



THE
SWORD
A CHARIS GLOBAL VISION MINISTRIES PUBLICATION

CHRISTIANS AND SLANDER

by Dr. Daniel O. C.

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It is a sin to unnecessarily criticise others. Many people find it easy to condemn others, but they find it hard to be corrected. We must declare war against slander, gossip, defamation and backbiting. Have you engaged in any of these evil activities? Are you a character assassin?

Psalm 50:19–21

*19 You give your mouth to evil,
And your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your brother;
You slander your own mother's son.
21 These things you have done, and I kept silent;
You thought that I was altogether like you;
But I will rebuke you,
And set them in order before your eyes.*

Many Christians have given their “mouths to evil”. They slander those around them, including men and women of God. They do not realise that by speaking against others, they enter into a covenant with Satan. These people allow their tongues to be used for manipulation and deception.

It is easy to live a life of hypocrisy. Christian ministers, know that what matters to God is not what you preach from the pulpit but what you do behind the veil. It does not matter what people say you are; what's important is who God proclaims you to be. There are many Christians whose hearts are not right with God and who do not live according to the Word of God. Do you harbour unforgiveness and bitterness inside your heart, yet you pretend to speak pleasantly about the person you're angry with?

Remember, the Bible says that out of the heart comes the issues of life. God sees your motives as much as He sees your actions. If you have wrong motives, repent and run back to Him for cleansing and purification. Do not slander anyone any more but embrace our Lord with all your heart, soul and spirit.

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Do not speak against your family members, friends or servants of God. How often have you done that? Where will our Lord Jesus find you when He returns? Will He find you rebellious or repentant?

Just because you are not destroyed by God immediately after you slander someone does not mean that it is alright to do so. We are always right in our own eyes. Repent and depart from sin and evil. Don't be full of guile. If others do something wrong, pray for them. It is your job to get on your knees and call upon the name of the Lord on their behalf.

WHAT IS SLANDER?

When you slander someone, you make damaging and false statements that smear or ruin their reputation. There is no truth in such accusations or insults which are the work of malicious hearts. Do you engage in slander? It is time for us to exercise good judgement. Practise justice, and discern between truth and falsehood.

There are those who assassinate a person's character because of the jealousy or envy they feel towards that person. Some people may speak evil of those whom they cannot match in terms of achievements, talents or attributes. Ask God to make you righteous. Do not sling mud at those who display wisdom or speak the truth. If you do so, you may miss your target, but your hand is already stained and unclean.

If you are the one being slandered, remember that while words can break your heart, they cannot break your bones. God will always protect you. Whatever measure you use to measure others will be used to measure you. If you sow in the flesh, you will reap in the flesh. If you sow in the spirit, you will reap in the spirit.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF SLANDER?

SLANDER COMES FROM AN EVIL HEART

If you have a righteous heart, your speech will be righteous. If you have an evil heart, your words will be evil.

Luke 6:45

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A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

SLANDER IS THE RESULT OF HATRED

Hatred can lead people to slander others.

Psalm 109:3

*They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
And fought against me without a cause.*

Just by listening carefully to someone's choice of words, you can tell whether they are speaking out of a hate-filled heart or a clean heart.

SLANDER COMES WHEN YOU'RE IDLE

Those who have too much time on their hands tend to engage in slander or backbiting. Instead of interceding for their spouse, children or others, they spend their time gossiping. God's eyes are on them. If you speak evil against an innocent person, you are actually blessing that person and laying coals of wickedness upon your own head.

SLANDER IS A WEAPON

Slander is a weapon in the hands of unrighteous people. It is used to destroy the innocent.

Proverbs 11:9

*The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour,
But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.*

Unrighteous men and women use slander to destroy lives and ministries. If you are slandered, put on the whole armour of God that's described in Ephesians 6:10-18.

SLANDER IS PART OF SATAN'S NATURE

If you are a slanderer, you have the nature of Satan.

Revelation 12:10

*Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength,
and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for*

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the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”

If you do not allow the Spirit of God to lead you, you will become an instrument in the hands of the devil.

Romans 6:12–14

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

BIBLE VERSES THAT WARN AGAINST SLANDER

Psalms 52:1–5

*1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God endures continually.*

*2 Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*

*3 You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah*

*4 You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.*

*5 God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah*

If you choose evil, God will destroy you. It is not the will of God for you to lend your tongue to Satan. Make a covenant with God not to speak evil. Be guileless and not cunning or deceitful. James 1:26 warns that your beliefs will be in vain if your tongue is not bridled:

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

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God does not want us to yield ourselves to Satan.

Romans 6:17–19

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Many Christians today cannot move in God's power because their tongues are evil and He cannot trust them. When they try to bind Satan, the devil challenges them: "How can you bind me when I am a part of your tongue?" No wonder these Christians cannot experience miracles or breakthroughs in their lives. Proverbs 10:18 emphasises:

*Whoever hides hatred has lying lips,
And whoever spreads slander is a fool.*

Titus 2:3 has a warning for women:

...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things...

1 Timothy 3:11 addresses the wives of deacons or church leaders:

Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

Being a minister's wife does not entitle you to slander others. Such behaviour is actually the result of insecurity. God will pass judgement on slanderers. So pray for others instead of gossiping about them or slandering them.

WHO IS VULNERABLE TO SLANDER?

JESUS

Jesus, the Son of the living God, was exposed to slander.

Matthew 26:59–60

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*59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,
60 but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.*

Many people made accusations against Jesus, but none of them could be specific about the content of the allegations. If Jesus Himself was subjected to slander, so can we, as His followers. You are not the first Christian who has been targeted and neither will you be the last. Woe to those who indulge in slander!

LEADERS

Leaders are not necessarily supported by everyone in the ministry or church, and they can be exposed to slander.

Jude 1:8

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

Kings get slandered. Pastors get slandered. Elders get slandered. All leaders risk being slandered. However, always remember that even if the whole world hates you, as long as Jesus loves you, you will be fine.

SERVANTS OF GOD

2 Corinthians 6:4 and 6:8 point out that God's ministers are on the receiving end of unfounded accusations, fabrications, lies and manipulations –

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

8 ...by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true...

Ministers, let none of the accusations made against you be true, exposing your sin. If people persecute you, let it be because of your belief in Christ, and not due to your wrongdoing.

BELIEVERS

As a believer, you may even be slandered by a family member or a colleague. Followers of Christ are vulnerable to slander by unrighteous people around them who mock their godly lives.

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Psalm 38:12

*Those also who seek my life lay snares for me;
Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction,
And plan deception all the day long.*

Psalm 109:2

*For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful
Have opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*

1 Peter 4:4

In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, who desired to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem after he heard that it had been damaged and its gates burnt.

Nehemiah 1:3

And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

Despite Nehemiah's good intentions, he was accused of having ulterior motives and opposing the king's authority.

Nehemiah 2:19

But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"

You may have a pure heart but yet you're slandered. However, do not be weary in doing good. You will be rewarded by God at the appointed time. Galatians 6:9 has a word of encouragement for us:

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

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WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SLANDER?

SLANDER CAUSES ANGER

Proverbs 25:23

*The north wind brings forth rain,
And a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.*

When you are falsely accused, anger will enter your heart. You will wonder why your accusers said the things they did. We cannot stop people from saying what they want, but on our part, remember that each of us will be held responsible for whatever we speak. God will hold you responsible if you lash out at your slanderers in anger and react sinfully to their accusations and taunts.

SLANDER SEPARATES PEOPLE

Proverbs 16:28 says that slander can divide even best friends:

*A perverse man sows strife,
And a whisperer separates the best of friends.*

Proverbs 17:9 echoes that thought:

*He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats a matter separates friends.*

If you are a tale-bearer, remember that you could cause the separation of best friends. Is that what God has called you to do? When you enter into a circle of friends, do you bind them or divide them?

SLANDER INFLICTS DEADLY WOUNDS

Proverbs 18:8 makes it clear that slander causes inner hurts:

*The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles,
And they go down into the inmost body.*

Even if you try to dismiss the false accusations and say: "It's okay, it's okay," you would still be wounded within. These areas deep within you can be touched by no man and only God can heal you with the balm of Gilead.

SLANDER LEADS TO STRIFE

In Proverbs 26:20–21, we learn that slander causes fights:

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- 20 *Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;
 And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.
21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire,
 So is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

SLANDER SOWS DISCORD

Proverbs 6:19 tells us that slander causes friction between loved ones:

*A false witness who speaks lies,
 And one who sows discord among brethren.*

As Christians, we are supposed to build up bonds among people with love, and not divide them by slander. It is not right to sow discord between husbands and wives, parents and children or among siblings from siblings by carrying false tales to and fro. What you sow is what you reap. God will judge you if you are guilty of causing discord. Watch your actions!

SLANDER SPARKS OFF MURDER

Ezekiel 22:9

*In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat
on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness.*

The Bible tells us that the words you speak can cause people to get killed. Why do you slander others? Have you checked your own life? Do you commit your tongue to God so that you do not utter evil words? Have you made a covenant with Him not to slander others?

SLANDER PRODUCES FEAR

When slander comes into your life, fear will follow.

Psalm 31:13–14

*13 For I hear the slander of many;
 Fear is on every side;
 While they take counsel together against me,
 They scheme to take away my life.
14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord;
 I say, "You are my God."*

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Firstly, slander brings with it the fear of losing your good name. You may become scared that your reputation will be stained or destroyed. If you have always commanded respect from others, you may fear a loss of that respect by those who hear slanderous reports about you.

Secondly, slander brings with it the fear of losing out on good opportunities. Ministers who are slandered may be afraid that churches will stop inviting them to preach. You may be fearful that people will become suspicious of you.

Thirdly, slander brings with it the fear of losing financial backing. You may get scared that supporters who contribute financially to your ministry will stop doing so, if they believe the lies. You may be afraid that they will no longer offer funds, buy your messages or books, or invite you to speak at seminars.

You need not worry. Even if you are personally defenceless against slander, God will defend you. You need not be afraid. If the way of a man is pleasing unto God, his enemies will bow before Him. That promise is found in God's Word. Do not be afraid. He who keeps you does not sleep or slumber. The Lord will protect your finances, your good name and your opportunities. He will open doors where there are none. He will make a way when there seems to be no way. If you trust in God, He will prove Himself strong. Glory to His name!

GODLY COUNSEL ON SLANDER

KEEP YOUR TONGUE FROM EVIL

No matter how badly you are pressured by friends or taunted about being "more righteous" than them, refrain from speaking evil and gossiping.

Psalm 34:13

*Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.*

Instead, proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. When you talk about others, demons will follow you. When you talk about Jesus, demons will flee from you.

LAY ASIDE ALL NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Do not harbour negative emotions but put them away together with slander.

Ephesians 4:31

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Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

ALLOW NO OCCASION FOR SLANDER

Do not make room for Satan and slander. Heed the exhortation in 1 Peter 3:16.

...having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

When someone starts to gossip, speak up and tell him or her that you do not want to hear bad news. Tell the person you only want to hear good news.

RETURN GOOD FOR EVIL

No matter what others do to you, do not repay evil with evil.

1 Corinthians 4:13

...being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Prove others wrong by doing good.

DO NOT LISTEN TO SLANDER

1 Samuel 24:9

And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm?'"

The person who brings you slanderous news may be the one who wants to destroy your life. If someone really loves you, they will not fill you with information that will discourage you or pull you down. However, be aware that you and I have only one enemy, and that's Satan, not man. Open your eyes to see who your real enemy is.

DO NOT REACT TO SLANDER

Jesus declared in Matthew 5:11 that those who suffer for His sake will be blessed.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

When others persecute you, remain righteous and you will receive your blessing from God.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A SLANDEROUS TONGUE

IT IS A SCOURGE

Is your tongue a scourge that destroys people?

Job 5:21

*You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,
And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.*

IT IS POISONOUS

A slanderous tongue is poisonous. Its venom is often worse than the poison of a serpent.

Psalms 140:3

*They sharpen their tongues like a serpent;
The poison of asps is under their lips.*

Unless you turn to God for a spiritual antidote, you may not be able to survive a poisonous tongue. Run to God when you are slandered.

IT IS DESTRUCTIVE

A slanderous tongue destroys your life.

Proverbs 11:9

*The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour,
But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.*

IT IS MADNESS

The words of a slanderer are madness.

Ecclesiastes 10:13

*The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk is raving madness.*

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INSTANCES OF SLANDER IN THE BIBLE

JOSEPH AND HIS MASTER'S WIFE

The wife of Joseph's Egyptian master tried to seduce Joseph. He resisted and ran away, but she made a false accusation against him. That story is told in Genesis 39:14–19

14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.

15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home.

17 Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me;

18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused.

Joseph was framed. In many instances, lies appear to speak louder than the truth. However, be encouraged and know that while lies always try to suppress the truth, in the end the truth will always prevail.

I know of a visiting minister who stayed in the home of a local man. The maidservant was attracted to the minister but he kept his distance. In time, the minister married a woman whom God gave to him and she moved into the same house. The jealous maid started feeding lies about the man of God to his wife. The host did not believe the maid's lies but the minister's wife did! She suspected her husband of sinning and spoke evil of him.

God's hand was upon the minister and He proved the maid wrong. However, the minister was deeply hurt by his wife's readiness to turn against him. Through God's grace and healing, he forgave her. When she went through a difficult delivery, he interceded for her and she and their baby were saved.

It was through prayer that the minister began to see more of God's grace upon his life. Both he and his host came to understand the trouble that Satan can cause with slander.

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It was also by God's grace that enabled Joseph to shake off the slander and become the Prime Minister of the land of Egypt. He was used mightily by God to do great things. Even if everyone is against you, you will stand tall if God backs you up. If you've been slandered in the past, do not look back. Love covers a multitude of sins. Slander aims to make you move away from God's calling or fall short of reaching the goal God has set for you. If you hear bad reports about people, be wise enough to discern and recognise the difference between truth and lies. If you've been slandered, be big enough to forgive and forget.

MOSES AND THE SPIES

The spies whom Moses sent to Canaan returned and slandered him by suggesting that he had sent them on a 'Mission Impossible'.

Numbers 14:36

Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land...

Those slanderers did not escape unpunished. They were killed by the plague.

Numbers 14:37

...those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

MEPHIBOSHETH AND HIS SERVANT

In 2 Samuel 19:24–30, the Bible tells us how Mephibosheth was slandered by his servant

24 Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace.

25 So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

26 And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant is lame.

27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king is like the angel of God. Therefore do what is good in your eyes.

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28 *For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king.
Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table.
Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?"*

29 *So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I
have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.'"*

30 *Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all,
inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own
house."*

Do not slander those in authority over you. Neither should you listen to those who slander their leaders or bosses. Be discerning. Recognise evil intentions and actions and have no part in them.

DAVID AND EVIL MEN

David described his slanderers in Psalm 64:3–6

- 3 *Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,
And bend their bows to shoot their arrows—bitter words,*
- 4 *That they may shoot in secret at the blameless;
Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.*
- 5 *They encourage themselves in an evil matter;
They talk of laying snares secretly;
They say, "Who will see them?"*
- 6 *They devise iniquities:
"We have perfected a shrewd scheme."
Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep.*

KING AHAB, JEZEBEL AND NABOTH

King Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard but Naboth refused to sell his heritage. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, then plotted to get rid of Naboth as told in 1 Kings 21:8–16

- 8 *And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and
sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the
city with Naboth.*
- 9 *She wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with
high honour among the people;*

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- 10 and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, 'You have blasphemed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die."
- 11 So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them.
- 12 They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honour among the people.
- 13 And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!" Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died.
- 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."
- 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead."
- 16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Beloved, never assassinate someone's character in order to take over what belongs to that person. If you do so, you will receive your just reward from God.

JEREMIAH AND THE ISRAELITES

Jeremiah was slandered by those who did not like his prophecies.

Jeremiah 18:18

Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."

JESUS AND THE JEWS

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THE
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In Matthew 11:9, Jesus was accused of being a glutton and drunkard.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children.

In Mark 14:64, the high priest incited the people to condemn Jesus.

"You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

In John 8:48, Jesus was accused of being possessed by a demon.

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

The same accusation is mentioned in John 8:52.

Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'"

Jesus was accused of being seditious and creating public chaos in Luke 23:5.

But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

In Luke 23:2, the people alleged that Jesus wanted to be an earthly King.

And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

If our Lord Himself was slandered, we can also expect to encounter this evil. When you're slandered, always remember to trust in God to clear your name. People know you by your reputation but God knows you by your character. If you have slandered anyone, repent today and walk in righteousness. If you do so, you can stand before God.

Psalm 15:1-3

- 1 *Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?*
- 2 *He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,*

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*And speaks the truth in his heart;
3 He who does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;*

Sanctify yourself now and you will see a miracle. Otherwise, you will travel further along the highway to destruction. Keep your tongue under control or your tongue will keep you wondering around in a spiritual wilderness. If you watch what your tongue says, you will preserve your life and be righteous before God. Do not let your tongue keep you in bondage and behind spiritual bars. Leave others alone, if they do wrong and let God judge them.

THE END

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