

SPEAKING EVIL OF DIGNITARIES

Speaking Evil of Governmental Powers

Speaking Evil of the Lord Himself

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (II Peter 2:9-12).

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves” (Jude 8-10).

(We are living during a day when governmental officials find themselves on the receiving end of all types of negative comments, abuse. Individuals *make fun of, make light of, speak evil of not just their actions but the officials themselves.*

And it is not just the world doing this type thing. Much of this is being done by Christians, who, seemingly, should know better, but don't.

Scripture condemns such actions in no uncertain terms, for a revealed reason. But Christians often pay little attention to what Scripture has to say, following the lead and ways of the world.

Thus, large segments of both the world and Christendom come together at this point. And as Scripture plainly reveals, and as will be shown in this article, *BOTH, through this means, are guilty of EXACTLY the same thing — bringing railing accusations against the Lord Himself.*

However, notes something about the preceding. *It is one thing to question the authority of an individual whom God has placed in power, bringing accusations against him personally, and thus against the Lord; and it can be something quite different to question his actions. The former has to do with the infinite, the latter with the finite.*

But on the latter, *two things* need to be considered. Questioning someone's finite actions *comes from the finite as well; and God's thoughts and ways* [surrounding His having placed this person in office, resulting in certain actions, which God could only have foreknown] *are separate from man's thoughts and ways* [Isa. 55:8, 9].

Man's thoughts and ways *can be in line with God's thoughts and ways, IF aligned with that revealed in the Word. But, if so, they then cease to be man's thoughts and ways per se and become God's thoughts and ways.*)

Speaking evil of dignitaries in Jude 8 refers back to verse five and moves forward into verses nine and ten. The same word translated “speak evil” in the Greek text of verse eight is also used in verses nine and ten (*blasphemeo*, the verb form, appears in vv. 8, 10; and *blasphemia*, the feminine noun form, appears in v. 9). The word is translated “railing accusation” in verse nine and rendered, once again, as “speak evil” in verse ten.

This is the Greek word from which the English

word “blasphemy” is derived; and the translation, “railing accusation,” in verse nine actually captures the thought expressed by the word somewhat better than the translation, “speak evil,” in verses eight and ten.

Exactly the same thing can be found in the parallel account in II Peter 2:9-12, which is possibly even more emphatic in some respects than seen in Jude.

In Jude 9, *Michael* would not bring “a railing accusation against Satan; then in II Peter 2:11, this is expanded to *other angels* (which, as Michael in Jude, “are greater in power” than man) and *other dignitaries*, possibly a reference to *all angels and all dignitaries*.

And the Greek word from which we derive our English word “blasphemy” is used three times in II Peter 2:10-12 as well. *Blasphemeo*, the verb form, is used in verses ten and twelve (translated “speak evil”), and the masculine noun form, *blasphemos*, is used in verse eleven (translated “railing accusation”).

During Moses' Day

Railing accusations, emanating from unbelief on the part of the people of Israel in the historical account covered by verse five, *were directed against Moses*. However, by so doing, *the people were actually directing these railing accusations against God Himself*.

Moses was *the one whom God had chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land covenanted to Abraham and his posterity through Isaac and Jacob*. His power and authority were of *DIVINE ORIGIN*; and, consequently, *accusations leveled against the leadership of Moses were, in actuality, accusations leveled against God Himself*.

The people of Israel who questioned Moses' authority, seeking to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt, were questioning *the very authority of God vested in Moses* (cf. Num. 14:2, 27).

Because of this sin, resulting from unbelief concerning their ability to go into the land as God had

commanded, judgment fell upon the people of Israel. They could no longer enter the land under Moses and realize the purpose for their deliverance from Egypt.

They had fallen away, apostatized, in such a manner that *it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance*. As a result, during the next thirty-eight and one-half years, *the entire generation — murmuring against Moses, and thus against the Lord — perished in the wilderness*.

(Note the antitype relating to *Christians* in Heb. 6:4-6. Hebrews 6 draws from Heb. 3, 4, which has to do with *the previous experiences of the Israelites under Moses*.)

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and those who followed them constitute another similar example (Num. 16:1ff). They rose up against Moses and Aaron in matters concerning their authority — Moses as leader of the people, and Aaron as high priest in the camp. When this occurred, Moses “fell upon his face” (v. 4).

Moses knew that Korah and those with him were questioning, not just his and Aaron’s authority, but the authority of God.

This rebellion against authority led to unacceptable incense being offered upon the altar at the door of the tabernacle by two hundred fifty prominent men who had sided with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses. This, in turn, led to God’s judgment on the entire group.

God exhibited his wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by opening a chasm in the earth and causing them, along with “all that appertained unto them [their wives, children (save Korah’s sons; cf. Num. 26:11, 58)],” to go down into *Sheol* alive:

“And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit [‘into *Sheol*’], and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation” (Num. 16:32, 33).

A fire then came out from the Lord and consumed *the two hundred fifty men* which had offered the incense upon the altar (v. 35).

Immediately after the destruction of Korah and those following him, the people of Israel again murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, “Ye have killed the people of the Lord.” Again, as before, *this was a murmuring not only against Moses and Aaron but against God.*

God was the One Who had performed the execution of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, and the two hundred fifty men offering incense.

And because of this same sin of murmuring against Divinely established authority, God sent a plague into the camp of Israel.

This was done *so speedily* that before Aaron had time to make an “atonement for the people,” standing “between the dead and the living,” *fourteen thousand seven hundred Israelites perished* (vv. 41-50).

During the Present Day

According to Scripture, it is A *VERY, VERY SERIOUS THING* to murmur against, bring railing accusations against, those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority. *ANY rebellion against Divinely established authority is no more, no less than a rebellion against the Lord Himself.*

It WAS SO during Moses’ day, and it is NO DIFFERENT during the present day. The “powers that be” *WERE during Moses’ day, and ARE today*, “ordained of God.” *ALL positions of power and authority are by Divine appointment.* And *WHOSOEVER* “resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [‘judgment’]” (Rom. 13:1, 2).

God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it “to whomsoever he will.” God is the One Who establishes/positions rulers, and He is also the One Who removes rulers (Dan. 4:17, 25-32). “There is no power but of God” (Rom. 13:1), *which today, in*

view of the coming age, is vested in His Son.

Jesus told His disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).

In view of this, *ANY rebellion against existing ordained powers — whether in the heavens or upon the earth — is a rebellion against the power vested in God’s Son, which is simply a rebellion against Christ Himself.*

Again, note the example given in Jude 9: Michael, the archangel, would not bring a railing accusation against even Satan (expanded to other angels in II Peter 2:11). Michael, knowing that Satan held his position by Divine appointment and that Satan possessed no power but that which emanated from God, would go no further than to simply say, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

Michael knew that *any accusation against Satan would be an accusation against the One Who had appointed him to this position, the One in whom all power and authority reside* (cf. I Sam. 24:8-10; II Sam. 1:2-16).

Now, with all this in mind, *a particular apostate element existing in Christendom in the latter days, seen practically everywhere today — with its parallel drawn from experiences of individuals during the days of Moses — should be clear.* Bringing railing accusations against those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority is A *FORM OF APOSTASY*. It is that simple.

Such reviling or railing against Divinely established authority is not only *standing away from the God-ordained position which a Christian is to occupy*, but, as well, it is *moving into a position wherein the apostate, in actuality, brings these accusations against the Lord Himself.* And through such accusations, these apostates, as “brute beasts...shall only perish in their own corruption” (II Peter 2:12; Jude 10).

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