

The Seeking Savior

Luke 19.1-10

Los Angeles Times - May 29, 2008

JIDDA, Saudi Arabia -- It's a profanity uttered countless times a day around the globe, but a barber in Saudi Arabia faces beheading for the crime of using God's name in vain. Sabri Bogday, a Turk who cuts hair in this Saudi port city, is awaiting appeal on his sentence.

Press reports say Bogday cursed during an argument with a neighbor, who later complained to police. This nation is ruled by a strict Wahhabi brand of Islamic justice that doles out lashings and public beheadings for crimes including murder, rape and heresy.

Bogday has been in jail for 13 months. Turkish President Abdullah Gul has asked Saudi King Abdullah to spare the barber. But the Arab News daily reported that there could be complications hinging on arcane interpretations of religious law by fundamentalist judges.

The newspaper quoted a lawyer as saying: "Some judges consider it heresy and infidelity, and say that the accused cannot repent and so faces the death penalty.

No Forgiveness of Sins! > Great News of Gospel – Forgiveness in Christ

CREEDS – Forged out of REAL STRUGGLES in Church Life

APOSTLE'S CREED – NOT Written by Apostles – DOCTRINE of Apostles

Wm. Barclay > CREEDS have both POSITIVE & NEGATIVE Element

POSITIVE > Set Forth some TRUTH of God for our FAITH

NEGATIVE > Contradict some ERROR about Understanding or Application

‘I believe in the FORGIVENESS of SINS’ > Sadly, some Believers DID NOT

Some SINS TOO EVIL to be FORGIVEN > Forgiveness IMPOSSIBLE?

HOW? Forgiveness BY EFFORTS of Seeker > Earned by RELIGIOUS MERIT

Church BY PRIESTS, SACRAMENTS, INDULGENCES gave Forgiveness

7 Different Words for Forgiveness in Bible > 3 in OT, 4 in NT
 Most Common = 'sending away' or 'letting go' > GUILT and SHAME of Sin

ONE of MAIN Themes of Bible > from Garden of Eden to New Jerusalem

NO Greater HOPE for the WORLD > > God FORGIVES Sinners!!

From Adam and Eve dressed in Skins to Bride dressed in White Robes

If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared. Psalm 130:3-4

FORGIVENESS of God REACHING PEOPLE ONE BY ONE
 WHEN People REACHED - CHANGE SELVES, CHANGE IN SOCIETY

See EXAMPLE in LUKE 19 > ONE Man in Jericho FORGIVEN > RESULT
 Luke 19:1-10

19:1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

JERICHO > One of WEALTHIEST Cities in PALESTINE

CITY described by Jews as a "Little Paradise"

Palm Trees, Rose Gardens, Grand Winter Palace, Theater, Hippodrome

Given by MARK ANTHONY to CLEOPATRA - token of affection

v. 1 Jesus passing through JERICHO - Major Road - TOLL STATION
TAX COLLECTORS LOCATED AT KEY POINTS OF ENTRY

1. Shameless Sinner

a. Abusive

v. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a *chief tax collector*

"CHIEF TAX COLLECTOR" Other collectors under him - HE TOOK CUT
ZACCHEUS was the Chief ENCHILADA of JERICHO TAX MAFIA

RECENTLY PASSED - Evil Day - April 15 >> TAXES DUE

Like Anywhere and Anytime > ROMAN TAXES CAUSED MUCH PAIN

TAX COLLECTORS Despised by the Jews in Palestine:

1) Unpatriotic - Collected Money to support Oppressive Colonial Power
PAID FEE TO ROMANS TO BUY COLLECTION RIGHTS

2) Unscrupulous - Grew rich at expense of own people's LOSS & MISERY

3) Unclean - Regular contact with Gentiles, CEREMONIALLY UNHOLY

NT Lumps TAX COLLECTORS with "Sinners" "Harlots" and "Gentiles"

MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER TO TAX COLLECTORS -

"Don't collect any more than you are required to" Luke 3:13 > YEAH RIGHT!!

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM - Zacc UNREACHABLE - Too Bad for God

"Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
Habakkuk 2:6

b. Affluence

v. 2 he was a chief tax collector *and was wealthy* = NO NEED FOR GOD

Jesus: "You cannot serve both God and Money." Matthew 6:24
Zaccheus MADE HIS CHOICE and GOD LOST!

RICH YOUNG RULER CHOSE MONEY INSTEAD OF CHRIST -

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.
Luke 18:23

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
1 Timothy 6:10

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.
Proverbs 11:4

DAYS OF SAILING SHIPS - Great ship hit REEF began to SINK

Passengers began to climb into Lifeboats

1 Man- GREAT OPPORTUNITY - Ran to State Rooms STOLE Gold & Jewels
STUFFED INTO HIS CLOTHES - ALL LIFE BOATS WERE FULL

Put on Lifejacket - Jumped In - Sank like a Stone

c. Arrogance

vs. 3 & 4 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him

Probably LESS than 5 feet tall – Less than 1 ½ METERS

MID-EASTERN Culture - IMPORTANT PERSON – Maintain their DIGNITY
WOULD NEVER RUN – NEVER THINK of CLIMBING TREES > for Boys

NO Shame - "Who cares what people think about me?" - FLAGRANT

TEMPTATION FOR RICH - Command those who are rich in this present world
not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, 1 Timothy 6:17

the unrighteous know no shame Zephaniah 3:5

Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to. Mark Twain

Did not care about PEOPLE'S OPINION – “devil may care” Attitude

AFFLUENT - ABUSIVE – ARROGANT > *Don't Like him?? Your Problem!*

2. Seeking Savior

Few Verses EARLIER in Luke –

Jesus looked at him (*rich ruler*) and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, *it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.*" Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "What is *impossible with men* is possible with God." Luke 18:24-27

POINT of Word Picture > EYE of Needle > ABSOLUTELY UNIMAGINABLE
NOT a Small Gate in City wall CALLED EYE of NEEDLE > eg. I CAN DO IT!

POINT > ONLY God CAN SAVE > Men: Impossible / God: ALL POSSIBLE

EXTENDS a. Plea

v. 5 "Zacchaeus , come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

WERE there NO PRIESTS, RABBI'S, RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE IN JERICHO?

Without Being Asked - JESUS STOPS AND TALKS TO ZACCHAEUS

Without Being Asked - JESUS OFFERS to be GUEST in a SINNER'S HOUSE

Without Being Asked - JESUS CHANGES Zaccheus' SELFISH HEART

DAY OF THE LORD HAS COME - "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me." Isaiah 65:1

The very heart of the gospel is the good news that God has worked out for us human beings his costly and altogether sufficient forgiveness through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. C.E.B. Cranfield

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20

NO TIME TO CLEAN UP HIS HOUSE - MAKE SELF READY
INVITED to COME AS WE ARE - NOT TO MAKE OURSELVES READY

More TRY to Get Yourself READY – the LESS READY we BECOME
God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

b. Perception

1) View of the Crowd

v. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

PHRASE 'I believe in FORGIVENESS of SINS' added 4th C to Apostle's Creed
Before CONSTANTINE became EMPEROR of Roman Emp > PERSECUTION

Early in 4th C > Roman Authorities told PASTORS > BURN their BIBLES
Burn BIBLE OR BE BURNED ALIVE Themselves

SOME DIED COURAGEOUSLY – OTHERS DENIED CHRIST

Reasoned > BETTER to Save a BELIEVER than a BOOK

When PERSECUTION STOPPED > Church had a PROBLEM

What about THESE COWARDLY COMPROMISERS – Be FORGIVEN??

DONATUS, followers DONATISTS > NO WAY! No Forgiveness for Them!

UGANDA in 1980's after IDI AMIN > 'Xtian' Gov't Officials, Soldiers served COMPROMISED for him, KILLED and TORTURED for him - 'GONE CASE!'

TOO BAD to BE FORGIVEN > EXCEEDED Limits of God's MERCY

OT BASIS of Idea: "Anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; *his guilt remains on him.*" Numbers 15:30-31

'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'
1 Samuel 3:14

OT – Some sins were UNFORGIVABLE – Beyond Effects of SACRIFICES

MAYBE when YOU Confess words '*I believe in Forgiveness of Sins*'
Accusing VOICE in Back of Head > 'YEAH, RIGHT!...Not for You SUCKER!'
YOU are a GONE CASE --- Too Bad to BE FORGIVEN

Or MORE LIKELY > We think '**NOT FOR THAT CREEP!**'
I could NEVER FORGIVE them, and NEITHER SHOULD GOD!

When we refuse to forgive each other, or when all the church does is point to the shortcomings of others, how do those others see it? At best, they see us as hypocrites or as ungrateful people who claim to be forgiven sinners and yet do not really believe it or do not act as if we do. At worst, since we claim to be servants of the King, they come to the conclusion that our God is as harsh and unforgiving as we are.
Justo L. Gonzales

2) View of the Christ

v. 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

Father Abraham – shows us Salvation is by Grace - FREE GIFT OF GOD
IDOL WORSHIPPER BECOMES MAN OF FAITH

The fact that we find it so difficult to forgive people at times brings home to us how marvelous a thing divine forgiveness is.
Alister McGrath

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6
 ONE of MOST IMPORTANT Verses in BIBLE > Quoted 3 X's in NT

The Christian is not merely a pardoned criminal, but a righteous man...
 Forgiveness is only negative, the removal of condemnation. Justification is also
 positive, the removal of guilt and the bestowal of a perfect standing before God.
 W.H. Griffith Thomas

NAME ZACCHEUS – Hebrew = PURE, RIGHTEOUS > NOW in X + Truly Is!

THERE IS NO PERSON TOO BAD FOR SALVATION

In NT – Only UNFORGIVABLE SIN – Reject JESUS – Only WAY of Salvation

"In every work there must be a beginning, and in spiritual work that beginning may be very small. Do we see a careless brother beginning to use means of grace, which in time past he neglected? Do we see him coming to church and listening to the gospel after a long time away? When we see such things let us remember Zacchaeus and be hopeful. Let us not look coldly on him because at present his motives are very poor and questionable. Let us believe it is far better to hear the gospel out of mere curiosity, than not to hear it at all." J. C. Ryle

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
 1 Samuel 16:7

c. Purpose

v. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

KEY Verse of Passage >> THEME VERSE OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

"It is clear that tax collectors take on the importance they have in the Gospels precisely because they are such striking examples of the surprising grace that constitutes the very essence of Jesus' message." Donald Hagner

v. 5 "I must stay at your house today"

Zaccheus became GUEST in OWN HOUSE > Jesus is the NEW MASTER

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:32

there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Luke 15:7

He SEEKS SINNERS because he CAME to SAVE SINNERS

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:18-19

v. 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through....

MOVEMENT of Luke's Gospel > Jesus GOING to JERUSALEM

Main STORY-LINE of ACTS > SPREAD of KINGDOM Message of JESUS

LUKE: Jesus MOVING TO Jerusalem/ ACTS > Jesus People FROM Jerusalem

Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to *fulfillment at Jerusalem*.

Luke 9.30,31

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, *Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem*.

Luke 9.51

Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as *he made his way to Jerusalem*.

Luke 13.22

I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day - for surely *no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!*

Luke 13.33

1492 Christopher COLUMBUS searched for NEW WORLD

Kept 2 LOG BOOKS 1. FALSE – Showed Closer to Land than REALLY Were Capt. Columbus > Wanted to give HOPE to WORRIED SAILORS

Capt of our Salvation > ONLY 1 Log Book > God's Truth >> CROSS!

Jesus took the Twelve aside and said, 'We're going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled'
 Luke 18.31

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes."
 Luke 19.41,42

Jesus ACCOMPLISHED Salvation in J. / ANNOUNCED Salvation from J.

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 Luke 24.45-46

Jesus Conquered CROSS in Jerusalem > We CARRY Cross FROM Jerusalem

MISSION Theme > Back to Jerusalem > GOOD IDEA > Chinese M's Go!
 NO BIBLICAL BASIS > Just GOOD TOOL > God CAN USE If He Chooses

ONLY – Human Ideas – 4 Laws, Promise Keepers, Xtian TV, CPM's
 WRONG to CLAIM THEY are the GOD-ORDAINED Tool to Save World

ONLY GOD-ORDAINED Tools > God's Word and God's Spirit
 ANY who Use them RIGHTLY and REVERENTLY will be BLESSED!
 Apostle Peter on Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."
 Acts 2:38

MISSIONARY IN INDIA - befriended Hindu PEARL DIVER

Told Hindu man about the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ

NO! He would prepare self for the next life - CRAWLING TO DELHI 900 miles

Before Left gave Missionary a Beautiful Giant Pearl

Missionary WANTED TO PAY FOR IT - Hindu Man REFUSED

OBTAINED BY ONLY SON - DOVE VERY DEEP - DIED BRINGING IT UP

"What amount of money could pay for such a gift?"

THEN HE UNDERSTOOD THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS FOR OUR SINS

GENUINE BELIEF – seen by EVIDENCES:

3. Signs of Sincerety

a. Response

v. 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

Z. IGNORED the MUTTERING Crowds > PEOPLE will ALWAYS MUTTER

to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, *he gave the right to become children of God*
John 1:12

vs. 9,10 Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Zaccheus was REASON Jesus HAD GONE THROUGH JERICHO

Jesus was REASON ZACCHAEUS CLIMBED TREE

CURIOSITY BEGINNING OF CONVERSION

Curiosity and simplicity are a sort of preparation for faith. John Calvin
BIG, IMPORTANT MEN > Not Supposed to Climb Trees

BIG, IMPORTANT MEN > Need to HUMBLE Themselves and BE SAVED

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory
Luke 9.26

Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. Hebrews 2:11

b. Repentance

v 8 "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor...

GREAT CHANGE OCCURRED in the HOUSE > in the HEART of Zaccheus
GAVE WHAT WAS JUSTLY AND HONESTLY HIS TO THE POOR

**TURNED FROM SELFISHNESS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS
FROM GREED TO GENEROSITY**

from **BEING MASTERED** by **MONEY** - **JESUS** new **MASTER** of his **MONEY**

What a remarkably positive appreciation of human dignity is the recognition that we are not merely the result of other's decisions or social pressures or even undeveloped evolution, but we are free creatures! We are responsible for our actions. We are therefore responsible for the harm we do to ourselves and other people...Guilt is not a feeling but a rational estimation of human responsibility. Guilt is not a block to self-esteem but a step toward self-honesty. Guilt does not cover us in shame but opens us to forgiveness. Luke Timothy Johnson

CONTRAST TO RICH YOUNG RULER -

Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Luke 18:22-25

...unless you repent, you too will all perish Luke 13:3

Little Boy taken by Parents to Elegant Home of Relative

Parents **VERY AFRAID SOMETHING WOULD BE BROKEN**

Boy **GOT HAND STUCK IN TREASURED, EXPENSIVE VASE**

Tried Everything to Get it Out - Soap, Cooking Oil, **NO SUCCESS**

Boy asked "Would it help if I Let Go of the Penny I am Holding?"

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord Acts 3:19

c. Restitution

v. 8 ...and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

RETURNED WITH INTEREST WHAT HE HAD EXTORTED
4 X'S FAR EXCEEDED DEMANDS OF LAW OF MOSES

RESTITUTION is RESPONSE to Grace, NOT to RECEIVE Grace

"A 31 year old accountant repaid the \$ 40 he stole 15 years ago from an amusement park - and added \$ 286 as interest to atone for his theft. Fifteen years had passed since the theft. He said, "I was praying at my desk and reading the Bible, and it just came to me. It wasn't the Lord's voice, but it came from within me - I had to pay back the money" Dallas Morning News on November 11, 1984

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously
Psalms 37:21

Those WHO FOLLOW a GOD of JUSTICE TRY TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT
RECEIVE - REPAY - RESTORE - RIGHT NOW

"Faith that does not purify the heart and life, is not faith at all. Grace that cannot be seen, like light, and tasted like salt, is not grace but hypocrisy. The person who professes to know Christ and trust in him, while clinging to sin and the world, is going down to hell with a lie in his hand. The heart that has really tasted the grace of Christ, will instinctively hate sin."
J. C. Ryle

When DAY BEGINS > Never KNOW HOW it will END

End of THIS DAY > Hated Taxgatherer became HOLY TROPHY of GRACE

Son of ABRAHAM > CHILD of SALVATION

SON of MAN Came to SEEK and SAVE Z. > YOU TOO! Your Day NOW!

Best Words EVER HEAR > "I BELIEVE in the FORGIVENESS of SINS"
