

# Sunday School

## Second London Baptist Confession of Faith Chapter 23: Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

### I. Their Definition

1. A lawful oath is an element of religious worship in which a person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calls God to witness what is sworn<sup>1</sup> and to judge the one swearing according to the truth or falsity of it.<sup>2</sup>

Paragraphs 1-4 address the proper use of Oaths, paragraph 5, the proper use of Vows.

**Primary Question:** what is a oath/vow and are they lawful/biblical to utilize?

A potential case against oaths & vows: Matthew 5:33-37 (repeated by James 5:12)

Historical Considerations:

Scriptural Proofs for the Legitimacy of Oaths:

The command to not swear falsely by God's name: Exodus 20:7;

The command to only swear in God's name: Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20

The example of God Himself: Hebrews 6:13-16

The example of Old Testament saints: Genesis 24:3; 47:30-31; 50:25

Law of Moses required oaths: Numbers 5:19, 21; 1 Kings 8:31; Exodus 22:11

Christ's own example: Matthew 26:62-64

Paul indicates their lawfulness: Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Acts 18:18

### II. Their Sanctity & Propriety

2. People should swear by the name of God alone and only with the utmost holy fear and reverence. Therefore to swear an empty or ill-advised oath by that glorious and awe-inspiring name, or to swear at all by anything else, is sinful and to be abhorred.<sup>3</sup> Yet in weighty and significant matters, an oath is authorized by the Word of God to confirm truth and end all conflict.<sup>4</sup> So a lawful oath should be taken when it is required by legitimate authority in such circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12.

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23

<sup>5</sup> Nehemiah 13:25.

