

Ten Commandments (Part 18)
(The Third Commandment – Part 1)

Exodus 20:7

I. A Solemn Prohibition (v. 7a)

- It is forbidden to use the name of God irresponsibly.

II. A Sobering Motivation (v. 7b)

-The Lord will not acquit or hold guiltless the person who uses His name in an empty, worthless manner.

-All this implies the positive obligation to use God's name responsibly and reverently.

→The 1st Commandment urges reverence for God's being; the 2nd, reverence for God's worship; and the 3rd, reverence for God's name.

YHWH (tetragrammaton): "I am who I am" God's name is more than a label. It signifies who He is. It represents His identity (Psalm 8:1, 9) and His glory (Psalm 111:9).

Three common violations of the 3rd Commandment in Israel:

-Sorcery (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

-False Prophecy (Jeremiah 14:14)

-False Oaths (Jeremiah 5:2)

Gary North: *"One way for a modern American to begin to understand this commandment is to treat God's name as trademarked property. In order to gain widespread distribution for His copyrighted repair manual—the Bible—and also to capture greater market share for His authorized franchise—the Church—God has graciously licensed the use of His name to anyone who will use it according to His written instructions. It needs to be understood, however, that God's name has not been released into the public domain. God retains legal control over His name and threatens serious penalties against the unauthorized misuse of this supremely valuable property. All trademark violations will be prosecuted to the full limits of the law. The prosecutor, judge, jury, and enforcer is God."*

WLC Q#110: *"What is required in the third commandment?" Answer: "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."*

-The 3rd Commandment must not be restricted only to speech or God's name or titles.

John Calvin on the 3rd Commandment (Institutes 2:8:22): *"The purpose of this commandment is that God wills that we hallow the majesty of His name. Therefore it means, in brief, that we are not to profane His name by treating it contemptuously and irreverently. To this prohibition duly corresponds the commandment that we should be zealous and careful to honor His name with godly reverence. Therefore, we ought to be so disposed in mind and speech that we neither think nor say anything concerning God and His mysteries without reverence and with much soberness, that in estimating His works we conceive nothing but what is honorable to Him."*

→ The 3rd Commandment prohibits the misuse of the name of God because it is by the name of Jesus Christ that we're saved.