

“You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain for the Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

We are continuing in the study of the Ten Commandments and seeing how they are the foundation for spiritual life. This commandment in the most basic sense means to not misuse the Lord’s name especially in the context of making a false promise or oath. While it is not hard to see what that this is bad, it may seem almost trivial compared to the other rules that make up the 10 Commandments. And it is even said in the commandment that the Lord will not hold guiltless those who take His name in vain.

This serious warning is echoed in the gospel when Jesus says a sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. That make this an issue of salvation, and we might be wondering why. Now, if we remember that these rules are not for the Lord’s sake but for our own good, it can be easier to understand what this warning is about.

It is about damaging our relationship with the Lord to the extent that we cannot be saved. And because the Lord is Good and Truth itself it means damaging our connection to good and truth so we cannot be saved. The heavenly doctrine uses a term for this in the specific and broader senses, which is profanation—Or mixing the holy with things that are not holy.

Maybe you have heard of profanation and that it is serious, but we are going to try to see why it is so damaging that it leads to hell, and worse!

A very important context is that just like there are levels of each commandment, there are levels of breaking them which have varying degrees of spiritual harm.

Profanation means we are not simply doing evil. Evil itself cannot harm or destroy what is good. It only pushes it away. Profanation can injure what is good because it mixes what is good and what is evil, or what is false with the truth. The priests who carried the Ark into battle were evil and the Children of Israel had not followed the Lord or repented of their evils. They tried to remain in their evil and add the truth to the evil to solve their problems. This led to the Ark being taken away from them. Profanation takes away the power of the truth or the Lord to help us. If this happens then even when we turn back to Him and really ask for help it may be very difficult

or impossible to receive His help.

Reading from the Apocalyps Explained 1047

[2] Profanations are of many kinds. The most grievous kind is when one acknowledges and lives according to the truths and goods of the Word, of the church, and of worship, and afterwards denies them and lives contrary to them, or even lives contrary to them and does not deny them. ...

This shows the worst profanation is where a person has both charity and faith and then goes back and rejects charity, meaning no longer follows the Ten Commandments.

Other kinds of profanation are using the Word and the church as a means for personal gain. Or acting in a holy and respectful way in public but privately mocking the Church and the Word. These kinds of profanation are not ok, and the only reason they are called less severe is that these people never had genuine charity in the first place. They always disobeyed the Commandments in heart but make an outward show of respect. Along these lines, there is another description of profanation which is unfortunately common today in the World where people talk about the God and the Bible and yet constantly cheat in business, commit adultery, and cherish hatred and revenge over forgiveness.

A final kind of profanation which is also called mild but is also a clear example of how profanation does harm to our ability to repent and be saved from evil. This is joking about the Word or mixing holy truths from the Word with things that are crude and worthless.

The same is true of the Lord's Names. When we misuse one of the Lord's names or the Word in general, it then it lessens the power of the Lord and Word to help us. If you hear the words: Jesus Christ, or "Oh my God" what is the first association? A prayer from the Word? or something profane? When we make an association it can become like a permanent stain in our mind and our mind is our soul. When there is an association of things evil and good or true and false they at first act like magnets that repel each other. But if we habitually associate things which don't go together then they loose there ability to repel each-other and truth no longer can protect or heal us from evil.

When people joke about the Word, afterward that joke is always going to be attached to that part of the Word. When they hear the Word they will immediately think about the joke and so the Word becomes contemptible rather than holy. Once an association is made it is impossible to undo. Once you know what a horse is it is impossible not to think about it when someone says horse. Profanation can make it impossible to enter heaven.

This problem is not that the Lord won't let us, in but that heaven is not just a place but a state of mind. This develops through our lives and if we get into a habit of doing something evil and then going back to the Word not for instruction or help but for justification. This creates a pattern that becomes a permanent thought pathway.

This is why it is important to keep the Lord's name holy. And not only one name. The Jewish Church was very careful of the name Jehovah, to the point of not saying it at all including worship. They were less careful about respecting the other names of the Lord and the holiness of the Word more generally. Most obviously when Jesus came as the Word made flesh most of the church didn't listen to Him. When we keep the Lord's name Holy, and the Word the expression of Who the Lord is we have the Power of the Truth to make us clean and living.

AC 3424.2 That the Word of the Lord is such that it gives life to him that thirsteth, that is, to him that desireth life, and that it is a "fountain whose waters are living," the Lord also teaches in John when speaking to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well:

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life (John 4:10, 14).

That the Word is living and therefore gives life, is because in its supreme sense the Lord is treated of, and in the inmost sense His kingdom, in which the Lord is all; and this being the case, there is in the Word life itself, which flows into the minds of those who read the Word with reverence; hence it is that in respect to the Word that is from Himself the Lord declares Himself to be a "fountain of water springing up unto eternal life"

Profaning the Lord's name and His Word, can lead to worse than hell. Jesus said in the book of Revelation. Rev 3:16 *"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."*

Being just plain evil is not as bad as mixing good and evil in a conscious or intentional manner. The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is when we have acknowledged the truth and goodness of the Word and still deny it or live contrary to it. That is a lot harder to do than simply saying something. And yet we still need to be careful of both. It is always harmful to mix good and evil.

We can remember in the Garden of even. After Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord and ate from the Tree of knowledge they were not able to eat from the tree of life anymore:

Gen 3:24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

This is echoed in the prophet Isaiah and the quoted by Jesus in the Gospel:

AC 10498. Say to this people, Hearing hear ye, but understand not; and seeing see ye, but know not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and blot out their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and their heart should understand, and be converted, that they may be healed (Isa. 6:9, 10; also John 12:37-40); it is said, "lest they be converted that they may be healed," by which is signified that if they were to understand the internal things of the Word, of the church, and of worship, they would profane them.

Why wouldn't the Lord want to heal and convert people? Why would He guard the way to the Tree of life? It is because you cannot become good without first shunning evils, if you try to hold on to both the good is corrupted and the truth is falsified so it can never become useful again.

Keeping the Lord's name holy is protecting us from profanation. After acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the One God, in the first commandment, we need to protect from harming that connection to the Lord by mixing His name, or the truths from Him with things that are evil and false. Most especially by profaning in the way we live our lives.

The Lord's commandments are the Lord's message on the most basic essentials truths of spiritual life. What is also amazing about the spiritual truths of the commandments that each commandment contains the others, and In fact these ten commands can even be condensed down into two rules:

TCR 287. The literal sense of the Ten Commandments contains general instructions on doctrine and life; but their spiritual and celestial senses contain universal instructions.

It is well known that the Ten Commandments are called in the Word the Law par excellence, because they contain everything concerning doctrine and life, not only everything which concerns God, but also everything which concerns man. That is why the law was written on two tablets, one dealing with God, the other with man. It is also well known that the whole of doctrine and life relate to love to God and love towards the neighbour. The whole of these loves is contained in the Ten Commandments. This is the teaching of the whole Word, as is evident from these words of the Lord:

Jesus said, You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with

all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself. The law and the prophets depend upon these two commandments. Matt. 22:35-37, 40. The law and the prophets mean the whole Word.

Amazingly these two commandments can be condensed even more, simply to the name Jesus Christ, which spiritually means Love and Wisdom, or celestial and spiritual love, which are Love to the Lord and Love to the neighbour. They can also be expanded infinitely as well to include the whole of the Word and Doctrine.

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Amen

Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ, The One God of Heaven and Earth... of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Readings: **Exodus 20:7, 3:13-15; Isaiah 9:6; 1 Samuel 4:2-11; TCR 297-300; AC 9818.**

Exodus 20:7

“You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Exodus 3:13 And Moses said to God, Behold, I come to the sons of Israel, and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say to them? 14 And God said to Moses, I AM WHO is I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel: I AM has sent me to you. 15 And God said further to Moses, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel: Jehovah, 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 to eternity, and this is My memorial to generation and generation.

Isaiah 9:6 For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us; and the sovereignty shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God, Hero, Father Everlasting, Prince of Peace.

1Samuel 4: 2 And the Philistines set themselves in array to meet Israel; and the battle extended; and Israel was struck before the Philistines; and they smote in the battle array in the field about four thousand men. 3 And the people came into the camp, and the elders of Israel said, Wherefore has Jehovah struck us this day before the Philistines? Let us take unto us the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, out of Shiloh, and let it come into our midst, and it shall save us from the hand of our enemies. 4 And the people sent to Shiloh, and bore thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of Armies, who sits upon the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God....10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was struck down, and they fled, a man to his tent; and there was a very great smiting; and there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. 11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

TCR 297. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

In the natural sense, which is the sense of the letter, to take the name of Jehovah God in vain means the name itself, and its abuse in various kinds of conversation, especially in false speaking or lying, and in useless oaths or oaths to exculpate one's self in evil intentions (that is, oaths with imprecations), also when employed in juggleries and incantations.... But the name of God, because it is holiness itself, must be used continually in the holy things pertaining to the church, as in prayers, psalms, and all worship, also in preaching, and in writing on ecclesiastical subjects. This is so because God is in all things of religion, and when He is solemnly invoked He is present through His name and hears. ... There are many names of God that must not be taken in vain, as Jehovah, Jehovah God, and Jehovah of Hosts; the Holy One of Israel, Jesus and Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

298. In the spiritual sense, the name of God means everything which the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is invoked and worshiped. All such things in the complex are the name of God. "To take the name of God in vain," means, therefore, to introduce any of these things into frivolous conversation, into false speaking, lying, imprecations, juggleries or incantations; for this too is reviling and blaspheming God, thus His name. ...

299. In the celestial sense, "to take the name of God in vain" means what the Lord said to the Pharisees:

Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven (Matt. 12:31, 32),

"blasphemy of the Spirit" meaning blasphemy against the Divinity of the Lord's Human, and against the holiness of the Word. That the Divine Human of the Lord is meant by the name of Jehovah God in the celestial or highest sense...

300. Who does not know that he who disparages and calumniates anyone in name, also disparages and calumniates the actions of his life? In idea the two are joined together, and the fame of his name is thus destroyed... So again he who mentions the name of another in a tone of contempt, at the same time belittles the acts of his life.

AC 9818. All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. If anyone shall say a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come (Matt. 12:31, 32);

"to say a word against the Son of man" denotes against truth Divine not yet implanted or inscribed in the life of man (that "the Son of man" denotes the Divine truth, see n. 9807); but "to speak against the Holy Spirit" denotes against the Divine truth that has been implanted or inscribed in the life of man, especially against the Divine truth about the Lord Himself. To speak against this, that is, to deny it after it has once been acknowledged, is profanation; and the profanation is of such a nature that it utterly destroys the interiors of man; and from this it is said that this sin cannot be forgiven