

“The Name of the LORD”

Exo. 20:7

Introduction

- I. The Ten Commandments were the foundation of the Old Mosaic Law.
- II. The beginning of these commandments place emphasis on loving God and man (Exo. 20:1-2).
- III. Our focus will be on the “third commandment” (Exo. 20:7).

Discussion

- I. It was a command, not a suggestion.
 - A. Like the first two, the “third commandment” is prohibitive.
 - B. It was sin to perform such an act.
 - C. To disrespect God's name, Israel could not fulfill the “first and great commandment” (Deut. 6:5).
 - D. Tetragrammaton-YHWH; Yahweh/Jehovah (cf. Exo. 3:14).
 1. A reference to God should be reverential.
 2. Flippancy is prohibited.
 3. Israelites would often invoke the name of God when taking an oath, which should have shown the extreme importance of keeping such vows (Num. 30:2; Lev. 19:12; Deut. 23:21-22; Psm. 15:4; cf. Matt. 5:33 and James 5:12).
 - E. To take God's name in vain is to use it in an “empty or meaningless way”.
 1. First century Jews had taken this command to an extreme by refusing to refer to God's name, period.
 2. Scribes would use new “pens” to write the letters YHWH, or they might have chosen not to write all letters.
 3. When Jesus identified himself as “I am”, it was taken as if He had blasphemed (John 8:58; Lev. 24:16).
 4. Today, many take the name of God in vain by using terms that refer to God or Jesus as nothing more than slurs (“OMG”, “Oh, Lord”, “Jesus Christ”, etc.)
 - F. Our speech should always be used properly (Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 3:2).
- II. There was a serious consequence for violating the “third commandment”.
 - A. God consider an offender guilty, worthy of punishment (Lev. 5:4-6; cf. Matt. 12:36-37).
 - B. Thankfully, if we are guilty today, we can obtain forgiveness (Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:7).

Conclusion

- I. We should take the name of the LORD very seriously.
- II. Keil and Delitsch in their commentary write: “The [command] prohibits all employment of the name of God for vain and unworthy objects, and includes not only false swearing, which is condemned in Lev_19:12 as a profanation of the name of Jehovah, but trivial swearing in the ordinary intercourse of life, and every use of the name of God in the service of untruth and lying, for imprecation, witchcraft, or conjuring; whereas the true employment of the name of God is confined to “invocation, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving,” which proceeds from a pure, believing heart. The natural heart is very liable to transgress this command, and therefore it is solemnly enforced by the threat, “for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless” (leave him unpunished), etc.”