

WHY THE LAW OF MOSES IS STILL VALID

By Duane A. Linn

PART III. The 3rd Commandment

Ex 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Last week, we got into the First and Second Commandments to some degree. While there is much more to go on with regard to the 2nd Commandment, as to the punishments for violating it; this will be dealt with in the final sermon of this series (which is tentatively titled, “The Punishments for Violating God’s Commandments”).

So, getting right to it, let’s look at the 3rd Commandment.

We see the word, “vain” mentioned twice in this Commandment. This in and of itself is noteworthy. It shows the seriousness of the Command to not take the NAME of the LORD in vain. To use it in a manner that does not profit the user of God’s Name, nor does it glorify God Himself. Paul Washer called this, a “Hebrew Parallelism”. The second use of the word “vain” shows the emphasis of the subject being taught to us.

To the definition...

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

vain

VAIN, a. L. vanus; Eng. wan, wane, want.

1. Empty; worthless; having no substance, value or importance. 1Peter 1.
1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

Every man walketh in a vain show. Ps. 39.

Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Ps. 2.

2. Fruitless; ineffectual. All attempts, all efforts were vain.

Vain is the force of man.

3. Proud of petty things, or of trifling attainments; elated with a high opinion of one's own accomplishments, or with things more showy than valuable; conceited.

The minstrels play'd on every side, vain of their art -

4. Empty; unreal; as a vain chimera.

5. Showy; ostentatious.

Load some vain church with old theatric state.

6. Light; inconstant; worthless. Prov. 12. ***Pr 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.***

7. Empty; unsatisfying. The pleasures of life are vain.

8. False; deceitful; not genuine; spurious. James 1. ***Jas 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.***

9. Not effectual; having no efficacy

Bring no more vain oblations. Is. 1.

In vain, to no purpose; without effect; ineffectual.

In vain they do worship me. Matt. 15.

To take the name of God in vain, to use the name of God with levity or profaneness.

The above definitions are self-explanatory. The last statement, is what most people LIMIT this Commandment to mean. The simple profanity of saying, “GD”.

Yet, to look deeper at this first part, it goes much further than just the two words, “God” and “Dammit”, or, “Damn” put together.

I’ll give you an example.

The Late Dr. Ferrell Griswold, taught on this matter and it has stuck with me from the very day that I heard it in the truck all those years ago during the time of my instruction. He said what I just mentioned here prior, about the combination of the two words... Yet, Dr. Griswold took it further;

(Paraphrasing) “Even in your mind, to think it, is to say it out loud. Whether it is “gosh darn” “gal durn” etc., you are still saying, “God Damn”. That which is in the mind and heart, when done, is just as if you had said aloud.”

Let’s have a look at the words, levity and profaneness.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

levity

LEVITY, n. L. levitas, from levis, light; connected perhaps with Eng. lift.

1. Lightness; the want of weight in a body, compared with another that is heavier. The ascent of a balloon in the air is owing to its levity, as the gas that fills it is lighter than common air.

2. Lightness of temper or conduct; inconstancy; changeableness; unsteadiness; as the levity of youth.

3. Want of due consideration; vanity; freak. He never employed his omnipotence out of levity or ostentation.

4. Gaiety of mind; want of seriousness; disposition to trifle. The spirit of religion and seriousness was succeeded by levity.

Some instances of this can be boiled down to “Using the Name of God in casual conversation”. I have seen many times in online postings in groups, or even in plain posts outside the group format, people calling God by His Holy Names. “Adonai”; “Yahweh”, “Elohim”, “Elohenu”, etc. Speaking of God as if He were a Tom, Dick, or Harry; a friend or acquaintance.

Exclaiming, “OMG” as a result of surprise, shock, horror, etc.

These are just some of the instances of taking the Name of the Lord in vain in levity.

Now we move on to profane, or profaneness.

PROFA'NENESS, n. Irreverence of sacred things; particularly, the use of language which implies irreverence towards God; the taking of God's name in vain.

Profaneness in men is vulgar and odious; in females, is shocking and detestable.

Speaking His Name, or yelling, “OMG” at the point of extreme pleasure or the final climax at the end of the deed during sexual intercourse; is what I would call “profaneness” in the use of God’s Name.

Let’s have a look now at the Scriptures where the 3rd Commandment is expressed.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

Exodus 20:7

take. Le 19:12; 24:11-16; De 5:11; Ps 50:14-16; Pr 30:9; Jer 4:2; Mt 5:33-37; 23:16-22; 26:63-64; 2Co 1:23; Heb 6:16-17; Jas 5:12

guiltless. Jos 2:12,17; 9:20; 2Sa 21:1-2; 1Ki 2:9

General references. exp: De 5:11; Jos 2:17.

See also on exp:

Ge 3:5 God.

Ge 24:3; Nu 30:2 swear.

Ge 24:5 Peradventure.

Ge 27:20 Because.

Le 19:12 ye shall.

Le 24:11 blasphemed.

Le 24:16 blasphemeth.

Jg 11:10 if we do.

Jg 17:2 Blessed.

1Sa 28:10 sware.

1Ki 2:9 hold him.

2Ki 5:20 as the Lord liveth.

Job 9:28 I know.

Ps 34:21 desolate.

Ps 139:20 thine.

Pr 16:5 unpunished.

Pr 30:9 and take the name.

Jer 34:16 polluted.

Jer 42:5 The Lord be.

Eze 17:16 whose oath.

Eze 39:7 and I will.

Mt 5:33 Thou.

Mt 15:9 in.

Mt 26:72 with.

1Ti 1:10 perjured.

Le 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD

Le 24:11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)

Le 24:12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them.

Le 24:13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Le 24:14 Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

Le 24:15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.

Le 24:16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.

De 5:11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (This is in the recap of the giving of the 10 Commandments)

Ps 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Ps 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Ps 50:16 ¶ But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? (This can refer to false teachers)

Pr 30:9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Here is a proper use of using the Name of the Lord...

Jer 4:2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

2Co 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Here is what the Lord Jesus says about the matter.

Mt 5:33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

Mt 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Mt 5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Mt 5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Mt 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

When attacking the Pharisees;

Mt 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

Mt 23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

Mt 23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

Mt 23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

Mt 23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

Mt 23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

Mt 23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

Finally, James; The Lord's Half brother, says this...

Jas 5:12 ¶ But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

The point in all this, is that the Name of the LORD OUR GOD is HOLY. It should only be used in PRAYER, or in teaching the Scriptures, as I have done here.

Lest one thinks that I am acting or teaching on my own understanding, let's see what a couple of the Bible teachers of the past have said on the matter of the 3rd Commandment.

John Calvin's Verse Commentary

Exodus 20:7

Ex 20:7. Thou shalt not take the name. There is a manifest synecdoche in this Commandment; for in order that God may procure for His name its due reverence, He forbids its being taken in vain, especially in oaths. Whence we infer on the other hand an affirmative commandment, that every oath should be a testimony of true piety, whereby the majesty of God Himself should obtain its proper glory. Moreover, it is clear that not only when we swear by God, His name is to be reverently honored, but whenever mention of it is made. Thus in these words He maintains His holiness not only in His word, but also in His works, against all profane contempt of it. We shall soon see that to swear by God's name is a species or part of religious worship, and this is manifest too from the words of Isa 45:23; for when he predicts that all nations shall devote themselves to pure religion, he thus speaks, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall swear by me." 1 Now, if the bowing of the knees be a token of adoration, this swearing which is connected with it is equivalent to an acknowledgment that He is God. Since, then, reason dictates that the species is put for the genus, we must see what is to be understood by God's name, and by the adverb לְשָׁוֹ, leshav. It is silly and childish to restrict this to the name Jehovah, 2 as if God's majesty were confined to letters or syllables; but, whereas His essence is invisible, His name is set before us as an image, in so far as God manifests Himself to us, and is distinctly made known to us by His own marks, just as men are each by his own name. On this ground Christ teaches that God's name is comprehended in the heavens, the earth, the temple, the altar, (Mt 5:34,) because His glory is conspicuous in them. Consequently, God's name is profaned whenever any detraction is made from His supreme wisdom, infinite power, justice, truth, clemency, and rectitude. If a shorter definition be preferred, let us say that His name is what Paul calls τὸ ἄγνωστον, "that which may be known" of Him. (Ro 1:19.)

God's name, then, is taken in vain, not only when any one abuses it by perjury, but when it is lightly and disrespectfully adduced in proof of frivolous and trifling matters: I speak with respect to oaths. In this, however, man's ingratitude is very gross, that when God grants them His name, as if at their entreaty, to put an end to their strifes and to be a pledge of their truth, still it flies promiscuously from their mouths not without manifest disrespect. God will again condemn perjury in the Fifth Commandment of the Second Table, viz., in so far as it offends against and violates charity by injuring our neighbors. The aim and object of this Commandment is different, i.e., that the honor due to God may be unsullied; that we should only speak of Him religiously; that becoming veneration of Him should be maintained among us. The word לְשָׁוֹ, leshav, might indeed be translated "for falsehood," and in this sense we shall see it used elsewhere; but since it

often is equivalent to ???, chinam, which means gratuitously, or in vain, this exposition seems to be most appropriate. In this, too, fuller and richer instruction is contained, viz., that men should not drag in His name in light matters, as in sport or derision of Him, which cannot be done without insulting and profaning it. And thus the holiness of God's name, which preserves us in His fear and in true piety, is contrasted with the particle ????, leshau. But since nothing is more difficult than to restrain men's licentiousness in this respect, and to excuse or at least diminish the sin, the slipperiness of the tongue is pleaded, its punishment is here denounced: that if God's name is rashly exposed to reproach or contempt, He will avenge it. The more hardened, therefore, in their licentiousness they may be, the less will be their impunity; so far is depraved habit from diminishing the guilt.

The Geneva Bible translators have this to say on the matter...

Geneva Bible Footnotes

Exodus 20:7

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in (f) vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

f. Either by swearing falsely or rashly by his Name, or by condemning it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Exodus 20:7

Thou shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain,... Make use of the name Lord or God, or any other name and epithet of the divine Being, in a light and trifling way, without any show of reverence of him, and affection to him; whereas the name of God ought never to be mentioned but in a grave and serious manner, and with an awe of the greatness of his majesty upon the mind. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan restrain this to swearing by the name of the Lord; and so the Jewish writers generally interpret it either of swearing lightly, rashly, or falsely; and to this it may very well be extended, though not limited; and so forbids, as all profane oaths; imprecations, and curses by the name of God, which the mouths of wicked men are full of, so swearing by it in matters trivial, and of no importance; for swearing even by the name of the Lord ought not to be used but in matters of moment and consequence, for the confirmation of a thing, and putting an end to strife, and where a matter cannot be determined and decided without an appeal to God. And great care should be taken that a man swears to that which is true, and not false; for false swearing, or perjury, is a very grievous sin, and as it is strictly forbidden, it is severely punished by the Lord, as follows; see Le 19:12, this is the third command, and the reason enforcing it follows:

for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name is vain; will not look upon him as an innocent person, and treat him as such; will not acquit and discharge him as just and righteous; but on the contrary will consider him as a guilty person, a profaner of his name, and a transgressor of his law, and will condemn and punish him, if not in this world, yet in the world to come; and so the Targum of Jonathan, by way of explanation, adds, "in the day of the great judgment;" see Mal 3:5.

Lord's Day 36 (Heidelberg Catechism)

Topics: Third Commandment, Blasphemy, Oath, Death, Name of God

99. Q.

What is required

in the third commandment?

A.

We are not to blaspheme or to abuse the name of God

by cursing, 1 **Lev 24:10-17**.

perjury, 2 **Lev 19:12**.

or unnecessary oaths, 3 **Mt 5:37; Jas 5:12**.

nor to share in such horrible sins

by being silent bystanders. 4 **Lev 5:1; Prov 29:24**.

Rather, we must use the holy name of God

only with fear and reverence, 5 **Ps 99:1-5; Is 45:23; Jer 4:2**

so that we may rightly confess him, 6 **Mt 10:32, 33; Rom 10:9, 10**.

call upon him, 7 **Ps 50:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:8**.

and praise him in all our words and works. 8 **Rom 2:24; Col 3:17; 1 Tim 6:1**.

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100. Q.

Is the blaspheming of God's name

by swearing and cursing

such a grievous sin

*that God is angry also with those
who do not prevent and forbid it
as much as they can?*

A.

Certainly, 1 **Lev 5:1**.

for no sin is greater
or provokes God's wrath more
than the blaspheming of his name.

That is why he commanded it to be punished
with death. 2 **Lev 24:16**.

Westminster Larger Catechism on the 3rd Commandment

Q. 111. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 112. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requires, that the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.

Q. 113. *What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any wise opposing of

God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.

Q. 114. *What reasons are annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, The LORD thy God, and, For the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain, are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 54

Q: *What is required in the third commandment?*

A: The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names,¹ titles, attributes,² ordinances,³ word,⁴ and works.⁵

Psalm 29:2. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Matthew 6:9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Revelation 15:3-4. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Malachi 1:14. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.

Psalm 138:2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

Psalm 107:21-22. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

There is one more matter to discuss with regard to the 3rd Commandment, and that is the blasphemy of the woman Bible preacher and teacher.

The preaching of the Gospel is an ordinance commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ- ***Mr 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.***

When a woman preaches and teaches, the woman, also called a “Pastrix”, is in direct violation of God’s Commandment regarding women teachers of the Word of God.

1Co 14:34 ¶ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

1Co 14:35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1Ti 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

1Ti 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

1Ti 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

1Ti 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Here is the reasoning behind this... (not that the Scripture is ambiguous; for it is quite clear)

Geneva Bible Footnotes

1 Timothy 2:12

But I suffer not a woman to teach, (8) nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

8. The first argument, why it is not lawful for women to teach in the congregation, because by this means they would be placed above men, for they would be their masters: and this is against God's ordinance.

Ge 3:16 ¶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Esther 1:22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

1Co 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Eph 5:22 ¶ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Col 3:18 ¶ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Here is a portion of the Scripture where the woman is exhorted to teach to the younger women:

Tit 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

Tit 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

Tit 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

This does not imply that they are to teach the Gospel.

Finally, Peter has something to say about this as well...

1Pe 3:1 ¶ Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

(This is regarding the unsaved husband; not a carte blanche blank slate to preach the Gospel to him, or that the women are to teach and preach the Gospel in ladies Bible Study, which is an invention of reprobate men and unyielding women),

1Pe 3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

1Pe 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

1Pe 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1Pe 3:5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

1Pe 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

1Pe 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

So, to conclude this sermon, it is safe to say that the LORD takes VERY SERIOUSLY, the use of His HOLY NAME. Be mindful in your daily walk and think before you speak; this is the best way to proceed.

Let us pray...

Heavenly Father,

I thank you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the privilege of preaching Your Word to those who have been drawn to this ministry. It is my prayer, Oh Lord, that You bless and keep these brothers and sisters in Your Body free from evil. I quote John 17:9-10, 15-16:

Joh 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

Joh 17:10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Joh 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Joh 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray,

Amen