

HC 100-102 – Shall I take Oaths?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: We have looked at the 2 principles of the 3rd command: **Prohibitions of Law 3 and Prescriptions of Law 3.**

We will look today at **one particular prescription of Law 3** that God has given to us – **the issue of taking oaths.**

We take oaths, but some Baptists and Charismatics don't. They believe it is wrong to do so. So let God's Word speak today.

Our headings are:

Take Oaths, but don't blaspheme

Take Oaths, but do so reverently

Take Oaths, but not by lesser creatures or things

Our goals are: That as covenant children bought with the blood of the Lamb of God, **you will properly use God's name so you would bring honor to him.**

Take Oaths, but don't Blaspheme

100 Q. IS BLASPHEMY OF GOD'S NAME BY SWEARING AND CURSING REALLY SUCH SERIOUS SIN THAT GOD IS ANGRY ALSO WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT DO ALL THEY CAN TO HELP PREVENT IT AND FORBID IT?

A. Yes, indeed. **No sin is greater, no sin makes God angrier than blaspheming his name.** That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.

1. It is right to take oaths but you must not blaspheme God's name by misusing it.

2. It is right to take oaths and you must rebuke those who blaspheme God's name.

Leviticus 5:1 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter —if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

Example: If Sam knew Sue was taking an oath before God and was lying in that oath, and Sam remained silent, Sam would be guilty – **guilty of abusing of God's name by neglecting to speak up,** just as Sue who was falsely swearing.

Moses made it clear those who heard any abuse of God's name and said nothing were also guilty of abusing God's name.

You have an obligation to protect your earthly father's name, even knowing his weaknesses. Wouldn't you want to protect your heavenly Father's good name?

You must try to stop others who abuse God's name, but not everywhere and every time. The context of Leviticus 5 was in a legal situation. There are times when you have no right to speak.

You must not try to regulate speech in your boss' work place. You might sit away from those who misuse God's name, and if they ask you why you are sitting away from them, explain. Or you may nicely talk to someone who blasphemes God's name, but you must not force others, outside of your area of sovereignty, to obey God.

You must regulate speech in your own house, but not in parliament. This means teach your children and others in your household. You must not be a silent bystander when you hear others blaspheme God's name when you can speak up.

You may have to leave someone's house or job if God's name is constantly blasphemed and it becomes unbearable.

3. Are there other things you can do to stop others from misusing (blaspheming) God's name and help them to use it properly?

a. Live holily before the Lord so there will be no question how highly you respect and honor the Lord.

Romans 2: 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 **For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"** as it is written.

The Jews lived lives of hypocrisy...pretending to be good by their lips but not their lives. This caused Gentiles to blaspheme God's name – to think lowly of him. So when you say: "Oh, my God," let it be in the form of prayer. Let people see how highly you think of your God. **Consider some of the songs we are singing today.**

b. Don't blaspheme against God's name yourself. Speak the truth. Don't curse.

1Timothy 6:1 - Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

The church may pronounce judgment on the wicked...even your enemies, but it is

not for you to condemn others to hell. And remember, the phrase “God Damn You,” is the worst possible curse you can curse.

Take Oaths, but do so reverently

Q.101BUT MAY WE SWEAR AN OATH IN GOD’S NAME IF WE DO IT REVERENTLY?

A. Yes, when the government demands it, or when necessity requires it, in order to maintain and **promote truth and trustworthiness for God’s glory and our neighbor’s good.** Such oaths are approved in God’s Word and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.

1. Jehovah, God of the Universe, holy, omniscient, and all-powerful, does not want you to be afraid to properly use his name in worship or oaths; he just wants you to do it reverently.

He wants you to call him to witness to the truth you speak so he would bless you when you speak truth.

Deuteronomy 6: 13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and **shall take oaths in His name.**

2. Consider some examples of proper swearing – men who were not afraid to swear:

a. Jacob swore an oath – an oath that protected him and his family from Laban.

Genesis 31:51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52 "This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 "The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And **Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.**

b. Saul asked David to swear he would not kill Saul’s family when he became king. David was right to swear.

1Samuel 24: 21 "**Therefore swear now to me by the LORD** that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father’s house." 22 So **David swore to Saul...**

3. So you may properly swear an oath in all serious occasions. Examples:

a. A soldier in time of war swears to defend his country and to take orders from his superiors.

b. You swear to tell the truth in testimony in court or in legal civil situations to add weight to what you are saying.

c. In marriage (called a vow) you swear to love your spouse.

d. In church membership vows you swear to serve the Lord and submit to your elders.

Baptists and Charismatics who refuse to take any oaths, believing oaths to be sinful, sin against the Lord by refusing to honor his name.

Because oaths require understanding, children and mentally handicapped people should not be given, nor should they take oaths.

Take oaths, but not by lesser creatures or things

102 Q. MAY WE SWEAR BY SAINTS OR OTHER CREATURES?

A. No. A legitimate oath means calling upon God as the one who knows my heart to witness to my truthfulness and to punish me if I swear falsely. **No creature is worthy of such honor.**

1. You may only swear by Jehovah God; you may not swear by anything or anyone else.

2. The Apostle Paul had the opportunity to swear by one of the deceased saints when he wanted to make a strong statement, but instead of swearing by James, for instance, Paul called God to witness.

This means he swore by God.

2Corinthians 1: 23 Moreover **I call God as witness against** my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

3. Consider how even God swears by himself.

There was no other person by whom he could swear. Only he has the power to do or not do. To him all men shall bow...to him all men shall swear.

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

4. Consider how Jesus explicitly warned against making oaths by minor things.

Matthew 5:33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34 "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

The Jews had 2 serious errors in how they swore:

a. They swore about less important things (I swear I will help you move tomorrow.) because they wanted to look good. They didn't always feel the obligation to honor those oaths. But swearing should only be for important things.

b. Instead of swearing by God, they developed categories about what they should swear by. So if they swore by the temple (and you should only swear by God) they gave the appearance of seriousness, but had no obligation to fulfill their pledge because God's name wasn't involved.

5. There are many modern examples of swearing oaths today for minor things...and therefore swearing by things other than the Lord.

"I swear by the sun above me, I swear on my mother's grave, I swear by the breath in my body, I swear by my head, and I swear by this cathedral." These are bad!

No creature is worthy to be used in the taking of oaths. No saint can independently fulfill what you promise. No dead mother can do anything you promise. No place makes an oath more powerful or useful. Jesus rebukes this type of swearing.

Matthew 23:16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' 17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?"

Conclusion:

Take oaths, but don't blaspheme and work to prevent others from doing so. Take Oaths, but do so reverently, bringing honor to God. Take Oaths, but not by lesser creatures.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. God is now your Heavenly Father because Jesus Christ redeemed you from the claws of the Devil. You now have a new heart, and new name, and a new life. You are in a perfect place! There is none better.

2. With that new heart, new name, and new life, bring honor to God's name by speaking the truth, and when necessary, have the confidence to take proper oaths in your Father's name, and so honor him!

Finally, **you can never use God's name rightly unless you are God's child.**

You have no business calling God to witness your promises or asking for help!

You would not have the proper respect as to who God is and what he has done for you unless you experience his regenerating work in your heart.

Therefore, in order to obey this command, one that all men are bound to obey, **you need to ask God to make you his child.**

Ask him to take away your sins because Jesus took the punishment for them. God has obligated himself to do so if you sincerely ask.