

A Case of Blasphemy

Leviticus 24

Leviticus series #18

October 9, 2022

### PreSermon Comments

- Jumping ahead today, then backtracking next Sunday with Rabbi Matt

### Introduction | Who Said It?

- *What's in a name? ...Don't you ever talk about me...Say my name, say my name...Keep my wife's name out your mouth...Put some respect on my name.*
- What's the deal with respecting someone's name?
- Only two narratives in Leviticus: Nadab/Abihu, and this story

### I. Tell the Story

**Leviticus 24** <sup>10</sup> Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father was among the Israelites. A fight broke out in the camp between the Israelite woman's son and an Israelite man.

- Possibly an "in the wrong neighborhood" kind of situation

<sup>11</sup> Her son cursed and blasphemed the Name, and they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith, a daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan.) <sup>12</sup> They put him in custody until the Lord's decision could be made clear to them.

- Up to this point in the Torah, there is no law given for such a situation.
- The only close law would be Ex. 21:17 where death is for one who curses mother/father
- Why genealogy but no name? Because of the idea of being "cut off" from the community

<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>14</sup> "Bring the one who has cursed to the outside of the camp and have all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then have the whole community stone him. <sup>15</sup>

And tell the Israelites: If anyone curses his God, he will bear the consequences of his sin. <sup>16</sup>

Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death; the whole community is to stone him. If he blasphemes the Name, he is to be put to death, whether the resident alien or the native.

- Note the two verbs: curse and blaspheme. More in just a few
- This leads to a series of law given to the people

### Rulings for Life

**Leviticus 24** <sup>17</sup> If a man kills anyone, he must be put to death. <sup>18</sup> Whoever kills an animal is to make restitution for it, life for life. <sup>19</sup> If any man inflicts a permanent injury on his neighbor, whatever he has done is to be done to him: <sup>20</sup> fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever injury he inflicted on the person, the same is to be inflicted on him. <sup>21</sup> Whoever kills an animal is to make

restitution for it, but whoever kills a person is to be put to death.<sup>22</sup> You are to have the same law for the resident alien and the native, because I am the Lord your God.

1. The punishment must fit the crime
2. Animals are different from people - more serious consequences
3. These laws apply to both natural born Israelites and those who grafted in

### **Excursus: Capital Punishment**

#### **Capital Offenses**

1. Murder | Genesis 9:6
2. Witchcraft | Exodus 22:18
3. Sabbath-breaking | Exodus 31:15
4. Idolatry | Leviticus 20:2
5. Cursing parents | Leviticus 20:9
6. Sexual immorality | Leviticus 20:10
7. Blasphemy | Leviticus 24:16

#### **Capital Punishment in Scripture**

1. Assumed and allowable | All Torah, Romans 13:4
2. Not personal vengeance | Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:19
3. Today ≠ theocratic Israel | Jeremiah 29, Daniel, 1 Peter
  - a. Do our gov'ts use this tool to promote devotion to YHWH, flourishing?

*\*Jesus followers can have good faith disagreements about whether or not our current governments can/should use capital punishment. At best, a tragic necessity. At worst, a massive misuse of authority.*

## **II. Blaspheming the Name**

### **Ancient Names**

- Highly important
- Indicative of character
- Tied to reputation
- Literary device

### **A Series of Names**

**Leviticus 24**<sup>11</sup> Her son cursed and blasphemed the Name, and they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith, a daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan.)

**Leviticus 24**<sup>11</sup> *The blasphemer—whose name we won't even mention—was the son of a woman named My Shalom. The blasphemer's grandpa, One Who Speaks, was from the tribe of God will Judge.*

## God's Name

- Revealed at Sinai | Exodus 3:13-16 *Who shall I say sent me?*
- God's self | Exodus 6:3 *I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I was not known to them by my name 'the LORD.'*
- God's power | Exodus 9:16 *...show you my power, so my name can go to the whole earth*
- God's glory | Exodus 33:18-34:7 *Let me see your glory...I'll proclaim my name.*
- God's dwelling | 2 Samuel 7:13 *The temple David wanted to build.*

## God's Name on the People

**Numbers 6** <sup>22</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>23</sup> "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. You should say to them, <sup>24</sup> "May the Lord bless you and protect you; <sup>25</sup> may the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> may the Lord look with favor on you and give you peace." ' <sup>27</sup> In this way they will pronounce my name over the Israelites, and I will bless them."

## Misusing the Name

**Leviticus 22** <sup>32</sup> You must not profane my holy name; I must be treated as holy among the Israelites. I am the Lord who sets you apart, <sup>33</sup> the one who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord.

- Rooted in the 10 Commandments

**Exodus 20** <sup>7</sup> Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name.

- Naqab | Pierce, designate, blaspheme (A very *definite* sort of word)
- Qalal | Curse, to make small, disgrace (Not respecting)
- Chalal | Profane, wrongly use (Like in Lev. 20 when sacrificing to Molech)
- \*Gadaph | Mock, revile, blaspheme (often used of other nations)

*The name of the Lord is who he is. And it is by his speech/words that everything came into being. So to use your words and speech against him is to fundamentally disrespect the one who spoke you into existence.*

## Jesus and Blasphemy

**Matthew 12** <sup>31</sup> Therefore, I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

**Roy Gane** Using the power of speech against God, who created the world for the human species by speaking (Gen. 1), is the height of ingratitude and rebellion. It is also ultimate arrogance to suppose that one can engage in a verbal slugfest with the Almighty. This is an implicit claim to divine power, which is not protected by a right of "free speech" under the Lord's constitution.

## **HAVE I COMMITTED BLASPHEMY?**

1. Asking hard questions of God is not blasphemy | Job, Psalms, prophets. Jacob *wrestled*
2. Wavering or doubting is not blasphemy | Mark 9:24, Jude
3. Harming with words is sin, but not blasphemy | James 3

**Sam Storms** Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not a careless act committed only once in a moment of rage or rebellion, but a calloused attitude over time; a persistent defiance that hardens and calcifies the heart...[Blasphemy] is not just unbelief; the sort of unbelief or rejection or doubt that is so typical in our world. This is defiance of what one knows beyond any shadow of doubt to be true. It is not mere denial, but determined denial; not mere rejection but wanton, willful, wicked, wide-eyed rejection.

- The people of ancient Israel saw God's power on display. This guy rejected it
- The people in Jesus' day saw God's power on display, they rejected it
- If you're afraid that you've committed blasphemy, you haven't

## **Jesus and Blasphemy**

- Jesus spoke truth about God | John 1:17
- Jesus was accused of blasphemy | John 10:33
- Jesus spoke forgiveness | Luke 23:34
  - Death, Resurrection, Ascension

## **Honoring God's Name**

- Learn truth about God
- Ask honest questions to God
- Put some respect on God's name

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Matthew 6** <sup>9</sup>Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.