

## **Blasphemy**

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January 2012

We know how important the Commandments are, but do we understand those Commandments? Do we understand what they imply, what they are really saying to us? The third Commandment is telling us that we are not to take the name of the Lord in vain; and if we do we are held guilty by God. But do we realize the implication of it – do we realize how we can actually break that Commandment? Now we are not talking about the authority of God – that is only one area that this Commandment speaks about. Another area is the name of God Himself, what He stands for, and we know that God is a jealous God – very jealous! He wants us to treat Him as a Father and also as God.

There is a word in the Bible that creeps up in the Old and New Testaments that I think we sometimes do not fully understand. We know that it means something bad, but we don't really understand it. We just don't connect it to the Third Commandment as we will see as we go along. It is actually part of that Commandment. The word I am talking about is BLASPHEMY! How often have we read over that word and said "Oh yes it is referring to something bad, and we must not blasphemy". But do we really understand what it means, what it is saying to us?

We have to understand the full meaning of the word blasphemy; otherwise we in God's Church will face dire consequences if we don't. The world in general blasphemes and don't realize what they are saying, but we must not be like the world. We must understand what it is, and how it can easily be brought into our lives. We also have to understand that it could actually be part of our lives right now without even realizing it. We must know, and as a loving Father God wants us to know, and act on it. He wants His children to obey Him. He wants us to love Him, and to become part of His Family. Blasphemy is a very dangerous sin. It is the most dangerous sin one can commit. We will understand why I have stated that as we continue. Let us understand, all sin is wrong, but this one carries things that we need to understand and appreciate.

Let us go to our first scripture, Lev 24:10-16. "And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregations stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surly be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death".

As we can see it is very serious. We must understand that if it carried the death penalty in ancient Israel what about us today, spiritual Israel? Now Strong's looks at the word BLASPHEMY which is 5344 in the Hebrew, and it says this – "to puncture Lit. (to perforate, with more or less violence) bore, with holes, pierce, strike through". In other words it is saying – to violently poke holes through, to jab at or perforate - and of course it is referring to God. So when we blaspheme God we are perforating Him, we are sticking pins in Him. We are hurting Him. Blasphemy applies strictly to an intentional utterance defying or offering indignity to the Supreme Being. Webster's Dictionary states this of indignity; "indignity offered to God in words, writing or signs, dishonour, disrespect, reproach, slap in the face,

snub". The Church of God, in these past few years, has been doing all those things. Some of us have been guilty of these ourselves; until, in His mercy, God brought us here, in this small but faithful group. Look at it-reproaches, slapping in the face- isn't it what's happening to God today? Isn't He being snubbed today by His own people? Again, the Third Commandment-taking the name of the Lord in vain-They are preaching the name of God, but they are not really submitting to Him; are they?

The apostle Paul wrote that in the last days there would be blasphemy. Turn to 2Timothy 3:1-2. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come". And we are experiencing perilous times. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy".

When God talks through the Bible He is not talking to the world for they don't understand it. We have been given understanding of God's Word, and so He is talking to us His people. These are perilous times for the Church of God and blasphemy is rife amongst the people of God. What a shame! Even in this country, Malta, one hears blasphemy day by day: at work at shows and on the streets. If one turns on the T.V. one can be watching a movie and blasphemy is being uttered. American movies are some of the worst but also British films are the same. You turn on the radio and again blasphemy is contained in certain songs. These are very catchy songs and one can easily be caught singing along without noticing what is really being sung.

When I came into God's Church many years ago I read an article where there was mentioned these words: "Gee, Gosh, Golly and dame". One can hear them in many films and soap operas on T.V. These words are derivatives of Jesus Christ and the Father. 'Dame' is actually condemning someone to death. There is one particular song with the words "good golly" in it; the song itself sounds pretty good but it is taking the name of God in vain none the less. We have all sung along with these songs at one time or another. We should know better! As I stated before, the article mentioned above is very old, and I am surprised that for some reason we haven't heard about this for a long, long time: as if we are perfect. We are not perfect brethren! We blaspheme without realizing it!

Mark 7:21-23 states "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man". When it says, "come from within", it means it is coming from the heart or the mind. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "it is deceitful and desperately wicked". The carnal mind-not the mind of God which we should have; but the carnal mind, the old man that could still be residing in us, can cause us to blaspheme God.

Now let us look at some examples of blasphemy because there are different types of it:-

Isa.36:14-16. "Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you." This is the king of Assyria's captain. "Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, the Lord will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for this saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern:" Verse 18. "Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, the Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" Brethren, we have a challenge here. This man is actually challenging God. Verses 19-20, "Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" This man was defying

God, wasn't he? This man was turning against God. In chapter 37:6 "And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master", He was speaking to Israel now, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that you have heard, wherewith the servant of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me." So these Assyrians were blaspheming the Almighty God, bringing Him to the stature of an idol-likening God to an idol that the other nations had, which did not deliver them from Assyrian captivity. Verse 10 "Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom you trust, deceive you..." He is saying to Israel that your God won't help you. Verse 23 "Who have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel." These Assyrians were not blaspheming Hezekiah or the Israelites, but defying and blaspheming Almighty God.

Another type of blasphemy: Ezek.20:27 "Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, thus says the Lord God: Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me." So what were they doing? They were actually sacrificing to idols. They were teaching a different type of religion after God had delivered them into the Promised Land. Brethren, can we relate to this particular type of blasphemy? God brought us into His land, into His Family where the tremendous blessings are, of knowing God. Yet people are turning against God, having their own religion, making men into gods. They are blaspheming God without knowing it-that's what they are doing, and God does not like it.

What about hypocrisy? What about when someone comes to services and he or she says they're keeping God's commandments, yet at home they do the opposite, claiming to be Christians but constantly putting up with their sins? Now, we know we all have sins and we fight against them, as we are suppose to do, but what if we allow those sins to remain. What if we are comfortable with them in our lives? We live with sin and still say, we are God's children, and we say to ourselves that we are submitting to God. Aren't we being hypocritical? Aren't we denying the name of God? Aren't we blaspheming?

Another type of blasphemy: Acts 13:44-45 "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." God wants us to reason with Him, and ourselves. But once something is clarified from scripture, whichever way it goes, if we speak against it we are blaspheming God. If God shows us something from scripture and it is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt then we cannot speak against it. If it comes from God and we speak against it we will be blaspheming Him. How serious it is to do things the right way. We don't stop asking questions, we don't stop putting our thoughts across, but once it is shown to be 100%, whichever way, then it is from God and we are to submit to Him.

In these last couple of years God has shown us so much more from His Word and we have submitted; but they were proven. Now if we speak against any one of those doctrines we have been given in the last few years in a wrong way, in any negative way: then we are blaspheming God the Father and of course Jesus Christ who passed on to us those new understandings from His Father.

Another way to blaspheme is actually causing others to blaspheme. What if we went to the Feast of Tabernacles and instead of setting a good example we were unruly? We left our rooms in a mess and ran around not caring about others; setting bad examples, people would speak badly about us and wouldn't want to have anything to do with us nor God's Church. They would actually be blaspheming God and we would have been the cause, we would be just as guilty of the blasphemy as they. Instead of causing people to praise God, which we are to do, we would have caused them to blaspheme Him. We are to be lights, not

bad examples but lights. We are to cause people to praise God. One day they are going to know that we were part of God's Family in the flesh, and they'll praise God for it. But what if they look back and say, "Oh that person, he didn't act the way of a true Christian." Paul the apostle wrote in Rom.2:23-24 "You who boast in the law"-he is speaking to the Jews-"do you dishonour God by breaking the law? For it is written: the name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you". So what about us in the Church of God today? We are making ourselves look like mugs-we are making a mockery of religion aren't we; 400 splits and splinters. They, the split and splinter groups, are making this religion sound so crazy. You know-the majority of God's Church is causing blasphemy towards God. This is the Body-His Son's Body. We must not be a part of these groups. We know what happened to David- king David, a man after God's own heart. His sin with Bathsheba caused the death of his little son; but also caused the death of many Israelites; because they blasphemed God. The enemies of Israel were blaspheming God buy making fun of the God of David. We must not cause anybody to do that. God wants us to set a good example and so we must obey.

Titus 2:5 begins to hit home. It says this to the women in God's Church; "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." So really what God is saying here is-He is not pulling punches- if the wife disobeys by not doing those things she is causing God's Word to be blasphemed. But the wife is not the only one. If we go to 1Tim.6:1 it says this; "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." So the men in God's Church have to also set a good example at the work place, at home; wherever they may be-serving, working, whatever. God covers all areas of life. He leaves nothing untouched. He is hitting us where it hurts. He is telling us to wake up to ourselves and do what is right. So far He has blessed us immensely. But if we harden ourselves He will not rain upon us the blessings of revelation and deeper understandings.

Now why is blasphemy so dangerous? In Matt.12:22-23 " Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." So a tremendous miracle had been performed here in the sight of those watching. Verse 23 "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself: how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men, And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." So basically Jesus is showing us that there are different types of blasphemy, as we have just seen. Yet one of them, one of them leads us to committing the unpardonable sin. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is committing the unpardonable sin! Now these Pharisees saw the miracle, they saw that it was good. They saw the power of God, and they knew-they knew who Christ was. They knew; Nicodemus said to Christ 'We know who you (Christ) are'. So they knew, so what did they do that was wrong? Well, they rejected what was done. They saw the wonderful miracle that Christ did, but they hardened their hearts against it. The Holy Spirit that brings us to repentance- they actually turned against it. They hardened themselves and spoke against Christ's miracle. They said that it

was done by satan, not by the power of God. Instead of repenting, they struck back; remember what blasphemy means? To poke, to pierce, to slap in the face. That's exactly what they were doing. They were slapping God the Father because it was His power that brought this man back-gave him hearing and gave him sight. They blasphemed God. They said it was the devil doing it. The very power which brings us to repentance is what they were turning against. Once they seared their conscience and hardened their hearts, they arrived at the point where they could not repent. Therefore they could not be forgiven. If you reject the only power that brings you to repentance, the only power that brings you back to God; if you reject that-how can you repent? And so, how can you ever be forgiven if you don't repent?

We have to overcome; we have to look at ourselves to see if we are doing any of those things mentioned above. We are to marry Jesus Christ-to be with Him on Mount Zion; the 144,000 Firstfruits. These Firstfruits will have to go through a great deal. Let's go to Rev.14:1-5. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women ;( These are they who did not blaspheme) for they are virgins,"( virgins-purity). "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile (guile-blasphemy): for they are without fault before the throne of God." This is our future. So we must eradicate from our lives any type of blasphemy. In other word, we have to search ourselves because we might not realize what we are doing: setting the wrong example at work, at home or during services. Talking behind the minister's back, talking behind the backs of the brethren. If we do these things we blaspheme the name of God, and above all the Holy Spirit, the very power of God. We must never attribute anything that is done by the Holy Spirit to satan the devil. If we defy the power of God in any way, shape or form, how can we ever return to repentance? How can we ever be forgiven? How can we? The only place left will be the lake of fire! It is so dangerous to blaspheme. One blasphemy, in the sense of causing people to blaspheme or whatever, could lead us to this outcome. It is like the old saying 'All roads lead to Rome'. Once you begin to blaspheme in an area it could lead to the most dangerous type of blasphemy-that is defying the Holy Spirit of God; the very power that brought us into the Body of Christ in the first place, the very power that will raise us up from the dead, and change us from mortal to immortality.

So let's not defy God! Remember we are being judged right now. Every moment of every day, we are being judged in how we act, in what we say and what we do. If blasphemy is found in us let's get rid of it! I know by ourselves we can't do it- we must go and ask God for His help to overcome it. If we endeavour to do that then God will help us. If we endeavour to let God into our lives, and continue to seek His help, then He will be there for us. But if we defy Him and His power we will have no help at all. That is how dangerous blasphemy is. That is how dangerous it is to violate that third Commandment. So let us keep it as commanded by the Almighty.