

## THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT  
FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTIONS # 113 & 55.

*(Larger Catechism)*

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;<sup>1</sup> and the abuse of it in an ignorant,<sup>2</sup> vain,<sup>3</sup> irreverent, profane,<sup>4</sup> superstitious<sup>5</sup> or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes,<sup>6</sup> ordinances,<sup>7</sup> or works,<sup>8</sup> by blasphemy,<sup>9</sup> perjury;<sup>10</sup> all sinful cursings,<sup>11</sup> oaths,<sup>12</sup> vows,<sup>13</sup> and lots;<sup>14</sup> violation of our oaths and vows, if lawful<sup>15</sup> and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful;<sup>16</sup> murmuring and quarrelling at,<sup>17</sup> curious prying into,<sup>18</sup> and misapplying of God's decrees<sup>19</sup> and providences;<sup>20</sup> misinterpreting,<sup>21</sup> misapplying,<sup>22</sup> or any way perverting the word, or any part of it;<sup>23</sup> to profane jests,<sup>24</sup> curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines;<sup>25</sup> abusing it, the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms,<sup>26</sup> or sinful lusts and practices;<sup>27</sup> the maligning,<sup>28</sup> scorning,<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mal. 2:2.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 17:23.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 30:9.

<sup>4</sup> Mal. 1:6, 7, 12; 3:14.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. 4:3-5; Jer. 7:4, 9, 10, 14, 31; Col. 2:20-22.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings 18:30, 35; Ex. 5:2; Ps. 139:20.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. 50:16, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Isa. 5:12.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Kings 19:22; Lev. 24:11.

<sup>10</sup> Zech. 5:4; 8:17.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 16:5.

<sup>12</sup> Jer. 5:7; 23:10.

<sup>13</sup> Deut. 23:18; Acts 23:12, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Est. 3:7; 9:24; Ps. 22:18.

<sup>15</sup> Ps. 24:4; Ezek. 17:16, 18, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Mark 6:26; 1 Sam. 25:22, 32-34.

<sup>17</sup> Rom. 9:14, 19, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Deut. 29:29.

<sup>19</sup> Rom. 3:5, 7; 6:1, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Eccl. 8:11; 9:3; Ps. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 5:21-48.

<sup>22</sup> Ezek. 13:22.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Pet. 3:16; Matt. 22:24-31; *particularly* 25, 28-30.

<sup>24</sup> Isa. 22:13; Jer. 23:34, 36, 38.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Tim. 1:4, 6, 7; 6:4-5, 20; 2 Tim. 2:14; Tit. 3:9.

<sup>26</sup> Deut. 18:10-14; Acts 19:13.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Rom. 13:13, 14; 1 Kings 21:9, 10; Jude 4.

reviling,<sup>30</sup> or any wise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways;<sup>31</sup> making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends;<sup>32</sup> being ashamed of it,<sup>33</sup> or a shame to it, by unbecomable,<sup>34</sup> unwise,<sup>35</sup> unfruitful,<sup>36</sup> and offensive walking,<sup>37</sup> or backsliding from it.<sup>38</sup>

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known.<sup>39</sup>

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Question 1—*What is it that the third commandment forbids?*

*Answer*—The third commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes Himself known as not using God's name as required, Mal. 2:2. This necessarily applies not simply to the word because the word (הַדְבָרִים) may be either spoken or merely thought, Deut. 30:14. Additionally, in Hebrew, this word *davar*, may refer to physical objects, Num. 31:23; or, even a thing in the most general sense, Lev. 4:13. Thus, the word, whether spoken or thought, is not disjoined in Hebrew from the understanding of what a thing is or entails—it is the object as understood, Gen. 21:11; Deut. 1:14. There is no separation between the name, or whatever God uses to reveal Himself to us, and our understanding of the God so revealed, Ps. 148:1, 5. The third command forbids us to think or develop any understanding that disjoins the name of God from God Himself, Lev. 19:12.

Question 2—*What are some of the common ways in which men fail to sanctify the name of the LORD?*

*Answer*—There are several ways that men commonly fail to sanctify the great name: 1.) When they use it ignorantly to call upon Whom they do not know, and speak of Him that they know not what, Acts 17:23. 2.) When they fail to join their actions to their words and make the use of the name of God a vain, or useless, thing, Prov. 30:9. 3.) When it is irreverently used as an exclamation (e.g., O God! O Lord! O my God! etc.), Ezek. 36:23; informally invoking that name in thanksgiving or salutations (e.g., thank God; bless God; Godspeed; etc.), Matt. 6:9; using the name to beseech a person to do or forbear in light matters (e.g., for the love of God; etc.), Rom. 12:1; using the name to adjure, or oblige, a person to do or forbear in trivial matters (e.g., for God's sake; etc.), 2 Tim. 4:1; or, in appeals to God in matters that are not weighty (e.g., God knows, etc.), 2 Cor. 12:2. These are all examples of profaning the name of the Lord and turn what ought to be a matter of service into vanity, Mal. 1:6, 7, 12; 3:14. 4.) When men swear by God or Christ, not to

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<sup>28</sup> Acts 13:45; 1 John 3:12.

<sup>29</sup> Ps. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:3.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Pet. 4:4.

<sup>31</sup> Acts 13:45, 46, 50; 4:18; 19:9; 1 Thess. 2:16; Heb. 10:29.

<sup>32</sup> 2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 23:14; 6:1, 2, 5, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 8:38.

<sup>34</sup> Ps. 73:14, 15.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Cor. 6:5, 6; Eph. 5:15-17.

<sup>36</sup> Isa. 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:8, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Rom. 2:23, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Gal. 3:1, 3; Heb. 6:6.

<sup>39</sup> Mal. 1:6, 7, 12; 2:2; 3:14.

worship or pray, but to curse, Jas. 3:10. Or, swear by creatures, as papists by Mary and the saints, Deut. 10:20. Which swearing dishonors God because of the relation they bear to Him, Matt. 5:34, 37. Or, enter upon the use of minced oaths (e.g., O gosh! For crying out loud! etc.), which have the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5:22; and, are surely idle words, Matt. 12:36. 5.) When men add to this name anything superstitious, 1 Sam. 4:3-5; Jer. 7:4, 9, 10, 14, 31; Col. 2:20-22.

In addition, we must take care not to abuse name of God by making wicked mention or employ his titles or attributes (e.g., holy cow; good grief; etc.) in any profane manner, 2 Kings 18:30, 35; Ex. 5:2; Ps. 139:20. We must take care with respect to our approach to His ordinances, as appointments of His making, Ps. 50:16, 17. And, we must study to see His name sanctified in all our works, Isa. 5:12. All of which, must be guarded against by avoiding: 1.) Blasphemy, whereby men wrong the majesty of God, 2 Kings 19:22; Lev. 24:11. 2.) Perjury, whereby men confirm a lie by an oath, Zech. 5:4; 8:17. 3.) All sinful cursings, whereby men seek to entangle God in their unhallowed passions, 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 16:5. 4.) All sinful oaths, wherein men seek to manipulate God, Jer. 5:7; 23:10. 5.) All sinful vows, whereby men seek to sanctify what God condemns, Deut. 23:18; Acts 23:12, 14. 6.) All sinful lots, whereby men attempt to take refuge for what would otherwise be unlawful, or vain, under a direct appeal to God, Est. 3:7; 9:24; Ps. 22:18.

This command also forbids violations of oaths and vows, if lawful, Ps. 24:4; Ezek. 17:16, 18, 19; or, the keeping of oaths and vows, if sinful, Mark 6:26; 1 Sam. 25:22, 32-34. In both cases, the name of God is being used to bind. In the former, the violation provokes God implicating His name if He does not avenge; in the latter, the keeping binds the name of God to the commission of sin and provokes Him to anger.

It is forbidden, in this command, to take up God's decrees or providences so as to: 1.) Murmur or quarrel at them, whereby men show themselves hardened against this holy name, Rom. 9:14, 19, 20. 2.) Curiously prying into them, whereby men exhibit their distrust of the Lord, Deut. 29:29. 3.) Misapplying of the decrees, whereby seek to draw God into their vain thoughts or deeds, Rom. 3:5, 7; 6:1, 2; or, misapplying of providence, whereby men seek to console themselves that all is well when they sin despite the warnings of the Word of God, Eccl. 8:11; 9:3; Ps. 39.

Men are warned, by this command, not to do despite to the Word of God wherein He manifests Himself most clearly by: 1.) Misinterpreting it, wherein men demonstrate that they do not know God, Matt. 5:21-48. 2.) Misapplying it, wherein men demonstrate that they do not sanctify God's revelation of Himself to men, Ezek. 13:22. 3.) In any way pervert it, wherein men display their instability and hostility to God, 2 Pet. 3:16; Matt. 22:24-31. This abuse of the Word is also displayed when: 1.) Men turn the Word of God into a matter of profane, or vain, jesting, Isa. 22:13; Jer. 23:34, 36, 38. 2.) Men turn the Word to a matter of curious and unprofitable questions, vain janglings or to the establishing of false doctrines, 1 Tim. 1:4, 6, 7; 6:4, 5, 20; 2 Tim. 2:14; Tit. 3:9.

Likewise, the name of God is profaned when it is: 1.) Abused by attaching it to the creatures, or any other thing which contains the revelation of God, as to charms, which by uniting the holy name to something gives it some efficacy or magical power, Deut. 18:10-14; Acts 19:13. 2.) Abused by attaching it to sinful lusts or practices, as if that which is unclean could be sanctified by this union, 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Rom. 13:13, 14; 1 Kings 21:9, 10; Jude 4.

The name of God is profaned when the truth, grace or ways of God are in any way: 1.) Maligned, by implying they are not what God declares them to be, Acts 13:45; 1 John 3:12. 2.) Scorned, by mocking them against the authority of God, Ps. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:3. 3.) Reviled, whereby men speak evil of that which God declares to be good, 1 Pet. 4:4. 4.) Opposed, when men seek to subvert or undermine those who wish to keep that name holy, Acts 13:45, 46, 50; 4:18; 19:9; 1 Thess. 2:16; Heb. 10:29.

Question 3—*In what ways do men show forth a reviling and opposition to the holy name of God?*

*Answer*—Men demonstrate themselves as reviling or in opposition to the holy name of the Lord when: 1.) They make a profession of faith in hypocrisy or for sinister, or fraudulent, ends, 2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 23:14; 6:1, 2, 5, 16. 2.) They behave in such a way that they show themselves ashamed of their profession, Mark 8:38. 3.) They behave in a way that is a shame to their profession by their walk being unconformable, Ps. 73:14, 15; or, unwise, 1 Cor. 6:5, 6; Eph. 5:15-17; or, unfruitful, Isa. 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:8, 9; or, in any way offensive, Rom. 2:23, 24. 4.) They backslide from God's truth, grace and ways, Gal. 3:1, 3; Heb. 6:6.