

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

Overview

Taking God's name in vain means abusing His name in different kinds of conversation. But the "name" of God is more than just a name. God's name reflects all of His qualities and attributes (all of His goodness, truth, and the useful services He performs) as these things show themselves in His Word and also in human affairs. Therefore, God's name is taken in vain when people...

- Abuse His name in conversation.
- Abuse His Word by...
 - Holding it in low esteem.
 - Holding it in contempt.
 - "Dragging it through the mud."
 - Despising it.
 - Etc.
- Abuse what is good and true in His Word. This happens when people...
 - Believe in God's Word intellectually, but live a life that is not in keeping with the Word, particularly the Ten Commandments.
 - Live an outwardly pious and holy life, but do not believe in God's Word intellectually.
- Abuse anything good and true that is taught in churches from His Word.
- Slander His character, qualities, and reputation, etc.
- Etc.

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Quick Reference

- from -

Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

“Taking the name of Jehovah your God in vain” happens when people...¹

1. Profane and blaspheme the truth and good of faith.²
 - a. To be precise, when people...³
 - 1) Turn truth into evil, that is,
 - a) Believe that truth is true, and yet do what is evil;
 - 2) Turn good into falsity, that is,
 - a) When people live in a holy manner, and yet do not believe.
 - 3) Note: Both are profanation.
 - b. In other words, when people...⁴
 - 1) Believe differently than they live.
 - 2) Believe in one way and live in another.
 - 3) Divide their thought and will.
 - 4) Join truth and evil together, or good and falsity together.
 - 5) Join things that are heavenly together with ones that are hellish.
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 happens when people acknowledge what is true and have faith, and afterward they live a life contrary to what is true.⁶
 - b. Blasphemy occurs when things from the Word, or from the doctrine of faith, which are holy, are held in derision and debased to unclean earthly things; in other words, when they are “dragged through the mud” and in that way defiled.⁷
4. Taking the name of God in vain, in Old Testament times, happened when people of Israel applied the name of Jehovah, and also the commandments and statutes which were commanded them, to the worship of idols.⁸
 - a. The people of Israel did this, for example, in the wilderness when they worshipped the golden calf.
 - b. They not only offered burnt offerings and sacrifices to the golden calf, and ate of the things sanctified by them, but they also called the day the calf was celebrated 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 he *is* His own quality.¹¹
 - b. His essence is divine love. His *quality* is the divine truth that comes forth from that love, united to divine goodness;
 - c. Thus with us on earth it is His 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 divine truth.¹⁴
 - b. With us it is called the Word of God.¹⁵
 - c. “The name of God” means the divine truth or the Word.¹⁶
3. The doctrine of genuine truth and goodness from the Word of God.¹⁷
 - a. Worship is according to that.¹⁸
4. Notes:¹⁹
 - a. God's quality has many and various forms.
 - b. His quality comprises all things that come from Him.
 - c. Therefore He has many names.

“To profane the name of God”...²⁰

1. Does not mean to profane the name itself, but His quality.²¹
2. The Word of God is profaned when...²²
 - a. Its holiness is denied, that is, when it is...²³
 - 1) Despised /blasphemed in any way,
 - 2) Rejected,
 - 3) And treated with contempt.
 - b. It is cast out of a person's 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 a person's will, and to his or her 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 happen as a result of the style in which the Word is written.

- 2) The style of the Word is not at all the style of the world.
 - 3) For this reason the Word may to some extent be despised when a person doesn't know about its interior sanctity.
4. Notes:
- a. The name of God is interiorly profaned by a life that is not in keeping with the Ten Commandments.²⁷
 - b. Profaning the Word is the same as blaspheming the Holy Spirit.²⁸

Final notes:²⁹

1. People who abstain from profaning the holiness of the Word (i.e., "the name of God") by means of contempt, rejection, or any kind of blasphemy, are people who have religion.
2. Such as their abstinence is, such is their religion.
3. No one has religion except from revelation. Revelation, with us, 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 their own sake.
 - 1) They use the Word to acquire honor for themselves.
 - b. For the sake of the world.
 - 1) They use the Word to make gains for themselves.
 - c. On account of some type 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 (literal) meaning:³⁰

1. Taking the name of Jehovah God in vain means...
 - a. Abusing it in various kinds of conversation, especially...
 - 1) In false statements or lies.
 - 2) In swearing for no good purpose.
 - a) [See qualifier, below.]
 - 3) In order to avoid being blamed.
 - b. Using it in evil intentions.
 - 1) [I.e., using it or for evil purposes or to evil ends.]
 - c. Using it in witchcraft and spells.
 - d. 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 taking the name of God in vain, unless a person who takes such an oath afterward discards his or her promises as vain (meaningless).

Spiritual meaning:³¹

1. The name of God refers to...
 - a. Everything good and true that the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is invoked and worshipped.
 - b. In other words, it refers to the divinity 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. Showing contempt for (or "sniffing at") the Lord's name by bringing that which is torn, the lame, and the sick.

4. The name "Jesus Christ" refers to...
 - a. Everything of redemption and everything of His teachings, thus everything of salvation.
 - b. Notes:
 - 1) "Jesus" refers to everything of salvation through redemption.
 - 2) "Christ" refers to everything of salvation through His teachings.

Heavenly meaning:³³

1. The name of Jehovah God refers to the divine humanity of the Lord on this level of meaning.
2. The Scriptures speak of blasphemy against the Spirit.³⁴
 - a. "Blasphemy against the Spirit" means...
 - 1) Blasphemy against the divinity of the Lord's humanity.
 - 2) Also, blasphemy against the holiness of His 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 just the person's name, but also his or her character.
 - a. People are celebrated for such things as are in them, such as...
 - 1) Talents.
 - 2) Learning.
 - 3) Merits.
 - 4) Etc.
5. Anyone who insults and slanders someone by name also insults and slanders the way he or she lives.
 - a. In this way a person's reputation is 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 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