

## Taking God's Name In Vain 8-31-14

In Exodus 3:13-15 God, for the first time, revealed to Moses His personal name - YHWH. He tells Moses that it is His "forever" name, a memorial name. He had not used it before (Exodus 6:3 - *I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them*), so this was the first time men knew God personally.

This special name (YHWH, pronounced YAHWEH) was the covenant name someone would call to God with. Over time, it became in our language "Jehovah". When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he referred to calling on this name to be saved (Acts 2:21, Joel 2:32). Jesus (which means "Jehovah Saves") would identify Himself with this name too; in John 8:58 He was nearly stoned for using it for His name.

With this new revelation God made rules about this name: Exodus 20:7 "*You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.*" God demanded that His name itself be viewed as holy and God resented being called in "vain". Vain means without meaning. Examples of this are in Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. In the Old Law, one would be put to death if they stated this word frivolously (in vain) (Leviticus 24:11-16).

Let us ask this question: Is God's name (or very simply the word "God") less holy or more holy today? Recall that God made the law of His name when He revealed it to men. Today God has revealed Himself more clearly to men than ever before (Ephesians 3:5, etc). Does it not follow that the name of God, the very word God, is more holy now with our perfect revelation than it was in the time of Moses? We are told that the penalty for violation of God's will under Moses' law was death, but in Christ's law, it is worse: eternal damnation (Hebrews 10:26-31). Therefore, we can conclude that blaspheme today is a more grave sin than ever before.

How do men blaspheme? By calling God frivolously (in vain). We see this every single day. Men and women yell out "Oh God, Oh My God, Good God" - not in prayer, but without any valid purpose at all. People send messages proclaiming "OMG", which they may not realize means "Oh My God". They blaspheme the Son, whose name is holy, by saying "Christ, Jesus, Jesus Christ". They do not mean it in praise; it falls out of their mouth with all the grace of vomit. Here are words that the Son of God died that men might have the nobility to utter for their salvation, and men have turned them into frivolous exclamations.

Another way men blaspheme is to call out curses that invoke God's name by authority. To curse things and men with words like "Damn" or "Hell" are necessarily invoking the name of God to curse something. God alone can eternally condemn something to hell; when we utter them without thought, or in anger, we have in fact cursed only ourselves.

All men, including the Saints of God, need to watch their mouths. James said that our tongue controls our eternal destiny (James 3:1-6). When we speak to or about God, let us recall that at all times He hears and listens. He takes great offense to our using His name and His identity without thought.

