

NO NEED TO SWEAR AT ALL!

(Scripture: Exodus 20:7)

Introduction:

There may be many reasons why we may use God's name in vain. Sometimes we invoke God's name in vain in our casual conversation. Some use God's name for cursing. But most of the scholars think that this passage actually refers to the context of swearing in the name of God. Let us see this subject from the swearing perspective first, and then look into other possible interpretations.

Exodus 20:7. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."

Jews took this command seriously and they actually went overboard with it. The name of God was so profoundly sacred that the orthodox Jews would not pronounce the name of God in normal conversation. In fact, as the scribes were making copies of the Holy Scripture, when they came to the name of God they place their pen down, rise, bathe themselves, and put on different garments. Then they would write with a pen that had never been used before the holy name of God. It was that holy, that sacred, that revered, and that honored.

Since they were forbidden to swear in the name of God, as per this text Exodus 20:7, they swore many other ways, we can peak into their culture through the following passage from the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Christ our Lord!

Matthew 5:33-37 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil."

Before anyone can make any vow or oath, they had to swear by something. Since they were prohibited from swearing in the name of God, they started swearing by their head, by their heart, by their family, or children. They also swore by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem! The Pharisees taught that if one swears by the altar it is not valid but if they swore on the offering that is on the altar that counts? If they swore by the temple it may not count, but if people swear by the gold that was in the temple then their oath counts? Jesus told them not to swear at all to make an oath. Why? Human beings cannot keep their oath most of the time, because they are sinners, and they will end up as liars. So He recommends that we just say yes or no. When we go overboard, we will get into trouble trying to keep our promise one hundred percent.

Examples of swearing in the Bible.

Jacob paying tithe.

Genesis 28:20-22. "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Did Jacob really pay tithe? Who did he pay to? Did he really keep his promise?

High priest and Jesus

Matthew 26:63. "But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!""
Matthew 26:63 NKJV.

Here we can see the high priest taking God's name in vain!

In our modern era also we tend to swear!

We swear by the name of God, we swear by the Bible, we swear by our mothers also!

Swearing leads to vows. Bible is very clear about not breaking our vows!

Numbers 30:2. "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."

God does not want us to violate any of our words, and He wants us to do everything that proceeds from our mouth.

Deuteronomy 23:21-23. 21. ""When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you. 22. However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you." 23. "You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised."

Jephthah story! Judges 11

Psalms 61:8. "So I will sing praise to Your name forever, that I may pay my vows day by day."

Our baptism must be our only vow. We must remember daily and pay those vows day by day. How? We die to ourselves and live for Christ!

Let us not swear and promise anything, but if we do, let us carry out that promise faithfully without swearing. Don't let our word fall to the ground. Let us work hard to carry out every word we speak.

II. If taking God's name in vain is not about swearing or making an oath, could this be about casual remarks about God? How often we bring the name of Jesus for every silly moment of our life. Instead of saying oh, no, we say oh my God! When we get frustrated we say "Jesus Christ, how could you do that. We curse someone also using Jesus' name.

Jesus, our Lord Himself warned us about using words carelessly.

Mathew 12:36-37. 36"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

It is important for us to control our tongue.
James warns us about our tongue:

James 3:8-10. 8But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9With it we bless Our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

Let us bridle our tongue that we may live peacefully. The name of God is to be mentioned in reverence and honor. Let us not take God's name in vain by invoking it casually.

We may use God's name in vain also to make other people believe what we say. Usually, it happens when we try to prophesy, and we unnecessarily invoke God's name and say, God told me to tell you! We try to gain trust by using God's name in our spiritual talk.

Sometimes, we try to be very funny in our humor, and we often pull God's name in vain. So many jokes about God's heaven. So many jokes about Jesus' miracles. God's creation etc.

Some of us may be saying all the right words about God. We may quote Scriptures accurately. Yet if our life is not according to the Lord's expectation, we are unnecessarily calling ourselves Christ's followers, and yet blaspheming His name by our sinful life.

Anyone who cannot back up His Word and translates that into action becomes a hypocrite. Let us not walk around as liars!

Conclusion:

God's name is very holy. God is Truth. God is Love. God is that I Am who is always there. Let us not take His name in vain.

Let us not swear in any name or object or persons because we are sinners, and we cannot keep our own promises always. It will fall to the ground.

Let us not try to bring down God's name to our sinful level. Let us not trivialize His name.

God will not let us slip away with our loose tongue. He will judge every word of ours and judge us. Beware of taking God's holy name in vain

Our Lord's Prayer says, our Father who ought in heaven, Hallowed be thy name! May we do just that! Can we hallow His name by keeping our promises?

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