

## **Ps. 74:18-23 (LD 36) “The Foolish Spurn His Name”**

**For the Children:** Perhaps you have heard some people using the word “God” or the Name of Jesus as a kind of swear-word, when they are hurt, angry or surprised. We call that “blasphemy,” which means not treating God or His Name as holy and special. But there are other ways of not taking God seriously. For example, if we don’t treat His Word seriously – if we can’t be bothered reading it or obeying it; or if we make a promise in God’s Name and don’t keep it; or if we don’t take His church seriously and hardly get involved. To avoid blasphemy, we must try to give honour to who God is, what He has done and with the things that belong to Him. Questions: What are some works of God that we should take seriously? How can we take God’s Word seriously? How can we take His church seriously?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Nature of Blasphemy**

- 1) **Definition and Words:** Taking the Lord’s Name in vain means treating lightly anything to do with His Person, works, Word, covenant, church or Kingdom. The opposite is to give Him honour and glory, with reverence and awe, properly confessing and praising and praying to Him. See LD 36. The Catechism mentions several examples of taking His Name in vain: blasphemous “swear-words”; perjury; unnecessary oaths; and being so little concerned with His Name that we ignore it when others blaspheme around us. Vss. 18 and 22 use a word that means mocking (God); and one (“spurn”) that means turning from treating God properly to disdain. The latter is often used for those who turn from the faith.
- 2) **Who Does This?:** Those who give themselves over to this sin are described as God’s enemies, adversaries, and as wicked fools.
- 3) **The Enemy of the People:** Those who are outside God’s covenant often revile God by reviling His people. For the Lord has linked His cause to that of His church. To revile the church is to revile the Head of the church, the Lord Jesus.
- 4) **The Covenant-Breakers:** Some within the covenant-community do the same. These are the ones who “spurn” the Lord – they turn from Him and as a result, become dangerous to His “turtledoves” – a word that implies that the church is vulnerable by itself.

#### **Second Point: The Lord’s Response to Blasphemy**

- 1) **God’s Anger:** Q/A 100 states that no sin is greater than blasphemy. That is why the Lord is angered by it – so much that He is even displeased with His people when we remain silent in the face of it. It is very serious because it represents opposition to God’s entire cause.
- 2) **Remember and Arise:** Asaph therefore calls on God to “remember” those who revile Him i.e., not to ignore their sin; but to arise and plead His own cause – to protect the interests of His Person, works, Word, church and Kingdom. Otherwise, some might conclude that these matters are light to Him. His cause is of paramount importance.
- 3) **Remember the Covenant:** However, He has taken our cause up into His. Therefore, Asaph also asks the Lord to remember His *covenant* (v. 20). The Lord is faithful to His covenant even when His people are not. Asaph asks Him to deliver them, not to leave them to their oppressors e.g. in Exile; rather, to return them to the praise of God and His mercy. But they must cry to Him in repentance and humility. This will show the wicked revilers that God really is the Saviour of His people.
- 4) **A Response Geared to His:** The ultimate response to this cry for help is the sending of the Lord Jesus to bring salvation. God does not always remove attacks upon His church immediately. He brings relief to His people in this life according to His mysterious purposes. In the meantime, we need to trust Him with patience and humility. We also need to respond to blasphemy on the basis of His view of it: not treating it lightly; but also striving to keep worshipping, confessing and praying to Him; recognizing His Son for who He is (Ps. 2:12); treating His Word with reverence rather than ignoring it; being involved in His church rather than ignoring her; seeking first His Kingdom; crying to Him for help; and putting His cause first.

### **Conclusion:**