

COMMANDMENT II

COMMANDMENT III

Commandment I-----concerns the object of our worship, Jehovah.

Commandment II-----concerns the ordinance of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped.

Commandment III----concerns the manner of worship.

Exodus 20:4-6 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

But, why would the creation of an image of God be wrong?

God is a Spirit. To attempt to make a material representation of God would defame and belittle His Person. A graven image would imply that God is no more powerful than something humans can create with their own hands. That would be an attempt to bring God down to man's own level. Any physical representation of God could cloud the concept of His being a purely spiritual essence.

Another reason why the creation of an image of God would be wrong relates back to the first commandment. To make a representation of God would be to provide Him with a rival (or with several rivals). Think about it-----you cannot have other gods without forsaking God!!!

Let's think about the making of another god, or an idol. A god that can be made can be manipulated. In history, we note that pagans carried their gods around with them. (Isaiah 46:1-7). Isaiah 46:1-4 makes a contrast between the gods who are carried and THE GOD WHO CARRIES. (Which would you prefer?) The Babylonians carried their gods on beasts of burden, but our God has always carried His people. Isaiah 46:5 (along with Exodus 20:5) reminds us that God is a jealous God. He is the only One who really would have any right to be jealous. And, He will not tolerate any rivals for His people's love and service. While God will bring wrath on those who worship graven images, He will give abundant mercy to those who love and obey Him.

Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The third commandment concerns the manner of worship, as noted previously.

This commandment forbids irreverence toward God in any form. To use His name in vain blasphemously, deceitfully, or flippantly insults His deity.

Why would God specifically mention His name?

Ask yourself---what is in a name? Certainly, in our current culture, names seem to be given 'at random' with spellings which make it hard to pronounce. So, our names do not mean as much to us now as they used to for people of other eras.

But, let's talk about God's name. God's name is a revelation of Himself, testifying to His character, power and glory. (Perhaps later we will have a study on some of the names of God, and their meaning and application to our lives. But, for now we will just look at the commandment.) For the Hebrew, the person's name was equivalent to that person. (Some children were not given a name initially at birth, as we do; a time elapsed and the child was named for the character that he/she exhibited. Makes you wonder about Nabal, doesn't it?)

There are several ways in which we can take God's name in vain. Some are rather obvious, so we will not discuss those. But, I would like to look at some different ways which we might not think about as often. For instance:

We take God's name in vain when we attempt to manipulate Him. (Psalm 78:35-37)

We take God's name in vain when we jest about holy things. (Ephesians 5:4) Wouldn't it be better to use our voice to express thanks to God for Who He is???

We take God's name in vain when we allow "Praise the Lord", and such other terms to become ordinary and do not come from our heart truly as worship to Him.

Taking God's name in vain---no matter the form---is an offense to God.

While these two commandments could be discussed over a large number of pages, I will stop with these last few thoughts. Proverbs 18:10 states "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Is there another name to which we can flee and feel safety? There is truly none other like Him.

May our prayer be "Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed (kept holy) be Your name. Amen."

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