

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

June 14, 2021

I Will Not Hold Him Guiltless

Whether it was a prophet, a priest, a teacher, or someone who swore an oath in the name of the LORD, God always took notice when his name was invoked. He said, *"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. The words *"in vain"* are from a Hebrew word which speaks of *"desolating"* or *"ruin."* God was saying *"I will not hold the person guiltless who ruins my name."*

Many oaths were made where a person would swear by a thing of great honor and value. The greatest and most fearful oath any person could make was to swear by God himself. Isaiah 65:16. This was not evil of itself because even the prophets spoke of a day when, *"...he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth..."* Isaiah 65:16. Yet, to swear by the name of God was a serious thing indeed, and to break such an oath brought a person under the direct indignation of God because it reproached his holy name.

Israel was quick to take up the name of the LORD, but they also often took his name in vain. God said, *"And when they entered unto the*

heathen, whither they went, **they profaned my holy name**, when they said to them, *These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.*” Ezekiel 36:20. First they profaned his name with their abominations. Then, after he scattered them among the nations, they profaned God’s name by being called his people. God was so tired of the insult they brought to his name that he said to them, *“As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: **but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.**”* Ezekiel 20:39.

God still watches today when we take up the name of the Lord. When a minister speaks, do they speak the truth in his name? or do they speak deception? Are they a faithful steward of the gospel? or do they speak for earthly gain and glory? No one has more reason to fear in the day of judgment than the person who presumptuously speaks in the name of Jesus Christ. Even the Apostle Paul did not forget this. He said *“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God...”* II Corinthians 5:11.

Perhaps the severest warning to those who *“take the name of the LORD”* is given to those who seek to stand in the ministry of a prophet. God said, *“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, **even that prophet shall die.**”* Deuteronomy 18:20. God was not playing around.

This was very serious to him. It is not the indignation of man a presumptuous prophet must fear. It is the indignation of God. He made it very clear. ***“The LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”*** Exodus 20:7.

It is a great honor and an awesome responsibility to be called to speak in the name of Jesus Christ. Only a foolish person would take it lightly. We must never forget that ***“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*** Hebrews 10:31.