

Shorter Catechism: Questions 53-56

The Third Commandment, Part 2: A Holy Profession

"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" –Matthew 15:8

Word of God (Exodus 20 - KJV)

20 And God spake all these words, saying, ²I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

⁴Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: ⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; ⁶And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

⁷Thou 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.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: ¹¹For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

¹²Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

¹³Thou shalt not kill.

¹⁴Thou shalt not commit adultery.

¹⁵Thou shalt not steal.

¹⁶Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

¹⁷Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Shorter Catechism

Q. 53 Which is the third commandment? 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. (Exod. 20:7)

Q. 54 What is required in the third commandment? The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, (Matt. 6:9, Deut. 28:58) titles, (Ps. 68:4) attributes, (Rev. 15:3–4) ordinances, (Mal. 1:11,14) Word, (Ps. 138:1–2) and works. (Job 36:24)

Q. 55 What is forbidden in the third commandment? The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known. (Mal. 1:6–7,12, Mal. 2:2, Mal. 3:14)

Q. 56 What is the reason annexed to the third commandment? The reason annexed to the third commandment is, That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men,

yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment. (1 Sam. 2:12,17,22,29, 1 Sam. 3:13, Deut. 28:58–59)

I. Our attitude towards God

- **Larger Catechism Q. 112** - "...whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holy and reverently used in thought, (Mal. 3:16) meditation, (Ps. 8:1,3–4,9) word, (Col. 3:17, Ps. 105:2,5) and writing..."
- **Matthew 15** - ⁸ "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

II. A holy profession & walking worthy of our God

- **Romans 2** - ²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 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.
- **1 Peter 2** - ¹¹ Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

III. The name of God divides men

- **2 Corinthians 2** - ¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?
- **Matthew Henry** – "Those who are willingly ignorant, and wilfully obstinate, disrelish the gospel, as men dislike an ill savour, and therefore they are blinded and hardened by it: it stirs up their corruptions, and exasperates their spirits. They reject the gospel, to their ruin, even to spiritual and eternal death"

IV. God will not hold them blameless who take His name in vain

- **Deuteronomy 28** - ⁵⁸ "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. ⁶⁰ Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹ Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed. ⁶² You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God. ⁶³ And it shall be, *that* just as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.
- **Larger Catechism Q 114:** What reasons are annexed to the third commandment?

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,] (Exod. 20:7) are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; (Lev. 19:12) 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; (Ezek. 36:21–23, Deut. 28:58–59, Zech. 5:2–4) albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men. (1 Sam. 2:12,17,22,24, 1 Sam. 3:13)

V. God rewards those who esteem His name

- **Malachi 3** - ¹⁶Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. (ESV)