

# Luke 5:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying,  
Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive  
sins, but God alone?

## Analysis

Scribes and Pharisees began to reason saying Who is this that speaks blasphemies Who can forgive sins but God alone. Scribes grammateis Torah experts. Pharisees Pharisaioi religious separatists. Began ἔρχαντο initiated. Reason dialogizesthai think through deliberate. Saying λεγοντες articulating. Who τις interrogative. This οὗτος derogatory this fellow. Speaks λαλῶν continuous present. Blasphemies blasphemias insults to God. Who τις. Can forgive δυναται has power ability. Sins hamartias moral failures. But εἰ μὲν except. God alone μόνος ὁ θεός exclusively. Religious leaders correctly understood implication. Forgiveness divine prerogative. Jesus claiming deity. Either He is God or commits blasphemy. No middle ground. Trilemma liar lunatic Lord. Cannot be merely good teacher. Claims require verdict. Reformed theology affirms Jesus full deity. He has authority to forgive because He is God incarnate. His sacrificial death satisfies justice. Forgiveness not cheap grace but costly purchased by blood.

## Historical Context

Forgiveness central to Jewish theology. Day of Atonement sacrifices. God alone forgives based on sacrificial system. Priest mediated did not forgive. Jesus pronouncing forgiveness claimed divine authority. Religious leaders saw clearly implications. Their conclusion logical if Jesus is not God then He blasphemes. Problem was they rejected His deity despite evidence. Miracles fulfilled prophecy authoritative teaching all pointed to deity. Hardness of heart blinded them. Early

church proclaimed Jesus divine authority to forgive. Peter Pentecost Paul everywhere preached forgiveness through Christ name alone. This offended Jews polytheists monotheists. Exclusive claim. Offense continues today. Pluralism rejects exclusive claims. But biblical Christianity maintains Christ alone forgives. No other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. Why is Jesus authority to forgive sins central test of His identity either God or blasphemer?
2. How does religious leaders correct theology (only God forgives) combined with rejection of Jesus deity demonstrate that right doctrine without right response condemns?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ ἦρξαντο διαλογίζεσθαι οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ  
And began to reason the scribes And G3588  
G2532 G756 G1260 G1122 G2532 G3588

Φαρισαῖοι λέγοντες τίς ἐστιν οὗτος ὃς λαλεῖ  
the Pharisees saying Who is this which speaketh  
G5330 G3004 G5101 G2076 G3778 G3739 G2980

βλασφημίας τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἀμαρτίας εἰ μὴ  
blasphemies Who can forgive sins G1487 G3361  
G988 G5101 G1410 G863 G266

μόνος ὁ Θεός  
alone God  
G3441 G2316

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 43:25** (Sin): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

**John 10:33** (References God): The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

**Luke 7:49** (Sin): And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

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