

## Speaking Against Others

*“But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’” Jude 9.*

Speaking poorly of other people is not only a right in our time, but something encouraged. The world encourages us to pour out sharp criticism against those with whom we disagree, whether they are those in various celebrity spotlights, politics, co-workers, friends, or even family members. There are those of us who believe that it is a human right to critique those we wish to critique. Is this what the Bible teaches?

In his warning about false teachers, Jude gives a short profile of the kind of behavior and attitude of some of these people. Jude warns that they defile the flesh, corrupt the grace of God and instead teach sensuality, are hidden in the assemblies, are loud-mouthed boasters who show favoritism to gain selfish advantages. They are wicked people deserving of the judgment of God. Yet Jude doesn't call them names, but, in a clear and informed way, explains God's view of them: They will not escape judgment.

One of Jude's warnings, though, points out the fact that they blaspheme that which they don't understand. Jude then compares the fact that these false teachers are willing to blaspheme heavenly things with the remarkable actions of Michael the archangel. Michael, in a dispute with the devil, didn't pronounce any blasphemous remarks against the devil, but rather relied on God's judgment. This may be one of the most powerful verses in the Bible that speaks against gossiping and speaking ill of others.

If Michael the archangel was in the right not to speak against the devil, who certainly deserves all the wicked things that have been said about him, then how much more are we in the wrong to speak poorly of any human being who is made in the image of God – both Christian and non-Christian? Friends, family members, or those in public spotlights may make decisions with which we disagree. They may even make decisions which are downright evil. But these people, most likely, are not actively seeking and taking pleasure in the destruction of human souls. This is what the devil does, and it doesn't get much more wicked than this. Yet Michael would not speak a blasphemous word against him – not out of respect for the devil, but out of reverence for God. And we would do well to pay attention to the actions of Michael.

**[DJR]**