



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 13 – The Third Commandment

A Puritan Catechism

47 Q. Which is the third commandment?

A. The second commandment is, “You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

48 Q. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God’s names ([Ps. 29:2](#)), titles, attributes ([Rev. 15:3-4](#)), ordinances ([Eccl. 5:1](#)), Word ([Ps. 138:2](#)), and works ([Job 36:24; Deut. 28:58-59](#)).



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The Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 112. What is required in the third commandment?

A. 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.

Matt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58; Ps. 29:2; Ps. 68:4; Rev. 15:3-4; Mal. 1:14; Eccl. 5:1; Ps. 138:2; 1 Cor. 11:24-25, 28-29; 1 Tim. 2:8; Jer. 4:2; Eccl. 5:2, 4-6; Acts 1:24, 26; Job 36:24; Mal. 3:16; Ps. 8:1, 3-4, 9; Col. 3:17; Ps. 105:2, 5; Ps. 102:18; 1 Pet. 3: 15; Mic. 4:5; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 10:31; Jer. 32:39; 1 Pet. 2:12.



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Q. 113. What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using His titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any wise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.



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References: Mal. 2:2; Acts 17:23; Prov. 30:9; Mal. 1:6-7, 12; Mal. 3:14; 1 Sam. 4:3-5; Jer. 7:4, 9-10, 14, 31; Col. 2:20-22; 2 Kings 18:30, 35; Ex. 5:2; Ps. 139:20; Ps. 1:16-17; Isa. 5:12; 2 Kings 19:22; Lev. 24:11; Zech. 5:4; Zech. 8:17; 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 16:5; Jer. 5:7; Jer. 23:10; Deut. 23:18; Acts 23:12, 14; Esther 3:7; Esther 9:24; Ps. 22:18; Ps. 24:4; Ezek. 17:16, 18-19; Mark 6:26; 1 Sam. 25:22, 32-34; Rom. 9:14, 19-20; Deut. 29:29; Rom. 3:5, 7; Rom. 6:1-2; Ecc. 8:11; Ecc. 9:3; Ps. 39:1-13; Matt. 5:21-28; Ezek. 13:22; 2 Pet. 3:16; Matt. 22:24-31; Isa. 22:13; Jer. 23:34, 36, 38; 1 Tim. 1:4, 6-7; 1 Tim. 6:4-5, 20; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Kings 21:9-10; Jude 1:4; Acts 13:45; 1 John 3:12; Ps. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:4; Acts 13:45-46, 50; Acts 4:18; Acts 19:9; 1 Thess. 2:16; Heb. 10:29; 2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 6:1-2, 5, 16; Mark 8:38; Ps. 73:14-15; 1 Cor. 6:5-6; Eph. 5:15-17; Isa. 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:8-9; Rom. 2:23-24; Gal. 3:1, 3; Heb. 6:6; 2 Tim. 2:14; Titus 3:9; Deut. 18:10-14; Acts 19:13.



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Q. 114. What reasons are annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, “The Lord thy God,” and “for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.

Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Ezek. 36:21-23; Deut. 28:58-59; Zech. 5:2-4; 1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22, 24; 1 Sam. 3:13.



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Attributes of God: Jealousy

God's jealousy is His zealous protectiveness of all that belongs to Him – His name, His glory, His people, His sole right to receive worship and ultimate obedience. – *Biblical Doctrine*, MacArthur, pg. 185

God's jealousy means that God continually seeks to protect His own honor. – *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, pg. 205

It is not wrong for God to seek His own honor because He is the only One who fully deserves it! Isaiah 48:11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

Exodus 34:14 - for you shall not worship any other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God-



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Attributes of God: Jealousy

Deut. 4:24 For Yahweh your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Deut. 29:18 lest there be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from Yahweh our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. 19 And it will be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will bless himself in his heart, saying, 'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to sweep away the watered land with the dry.' 20 Yahweh shall not be willing to pardon him, but rather the anger of Yahweh and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven.



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Attributes of God: Jealousy

Deut. 32:21 They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a wickedly foolish nation,

Psa. 79:1 O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; They have defiled Your holy temple; They have laid Jerusalem in ruins. 2 They have given the dead bodies of Your slaves for food to the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your holy ones to the beasts of the earth. 3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there was no one to bury them. 4 We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A mockery and derision to those around us. 5 How long, O Yahweh? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? 6 Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name. 7 For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his abode.



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Attributes of God: Jealousy

Joshua 24:19 Then Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve Yahweh, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

Ezekiel 39:25 Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, “Now I will return the fortunes of Jacob and have compassion on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.



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Taking His Name in Vain = Claiming to be His, but acting like we are not.

Luke 6:46 “Now why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their mouth And honor Me with their lips, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their fear of Me is in the command of men learned by rote, 14 Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be hidden.” 15 Woe to those who deeply hide their counsel from Yahweh, And whose deeds are done in a dark place, And they say, “Who sees us?” or “Who knows us?” 16 You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made would say to its maker, “He did not make me”; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?



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Taking His Name in Vain = False teaching in His name.

Matthew 15:7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commands of men.’” 10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand. 11 It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”



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Taking His Name in Vain = Elevating our preferences and tradition above God's Word. (*Narcigesis = Narcissistic Eisegesis*).

Mark 7:6 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 7 But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commands of men.’ 8 Leaving the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” 9 And He was also saying to them, “You are good at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.”



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John Calvin on the Third Commandment:

“The aim and object of this Commandment is different, i.e., that the honor due to God may be unsullied; that we should only speak of Him religiously; that becoming veneration of Him should be maintained among us. The word ,לְשׂוֹא *leshau*, might indeed be translated “for falsehood,” and in this sense we shall see it used elsewhere; but since it often is equivalent to ,חִנָּם *chinam*, which means gratuitously, or in vain, this exposition seems to be most appropriate. In this, too, fuller and richer instruction is contained, viz., that men should not drag in His name in light matters, as in sport or derision of Him, which cannot be done without insulting and profaning it.”



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John Calvin on the Third Commandment:

“And thus the holiness of God’s name, which preserves us in His fear and in true piety, is contrasted with the particle לְשׂוֹא, *leshau*. But since nothing is more difficult than to restrain men’s licentiousness in this respect, and to excuse or at least diminish the sin, the slipperiness of the tongue is pleaded, its punishment is here denounced: that if God’s name is rashly exposed to reproach or contempt, He will avenge it. The more hardened, therefore, in their licentiousness they may be, the less will be their impunity; so far is depraved habit from diminishing the guilt.” (*Harmony of the Law*)



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Matthew Henry on the Third Commandment:

“The third commandment concerns the manner of our worship, that it be done with all possible reverence and seriousness. We take God’s name in vain, [1.] By hypocrisy, making a profession of God’s name, but not living up to that profession. Those that name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity, as that name binds them to do, name it in vain; their worship is vain (Matt. 15:7-9), their oblations are vain (Isa. 1:11, 13), their religion is vain, Jas. 1:26. [2.] By covenant-breaking; if we make promises to God, binding our souls with those bonds to that which is good, and yet perform not to the Lord our vows, we take his name in vain (Matt. 5:33), it is folly, and God has no pleasure in fools (Eccl. 5:4), nor will he be mocked, Gal. 6:7. [3.] By rash swearing, mentioning the name of God, or any of his attributes, in the form of an oath, without any just occasion for it, or due application of mind to it, but as a by-word, to no purpose at all, or to no good purpose.”



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Matthew Henry on the Third Commandment:

“[4.] By false swearing, which, some think, is chiefly intended in the letter of the commandment; so it was expounded by those of old time. Thou shalt not forswear thyself, Matt. 5:33. One part of the religious regard the Jews were taught to pay to their God was to swear by his name, Deut. 10:20. But they affronted him, instead of doing him honour, if they called him to be witness to a lie. [5.] By using the name of God lightly and carelessly, and without any regard to its awful significancy. The profanation of the forms of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known, his word, or any of his institutions; when they are either turned into charms and spells, or into jest and sport, the name of God is taken in vain.”



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Matthew Henry on the Third Commandment:

“A severe penalty: The Lord will not hold him guiltless; magistrates, who punish other offences, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this, because it does not immediately offer injury either to private property or the public peace; but God, who is jealous for his honour, will not thus connive at it. The sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it, and that God will never call him to an account for it. To obviate this suggestion, the threatening is thus expressed, God will not hold him guiltless, as he hopes he will; but more is implied, namely, that God will himself be the avenger of those that take his name in vain, and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Second and Third Commandments:

(Second Commandment) Here we are forbidden to worship God under any similitude whatever. The first command forbids the worship of another God: the second strictly forbids us to worship anything which our eyes can see, under the pretense that we are worshipping God thereby. This is another offense, and much more common than the first; and it is often pleaded — “Oh, we do not worship these things: we worship God whom these represent.” But here it strictly forbidden to represent God under any form or substance whatsoever and to make that an object of worship.

(Third Commandment) A reverence for the very name of God is demanded and all things that are connected with his worship are to be kept sacred.



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“Not that God is jealous so as to bring him down to the likeness of men, but that this is the nearest idea we can form of what the Divine Being feels—if it be right to use even that word toward him—when he beholds his throne occupied by false gods, his dignity insulted, and his glory usurped by others. We might not have ventured to use the word, "jealousy" in connection with the Most High, but as we find it so many times in Scripture, let us with solemn awe survey this mysterious display of the Divine mind. Methinks I hear the thundering words of Nahum, "God is jealous and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." My soul be thou humbled before the Lord and tremble at his name!”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“Brethren, the whole history of the human race is a record of the wars of the Lord against idolatry. The right hand of the Lord hath dashed in pieces the enemy and cast the ancient idols to the ground. Behold the heaps of Nineveh! Search for the desolations of Babylon! Look upon the broken temples of Greece! See the ruins of Pagan Rome! Journey where you will, you behold the dilapidated temples of the gods and the ruined empires of their foolish votaries. The moles and the bats have covered with forgetfulness the once famous deities of Chaldea and Assyria. The Lord hath made bare his arm and eased him of his adversaries, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“God is very jealous of his deity in the hearts of his own people. Mother, what will he say of you, if that darling child occupies a more prominent place in your love than your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Husband, what shall he say to you, and with what stripes shall he smite you, when your wife reigns as a goddess in your spirit? And wife, thou shouldest love thy husband—thou doest well in so doing; but if thou exaltest him above God, if thou makest him to have dominion over thy conscience, and art willing to forsake thy Lord to please him, then thou hast made to thyself another god, and God is jealous with thee.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“He that made heaven and earth has a right to rule his creatures as he wills. The potter hath power over the clay to fashion it according to his own good pleasure, and the creatures being made are bound to be obedient to their Lord. He has a right to issue commands, he has done so—they are holy, and just, and wise; men are bound to obey, but, alas, they continually revolt against his sovereignty, and will not obey him.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“This reminds us of the Lord's hatred of sin. Every time we sin, we do as much as say, "I do not acknowledge God to be my sovereign; I will do as I please." Each time we speak an ill-word we really say, "My tongue is my own, he is not Lord over my lips." Yea, and everytime the human heart wandereth after evil, and lusteth for that which is forbidden, it attempts to dethrone God, and to set up the Evil One in his place. The language of sin is "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice; I will not have God to reign over me." Sin is a deliberate treason against the majesty of God, an assault upon his crown, an insult offered to his throne.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“God's glory is the result of his nature and acts. He is glorious in his character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, and good, and lovely in God, that he must be glorious. The actions which flow from his character, the deeds which are the outgoings of his inner nature, these are glorious too; and the Lord is very careful that all flesh should see that he is a good, and gracious, and just God; and he is mindful, too, that his great and mighty acts should not give glory to others, but only to himself. How, careful, then, should we be when we do anything for God, and God is pleased to accept of our doings, that we never congratulate ourselves.”



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Charles Spurgeon on the Jealousy of God:

“Be careful, dear friends, that you do not misrepresent God yourselves. You who murmur; you who say that God deals hardly with you, you give God an ill character; when you look so melancholy, worldlings say, "The religion of Jesus is intolerable;" and so you stain the honor of God. Oh, do not do this, for he is a jealous God, and he will surely use the rod upon you if you do. The subject is large and deep; let us prove that we understand it, by henceforth walking very carefully; and if any say "Why are you so precise?" let this be our answer—"I serve a jealous God.”

(From Spurgeon’s Sermon “[A Jealous God](#)”).