

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 # 112 & 54.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #112. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes,¹ ordinances,² the word,³ sacraments,⁴ prayer,⁵ oaths,⁶ vows,⁷ lots,⁸ his works,⁹ and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought,¹⁰ meditation,¹¹ word,¹² and writing;¹³ by an holy profession,¹⁴ and answerable conversation,¹⁵ to the glory of God,¹⁶ and the good of ourselves,¹⁷ and others.¹⁸

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #54. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God' s names,¹⁹ titles,²⁰ attributes,²¹ ordinances,²² Word,²³ and works.²⁴

Question 1—*What is the scope of the third commandment?*

Answer—The scope of the third commandment respects the self-revelation of God (*i.e.*, His name) and its proper use, because its abuse is common, Ezek. 36:23.

¹ Matt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58; Ps. 29:2; Ps. 68:4; Rev. 15:3, 4.

² Mal. 1:14; Eccl. 5:1.

³ Ps. 138:2.

⁴ 1 Cor. 11:24, 25, 28, 29.

⁵ 1 Tim. 2:8.

⁶ Jer. 4:2.

⁷ Eccl. 5:2, 4-6.

⁸ Acts 1:24, 26.

⁹ Job 36:24.

¹⁰ Mal. 3:16.

¹¹ Ps. 8:1, 3, 4, 9.

¹² Col. 3:17; Ps. 105:2, 5.

¹³ Ps. 102:18.

¹⁴ 1 Pet. 3:15; Mic. 4:5.

¹⁵ Phil. 1:27.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 10:31.

¹⁷ Jer. 32:39.

¹⁸ 1 Pet. 2:12.

¹⁹ Matt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58.

²⁰ Ps. 68:4.

²¹ Rev. 15:3, 4.

²² Mal. 1:11, 14.

²³ Ps. 138:1, 2.

²⁴ Job 36:24.

First, the self-revelation of God, which is the subject of this command, most properly consists in the name, or names, by which He makes Himself known, Matt. 6:9. Such is the reverencing of this name that all the commandments are considered kept in its keeping, Deut. 28:58. What is demanded is nothing less than glory, or honor, Ps. 29:2.

Second, in close conjunction with His name must be considered His titles because by and through them God distinguishes Himself from all others, so that He is, for example, 1.) the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, Ex. 3:6. 2.) The *Preserver of Men*, Job 7:20; Ps. 121:5. 3.) The *Hearer of Prayer*, Ps. 65:2. Likewise, the three Persons in the Godhead have various titles, such as: 1.) The Father is called the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 11:31. 2.) The Son is called *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*, Rev. 19:16; and, *Head of the church*, Eph. 5:23. 3.) The Spirit is called *the Comforter*, John 14:26; and, *the Sanctifier*, Rom. 1:4. By these titles, and many more, we must frame our keeping holy and entire the name of God, Ps. 68:4.

Third, the attributes of God, which are His perfections and properties, are those things whereby God is made known to be separate from creatures. These are an alphabet wherein the name of the Most High is spelled out for His creatures to behold, Ex. 33:19; 34:6, 7. The happiness of all nations is to be found in the reading of these aright, Rev. 15:3, 4.

Fourth, the ordinances of God, which are those directions prescribed by Him for making known His authority over the creatures, Mal. 1:11, 14. In these we are taught that proper ordering of the thoughts and intents of our hearts, Eccl. 5:1.

Fifth, the word of God, wherein He has chosen to magnify His name higher than any other self-revelation, Ps. 138:2. By which we ought to understand: 1.) The Holy Scriptures, wherein this revelation is most clearly held forth, John 10:35. 2.) The word preached and heard by us, 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 2:13. 3.) But especially of the Son, Who is the Word most properly considered, John 1:1. Herein is the reason that the Word is so magnified above all other revelations of God, John 17:6.

Sixth, the sacraments are those visible signs and seals wherein God reveals Himself to His people as a God active to bless and curse according to the terms of the covenant, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25, 28, 29.

Seventh, prayer is a religious duty and privilege wherein men are invited to cast away their own judgments and have their hearts formed to a more perfect obedience and expectation of seeing God active in His covenant keeping with His people, 1 Tim. 2:8. Through prayer God reveals Himself to men, Ps. 143:10.

Eighth, lawful oaths taken bring with them the self-revelation of God Who is the great enforcer of all covenants made between men, for their benefit or detriment, Jer. 4:2. Oaths call upon the LORD to judge between men, particularly in cases controverted, to bring peace between men, 2 Chron. 6:22, 23. Lawful vows, being like promissory oaths, are made to God alone, Eccl. 5:2, 4-6. Vows are paid to God alone, Deut. 23:21-23. In both, God reveals Himself to men either for their comfort or as their adversary, Ezek. 17:16-19.

Ninth, lawful lots may be cast which give self-revelations of the Deity by laying bare His secret counsels to men, Acts 1:24, 26. Nothing falls out by pure chance, John 17:11; but even contingent things depend upon the superintendence of God, Jon. 1:7; the lot, too, relies wholly on Him, Prov. 16:33.

Tenth, the works of God are also self-revelations, Job 36:24. Among these works we must consider those of creation which are self-revelations of what may be known to creatures, Rom. 1:19; and, the works of providence, which are self-revelations of God's secret purposes in history, Gen. 50:20. By these, and other, means God manifests Himself in and to men either in a way of grace, John 21:15-17; or, in a way of judgment, Rom. 1:24-28.

Question 2—*What is the requirement regarding all that pertains to this self-revelation of God that constitutes His name?*

Answer—The requirement is that this self-revelation, in its various forms, all be rightly improved by men by being used holily and reverently: 1.) In all their thoughts, Mal. 3:16; wherefore they must bring every thought captive to Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5. We must retain God in all our thoughts to avoid missteps, Prov. 30:4. 2.) In all our meditations, Ps. 8:1, 3, 4, 9. Men who are moved by a genuine love of God are continually drawn to such meditations, Ps. 111:2. 3.) In all their words, whether spoken from one to another, Col. 3:17; Ps. 105:2, 5; or, even written, Ps. 102:18. 4.) In all their deeds, both actively, by a holy profession, whereby men exhibit this name of God, 1 Pet. 3:15; Mic. 4:5; and passively, in answerable conversation, whereby this great name is reflected and perfumes all our lives, Phil. 1:27.

Question 3—*What three things make it necessary to carry the LORD's name with such care?*

Answer—The first consideration that ought to be kept is the glory of God, Lev. 10:3; wherein we are always to exercise ourselves, 1 Cor. 10:31.

The second consideration should be our own good, which includes that of our children, Jer. 32:39. The name of God is a place of safety and a refuge in trouble, Prov. 18:10.

The third consideration should be the good of others, 1 Pet. 2:12. It is a great kindness to a blinded world to take up this name aright, Eccl. 7:1; Zech. 4:14. The fragrant smell of this name taken up becomes to some the aroma of life, John 4:39-42; 2 Cor. 2:16, 17. This was Christ's work as He went out of this world which He left for His people to continue, John 17:26.