

You Shall Not Take the Name of Jehovah Your God in Vain....

Overview

Taking God's name in vain means abusing God's name in different kinds of conversation. But the "name" of God is more than just a name. God's name reflects all of God's qualities and attributes—all of God's character, goodness, and truth—as these things show themselves in God's Word and also in human life. Therefore, God's name is taken in vain when any of the following things happen:

- Abuse of God's name in conversation
- Abuse of God's Word:
 - Holding God's Word in low esteem
 - Holding it in contempt
 - Dragging it through the mud
 - Despising it
 - Etc.
- Abuse of what is good and true from God's Word in life
 - Believing God's Word intellectually, but living a life that is not in keeping with the Word (especially the Ten Commandments)
 - Living an outwardly pious and holy life, but not believing God's Word intellectually
- Abuse of anything good and true that is taught from God's Word in churches
- Slandering God's character, qualities, reputation, etc.

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You Shall Not Take the Name of Jehovah Your God in Vain....

Quick Reference
- from -
Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

"Taking the name of Jehovah your God in vain" [means]...¹

1. [Profaning and blaspheming] the truth and good of faith.²
 - a. To be precise:³
 - 1) Turning truth into evil, that is,
 - a) Believing that it is truth, and nevertheless living in evil;
 - 2) Also, turning good into falsity, that is,
 - a) Living in a holy manner, and yet not believing.
 - 3) [Note:] Both are profanation.
 - b. [In other words:]⁴
 - 1) Believing otherwise than you live.
 - 2) Believing in one way and living in another.
 - 3) [Dividing] thought and will.
 - 4) Joining truth and evil, or good and falsity, together.
 - 5) Joining things that are of heaven with yourself together with...those which are of hell.
2. [The Scriptures speak of the following:]⁵
 - a. Blasphemy of the Spirit.
 - b. Saying a word against the Son of man.
 - c. Speaking against the Holy Spirit.
3. [Notes:]
 - a. Profanation of truth from the Lord [has to do with] acknowledgment and faith, [and afterwards] a life contrary to truths.⁶
 - b. Blasphemy...takes place when those things which are of the Word, or of the doctrine of faith, thus which are holy, are held in derision, and are debased to unclean earthly things [in other words, dragged through the mud] and thus are defiled.⁷
4. Taking the name of God in vain, relative to the Israelite nation [of Old Testament times means] applying the name of Jehovah, and also the commandments and statutes which were commanded them, to the worship of idols.⁸
 - a. [The Israelites did this] in the wilderness [when they worshipped] the golden calf.
 - b. They not only offered burnt offerings and sacrifices, and ate of the things sanctified thereby, but also called the day of its celebration "a feast to Jehovah".

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You Shall Not Profane the Name of God.

Quick Reference
- from -
The Apocalypse Explained
Emanuel Swedenborg

"The name of God" means...⁹

1. Every quality by which God is worshipped.¹⁰
 - a. God is in His own quality and *is* His own quality.¹¹
 - b. His essence is the divine love, and His quality is the divine truth therefrom united with the divine good;
 - c. Thus with us on earth it is the Word;
 - d. Consequently it is said in John:
 - 1) The Word was with God, and God was the Word.¹²
2. That which is from God and which is God.¹³
 - a. This is called the divine truth.¹⁴
 - b. With us [it is called] the Word.¹⁵
 - c. "The name of God" [means] the divine truth or the Word.¹⁶
3. The doctrine of genuine truth and good from the Word.¹⁷
 - a. Worship is according to that.¹⁸
4. [Notes:]¹⁹
 - a. God's quality is manifold, [that is, it has many and various forms].
 - b. [His quality] comprises all things that are from Him.
 - c. So He has many names.

"To profane the name of God"...²⁰

1. [This] does not mean to profane the name itself, but His quality.²¹
2. The Word...is profaned when...²²
 - a. Its holiness is denied, [that is,] when it is...²³
 - 1) Despised, [that is, blasphemed in any way],
 - 2) Rejected,
 - 3) And treated with contempt.
 - b. It is cast out of the heart.²⁴
 - 1) [Note: In this case] a person no longer acknowledges any truth of the church.²⁵
3. [Qualifier: There are three kinds of profanation:]²⁶
 - a. Profanation that is interior and not exterior.
 - 1) Interior profanation [relates to will, and to thought from that will].
 - 2) Exterior [profanation relates to words and actions].
 - b. Profanation that is interior and at the same time exterior.
 - c. A kind of profanation that is exterior and not at the same time interior.
 - 1) [This] can come from the style of the Word.
 - 2) [The style of the Word] is not at all the style of the world.
 - 3) For this reason [the Word] may be to some extent despised from ignorance of its interior sanctity.

4. [Notes:]
 - a. The name of God is interiorly profaned by a life contrary to the commandments of the Decalogue.²⁷
 - b. To profane the Word is the same as blaspheming the Holy Spirit.²⁸

[Final notes:]²⁹

1. He or she who abstains from profaning...the holiness of the Word [that is, "the name of God"] by contempt, rejection, or any blasphemy, has religion.
2. Such as his or her abstinence is such is his religion.
3. No one has religion except from revelation, and with us revelation is the Word.
4. Abstinence from profaning the holiness of the Word must be from the heart and not merely from the mouth.
5. Those who abstain from the heart live from religion.
6. Those who abstain merely from the mouth do not live from religion. They abstain [for one or more of the following reasons:]
 - a. For the sake of self.
 - 1) The Word can be made to serve them as a means of acquiring honor.
 - b. For the sake of the world.
 - 1) [The Word can be made to serve them as a means of acquiring] gain.
 - c. [On account of] some [form of] fear.
 - 1) [Note:] But [many of these people] are hypocrites who have no religion.

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Quick Reference
- from -
True Christianity

Emanuel Swedenborg

Earthly sense:³⁰

1. To take the name of Jehovah God in vain means...
 - a. The name itself, and its abuse in various kinds of conversation, especially...
 - 1) In false statements or lies.
 - 2) In swearing without good cause.
 - 3) In order to avoid being blamed.
 - 4) In evil intentions, which are curses.
 - 5) In witchcraft and spells.
 - b. [Qualifier:]
 - 1) To swear by God and His holiness, the Word, and the Gospel, at coronations, ordination into the priesthood, or inauguration into offices of trust, is not to take the name of God in vain, unless he or she who takes the oath afterwards discards his promises as vain.

Spiritual sense:³¹

1. The name of God means...
 - a. Everything [good and true] which the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is invoked and worshipped.
 - 1) That is, the Divine that goes forth from God, and by which He is worshipped.
2. "To take the name of God in vain" means to...
 - a. Introduce any of [the above] things into...
 - 1) Frivolous conversation.
 - 2) False statements.
 - 3) Lies.
 - 4) Curses.
 - 5) Witchcraft and spells.
 - b. This too is reviling and blaspheming God, thus His name.
3. [The Scriptures speak of the following:]³²
 - a. Saying "The table of Jehovah is polluted, [and its fruit, its food, is contemptible]."
 - b. Sniffing at [the Lord's] name [by] bringing that which is torn, the lame, and the sick.
4. The name "Jesus Christ" means...
 - a. Everything of redemption and everything of His doctrine, thus everything of salvation.
 - b. Notes:
 - 1) "Jesus" [means] everything of salvation through redemption.
 - 2) "Christ" [means] everything of salvation through His doctrine.

Heavenly sense:³³

1. The name of Jehovah God in the celestial or highest sense means the divine Human of the Lord.
2. [The Scriptures speak of] blasphemy of the Spirit.³⁴
 - a. "Blasphemy of the Spirit" means...
 - 1) Blasphemy against the Divinity of the Lord's Human.
 - 2) [Also, blasphemy] against the holiness of the Word.

[Final notes:]³⁵

1. Someone's name does not mean just his or her name, but his whole character.
2. In the spiritual world...everyone is...named according to his or her character.
3. Angels are named according to their moral and spiritual life.
4. Nor in the natural world does a name mean the person's name only, but also his or her character.
 - a. He or she is celebrated for such things as are in him, as for...
 - 1) Talents.
 - 2) Erudition.
 - 3) Merits.
 - 4) [Etc.]
5. Anyone [who] insults and slanders someone by name [also insults and slanders] the way [that] he or she lives.
 - a. The reputation of his name is thus destroyed.
6. Anyone [who] utters the name of a king, a noble, or any great person with great disrespect heaps abuse on his or her majesty and dignity.
7. Anyone [who] pronounces a person's name in a contemptuous tone at the same time shows contempt for the way [that] he or she lives.
8. It is not lawful to insult and wound with slander anyone's name, that is, his or her character and consequent reputation.

Endnotes

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- ¹ SH 8882:1,4
 - ² SH 8882:1
 - ³ SH 8882:1
 - ⁴ SH 8882:1
 - ⁵ SH 8882:2, Matt. 11:31-32
 - ⁶ SH 8882:2,3, Matt. 11:24-26
 - ⁷ SH 8882:4
 - ⁸ SH 8882:4, Ex. 32:4-6
 - ⁹ AE 959:2
 - ¹⁰ AE 959:2
 - ¹¹ AE 959:2, emphasis added
 - ¹² AE 959:2, John 1:1
 - ¹³ AE 960:14
 - ¹⁴ AE 960:14
 - ¹⁵ AE 960:14
 - ¹⁶ AE 962:11
 - ¹⁷ AE 959:2
 - ¹⁸ AE 959:2
 - ¹⁹ AE 959:3
 - ²⁰ AE 959:4
 - ²¹ AE 959:4
 - ²² AE 960:14
 - ²³ AE 960:14, 962:11, 963:2
 - ²⁴ AE 960:14
 - ²⁵ AE 960:14
 - ²⁶ AE 962:11
 - ²⁷ AE 962:11
 - ²⁸ AE 960:15
 - ²⁹ AE 963:2
 - ³⁰ TC 297
 - ³¹ TC 298 unless otherwise noted
 - ³² Mal. 1:11-13, TC 298
 - ³³ TC 299 unless otherwise noted
 - ³⁴ Matt. 12:31-32, TC 299
 - ³⁵ TC 300