For 80 and 6 years I have served Him, and He has never once wronged me. How can I blaspheme my Lord and King who has saved me?” (c.69-c.155).

**ANNIVERSARY**

David and Anne Adams, 08-14.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Lois Tullis, 08-14; Wilba Hopkins, 08-16;  
Nicole Parish, 08-16.

**ILL**

**Sunday:** Janice Carter, Chris Edwards, Millie Robertson (PM). Allen Scott had knee replacement surgery at Olathe Medical Center on August 11 and is in Room 226. Ken Greer’s mother fell on Wednesday evening. John James’ mother is in Room 403 of the Olathe Medical Center. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

**Those battling cancer:** Diane Cannon, Ledgia Campbell and Ron Wood. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Lynda Cole, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

**HOME BOUND**

Bob Adams is in Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

**OUT OF TOWN**

Gary and Melissa Cole were in Liberal, KS last week. Kevin Greer was with his grandparents last week. Charles and Lois Tullis and Myron Nebergall left Sunday afternoon on a trip. George Thomas was in Illinois on business last week. Debra Gragg will be in Colorado this week.

**MEN’S BUSINESS MEETING**

Our monthly Men’s Business Meeting will be held this Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup> following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

**ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 66; Sunday PM, 44; Wednesday PM, 32.

**Those To Serve**

August 13, 2006

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek**

**MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson**  
**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... Gary Cole**  
**PRESIDE..... John Dodson**  
**ASSIST.....David Parish**  
**ASSIST.....Allen Scott**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Ken Greer**

**EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Myron Nebergall**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**LORD’S SUPPER..... John Dodson**

**WEDNESDAY 16th**

**SONG LEADER.....Ted Thrasher**  
**INVITATION ..... George Thomas**

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

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

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**  
**Phone: (913) 764-2325**  
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