

Ps 145:1,2
 Hy 1B
 Ps 76:1,2,3,4,5
 Ps 99:2
 Hy 64:1,2,3,4
 Exodus 3:1-15
 Ephesians 5:1-7
 Lord's Day 36,37

Yarrow, October 31, 2010

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

3rd commandment follows quite logically on heels of 1st & 2nd.

- 1st: God alone is God ∴ serve, trust Him alone. I.e., no other gods
- 2nd: because God is *God*, serve Him not as you think is reasonable but as He has commanded. ∴ no images, neither molten nor mental.
- Now 3rd: not misuse His name. Point here: take Him for real, treat Him with respect, every moment, every day.
 - There's the challenge for sinful people; it is in us not to take God for real in every circumstance of every day, in word and in deed.

IN WORD AND DEED TAKE GOD SERIOUSLY DAY BY DAY.

1. What is God's name?
2. How is His name misused?
3. Wherein are we encouraged?

1. What is God's name?

Term 'name' has two-fold significance. Every person has name by which we call him: Bob, James, Sue. Every person also has reputation, i.e., "what name do you have in the community?" With the Lord God, these two aspects inseparable; two sides of one coin.

- His name → Yahweh (=LORD) – shortened form of "I AM WHO I AM". Significance? See Exodus 3.
 - Moses at burning bush; God introduces self as God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (vs 6).
 - Adds: seen "misery of My people in Egypt", cf vs 7.
 - God promised Abraham – see Genesis 15:13
 - Time now up. So: will God do what said would do?? Says: yes, cf vs 8. ∴ command of vs 10.
 - But Moses hesitates. See Q of vs 13.
 - ∴ answer of 14: My name is I AM WHO I AM. Pt: God is
 - Who He says He is
 - Does what He says He'll do
 - So: Faithful, keeps promises
- Now fast-forward to Exodus 20:2. Note: 'LORD' – Yahweh → Israel learned significance of term from Moses at burning bush, Exodus 3. He said He'd deliver from Egypt, and lo, in Exodus 20 people are free, at Mt Sinai! Pt: He did what He said He'd do!! So: who God? What reputation He gain for self??

- One word: He is who He says He is! ie,
 - Faithful to promises
 - Powerful to carry out promises
 - Gracious to undeserving people
 - Therefore distinctly different from other gods, ie, holy.
- Obvious consequence: treat this God with respect! He no slouch, He not all show no go, He real, active – take Him seriously!
- We not at Mt Sinai – we richer, for delivered not from Egypt but from bondage to sin/Satan through work of Jesus Christ on cross. This foreshadowed through Israel' deliverance. We His children, heirs to life eternal...
 - Pt: *our* God no slouch; look what He did for us!
- This the force of 3rd commandment: not misuse His name, not abuse His reputation, not pretend He just a toy...
 - If do: Lord not take that lightly!! Cf curse at end of 3rd petition.
 - ∴ 2nd point:

2. How is His name misused?

In 3rd commandment Lord tells us not to misuse His name. How do that? What 'misuse' mean?

- Old translation: 'take ... in vain' = Treat lightly.
- Cf 30.06: how treat it?? Obvious: with great respect, lest someone get shot.... It won't do to treat rifle as if kid's toy..., plastic gun.... And society very adamant on that point!
- But what happens in our culture in relation to God? He treated as if plastic gun, not real/dangerous.
 - ∴ plenty of OMG's, using term 'God', 'Lord', 'Christ', 'Jesus' as explicative, fill in blank, etc.

How this possible?? Consider worldview:

- Christian: world consists of two 'rooms', one in which we live (earth), which eye sees and science can explore. 2nd is heaven where Lord God lives, with angels & saints who already received crown of glory.
 - These two intimately connected
 - From heaven God created earth in beginning, upholds it today...
 - From heaven God delivered Israel from Egypt, to Promised Land, preserved....
 - From heaven God sent Son to save from sin....
 - From heaven still sends sunshine/rain for sake of His children, ie, leads world history with purpose of gathering His church. Delightful perspective – rich!!
 - ie, sovereign God intimately connected with every event of every day.
 - ∴ reason to praise Him..., speak of Him with reverence, cf Lord's Day 36.99b. What a God!
- Modern: world as eye sees it, ie, this earth..., *and nothing more*. ie, is no heaven, is no almighty Creator who governs all.
 - So people treat Him as a toy, ie, not take Him seriously.
 - So people use God's name in any circumstance as filler.
 - The problem isn't simply that God's name is used but problem is the mindset that doesn't take God for real, that treats Him as if He were simply a toy gun instead of a real & dangerous 30.06.

- Yet He Himself added to 3rd commandment: He will not hold guiltless any who misuse His name. In keeping with analogy: the gun will one day go off, and those who play with God's name/reputation as if it were a plastic toy will get badly hurt.
- Catechism mentions blaspheming, cursing, perjury, unnecessary oaths.
 - Re blasphemy: see Leviticus 24:10f: in fight one called on God to damn other for personal gain, ie, call down a curse. Note penalty, vs 23: God not tolerate this misuse of His name – as if this divine gun can be drawn for personal benefit...
 - Happens today with prayer used lightly or in anger: God damn you (= send you to hell), or abbreviations: Damn you, or Damn.
 - In same category: using name of God or Saviour when angry or to express surprise, ie, punctuate speech.... Ibid alterations: Golly, Gosh, Cripes, Jeez, etc.
 - Re perjury: see Lord's Day 37.101: in this broken life, with its abundant dishonesty, is place/need for calling on God to test heart that I speak truth (cf A 102), eg, in court. But if I call on God in oath to test heart, then make point of deceiving, I playing games with God. Given who God is, this obviously provokes His anger, ie, threat of 3rd commandment.
- Our culture considers certain four-letter words as 'swearing', eg, the 'f' word, 's' word....
 - In fact not swearing and so not directly covered in 3rd commandment.
 - Yet Scripture plain: cf Ephesians 5:3f.
 - More: North American culture thinks in terms of: Christians don't drink, smoke or swear, and to our society this includes this foul language, cf refusal to print this words in paper, etc). So when unbeliever hears a Christian use foul language (let alone God's name lightly), hearer hears you treating God as lightly as he himself does, ie, like a toy. So unbeliever not encouraged to take God seriously. And yes, *that* belittles God – and so sets you afoul of 3rd commandment!

What the picture that results?

- Abusing God's name so common around us..., even on our part.... Feel guilty....
- Then read in Lord's Day 36 re the wrong of being silent bystanders..., no sin greater than blaspheming of God's name..., and we thoroughly discouraged...
 - Fact is: too often we treat God's name as toy instead of deadly 30.06, ie, "only with fear and reverence"....
 - ∴ 3rd point:

3. Wherein are we encouraged?

The God who is real, majestic & awesome, sent Son from heaven to earth.

- On earth this Son surrounded by culture that belittled God, ie, treated as toy gun – be it Romans who denied Him, or even Pharisees who used Him for own ends.... In midst of this culture, Jesus Christ never considered God as plastic, present for personal ends. Rather, always esteemed God highly, treated with respect, spoke of Him highly, obeyed His commands.
- Even on cross, when this almighty God turned on Him (cf 30.06 pointed at you!), He not think, speak, act irreverently to this God, but upheld His honour.
 - Ie, though God's righteous anger at our sins directed at Jesus, Jesus continued to trust Him, call Him Father, obey.
 - In so doing atoned for our sins, satisfied God's justice!

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- Result: reconciled us to God, more, ascended into heaven – one of us to God’s right hand. Point: heaven intimately connected to earth! All that happens on earth today comes from hand of ascended Christ, for He gathering His church.
 - How much more reason we have to think/speak of Him with reverence and awe!
 - This the colour of gratitude!
 - To make that possible ascended Lord has poured out His heavenly Spirit to renew, change sinful hearts.
 - In strength of this Spirit: can take God seriously, for this Spirit is God Himself.
 - This affect way we think of God, ie, He real, sovereign – not a toy gun, but needs respect of the real thing.
 - If in strength of Spirit we can *think* of God this way, can also in His strength *speak* this way and *act* this way.
 - Ie, as we’ll address person who treats a 30.06 as if it were a harmless toy, so we’ll address person who treats God as if a harmless toy. This is love for neighbour!
 - *How* you do it takes wisdom, and depends on circumstances. But certainly begins with you taking God seriously in how you act and in how you talk. Then gain moral right and respect (in eyes of others) to say something re their blasphemy.
 - Takes courage, but Lord in Spirit will give strength.
 - And remember: Christ who ascended comes again – to demonstrate He real, and so to vindicate all who took Him seriously when folk around them did not. So time and truth on your side....