

24 Reasons Refuted

The following 24 Reasons have been used as justification for a N.T. bishop (Jonathan R. Crosby) to retain or return to ministry after being biblically put out of the church for sin (adultery). But 1TI 3:2; TIT 1:6-7 say that a bishop must be *blameless*. The O.E.D. defines *blame* as “The action of censuring... censure...” and *censure* is “A judicial sentence...” (the judges in this case being the church members, per 1CO 5:11-13). Refutations follow each Reason. Be it understood that restoration to church fellowship through repentance is not to be equated with restoration to ministry after public censure (blamed).

1. “David was prophet and much more and kept his ministerial offices (Ps 51:11-13; Acts 2:30).”
 - A. O.T. order is not the rule for N.T. Christianity. If it is, then a N.T. minister should be able to have multiple wives as did David. But see **1TI 3:2**.
 - B. David was not put out of the O.T. church for his adultery. Should an adulterous N.T. minister not be put out of the church?
 - C. David also shed innocent blood (**2SAM 12:9**) and retained power. Should a blood-shedding N.T. minister not be put out of the church and/or keep his official power?
 - D. Building a case from David is selective: cherry-picking an example to prop up an error.
 - (1) Other kings who were very wicked also retained their offices.
 - (2) King Mannasseh was guilty of idolatry, murder, witchcraft, passing his children through fire, and more. **2KI 21:1-16; 2CH 33:1-16**.
 - a. God afflicted him. He humbled himself and was restored to his kingdom.
 - b. Would this justify a N.T. minister’s retaining office after similar crimes?
 - (3) There were other O.T. notables whose errors cost them their official privileges, such as the priest, Eli (**1SAM 2:30-36**). Why build a case only from David?
 - E. NOTE: Resorting to O.T. law or example is the common default of Christians whose creed or conduct is unsupported or forbidden by the N.T. (Eg. polygamy, dietary law, musical instruments in church, rebuilding Israel or the temple, etc.).
2. “David was punished practically by God (death of child, Absalom, etc.), but not ministerially.”
 - A. So if your child dies but you get to keep your ministry, this is good?
 - B. See answers to #1.
3. “Jesus is known throughout the Bible as the Son of David; David was always God’s favorite.”
 - A. See answers to #1.
 - B. So being God’s favorite overrules N.T. law for ministers? Is God a respecter of persons?
 - C. The “God’s favorite” argument became Israel’s justification for much sin. **AMO 9:10 c/w ROM 2:17-29**.
 - D. Being God’s favorite puts one under *greater* accountability. **AMO 3:2 c/w JAM 3:1**.
4. “I would rather be a forgiven David than a maritally-faithful Saul, for God loved David much.”
 - A. If those two are the only options, fine. But this is a “lesser of two evils,” “apples and oranges” comparison. It implies sinning and being forgiven is superior to not sinning. But see **ROM 3:8; 1CO 11:31**.

- B. An alternative: “I would rather be a faithful Joseph who fled adultery than a beloved David who didn’t.” **GEN 39:12.**
 - C. God forgave and loved Paul much but Paul knew that wouldn’t prevent him from being a castaway. **1CO 9:27.**
 - D. David’s experience is not a rule for N.T. church order for preachers.
5. “Peter was an elder and stayed in ministry after two failures (Matt 26:75; Gal 2:11; Jn 21:15-17).”
- A. If Peter’s “failures” subjected him to *blame* (censure, judicial sentence), mind that Peter was not put out of the church. Should that model be followed also?
 - B. Peter was *not* blamed in **GAL 2:11**. He “...was TO BE blamed.”
 - 1. This denotes a *potential or unrealized state*, not an *accomplished state*. c/w **ACT 21:37.**
 - 2. “The prisoner was to be hanged on Friday.” Does this imply that the prisoner was hanged or that he was not hanged?
 - C. Peter was being dissimulative (hypocritical) in **GAL 2:11-13**. Hypocrisy is not listed as a sin that merits N.T. church judgment (“blamed”). See **1CO 5:11-13; 6:9-10; GAL 5:19-21**, etc.
 - D. Unchecked, Peter’s hypocrisy might have become *heresy* but even heretics are given two admonitions before rejection. **TIT 3:10.**
 - E. Concerning **MAT 26:75**, *all* the apostles forsook Christ (**MAT 26:56**) yet retained ministry and church membership.
 - (1) Does this justify universal forsaking of Christ under the rules *later* given for the church by the Holy Spirit? Example: **HEB 10:25-39.**
 - (2) Peter or the others could not be judicially censured (blamed) for laws that were *not yet given*, “...for where no law is, there is no transgression” (**ROM 4:15**).
6. “Peter was blamed for two sins, both recorded publicly, but was the apostolic leader (Acts 1:15)!”
- A. See answers to #5.
7. “Peter was a leader at Jerusalem, took the gospel to Gentiles, has two epistles with his name.”
- A. See answers to #5.
 - B. Moses was a leader in the O.T. church and has five books to his name but was forbidden to enter the promised land because of public sin (**NUM 20:12**). Since Jonathan makes mileage out of O.T. heroes, what would be the implications of Moses’ fate for a blamed N.T. minister?
 - C. Paul was the chief apostle, greatly forgiven and has fourteen epistles to his name. Yet he dared not presume that, having preached to others, he could never be a castaway. **1CO 9:27.**
8. “I would rather be a forgiven Peter than a faithful Thaddaeus or Nicodemus (never mentioned).”
- A. Review answers to #5. This is an invalid comparison.
 - B. This argument implies that *failing* is better than *faithfulness*, so “...Let us do evil that

- good may come” (**ROM 3:8**). By contrast, Paul “...KEPT the faith...” (**2TI 4:7**).
- C. “...it is REQUIRED in stewards that a man be found FAITHFUL” (**1CO 4:2**).
- D. Fame is a poor rule for a good report. **HEB 11:36-39**.
- E. It is true that God delights in mercy but He also delights in judgment (**JER 9:24**). There is “...judgment without mercy” (**JAM 2:13**).
9. “Moses publicly rebelled against God at Meribah but was counted very faithful in God’s house.”
- A. See remarks on #7.
- B. Moses was not put out of the O.T. church for what was called *rebellion*. **NUM 20:24; 27:14**.
1. Does this negate N.T. law about rebellion against apostolic rule from God? **2TH 3:6, 14**.
2. Should a N.T. church retain in fellowship someone publicly guilty of rebellion, which is *as the sin of witchcraft*? **1SAM 15:23 c/w GAL 5:19-21**.
- C. O.T. order or events are not the rule for the N.T. church.
10. “Aaron led the people in an orgy to two golden calves but retained the loftiest spiritual office.”
- A. So a N.T. minister could lead saints in an idolatrous orgy and retain his ministry?
- B. Neither was Aaron excluded from the O.T. church. Can a N.T. minister do as Aaron and not even lose church membership?
- C. Aaron was not yet anointed to the office (**EXO 32 c/w EXO 40:13**). Should we conclude that “blameless” (**1TI 3:2**) doesn’t therefore even apply to pre-ordination qualifications?
- D. O.T. order is not the rule for the N.T. church.
- E. There were O.T. priests who were *irrevocably* put out of the priesthood. **1SAM 2:30-36; 3:12-14 c/w 1KI 2:27; NEH 7:63-64; EZE 44:9-16**.
11. “Jonah rebelled against God’s word, repented, and stayed a prophet in spite of serious problems.”
- A. Neither was Jonah excluded from the O.T. church. Does Jonah’s case prove that a N.T. minister is therefore immune to church censure?
- B. Similar observations to Moses’ rebellion against God’s word would apply here.
- C. O.T. order is not the rule for the N.T. church.
12. “John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas but repentance restored ministry (Col 4:10; II Tim 4:11).”
- A. Where is the evidence that John Mark committed a sin that merited church judgment?
- B. *Restored* his ministry? John Mark *continued with* Barnabas (**ACT 15:39**) and Barnabas sided with him. Would this not have made Barnabas complicit in John Mark’s “sin?”
- C. *Restored* his ministry? How does this fit with Jonathan’s position that a minister does not lose his ministerial authority because of church censure?
- D. Paul elsewhere waxed warm by *passion* rather than by *prophecy*. **ACT 23:1-5**.

13. “ ‘Blameless’ in I Tim 3:2 is at time of ordination and only precludes existing sins not repented of.”
 - A. The *qualifications for a candidate* are there because they are the *requirements of the office*: “A bishop then must be blameless...” (**1TI 3:2**).
 - B. By Jonathan’s reasoning, a bishop is neither bound by the rest of **1TI 3:2-7**. Once ordained, he is immune to the N.T. requirements for office. He could conceivably be repeatedly excluded from the church for various breaches of **1TI 3:2-7**, repent, be restored to membership and ministry.
14. “Repentance makes all the difference in the world (II Cor 7:10-11; II Sam 12:13; Matt 21:28-32).”
 - A. Repentance did not make all the difference in **NUM 14:34-45**.
 - B. Repentance can restore one to fellowship with saints and with God. **2CO 2:6-11**.
 - C. Repentance of sin that merited censure by the church (blame) does not result in either retention of or restoration to N.T. church office.
15. “Repentance altogether clears men by the God that forgives far better than men (Isaiah 55:8-9).”
 - A. See answers to #14.
 - B. Jesus taught disciples by a parable of an unfaithful *steward*, “...thou mayest be no longer steward” (**LUK 16:1-3**) and bishops/elders are God’s stewards. **1CO 4:1-2; TIT 1:5-7**.
16. “Peter was not “blameless” (Gal 2:11), but repentance cleared him to keep right on as an apostle.”
 - A. See answers to #5.
 - B. Every minister of Christ is, of necessity, a hypocrite, since he must preach an absolute standard of righteousness to which he can never perfectly measure up.
 - C. Peter would have done well to repent of his hypocrisy, as should all ministers who have known inconsistencies and double-standards. But the hypocrisy is not of itself a crime that merits church judgment.
17. “Members are to be ‘blameless,’ but repentance keeps them or gets them restored (Phil 2:15).”
 - A. **PHIL 2:15** is instruction on how to *avoid* blame (censure), not *recover* from it.
 - B. Restoration does not equal “blameless” but rather “forgiven.” One may be forgiven of a sin that merited blame but the blame still occurred.
 - C. “Blameless” is a status *continued in*, not *restored to*. A criminal may serve his sentence but still have a record that forbids him from positions of trust.
 - D. A blamed saint or minister may be restored to fellowship through repentance but this is not the same as one’s forfeiting of an office which *requires* blamelessness.
 - E. A church member who has been lawfully censured by the church would be ineligible for *candidacy* for the office of bishop, per **1TI 3:1-2**.
18. “I was excluded as a member for a year to prove repentance and then lived it six more (1993-2000).”

- A. See answers to #17.
19. “Ordination, reflecting God’s call, is not undone or repeated; neither do we rebaptize after sin.”
- A. Again, restoration to *fellowship* in God’s kingdom is not the same as restoration to *office* in God’s kingdom. This Reason is another invalid comparison.
- B. Secularly, an ambassador may be recalled by his government and jailed for malfeasance. He does not retain his authority. Upon serving his sentence, society may receive him but his government is not obliged to reinstate him to office. Preachers are “...ambassadors for Christ...” (2CO 5:20), ministers of a holy *nation*, the church. 1PE 2:5-9.
- C. True, rebaptism is not required after (repented of) sin.
- (1) Reordination is not required for a blamed former minister since he is not even eligible for it, per 1TI 3:2.
- (2) Things that are different are not the same.
20. “Ordination is not conditional or temporary, or ungodly ordainers could destroy a faithful pastor.”
- A. This is a *faulty causal relationship* or “straw-man argument.” God determines who may no longer be His minister, not “ungodly ordainers.” Men must choose to side with God or not.
- B. There is no need for “ungodly ordainers” to destroy anyone who destroys himself.
- C. Ministerial authority is very conditional: blameless, etc. 1TI 3:1-7.
- D. If a minister *retains* his authority after judicial censure, what is to stop him from simply evangelizing and building other churches, regardless of what his censuring church did to him? If somehow his ministerial powers (including evangelism) are restricted by not being restored to his home church’s fellowship or to its ministry, then his ministerial power IS conditional.
21. “Becoming pastor, whether first time or restoration, requires the unanimous consent of a church.”
- A. Unanimity is an irrelevant argument for restoration to N.T. ministry of a blamed man.
- B. Unanimity may only prove that mass deception or conspiracy is afoot. JER 5:30-31.
22. “A castaway is rejected by God and no longer used, like Saul, but God forgave and used David.”
- A. Saul also never lost his church membership even as David did not lose his.
- B. God used Saul after he was cast away (he remained king until his death). God used David after his adultery. Their cases prove nothing for N.T. purposes of ministry.
- C. O.T. order is not the rule for the N.T. church.
23. “A vital principle is at stake – God forgives men – the principle news of the gospel (I Tim 1:15-16).”
- A. 1TI 1:15-16 is addressing Paul’s *pre-conversion ignorance* (1TI 1:12-13), not his post-

conversion Christian life. Remember **1CO 9:27**.

- B. Forgiveness and restoration to fellowship is indeed good news. Restoration of a blamed minister to ministerial office is *fake news*.
- C. God may forgive but also take vengeance (**PSA 99:8; NUM 14:19-23**) that men may know His breach of *conditional* promises. **NUM 14:34**.

24. “For 27 years this sin has revealed the hearts of men – those who know the love and mercy of God.”

- A. This statement is emotional tripe to insulate Jonathan from scrutiny and cast his objectors as merciless and unloving.
- B. The 27 years may only be the longsuffering of God (as He did with King Saul) or they may be the current period of judicial blindness upon a church. The 27 years may be ambiguously interpreted. Further, no length of time countermands **1TI 3:2**.
- C. Redefining righteousness is not the pathway to blessing (**ISA 5:20; MAL 3:15**): it rather makes one guilty of sitting in judgment on God’s law. **JAM 4:11**.
- D. An alternate statement: “For 27 years this sin has revealed the hearts of men – that in their ignorance of or hardheartedness against the truth, they can be manipulated by a charismatic rebel.” c/w **2SAM 15:1-11**.