

Exodus 20:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

'Take in vain' (אִשְׁעַר לְשֹׁאַל, lo tissa lashav) means 'carry for emptiness/falsehood'—using God's name flippantly, deceptively, or carelessly. This bans profanity, yes, but primarily perjury (swearing falsely by God's name) and hypocrisy (claiming God's name while living contrary to it). God's name represents His character; misusing it profanes His reputation. 'Will not hold guiltless' (הַקְרִין אַל, lo yenaqqeh) promises inescapable accountability—no one gets away with it. The warning is solemn: bearing God's name (Christian means 'Christ-one') while living ungodly brings judgment. We carry His name; we must honor it. Our lives interpret God to watching world.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures took oaths by deity names seriously—perjury was capital offense. God's name represented His presence and power; misusing it was tantamount to blasphemy.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How might Christians 'take God's name in vain' without using profanity?
2. What does it mean to 'carry' God's name well as a Christian in your daily life?

Interlinear Text

לֹשׁוֹן אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה הַשְׁמָה אֶת־יְשָׁאָהוּ לֹא

אֲשֶׁר אָת יְהוָה יְנַצֵּחַ לֹא כִּי H3588 H3808 will not hold him guiltless for the LORD H853 H834 H3068 H5352

לֹשִׁיאָן	שְׁמִי	אַתָּה	וְאַתָּה	לֹשִׁיאָן
in vain	his name	thou	shall not	take

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 5:11 (References God): 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

James 5:12 (Parallel theme): But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay: lest ye fall into condemnation.

Leviticus 19:12 (References God): And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

Jeremiah 4:2 (References Lord): And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

Joshua 2:17 (Parallel theme): And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

Joshua 2:12 (References Lord): Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

Joshua 9:20 (Parallel theme): This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

Proverbs 30:9 (References God): Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Deuteronomy 10:20 (References God): Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

2 Corinthians 1:23 (References God): Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.