

Walking with Jesus Through Sinai:
 Seeking Moral Clarity in an Age of Chaos with the 10 Commandments
 CPC Adult Sunday Studies Fall 2024
 10 - Third Commandment

On Bearing God's Name and Our Speech

Review - from worshipping God as God has commanded in the 2nd C., and avoiding, as one example, the sin of vainglory by worshipping other images, we move now to treating God's name as it is due. This broadens, once again, the application of the 1st C. beyond God as God to God's glory, works, reputation, and witness.

Exodus 20:7 - *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."* (ESV)

- NIV, NLT translate it "misuse the name"; NRSV has "make wrongful use"
- NASB has "in vain"
- Also, "take" has the sense of "bearing" or "carrying", so it includes vows, but goes beyond them to include bearing the name of God, which is the purpose of Israel.

What is God's name?

Remember Exodus 3

- When the ESV writes "LORD", it is translating the divine name that was revealed to Moses in the burning bush episode in Ex. 3
 - Older translations used "Jehovah", which is certainly wrong based on what we know now about the Hebrew language
 - Most scholars prefer "Yahweh" now
 - Perhaps the best would simply be "I AM", since the word is a cognate noun of the verb "to be." Hence the full passage - *"Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* God also said to Moses, *"Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,*

and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations." (Ex. 3.13-15)

- God is connecting his particular covenant love with Israel to the fact that He is absolutely sovereign and without equal, so that to give any quality or attribute, even if true, is still to fall short of who God ultimately is. God is good, yes, but He is also beyond any goodness we can compare him to, so even our word "good" falls short.

God's Name elsewhere in the OT (briefly)

1. *Psalms*

1. 7.17 - *"I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the **name** of the LORD, the Most High."*
 2. 8.1 - *"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your **name** in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens."*
 3. 20.1 - *"May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the **name** of the God of Jacob protect you!"*
2. **Proverbs 18.10** - *"The **name** of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe."*
 3. **Jeremiah 7.11** - *"Has this house, which is called by my **name**, become a den of robbers in your eyes?"*
 4. **Ezek. 36.20** - *"But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned **my holy name**, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' But I had concern for **my holy name**, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came."*

In Summary - the Name is nearly equivalent to the Lord himself, it carries his identity, what he has done, his glory, and his purposes.

- In our culture, names don't mean as much as in other cultures, where it says a lot more about who you and your family are, what your destiny is, etc.
- This commandment goes far beyond certain "cuss words", which would minimize and flatten the importance of what's at stake. You can avoid all "cuss words" and yet still "take the Lord's name in vain" in myriad of ways by not honoring God for who He is.

The Duties Required

WLC 112 - "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." (Matt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58; Ps. 29:2; Ps. 68:4; Rev. 15:3-4; Mal. 1:14; Ecc. 5:1; Ps. 138:2; 1 Cor. 11:24-25, 28-29; 1 Tim. 2:8; Jer. 4:2; Ecc. 5:2, 4-6; Acts 1:24, 26; Job 36:24; Mal. 3:16; Ps. 8:1, 3-4, 9; Col. 3:17; Ps. 105:2, 5; Ps. 102:18; 1 Pet. 3: 15; Mic. 4:5; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 10:31; Jer. 32:39; 1 Pet. 2:12.)

1. "Whereby he makes himself be known" - anything that reveals God, which when we remember who God is and the purpose of creation, is everything!
2. "Thought, meditation, word, and writing" - whenever we consider anything of God, we ought to do so "holily and reverently" and "to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves and others." In other words, **remember Who you're dealing with!**

Jesus on the 2nd Commandment

1. **In Prayer** - *"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name . . .'"* (Matt. 6:5-9)

1. Jesus' introduction to the "Lord's prayer" is itself a way to "hallow God's name" because you're treating God as who God is, rather than praying for yourself - that you may be seen or heard by others, or as if God doesn't already know and isn't himself reward enough.
2. "Hallowed be your name" is literally "**let your name be kept/ considered holy**"

1. In other words, since you, God, are holy and set apart, may your glory and identity be entirely perceived and treated in that way.
 2. Shorter Catechism 101 - "What do we pray for in the first petition?
A. . . . we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory."
2. **In Speech** - *"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."* (Matt. 5.33-37)
1. There was a tradition that developed where if you swore by something else besides God, it didn't require the same stringency. Against those qualifications, Jesus is calling us to **integrity in speech**. Next week, we'll discuss what this means for all other oaths.
 1. **James 3.7-10** - *"For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so."*
 2. **Eph. 4.29** - *"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."*
 2. **Notice how God calls us to such a high standard for how we speak.** We are made in the image of God, called to witness to His name, glory, and works in all that we do and say.