

ANCIENT LAW | TIMELESS TRUTH

A Study of the Ten Commandments



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT



DEUTERONOMY 5:11

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

The background of the image is a close-up of a scroll of parchment with Hebrew text written in black ink. The text is arranged in horizontal lines and is slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The parchment has a warm, yellowish-brown tone. A white rectangular box with a thin black border is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the title. Below the title, a white rectangular box with a thin black border contains a bulleted list of four items.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

- Swearing (Oh my God, Jesus Christ)
- Jewish: False Oaths
- Do not mispronounce the name of the Lord
- Do not use the name of the Lord for magical power



YOU SHALL NOT CARRY THE NAME OF
YHWH IN VAIN

- The Hebrew verb נָשָׂא means “to lift, carry, bear.”
- Think “to take up” or “to take with”.
- Similar to the Spanish verb *llevar*, which can mean to take, carry, or wear.

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN BRANDING

- Ancient cultures would often brand the name of the owner onto animals or even human slaves.
- This was to mark the animal as property of the person whose name
- In the Exodus, the people had gone from being the property of Pharaoh, to the vassals and freed servants of YHWH.

HOLY TO THE LORD

- God designates things for himself
 - Priestly garments (Ex. 28:36–38)
 - Instruments of worship
- God has designated his people for his own possession (Deut. 14:2, 21)
 - The people of Israel “carry” God’s name in the same way that the priest literally does when he carries out his duties.

RIGHTS OF THE LORD

- God has a right to proper and authentic representation.
- People who claim to belong to him should act like they actually do. God deserves that.
- There are certain rights associated with claiming someone's name.



APPLICATION I: ACT IN OBEDIENCE

- If we claim to be one of God's people, we must act in accordance with his revealed will.
- When we act in disobedience or take lightly the fact that we bear God's name, we are act as if we belong to someone else. To another god.

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APPLICATION 2: DO NOT MISUSE THE NAME

- Because of the significance of God's name we should be very careful about what we say is his will. (Ezek. 13)
- Think of the political movements we associate with, or the conduct of the candidates that we say are "God's candidates".
 - This is something we should take very seriously. Because God tells us he will not hold people guiltless for bearing his name in vain.
- Be careful where you place God's stamp of approval. Think of it as the king's seal.

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HOW DO WE REPRESENT GOD?

- Unbelievers will draw conclusions about who Jesus is based on the way that we conduct ourselves in our lives.
- Are you bearing the Lord's name in vain to you children? At work? On social media? On the train? When you visit your in-laws?