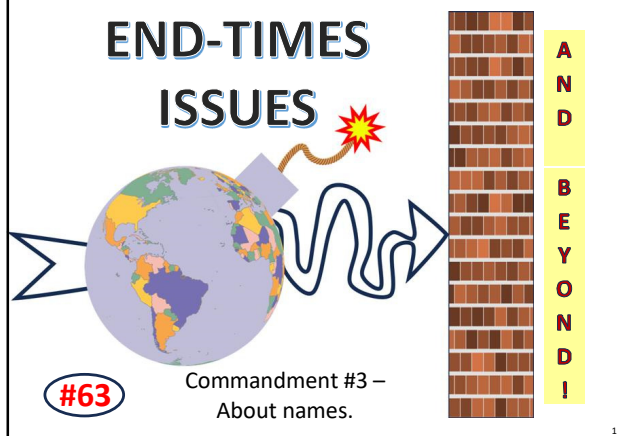


END-TIMES ISSUES



#63 Commandment #3 – About names.

1

The Third Commandment

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who takes His name in vain."

Exodus 20:7 (BSB); also Deuteronomy 5:11.

⇒ **This commandment represents** the category of commands, instructions and examples related to one's attitude toward God and what Scripture calls sacred.

- Most people think this command is just a prohibition of using God's name while swearing (or something similar). But it applies to *much more* than that!
- We need to remember that the "do not" *implies* what we should "do."
- We also need to understand the concept of "name," as used in Scripture.

2

What we have seen so far:

✓ An introduction to the topic.

- Names have significance. In Scripture, they're not just "labels" to identify someone.
- God reveals himself through *names*. If we include his titles and other descriptive terms (which can also be used as names), there might be more than 200 of them in the Bible.

✓ The need to know God.

- We need more than a mere "intellectual" knowledge. We need a "life-influencing" knowledge. It requires a *response*.
- When we chose to sin, we threw away this knowledge, and destroyed our relationship with God. God offers to *restore* these things through Christ.
- In Scripture, God reveals himself to us, the most significant way being through his names. What they teach us should influence how we live.

3

✓ Terms often used when exploring this topic:

- "**Name**" – Technically, it identifies (and often tells us something about) the person. **EXAMPLES:** Yahweh; Jesus. (For convenience, this word is sometimes used to encompass *all* of these terms.)
 - **God's names** are self-chosen, and are given for the purpose of revealing something about him.
 - **Human names** have varying degrees of significance. They may tell us about the person, a historic event that occurred near the time of birth, etc.; but they may also reflect the parent's hopes for the child's future (which could end up being nothing more than "wishful thinking").
- "**Title**" – This may indicate role, status, function, etc. They can also be used as names. **EXAMPLES:** Lord, King, Savior.
- "**Appellation**" – This represents a broader category. The term is sometimes used to *include* names and titles; but the category also includes terms that look *less like* names and titles. **EXAMPLES:** Lamb, Door, Rock, Wisdom, etc.

4

Today: More about the concept of "names."

✓ We will focus on the general topic, which goes *beyond* the focus of the Third Commandment.

- This will include what we might call "official" names, as well as titles and other terms that may be used to describe people (terms that might not resemble what we, today, typically call "names").

✓ Names were *more than* a label.

- They represented the *person*; the two were virtually equivalent. The person and name could even be used interchangeably.

Because he loves **me**," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges **my name**."

Psalms 91:14 (NIV)

[Jesus] said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in **My name** welcomes **Me**, ..."

Luke 9:48a (BSB)

5

✓ The first recorded instances of "naming" something – Genesis 1-2.

- To name things requires the ability to think and communicate with language.
- The first to do this was God (Genesis 1).
- Adam, who was made in the "image of God," was created with this ability to think and communicate with language.
- One of Adam's first tasks was to name various animals (Genesis 2:19). This *doesn't* mean he merely blurted-out syllables. Rather, he learned something about the animals, and (based on what he learned) used language to create names that had some type of significance for what that animal was.
- We see an example of this naming process, later, when Adam named his wife "Eve" (which means "living" or "life-giving").

And Adam named his wife **Eve**, because she would be **the mother of all the living**.

Genesis 3:20 (BSB)

6

- ✓ **Names could identify something about the individual and his relationship to others.** The person's reputation, authority, social standing, power, character, essence ...
- ✓ **"Believing" in someone's name** wasn't just an admission that the name existed! It meant trusting the person who was represented by that name.
- ✓ **God's "Compound names"** – These are names that are formed by a combination of "El" (God) or "Yahweh" and a phrase that describes something about God. Together, they tell us more about God, than do "El" or "Yahweh" alone. **EXAMPLES:** *El-Shaddai*: God Almighty (Genesis 17:1); *Yahweh Shalom*: The LORD our Peace (Judges 6:24). [Some translations use the name "Jehovah," instead of "Yahweh."]
- ✓ **People's names** often contained a reference to God. **EXAMPLES:** *Hezekiah*: Yahweh strengthens (2 Kings 16:20); *Joel*: Yahweh is God (Joel 1:1); *Ishmael*: God hears (Genesis 16:11). (This does not prove that they all followed the God of the Bible.)

7

✓ Name changes.

- **People's names could be changed** because of significant changes or events in their lives. This could include a change in status, or a new purpose or mission in life. (Cities could also have name changes.)

[Jesus] said, "You are **Simon** son of John. You will be called **Cephas**" (which is translated as **Peter**).

John 1:42b (BSB)

[Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) both mean "rock."]

- Other examples: Abram ⇒ Abraham (Genesis 17:5); Jacob ⇒ Israel (Genesis 32:28); Luz (a city) ⇒ Bethel (Genesis 28:19).

- **People sometimes had two names**, because of the cultural environment they lived in. For instance, the apostle Paul, apostle to the *Gentiles*, was also called Saul of Tarsus, reflecting his *Jewish* heritage.

Then **Saul**, who was also called **Paul**, ...

Acts 13:9a (BSB)

8

- ✓ **"Making a name for oneself," having a "good name," etc.** – a matter of reputation, success, etc.
- In some Old Testament passages, people accomplished something significant that gave them a reputation. Often, it was a good reputation – like King David, who had the reputation of being a successful warrior. But the reputation could also be an expression of sin against God, such as at Babel (Genesis 11:4).
- More significant for us is the concept of God "making a name" for himself. God created us for the purpose of displaying his glory in creation – through what he does for his people (his acts of power, etc.). This verse is from a prayer by Daniel:

Now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and **who made for Yourself a name renowned to this day**, ...

Daniel 9:15a (BSB)

9

✓ Genealogies, lists of names.

- To us, these lists may seem boring. But the fact that God chose to include them in Scripture shows us that they have value – even if we no longer understand what that value is.
- **Jesus' genealogies** show his right to the throne of David – both legally (Matthew 1:1-17) and biologically (Luke 3:23-38). This information would have been recorded (most likely at the temple or at his ancestral city, Bethlehem). These records were available for all to see – even his enemies, who were trying to find fault with him.
- **The Genesis genealogies** (especially chapters 5, 10 and 11) tell us about our own beginnings, and explain some of the reasons why things are the way they are today.
- **Various other genealogies** may seem less important to us; but they show the importance of people as part of a *community*. We are not just isolated individuals, but have a *connection* to everyone else. Though the sinful world doesn't always recognize it, *we have value!*

10

✓ Name being "cut off" or "blotted out."

- This concept often involved destruction or judgment by God. It was like erasing the person/city/nation from existence or from memory. Sometimes it involved *destroying* that person/city/nation.
- It may refer to death; at other times, it could refer to loss of citizenship, or banishment from the community.
- Eternally, it refers to the presence or absence of one's name in the book of life.

... he who overcomes ... **I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life**, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.

Revelation 3:5 (BSB)

If your name is NOT blotted out of the Book of Life, it's because your sin is blotted out – i.e., paid for by Jesus Christ (Psalm 51:1, 9)!



11

God has given us – his people – names!

✓ Being his people, God has given us *our* significance!

- God's names for us reflect our true essence – who we were meant to be (in God's eyes).
- This is an awesome privilege, but it comes with significant responsibilities. We are to represent him in both actions and words. We are to acknowledge *his* name, and reflect his character through our own conduct.

... God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription:

"The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the **name** of the Lord **must turn away from wickedness**."

2 Timothy 2:19 (NIV)

- In many cases, we haven't completely attained to what the names signify. But our goal (and obligation) is to live up to them – to *grow* in grace. After all, God gives his people the *desire* and the *power* to do so. – Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 10:16; etc.

12

✓ **God gave Israel (his Old Covenant people) various names (including titles, appellations, etc.).**

- The names often describe the God's *intended* relationship to Israel.

"Now if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you will be **My treasured possession** out of all the nations—for the whole earth is Mine. And unto Me you shall be **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**" These are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites."

Exodus 19:5-6 (BSB)

- Other examples: *Son* (Hosea 11:1); *Jeshurun*: Upright One (Isaiah 44:2); *My Servant* (Isaiah 41:8-9); *My Sheep* (Ezekiel 34:31).
- When Israel chose to rebel against God, he gave them names that were appropriate for the situation. Example: Jerusalem is called:

... the great city —figuratively called **Sodom** and **Egypt**—where their Lord was also crucified.

Revelation 11:8b (BSB)

13

✓ **God gives his New Covenant people (Jews and Gentiles together) a variety of names!**

- Many of the Old Testament names** for Israel also apply to us. For example, Peter refers to some of these Old Testament names:

But you are **a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession,** ...

1 Peter 2:9a (NIV)

(These terms are from Old Testament passages, such as Deuteronomy 7:6; Exodus 19:5-6.)

- The New Testament word "church"** refers to any "assembly" of people (saved or unsaved); and when applied to us, it emphasizes our relationship to each other as a *group*. Unlike the rest of the assemblies ("churches") that exist in the world, we are:

"... the **church** of the living God ..."

1 Timothy 3:15b (BSB)

14

- The word "Christian"** is found three times in the New Testament, in Acts 11:26; 26:28; and 1 Peter 4:16.
- If we pay attention to the contexts of these passages (included below), we learn that the characteristics of a "Christian" include:
 - A willingness to accept the message of the prophets (i.e., Scripture) – Acts 26:20, 22-23, 27-28.
 - Being a disciple (follower) of Christ (and all that is implied by the term "disciple") – Acts 11:22-23, 26.
 - Visible evidence of God's grace – i.e., it has a visible effect on our lives – Acts 11:22-23, 26.
 - A change in how we live (demonstrated by our actions) – Acts 26:20, 22-23, 27-28.
 - A willingness to share in Christ's sufferings – 1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12-19.
 - A willingness to continue doing the good things that caused that suffering – 1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12-19.

15

• **Here are some of the other names, titles and appellations that God gives to us, his people:**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ✓ Body of Christ | ✓ Pillar and Ground of the Truth |
| ✓ Saints (Holy ones) | ✓ Spiritual house |
| ✓ Bride / wife of Christ | ✓ Holy priesthood |
| ✓ God's building | ✓ Vineyard |
| ✓ City of the Living God | ✓ Abraham's seed |
| ✓ Temple of the Living God | ✓ Children of God |
| ✓ Family of God | ✓ Adopted sons |
| ✓ Brother (to Jesus) | ✓ Beloved |
| ✓ Sheep; the flock | ✓ Born of God |
| ✓ Branches | ✓ The called / chosen / elect |
| ✓ Kingdom of God/heaven | ✓ Children of light / of the day |
| ✓ Household/family of faith | ✓ Disciple |
| ✓ Light of the world | ✓ Good soil (parable of the sower) |
| ✓ A new creation | ✓ Heirs of promise / of salvation |
| ✓ My people | ✓ More than conquerors |
| ✓ Salt of the earth | ✓ The righteous |

WOW! GOD IS DOING AMAZING THINGS!

16

Your MISSION

The "PREREQUISITE" for accomplishing this week's mission.

Appreciate the significance of the "name" concept!

✍ It will help you to better understand Scripture passages that mention names.

Find out who you are!

(Based on the names God has given you, as a follower of Jesus.)

Then learn to live that way!

(This is a lifelong endeavor.)

The "MISSION."

17

Credits

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