

I grew up thinking the third commandment was a commandment about cursing, about throwing God's name around in a careless, irreverent manner because the King James version reads: *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Exodus 20:7.*

Then I made a fascinating discovery. The word that translates as "in vain," (the Hebrew word *Lashav*) can also be translated as "false." In fact, it **is** translated as "false" just a few verses later in the ninth commandment. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Exodus 20:16.* The third commandment is actually the equivalent of the ninth commandment except it is telling us not to claim something false about **God**.

Misrepresenting God is serious – it is what Lucifer was doing before he was exiled from heaven, he was mischaracterizing God, describing God as something He was not.

Misrepresenting God is what the Pharisees were doing during Christ's time on earth—they were describing God in a way that made salvation impossible to achieve. They took the ten commandments and added hundreds more, layering them into a wall of burdensome bricks attached to financial penalties that brought the money flowing in from the weak to the privileged. *That was not okay.*

Throwing God's name around with curses or silly banter is certainly not something anyone should engage in doing, but misusing the name of God to advance one's own agenda is, to my way of thinking, much worse.

The third commandment is one of humility. It gives instruction to be careful about how we use His name. When we misuse what God has said, we mischaracterize Him. When we suggest or imply that God hates sinners, that God is not open to saving sinners, that God does not love sinners and is waiting to destroy them, we completely mischaracterize God's intentions and character. His is a name to be used in reverence, in worship, and when we cry out to Him for help. His name is **not** to be used to condemn, coerce, harm or discourage other people. ***That's what Satan does!*** *"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. Revelation 12:10.*

The Pharisees served as a vehicle of Satan to accuse the Jews, because no matter what the Jews did, it was never good enough. The truth that Jesus came to reveal rejected the mischaracterization that the Pharisees had falsely presented.

He wanted, and still wants, to save to the uttermost.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25 (KJV)