

“Third Commandment”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigsandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of June 7, 2025.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with our series. The topic is the Ten Commandments. The presentation was titled “Third Commandment.”

The presentation mentioned two general categories—briefly mentioning the actual name, but spending the majority of the time discussing actions that dishonor the family name.

Foundational scripture

■ Exodus 20:2—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Then, the Lord proceeded to remind the children of Israel about the Ten Commandments.

Old Testament lesson = After God delivered them from Egypt, He reminded them of His expectations from them.

New Testament lesson = When God offers His bountiful grace to New Testament disciples, He still has expectations of them (Romans 6:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8).

Third Commandment

■ Exodus 20:7—“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Brief comments: Sacred Name movement

Although I do not believe that the actual name is the main point of this commandment, I believe that the topic of the actual name should at least be mentioned.

Following is an excerpt from gotquestions.org: “Related to the Hebrew Roots Movement, the Sacred Name Movement developed from the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the 1930s . . . The Sacred Name Movement teaches that only ‘Yahweh’ is to be used as the name of God and only ‘Yahshua’ is to be used as the name of Jesus . . . From the original Sacred Name Movement, several subgroups have formed—including the Assemblies of Yahweh, the Assembly of Yahweh, the House of Yahweh and Yahweh’s Restoration Ministry.”

For the record—the complete writing (which included the excerpt above) gave its criticism about the Sacred Name movement. I chose to avoid mentioning the criticism because I wanted to report about the origin. I do not criticize people who use the “Sacred Names.”

I understand that I get criticized on both sides of this issue.

- Some people (who strongly believe that the Sacred Names must be used) criticize me because I don’t feel compelled to be restricted to using those names.
- Yet other people (who don’t like the Sacred Names) criticize me because I am supportive of people having the freedom to use those names—the names of their convictions.

In our congregation, we have brothers and sisters who love the Father (God or Yahweh) and the Son (Jesus or Yahshua).

Blaspheming the name of the Lord

Here are only two examples (one in Leviticus and one in Revelation) that appear to be people blaspheming the name of God.

- Leviticus 24:10-14—When a son got into a fight leading to him blaspheming the name of the Lord and cursing, the punishment was severe—taken to Moses, put into custody, put outside the camp, the witnesses who heard him laid hands on him, and the congregation stoned him.
- Leviticus 24:15-16—Instruction to the children of Israel: “Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.”
- Revelation 13:5-6—The beast was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies . . . Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven.

Bad actions dishonor the name

Haven’t you noticed how bad actions tarnish a good name?

- Being called a doctor does not prove that someone is behaving like a doctor. Bad actions by a doctor undermine his title.
- Being called a teacher does not prove that someone is behaving like a teacher. Bad actions by a teacher undermine her title.
- Being called a disciple of the Father and the Son does not prove that someone is behaving like a disciple. Bad actions by a religious person seeking to please the Father (God or Yahweh) and the Son (Jesus or Yahshua) undermine the person’s effort.

Old Testament bad behavior dishonors the name

I spent most of the time reading scriptures about bad actions dishonoring the name. There are many examples of bad actions dishonoring the name.

- Leviticus 18:21—"You shall not profane the name of your God: I am the LORD." (How? Read all the wrong behavior in the chapter that displeases the Lord.)
- Leviticus 21:6—"They [the priests] shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God."
- Ezekiel 36:17—"When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds. To Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity."
- Ezekiel 36:23—"I will sanctify My great name (which has been profaned among the nation) which you have profaned in their midst. The nations shall know that I am the LORD."
- Malachi 1:6—How did the priests despise His name?
- Malachi 1:7-8—They offered lame offerings.
- Malachi 1:11—"My name shall be great among the Gentiles" and "My name shall be great among the nations."
- Malachi 2:7—The lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth.
- Malachi 2:8—But you have departed from the way. You have stumbled at the law.

Words of the Son of God

- Matthew 7:21—Not everyone who talks religiously (saying "Lord, Lord") shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Are people doing the will of the Father?
- Matthew 7:22-23—Even though these people were claiming the name and doing wonders, the Son of God said: "I never knew you."
- Mark 7:6—Many people honor the Lord with their lips, but they are far from Him.
- Mark 7:7—Many people worship the Lord in vain, because they teach doctrines of men.
- Mark 7:8—Many people teach traditions of men instead of the commandments of God.

Words of Paul

- 1 Timothy 6:1—Servants honoring masters help the name of God and His doctrine to not be blasphemed.
- Titus 1:16—"They profess to know God, but in works [actions] they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient."
- Titus 2:3-5—When the older women teach the younger women, it helps the Word of God to not be blasphemed.
- Titus 2:6-8—When the older men teach the younger men, it sets a pattern of good behavior.

■ Titus 2:10—Obedient servants help to adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior in all things.

Words of James

■ James 1:26—"If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this one's religion is useless."

■ James 1:27—Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is visiting orphans and widows in their trouble and keeping oneself unspotted from the world.

■ James 2:7—Don't they (the rich) blaspheme the noble name by their behavior? (James 2:1-7 shows that some were critical toward the people who didn't dress in the assembly according to the expectation of other people in the assembly.)

■ James 2:8—If you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, you do well.