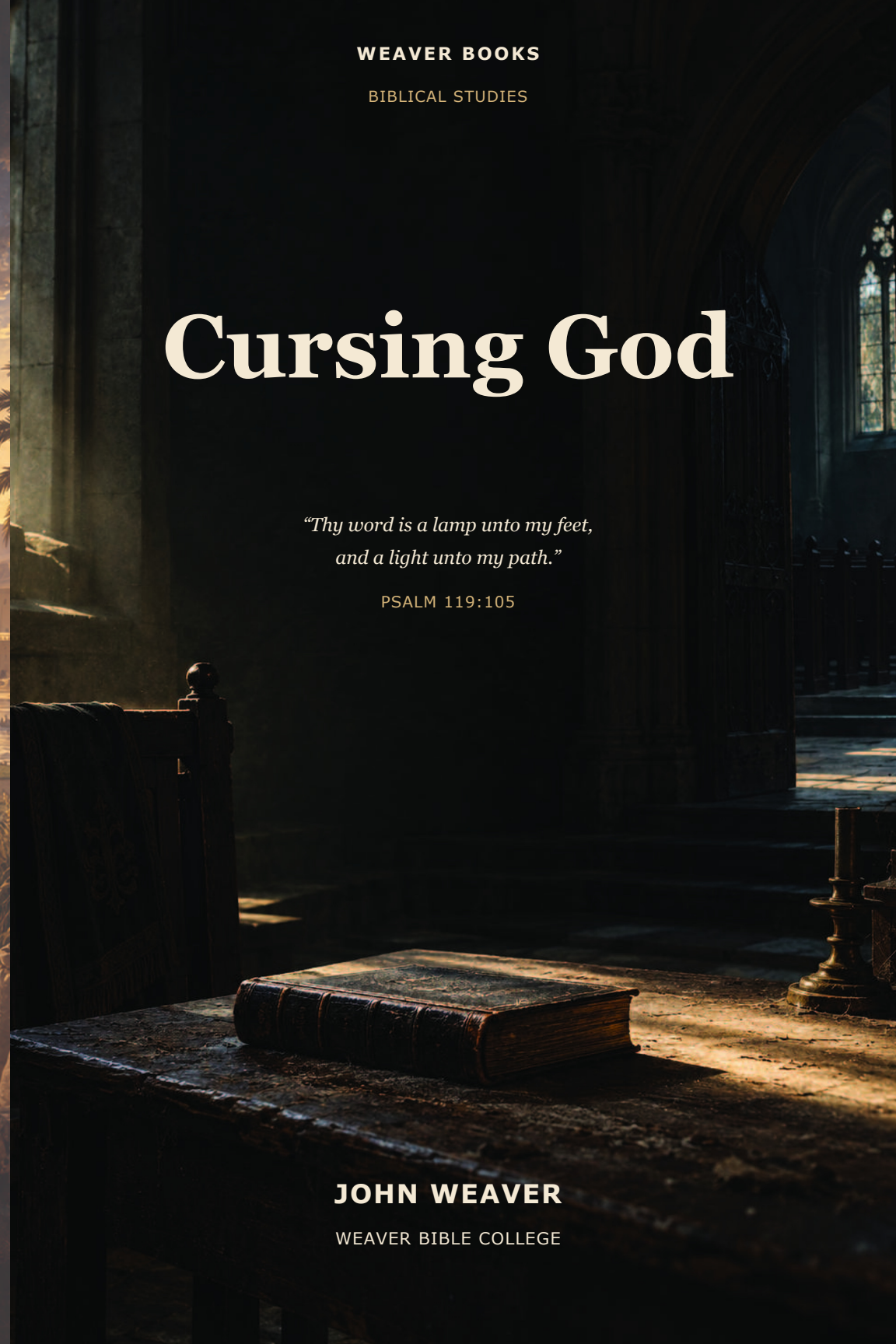
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Cursing God



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

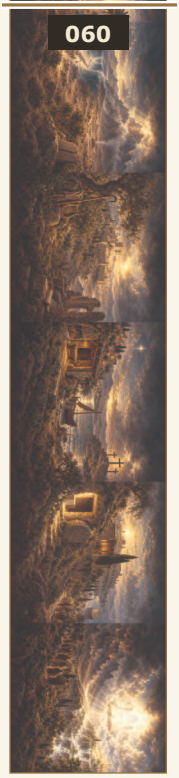
PSALM 119:105

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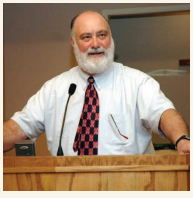
Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

EXODUS 20:7, EXCERPT

To dishonor God is more than a matter of spoken profanity. John Weaver examines neglect, false worship, and conduct that treats God's reality and authority as unimportant. These messages consider the difference between outward religious appearance and genuine esteem, calling readers to ask how daily habits may contradict the reverence they profess.

“When you ground your thinking, your actions, and your conduct in anything other than the Word of God, you are denying God's reality.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Cursing God

Part One of Two

Introduction and Text: Exodus 22:28

Well, let's open our Bible today, if you would please, to the book of Exodus chapter 22 and verse 28. This is the first message of a two-part series on cursing God. I think you will understand just momentarily. So look in Exodus chapter 22 and verse 28. Exodus 22 verse 28, the Word of God says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." Now when you read in Exodus 22 and verse 28, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people," our text is not teaching that there are many gods. There is only one God, the one true and the living God, who's revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. So you're going to ask, why then does it say, "Thou shalt not revile the gods" if there are no other gods? Well, the answer to that is found, first of all, in Psalm 82. If you want to turn there, Psalm 82 is a psalm concerning the judges. You have to remember that the judges were ordained by God to execute and to enforce His law.

So if you look in Psalm 82, let's begin reading there with verse 1. It's a very brief chapter, or brief psalm, I should say. Look at it. Psalm 82, verse 1, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods." There it is again. So notice, if you would, the context. Verse two, "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?"

So we're talking about judges. Then he tells them to "defend the poor and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, deliver the poor and the needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked." Then he said, "They know not"—this is the judges—"they perverted God's law. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course."

Now look at this. "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

In the book of John, our Lord quotes this passage when they accuse Him after He says, "I and my Father are one." They say, "Thou makest thyself God." He answers, "No," and reminds them, "May I remind you that even the Scripture says, 'Ye are gods'?" He is quoting Psalm 82, which also relates to Exodus chapter 22. John 10:33 records, "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." I've always smiled at that. They've got it backwards. It was not a man making himself God; it was God making himself man. But then Jesus said in verse 34, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" And of course that is written in Psalm 82 and also in Exodus chapter 22.

Exodus 22:28 says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." If God forbids us to curse the ruler of our people, how much more are we forbidden to curse the one sovereign, supreme, and divine ruler of the universe, the one true and living God?

Common Misunderstanding of Cursing

I started to title this message "Pollution, Profanity, and Vanity." I did not do so because ultimately each of these three things is a means of cursing God. When we think of cursing, we immediately think of Exodus chapter 20 and verse 7: "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." So it is amazing to me that most people limit profaning God's name to what they recognize as cussing—using profanity, or taking God's name with slang and vanity.

Sometime back, I heard a man taking God's name in vain by attaching God's name to the word "damn." I said, "Sir, you're cursing the wrong person or the wrong object." He asked what I meant. I said, "It's not God who damns; it's sin that damns. It's God who saves. So if you want to damn something, damn sin. Don't damn God. God is our only Savior and our only Lord." That is certainly true. Yet if you ask the average Christian the question, "What is taking God's name in vain?" inevitably they will say it is cussing.

Years back, I preached a message which I entitled “Preaching and Profanity.” I am not going to repeat that message, but I am going to tell you today what I said back then concerning the essence of profanity. You might be surprised when we begin to look at the essence of profanity. I think it would also be an interesting study if we went through the Bible and studied the word “curse.” You would be amazed at how many times the word “curse” appears in the Bible. Of course, there are different Hebrew words that are used, as well as different Greek words that are used, for “curse.” But most people simply label all cursing as profanity. They never distinguish between what you and I would call a biblical curse and a fleshly, humanistic curse.

Biblical Curses vs. Humanistic Curses

So, if you want to know the difference between a biblical curse and a humanistic curse, I would challenge you to read Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 29. In those two chapters, God places His blessings upon obedience, and He places all of His curses upon disobedience. When you get to chapter 29, there are a lot of curses listed there. It may surprise you that not all cursing is unbiblical. You say, “What

are you talking about?" Even the apostle Paul placed some curses upon individuals. The Bible therefore gives us a distinction that most people never make when they simply classify every curse as profanity.

In Galatians chapter 1, verses 8 and 9, the Apostle Paul says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Look what the Scripture says. Here is God, through the Apostle Paul, placing a curse upon anyone who preaches any other gospel than that which is revealed in the Scripture.

Then he says it again in verse 9: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." The word "accursed" in both of these verses is the Greek word "anathema." It refers to that which is cursed, that which is set aside for certain and sure destruction. The Apostle Paul therefore places a curse upon anyone who perverts the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ or preaches any other gospel than that which is revealed.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 22, Paul says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." What in the world is "Anathema Maranatha"? Once again, the word "anathema" means that which is placed under curse for sure and certain destruction. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," that is, at the coming of Christ. So he says, let him be a curse, let him be set aside for certain and sure destruction at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus' Teaching on Speech

So there are biblical curses. There are times when Christians must pronounce a biblical curse against someone. However, outside of biblical cursing, we have been commanded by our Lord to use proper godly language.

Matthew chapter 5, verse 33: "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." He said, "You have heard that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear

thyself." What does it mean to forswear yourself? Have you ever forsworn yourself? The word "forswear" here from the Greek means actually to swear falsely. It means to perjure yourself. So he says you are not to swear falsely. You are not to perjure yourself. He said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths."

Look in verse 34: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." He says, do not swear by your own head.

When I was a boy, a lot of the old timers, if they would see something they could hardly believe, would utter two words or three: "Well, I swear." That is what they would say. And God is saying here, "Swear not at all." Do not swear by Jerusalem. Do not swear by your head. Do not swear by God. Let your yea be yea and let your nay be nay.

In Colossians 4:6, the Word of God says, “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” If we say what we mean and mean what we say, we do not have to punctuate it with swear words or slang words. The reason people use slang words and swear words is simply because their oath or their word is not sufficient. They think they have to punctuate it with something atrocious. But this is why in Matthew 5 our Lord said, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Just speak the truth.

The Tongue and Cursing

The Word of God says in Romans 12:14, “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.” Blessing your enemy or loving your enemy simply means that we act biblically toward them. That is all. The Bible tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law. When we are persecuted, we do not retaliate with wickedness and evil. We still do

that which is right even toward them. We may pray for them, but we do not necessarily curse them.

James teaches us that for our mouths to issue blessing and cursing is confusion. He says, “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” As someone said, the tongue is like an automatic sewing machine set on fire out of hell. And that is usually it. But look what he says: “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.” You have to distinguish between a biblical curse and a humanistic, natural, fallen-man curse. You are not to use your mouth to bless God the Father and turn around and humanistically, fleshly, naturally, and carnally curse someone who is made in the image of God.

Is it possible for Christians to use foul language? The answer is yes. We have a tongue, and we can say anything we want to say. But there are always consequences to what we say. The Bible shows us an apostle of Jesus Christ who cursed and swore.

This was when Christ was taken into the palace of the high priest. The Apostle John had gone in because he knew the high priest. Then he sent word, and a little maid opened the gate and let Peter in. So three times now, Peter has denied Christ. This happens to be basically the last time.

“And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.” “And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.”

He began to curse and to swear. The word “curse” is the Greek form of “anathema.” It is “anathematizo,” and literally means to devote to destruction, to declare oneself liable for the severest divine penalties, and to bind oneself to a curse. The word “swear,” “omnuo,” means to threaten with an oath, or to invoke an oath. So here Peter is cursing and swearing.

Peter’s cursing and swearing was done in such a way as to demonstrate and prove that he was not a follower of Jesus Christ.

That ought to tell us something about cursing and swearing. In John 21, after Peter had denied our Lord three times, our Lord asked him three times, “Peter, lovest thou me?” Finally, Peter said, “Yes, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” In Mark 14, Peter was cursing and swearing to demonstrate that he was not a follower of Jesus Christ, in order to save his own hide so that he would not be condemned with Jesus. Yet when you get to John 21, Peter had repented and gave his life for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Notice how he gave his life.

John 21:17 says, “He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Peter was ultimately crucified as well. Our Lord was saying, “This is how you’re going to die.”

By God's grace, I want to explain to you from the Scripture profanity, pollution, and vanity. Today, we will consider the word "profane" and its significance for each of us. There were, and there still are, a multitude of ways to profane God and His name and anything connected with Him. We really do not think today in terms of profanation. Therefore, most Christians are actually guilty of profaning the name of God. And when we talk about profaning the name of God, it is not just the ignorant who are guilty. It is not just the common individual who is guilty. Pastors, preachers, teachers, and priests are also guilty. I want to show you, first of all, a number of Scriptures that deal with being profane. You will find a number of them in the book of Leviticus. There are a lot of terms and verses in Leviticus that use the word "profane" or "profaned."

Profanity in the Old Testament

The reason is that the theme of the book of Leviticus is holiness to the Lord. You remember that the high priest had a mitre and a band around that mitre that said, "Holiness to the Lord." Of course, these

are used throughout the entire Bible. But the main word used in this is the word "chalal." Every time I show you this in the Old Testament, it will be this Hebrew word.

It means to profane, to defile, to desecrate, to make, or to count, or to treat as that which is common, or that which is public.

Leviticus 18:21 says, “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of the Lord thy God: I am the Lord.” Passing your seed through the fire to Molech—whether it was Molech, Moloch, Melech, or Malcom—uses the same word in Scripture. God says that when you dedicate or give your child to a false god, you are profaning the name of the Lord. He said, “I am the Lord, don’t do that. Don’t profane my name.” A lot of Christians give their children to false gods. They give them to the state. They surely do.

In Leviticus 19:12, God says, “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.” Swearing by the name of God falsely is profaning the name of God.

Leviticus 20:3 says, “I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.” God says this act of idolatry was not only profaning His holy name; it was also defiling His sanctuary as well.

Leviticus 22:32 says, “Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the Lord which hallow you.” In other words, God sanctifies us. God makes us holy, and He says we are to hallow Him.

That is, we are to recognize his holiness and his sovereignty. Now, let me just quote one. And then I'm going to ask you to turn to Jeremiah 23. Just go ahead and turn to Jeremiah 23. And as you're turning there, I'm going to quote Nehemiah chapter 13, verse 17. Nehemiah said, "Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?" So it's not just God who can be profaned. It's the Sabbath day that can be profaned. You're going to find that anything

related to God can be profaned. Now in Jeremiah 23, look, if you would please, at verse 11. Jeremiah 23 and verse 11.

I want you to pay close attention to this one. He says, "For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord." Both prophet and priests are profane. Wow. So how in the world did the prophet and the priests become profane? Well, in order to answer that, you need to turn right over to the book of Ezekiel chapter 22 and look, if you would, at verse 26. Ezekiel 22 verse 26: God said, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." Now before I tell you about this verse, I want to give you two passages that relate to the responsibility or the responsibilities of the priests. Now, we know the prophet was supposed to declare the Word of God.

And a lot of times those false prophets are those who claim to be God's prophet and proclaim their own dreams and their own desires and not the Word of God. And God cursed them, especially in Jeremiah 23. But here are two verses. First of all, Leviticus 10 and verse 10: He tells the priests, "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." So it was the duty, it was a responsibility, it was the obligation of the priests to put a difference between that which is holy and that which is not holy, that which is clean and that which is not clean. Okay?

The second verse I want to give you is Malachi 2:7: “For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” Stop and think about that. It was not only the prophet's responsibility, but also the priest's responsibility, to know and teach the law of God, because they had to distinguish between the holy and unholy, the clean and the unclean. The priest is a messenger of the Lord of hosts, a messenger of God. He should have the truth and speak the truth.

But in Ezekiel 22:26, the priests had profaned God's holy things. They put no difference between the holy and profane; they showed no difference between the unclean and the clean. They had hidden their eyes from God's sabbaths, and He was profaned among them.

The priest held a special office. It was a holy office, and they were duty-bound to reverence the law and to function according to every law, rule, and regulation that God laid down. They were responsible to preserve His law, statutes, and ordinances from fraud, deceit, misuse, and abuse. Yet they wrested the law and truth of God to teach oppression and impiety, and to speak that which was not true, accurate, or biblical.

They made it mean what they desired. This is what happened to the Pharisees in the New Testament. They thought they kept the law of God, yet they perverted and twisted it so that it meant something God never meant it to mean. That is why in Matthew 5 our Lord says, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time... but I say unto you.” Over and over He says that. This is what they taught, but here is the truth. The messenger of God was to speak the truth; that is for sure.

They profaned God's holy things. They treated God with absolute contempt, as if He were not important, and in doing so they despised Him. Turn now to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. Malachi chapter 1, beginning with verse 6, shows how God confronts these priests.

“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”

God charged them with despising His name, and they asked, “Wherein have we despised your name?” Here is how: “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible.” In other words, “I don't want to have to do this. This is tiring. This is old. This is something we do all the time. We get tired of it. It's the same old thing over and over and over.”

Look also at verse 8: “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil?” All the sacrifices had to be without blemish. Yet God said, “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will

he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts."

God said, "Slay one of those oxen or young calves, and give your governor a piece of steak full of boils and sores. Even though you cooked it, some of the pus can still be seen. Let us see him eat it. Will he accept that at your hand?" They were treating God worse than they would treat their governor.

He said in verse 9: "And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts." In verse 10: "Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." You would not even shut the doors or kindle a fire if they needed to be shut or kindled. What were they doing?

They were not placing any difference between that which was holy and that which was unholy, between that which was clean and that which was unclean, or between that which was common and that which was holy. Thus they were profaning not just God and the name of God, but everything about God. He said, "You've hidden your eyes from my Sabbaths." You were not keeping His Sabbath, and you were hindering other people who were not keeping it. You were despising Him.

Since these priests dishonored, disobeyed, despised, condemned, and profaned the name of God, why would God put up with such priests? Why would God not judge them? The truth of the matter is, He did judge them.

Here is a good question I am going to ask you. Answer in your mind: Does He still have priests like that? The first answer you would give me is, "No, we do not have priests like that today because that is the Old Testament, with Old Testament sacrifices and all this kind of thing." I am going to tell you something: We do have priests like that today. I am not talking about the Roman Catholic priests. They have their problems as well.

You say, "What in the world are you talking about?" I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Revelation, chapter 1, and look at

verse 6. In fact, let us read verses 5 and 6: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” What has Jesus Christ done for His children? He has made us kings and priests.

In Revelation chapter 5, verse 10, He says, “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Again, He has made us kings and priests.

By the way, I am not going to take the time today to show you that we should function as priests. What did the priest do? They made intercession for the people. Do we not pray for one another, for our children, and for our spouses? We are to make intercession as priests. What about sacrifice? Do we offer sacrifice? Yes. What does the Bible say? “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” We have been made priests unto Him. Since you are a Christian and a priest, what kind of priest are you? What kind of priest are you?

Now I want you to listen. I want to show you the word "profane" in the New Testament. I'm going to give you several passages in which the word "profane" is used. And in each instance, it is from the same Greek word, "bebelos." Okay. Now "bebelos" is a word that is made up of two words. I'm going to just give you one word right now. "Bebelos" comes from "belos"—"belos"—which refers to a threshold. So when we come in a door we step over the threshold. Wow. Okay. I'll finish the word a little bit later, but I'm going to show you the scriptures and you're going to see that profanity not only deals with persons, but actions and attitudes and sayings and fables.

Profanity in the New Testament

And it refers to that which is unhallowed, or unsanctified, and that which is common and public. So, turn in your Bibles, if you would, first of all, to the book of 1 Timothy 1, verse 9. 1 Timothy 1, verse 9. Watch carefully. He says this: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers

of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." Oh, wait a minute. Did you hear what I just read? It's not just these wicked deeds that are profane, but anything that is contrary to sound doctrine is profane.

Wow. Look, if you would, in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 7. 1 Timothy 4 and verse 7: He says, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." Now if anything contrary to the truth is profanity, here it is: an old wives' fable, an old wives' tale. It's not true. You may have heard it all of your life, but it's just not true. It's a fable. It's a lie. Therefore he says it's profane.

Look in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 20. 1 Timothy chapter 6 in verse 20: Here it is again. He says, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." Now look at this. "Avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." Vain babblings, that's just talking and beating your gums. It's not true. It's not worth anything. It is absolutely worthless. You know, I thought about this as I read this verse. We could read it like this: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoid profane and vain babblings from Anthony Fauci and from CNN and from all these people who are just babbling off and have no idea what they're talking about." And when science says the Bible is not true, that's vain babbling. That is profanity.

In 2 Timothy 2:16, he says, “But shun profane and vain babblings.” Why? “For they will increase unto more ungodliness.” You can see that profanity refers to a lot of things. It is not just cussing; it is running your mouth when you are babbling, going forth, and spouting out fables and untruths.

Hebrews 12:16 says, “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” Now, wait a minute. Esau is called a fornicator, and he is called a profane person. Dealing with the word “fornicator” is another sermon, but notice that he is called a profane person. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that Esau cursed, cussed, as we would say, or took the Lord’s name in vain. Yet God calls him a profane person.

What was it that made Esau profane? Genesis 25:29 says, “And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Now, when Esau said, “I am at the point to die: what profit shall this birthright do to me?” Dinah, you have been a nurse for a long time. Have you seen people at the point of death sit down and eat, then get up, walk away, and do their own thing? They are not at the point of death. They may be hungry or tired, but you do not need to walk away if you are at the point of death. Here is what made him profane in one sense of the word: he despised spiritual things. He despised his birthright.

The birthright, number one, included him being the head of the family, since Esau was the eldest, the oldest son. That meant he would have taken over after Jacob died. He would have been the head of the family.

Secondly, the birthright included a double portion of the inheritance. The oldest son got a double portion because it was his responsibility to take care of his parents when they were elderly and could not take care of themselves. He got a portion for himself and a portion for them.

Thirdly, the birthright included the lineage of the Messiah. Esau despised this birthright and sold it for a bowl of red lentils. He was a profane person.

The Meaning of Profane

There was more to his profanity in the sense that he violated the fifth commandment, which says, "Honour thy father and thy mother." In fact, he acted contrary to his father and mother deliberately, premeditatedly, on purpose.

Look in Genesis chapter 28, beginning with verse 6: "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; and Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."

Whenever Esau saw these Canaanite women did not please Isaac and Rebekah his father, and Jacob had obeyed and gone after a wife whom his father had commanded him to take, Esau purposely and deliberately violated what he knew to be the will of his father and mother. He was a profane individual.

One can be profane and never curse. In order to be profane, all you have to do is live as if God does not exist and as if God has never spoken. Profanity is far more than filthy and foul language. Profanity is a lifestyle—a life that ignores, forgets, overlooks, and despises that which is right and holy, cares little about God, treats Him contemptuously, and thereby despises Him.

How was Esau profane? Our English word "profane" actually comes from the Latin "profanum." "Profanum" is made up of two words: "pro," a preposition meaning "to" or "toward," and "fanum," meaning "temple." So the word "profane" means "to or toward the temple." If we are looking to or toward the temple, what does that mean? It means we are outside the temple, not in it. Thus, a profane person, based upon the Latin word, is outside the temple and outside the presence of God, so to speak—not in reality, but according to his view. God has no control over him. He lives his life away from God, away from His word, and away from His truth, counting God as someone common and not worth listening to.

Every one of these verses I read earlier came from the same Greek word, "bebelos." The word "belos" meant threshold, and "bebelos" is made up of two Greek words. The other is "basis," from "baino," meaning to walk or step away. Therefore, "bebelos" literally means to cross over the threshold, to step over the threshold, and to go outside the temple.

What is a profane person, whether described by the Latin term or the Greek term? He is someone who walks away, desecrates anything holy, despises God, refuses to submit to Him, forgets His law, commands, statutes, and ordinances, and treats Him with contempt.

Application: What Kind of Priest Are You?

Whenever you see the Roman numerals LXX, designating 70, that refers to the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. In the Septuagint, "bebelos" is used to speak of the desecration and profanation of the name of God, His day, His land, His covenant, and His priests.

So here is my question again: What kind of priest are you? What kind of life are you living? Are you inside the temple or outside the temple? Are you on the outside looking in, or on the inside looking out? Those who are not profane, as priests, put on the spectacles of Scripture and look through them, interpreting everything in light of the word, will, and purpose of God. They acknowledge Him in every area of their life.

They are the ones who make a distinction between that which is holy and that which is unholy, that which is clean and that which is not clean, based upon the Word of God. As God's priests, we have to learn to view everything through the glasses of Scripture, the spectacles of God's Word.

Let me tie this together and make some applications. First, I hope you understand that it is simple, easy, and natural for a fallen man to be profane. That is what he is by nature. All you have to do is ignore God or think wrong thoughts of God. When you manufacture a god in your mind that is not the God of Scripture, you are being profane. When you think thoughts about God that are not Scripture, you are being profane. When you refuse to obey God, you count Him as common. You are being profane.

When you refuse to treat God as God, worship Him as God, pray unto Him as God, and praise Him as God, you are being profane. Fallen man by nature is profane, and many Christians in their ignorance live a life of profanity.

Profanity is not simply curse words or using the name of God flippantly and lightly. It is a life lived outside God's Word, law, principles, and direction. Profanity is accomplished by ignoring and forgetting God because we do not count Him important enough to consult concerning our plans, purposes, and desires. We simply ignore Him and treat Him as if He were not God.

Isaiah 53 begins: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” I want you to look at the first three verses. It is verse 3 that I really want to deal with. “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

First of all, this of course refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was a common-looking man. This is what this is saying. He had no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there was no beauty that we should desire him. There was nothing that stood out spectacularly about Jesus Christ. He did not walk around with a halo glowing over his head. He looked just like an ordinary man.

Now look at verse 3: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” The word “esteemed” means to consider. It means to pay attention to. It means to think about. “He is despised and rejected of men”; we did not even think he was worth thinking about.

It is a waste of our time to contemplate Jesus Christ. It is a waste of our time to read the Scripture. It is a waste of our time to serve God. That is the way those wicked priests were in Malachi chapter 1: We esteem him not. We do not think that he is worthy of our time. We do not think that his word is worthy to be read and to be studied.

We do not think that He is worthy of our prayers, meditation upon His truth, and communication with Him. We esteem Him not. We are being profane, living outside the temple as if God has not spoken, as if God does not exist.

I want to give you one last Scripture. I preached from this passage a few weeks back and want to call it to your attention: Jeremiah 2, verse 32. God asked, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride

her attire?" The answer would be no. Then He says this: "Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." What does that mean? They are living profane lives.

Christians can be profane, and unhappily, too many live a profane life because they can go days without prayer, days without reading the Scripture, days without praising Him, days without thanking Him, days without even saying, "Lord, just thank You for life and health." Profanity is cursing God. Living a life without Him is profane. It is cursing God. Refusing to acknowledge His Word, His sovereign authority and power is profanity, because it does not esteem Him as God and as sovereign.

What kind of a priest are you? Are you inside the temple or outside of the temple? Do not live a profane life. Live, as the Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians chapter 3 and verse 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and mercy, and we pray, Lord, that You would indeed make us holy. May we not have profane lives, may we not live profanely, and certainly, Lord, may we not profane Thy holy name, because Thou alone art God, and beside Thee there is none other. Give us Your grace and mercy, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Cursing God

Part Two of Two

Introduction and Review

Exodus chapter 20, verse 7, says, “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.”

Last week I began the first part of this message on cursing God, and this week I want to finish it. I pointed out that there is a difference between what we would call biblical curses and humanistic curses. We are forbidden to curse except to enunciate and proclaim the curses that God has proclaimed in His Word. Scripture tells us in Colossians chapter 4 and verse 6 that our speech is to be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how to answer every man.

There is a good reason, based upon Scripture, why our yeas should be yea and our nays should be nay. Our Lord said, “Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of the great King; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by the hair of your head, because

you can't make one hair white or black. But let your yeas be yea, and your nays be nay; for whatsoever cometh more of that is evil." Clearly, there is a reason why we should say what we mean and mean what we say.

Biblical curses are found in Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 29, as well as in many other passages of Scripture. The Apostle Paul enunciated a curse in Galatians 1, verses 8 and 9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Twice he used the word "accursed." It is the Greek word anathema, meaning to be doomed, damned, and set apart for certain destruction.

Paul did this again in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 22: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—that is, let him be accursed and doomed and damned at our Lord's returning. In the first message I dealt with the word "profane," pointing out that you can be profane very easily and never curse.

All one has to do to be profane is live as though God does not exist or has not spoken. Profanity is therefore far more than filthy and foul language. It is basically a life that ignores, forgets, overlooks, and despises that which is right and holy.

Our English word "profane" comes from the Latin. It is made up of two words: pro and fanum. Pro is a preposition meaning "to" or "toward," and fanum is the word for "temple." If you are outside and are to and toward the temple, it simply means that you are not inside. You are outside the temple, and therefore outside of God, outside of God's law, and outside of God's direction.

The Greek word is bebelos, made up of two words. The first is belos, which refers to a threshold. Every door has a threshold. The second part is basis, which comes from the verb baino, meaning "to walk" or "to step." Thus, bebelos means to walk over or step over the threshold; it means, basically, to go outside. Anyone who treats God as if He is not God is a profane person.

We looked particularly last week at Esau. Esau was classified as a profane person, yet Scripture never tells us that he cursed or swore.

God's name and honor, God's service, God's ordinances, and God's worship may be polluted as well as profaned.

There is a close connection between the words "profane" and "polluted." Many times in Scripture, they come from the same Hebrew word, kalal. However, different Hebrew words are also translated as "polluted" in our Bibles. There is therefore a difference between profanation and pollution.

Profanation vs. Pollution

Consider briefly how to discern that difference. Every sinner is under the condemnation of God. We have broken His law, violated His law, and transgressed His commandments; therefore, we are under the penalty of the broken law. It is true that Scripture says Christ has redeemed us from the law—that is, from the curse of the law—because we were under it and were therefore considered condemned, or under condemnation.

Sin not only condemns; it also pollutes. In order for you and me to be right with God, we need at least two things. First, we need our condemnation dealt with. That is taken care of in justification, where God looks at us through the person and work of Jesus Christ and pronounces us innocent in light of the law. He does so because Christ bore our sins in His own body, as the Scripture tells us. God imputes our sins to Jesus Christ and His righteousness to us.

Pollution of the Temple in the Old Testament

Justification takes care of our condemnation, but sanctification takes care of our pollution. We are not only condemned as sinners; we are polluted as sinners. We need both justification and sanctification as well. First, consider the word “pollution,” its significance, and how it applies to us today. Then consider exactly what it means when God says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

The word “profane” and the word “pollute,” or “pollution,” are sometimes translated from the same Hebrew word, kalal. At other times, different Hebrew words refer to pollution. One of the main words is tamei. It means that which is impure, that which is unclean,

that which is defiled, and that which is polluted. We need to look in Scripture at some of these words so we can see how they are used.

In 2 Kings 23:16, we see what King Josiah did. This is a very interesting passage, especially when we know the background: “And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent and took the bones of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.”

The man of God from Judah who proclaimed these words is recorded in 1 Kings 13:2. Between 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23, about three hundred years had passed. The Word of God tells us very plainly that time is not going to change the eternal decree of God, and nothing that man can do can stop God from fulfilling His decree.

And that which He has promised and prophesied. So those who are opposed to God and will not follow God shall be polluted themselves and destroyed just like this false altar was.

In 2 Chronicles chapter 36, verse 14, the Bible says, “Moreover all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.” It was not just the priests. It was also the people who transgressed and polluted the house of the Lord. Of course, transgression is an abomination according to this verse, and it is also a pollution. But the Bible says they polluted the house of the Lord.

So how in the world would you pollute the temple? That is the house of the Lord. How would you pollute the temple? You could pollute the temple in a number of ways. You could pollute the temple, number one, by adding to it that which God has not ordained. You could also pollute the temple by changing it or altering it and putting something there that is contrary to God, contrary to God’s ordination, or contrary to God’s arrangement. There is a real application of this. So how then did the priests and the people pollute the temple? Consider 2 Kings chapter 16, beginning with verse 10.

You are going to find what King Ahaz did, who was a wicked, wicked rascal. “And King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus. And King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, according to the workmanship thereof.” The king was in Damascus, in Syria. He saw this pagan altar and liked it. So he sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar and the pattern of it. “And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made it against King Ahaz came from Damascus.” He went ahead and made it very quickly. When the king came from Damascus, the king saw the altar, approached the altar, and offered thereon.

This is something that God has not ordained that is in the temple. Notice what the Bible says: “And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of the peace offerings upon the altar. And he brought also the brazen altar, which was before the Lord, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north side of the altar.”

What he has done is put his altar in a certain place and moved the altar of the Lord. “And King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king’s burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by.”

“Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.” What in the world has he done? He has taken a pagan altar and put it in the temple, and at the same time removed an altar which God had ordained and put in a proper place. So he has basically defiled the temple.

Look in 2 Kings chapter 23. We are talking about pollution, and about how to defile the temple. Look at verse 4: “And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order,”

And the keepers of the door brought forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven. And he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

So they had in the temple all of these instruments and all of these things worshipping Baal and the grove, which was an Asherah, a pagan goddess, a sex goddess. And now the king is saying, "You get all this trash out of the temple."

"And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the"

"And he broke down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the Lord, by the temple, where the women wove hangings for the grove." So they had the sodomites and the immoral Asherah people worship all right there at the temple. And God says, "Look, you have polluted my house," and they added to it.

But that was not all. "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire." They had horses in the house of the Lord, or at the entering into the house of the Lord, which they had given to the sun. These chariots of the sun they burned with fire.

Now I want you to understand how easy it is to pollute the house of God. All you have to do is add something to it that God has not ordained or decreed. You can move something from the orderly arrangement that God has ordained. In other words, you try to make

things the way you like them, the way you prefer, so that they will be easy on you.

Exodus 20:25 shows how particular this is: “And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.” God said you cannot add anything to what He tells you. If you are going to make Him an altar of stone, take the stones as they are and build Him an altar. If you lift your tool upon it, you have polluted it. Man is not to add to, change, or alter anything that God has ordained.

Stop and think with me: anything men do to the church—anything they add to it, change, alter, or make it into something that it should not be—is polluting the temple of God. We pollute the church by adding unconverted people to it. We pollute the church by giving worldly entertainment in the church. We pollute the church by idolatry, because anytime we are doing anything contrary to God, it is idolatry. We pollute the church by self-serving programs and self-serving acts. You say, “Brother Weaver, how in the world did you get from the temple to the church?” It is very easy.

The Church and Believers as God's Temple

In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, beginning with verse 16, God says through the Apostle Paul: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

Now, in verses 16 and 17, he is talking about the church. How do I know that? If we go back to verse 8, he says: “Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” Then, in verse 9: “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” He tells us, then, that we are the building of God. Going back to verse 16, he says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

There are two Greek words for temple. The first is hieron, and it simply refers to the building or structure. I could say, “There stands a hieron.” But the second Greek word is naos. The word naos refers to the Most Holy Place. In the earthly temple, there was the court of the people, the holy place, and the Most Holy Place. Naos refers to the Most Holy Place, where our Lord manifests Himself, where His presence is. You say, “Now wait a minute. What do you mean, where our Lord’s presence is?” Do you not remember in Matthew 18 what He said?

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." So the church, basically, is the temple of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22 says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." He is saying once again that we believers are the church, and we are the temple of God. The church is not merely a gathering of people; believers are built together as an habitation of God through the Spirit.

First Corinthians 3 talks about the church, the people of God being God's building and God's husbandry. But when we come to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, we are talking about individual Christians: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Do you realize that we sin when we treat our bodies as our own? If you are a Christian, your body is not yours, and your spirit is not yours. Jesus Christ bought you. When he says in verse 19 that you are the temple of God, it is the word naos. In other words, we individuals are the temple of God, and when we come together as a church, we are also the temple of God. Thus Scripture speaks both of the gathered church as God's temple and of the individual believer's body as the temple of the Holy Ghost.

There are many ways to pollute the temple, as I pointed out earlier. You can pollute the temple of your body.

You can also pollute the temple of the church. One thing that hinders the advancement of God's kingdom and the advancement of the church is the pollution that's in the assembly. When you think about all the fussing and fighting, all the ill will, all the heartache that goes on, and all the unforgiving spirits, that is not just true in a local body. It is true in our own bodies as well.

When we talk about polluting the temple, it does not matter whether we are talking about food, fornication, or idolatry. In fact, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the way that he is talking about polluting your body is through fornication. I want to show you from the Scripture this truth about pollution. Pollution is real in our day and time as well as in the Old Testament.

Pollution Through Sin and Idolatry

In Ezekiel chapter 4, verse 14, we read: "Then said I, Ah Lord God! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth."

God had told Ezekiel to do something, and he was to be a sign to the children of Israel. God said, "Here's what you're going to have to do. You're going to lie on your side for a certain length of time, and you're going to lie on the other side for a certain length of time. You're going to pitch a siege against Jerusalem, and you're going to picture everything that I am going to do to Jerusalem." He was to eat his food little by little and cook it with the dung of man. That is when Ezekiel said, "Lord, my soul has not been polluted. I have not done anything unclean. I've not done anything impure like that."

God says in the passage, "Okay, I'll give you cow's dung. You may use cow's dung to cook your food." If you think that is strange, it is not, because that is how the American Indians usually cook with the dung of buffalo, and a lot of the folks in China and Mongolia do the same thing.

Ezekiel said, “I just don’t want to be polluted.” In Ezekiel 14:11, he says, “That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me,

neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord God."

When we sin, when we transgress, we become polluted. He said that Israel may go no more astray from Him, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions. So sin pollutes, period. This is the central point: sin does not merely violate a rule; it pollutes the sinner.

In Ezekiel 20:26, God says concerning the people that sinned against Him, "And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord." God was talking about judging these people, and so they were polluting God. They would not listen to Him. And so now God, in turn, in judgment, polluted them as well.

Ezekiel 20:30 says, "For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel?" Then verse 31 says, "Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?" The people polluted themselves with their idols and committed whoredom after their abominations.

Although the Bible does deal with physical adultery, in the way that we ordinarily think of it, and physical whoredom, probably about 98 or 99% of the time, especially in the Old Testament, those words refer to idolatry. When it speaks of their going a whoring or committing adultery, they were leaving Him and going after false gods and false idols. Their unfaithfulness to God was described in the language of adultery because they had turned from Him to other gods.

Ezekiel 23:17 says, "And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them." Again, this is idolatry, because Israel went after the gods of the Assyrians and the gods of the Babylonians.

Ezekiel 36:18 says, “Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it.” Let me mention something to you, and show you this from the Bible. I hope you are already putting things together. You can pollute yourself. You can pollute the name of God. You can pollute the temple of God, which is your body, and the church. But you can also pollute the land. Your society—even more—you can also pollute your own nation. You say, “How in the world does that happen?” Look back in your Bibles to the book of Numbers: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. Numbers chapter 35, and let us begin reading there with verse 30 through verse 34. God says, “Whoso killeth any person,”

The murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.

Notice that the entire land can be polluted by not executing those who merit the death penalty. I have no idea how many people are on death row in this country. Some have been there for twenty or thirty years; some will die there without ever being executed. God says that when someone murders, the blood that was shed pollutes the land, and the only way the land can be cleansed is by the blood of him that shed it. The Bible actually demands what you and I would call capital punishment.

Some of you probably heard in the news about the man who was executed in South Carolina, I think it was on Friday, by firing squad—the first time that had happened in fifteen years in South Carolina. I watched a little of the news on the internet, and it was so awful that I could not watch it. Someone was saying that the Old Testament demanded the death penalty, but in the New Testament

there was forgiveness. No. God does not change. God still demands the death penalty for the murderer. So He says, “It pollutes the land.”

Here is the interesting thing. In verse 33, “So shall ye not pollute the land” is the Hebrew word kalal. Then, “For blood it defileth the land” is also the Hebrew word kalal. Thus pollute and defile come from the same Hebrew word. However, in verse 34, “Defile not therefore the land” is a totally different word, tamei, which I mentioned earlier for pollution. The words defile and pollute are basically the same.

Polluting the name of God, polluting the temple of God, and polluting the land that God has given us are all forms of cursing God. You can curse God by profanation, by pollution, and by taking His name in vain. When you do these things, you are outside the temple. You have crossed the threshold and gone out, totally saying, “God doesn’t matter. His Word doesn’t matter.”

The Meaning of Taking God's Name in Vain

Consider the meaning of taking God’s name in vain. Exodus chapter 20 and verse 7 says, “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.” What is taking His name in vain? For most professing Christians, taking God’s name in vain is cussing. If you are college educated, you might call it cursing, but cussing and cursing are basically the same. That is the limit of their thinking. They think, “Because I have not taken God’s name and attached it to a slang word, I have not taken His name in vain.”

Dear friend, you are not thinking biblically and scripturally if you think that. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” is a negative. Every negative has a positive, and every positive has a negative. The positive is, “Thou shalt take the name of the Lord thy God in righteousness and in truth.”

The third commandment's negative forbids all false swearing and all false oaths, including swearing by the names of false gods. Someone says, “Well, I'll swear by Zeus.” That is forbidden in the third commandment. He is a false god. You cannot swear by

anything that is false, not even a false power. Our swearing should be done in His name.

You say, “Wait a minute. The Scripture says, ‘Swear not at all.’” Well, that is true. You are not to swear at all in your own being, but you are to swear by His name. Leviticus 19:12 says, “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.” “Ye shall not swear by my name falsely” means that you shall swear by His name truthfully. If you swear by His name falsely, you are profaning the name of thy God. False swearing is not merely an empty expression; when His name is invoked falsely, His name is profaned.

He says, “I am the Lord.” Deuteronomy 6:13 says, “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” Thou shalt swear by His name: no false swearing, but swearing in truth, in holiness, and in righteousness. This is joined to fearing the Lord and serving Him. Deuteronomy 10:20 says, “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.” Thus the commandment forbids false oaths while requiring that any swearing by His name be truthful and holy.

Now let me tell you that God swears by His own name. I will show you that. In Isaiah chapter 45, look at verses 22 and 23. There is an interesting story attached to Isaiah chapter 45 and verse 22. I read it years and years ago. Look at verse 22 before going to verse 23. In verse 22,

He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." I have always remembered this verse because of the story I read. It was under this verse that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was converted. He was walking to church during a humongous snowstorm, and even the pastor could not get there. When Spurgeon arrived, only a handful of people were present. An old deacon stood up. He was not a preacher and was not prepared to preach, so he opened the Bible to Isaiah 45:22 and said something like this: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Look unto me. Any fool can look. Just lift up your eyes and look. Any imbecile can look. Just lift up your eyes and look." Spurgeon said that he carried on like that for five or ten minutes, and finally said, "And finally I looked, and the

Lord saved me." Here he was, a young boy, and God saved him; he turned out to be one of the greatest preachers that ever lived. But it was based on this verse.

Look what God says: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." They will swear that He is indeed the one true and living God, and that beside Him there is none else, and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. They will swear to Him.

Hebrews 6:13 says, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself." God swears by Himself because He is the epitome of holiness, righteousness, and truth. Abraham received the oath of God because God swore by Himself.

So let me put it to you like this: all false swearing and all untruthful swearing is forbidden. It is also forbidden to swear by any false god or any false power. Just stop and think about this.

Most of you have probably said it. You will say something like, “Well, I will tell you what I will do.” What are you doing? You are swearing by yourself. In one sense, you are not using the word “swear,” but in essence you are saying, “I’ll fix you. I’ll do what I’m going to do.” You are swearing; you are telling somebody what you are going to do.

As James says, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

It is just that simple. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” What does that mean? “Take” is a very important word. The Hebrew word is nasa, and it means to lift up, bear up, carry, lift up, and exalt.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”—that is a negative. We are not to take the name of the Lord in vain. I will explain vanity in a minute. But the positive is this: I shall not take

the name of the Lord in vain. How do you avoid taking the name of the Lord in vain? By grounding every thought, action, attitude, and disposition upon God and His Word.

We take His name in vain when we deny His reality. God is the One who determines what reality really is. Stop and think about all the stupidity that has gone on in this country for the last seven or eight years.

Someone says, "Well, I was born a man, but I think I'm a woman." That is the height of blasphemy. What you are saying is, "I don't live in reality. I live in my own fantasy world. I determine what reality is." Stop and think. They are taking the name of God in vain. They are saying, "I'm not the way God made me. I'm not what God made me." It is just that simple.

We take His name in vain when we deny His reality, when we deny His law word, when we live as if He does not exist, or that He has not spoken, or as if He has no authority to tell us what to do. God has every right to tell us what to do because God is our Creator. We are the creature. He is the Master, and we are the servant. If we are saved, He is the Father, and we are the son. You are taking His name in vain when you do not live in His reality according to His law and according to His word.

What does the word "vain" mean? The Hebrew word is shav, which means emptiness, vanity, falsehood, lying, worthlessness of conduct. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"—in worthless conduct, worthless living, vain living, empty living. Here you are as a Christian, professing to be His child, and then living as if He does not exist. You remember when I preached from Jeremiah chapter 2, where God says, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number."

When we forget God, forget to study, forget to read His Word, forget to pray, or forget to obey, we are taking His name in vain. It is very easy for a Christian to take the name of the Lord in vain. It means that you are living an empty profession, a worthless profession. You are living in disregard of Him.

Illustration from 2 Kings 17

Consider this illustration from 2 Kings 17. I wish there were time to read the entire chapter, and you should read it when you get home. The children of Israel had forsaken God and His law, and had begun following men, their power, and their statutes. Verse 7: “For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.” In other words, they ceased obeying God and started obeying man.

"And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree."

You can read this and see how wicked they really were. So what God did was this: He sent the king of Assyria, and the king of Assyria defeated them. He took a lot of the Israelites and put them over in Assyria. Then he took a lot of these other heathen people and populated Samaria with them.

When you read this chapter, you will find that the people had their own false gods. The Lord sent lions and slew some of them. So they sent to the king of Assyria and said, "The lions are slaying us because we know not the manner of the God of the land."

Remember the manner of the God of the land. Jeroboam made the two golden calves. This is why God destroyed them. That was the initial thing: they made the two golden calves. The priests that were there were priests of the calves; they were not priests of God. The king of Assyria then sent one of these pagan priests, supposedly God's priest, back to teach them the manner of the God of the land.

In other words, they were individuals who thought they were far more than one God—polytheists. So look at this. This is astounding. "And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim,

and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord."

Note that they had no respect for God. “Therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.”

Now watch this. “Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.” Now watch verse 32: “So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.” Here it is: “They feared the Lord, and served their own gods.”

“After the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.” How in the world can you fear God and serve your own gods? Because you have an empty profession. You do not really know Him. You do not really fear Him, because if you fear Him, you obey Him. You remember I preached two messages, twin truths: fear and obedience. Yes. So the Bible said, “So they feared the Lord, and served their own gods.”

What did God say? Look in verse 34: “Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the Lord, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and

commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel." God said they do not fear Me because they do not obey Me. So they said they feared the Lord, but then they turned around and served their own gods. Let me tell you something: you may take God's name in vain and never curse. You may take God's name in vain and never utter his

You can take His name in vain and never use His name as a byword or use His name flippantly. You can do it simply by ignoring God. When you take His name in vain, you are cursing Him. When you pollute His temple, you are cursing Him. When you profane His name, you are cursing Him. All you have to do to curse God is fail to acknowledge that He is the absolute sovereign of heaven and earth, and that He has the absolute right to tell you how to live.

Applications and Conclusion

A profane life, a polluted life, and a life that takes God's name and carries God's name in a worthless, empty, and useless manner are all forms of cursing God. You can curse God by profaning His name, by polluting the temple, or by taking His name in vain. So the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," deals with God's name, God's office, and God's position. He is the sovereign, He is the King, He is the Lawgiver, and He is the ruler of all. Anytime that you live in such a way that denies the reality of God, you are taking His name in vain; you are carrying His name in vain.

God defines reality. His definition of reality is reality, not ours. We want to live in our own fantasy world, but it does not exist. Our world does not exist; only His world exists. When you ground your thinking, your actions, and your conduct in anything other than the Word of God, you are denying God's reality. You are denying Him, and you are taking His name in vain. Clearly, there are many Christians who can and do profane the name of God, pollute the temple of God, and carry His name in vain. All are forms of cursing God.

"Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people." If it is wrong to curse our own physical rulers, how much worse is it to curse the sovereign God of heaven and earth? We do not wish to profane His

name, pollute His name, or carry His name in vain. Our lives are to demonstrate His reality.

The profanation, pollution, and carrying God's name in vain all go together. The question was raised whether taking the Lord's name in vain also includes lightly esteeming God. It does. It is not a matter of deceiving Him; it is lightly esteeming Him, not giving Him the esteem that is due. The third commandment deals with His person, His office, and His position. Anytime we do not esteem Him as He is in Scripture, we are indeed profaning His name, polluting His name, and taking His name in vain. That is for sure. He is to be esteemed highly because He is God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and Your mercy. We ask for Your truth, and ask, Lord, that You would help us not to profane Your name, not to pollute Your name, and certainly, Lord, not to carry it emptily and worthlessly. We ask that our lives will be brought into greater conformity to Your Word, and that You would be honored and glorified. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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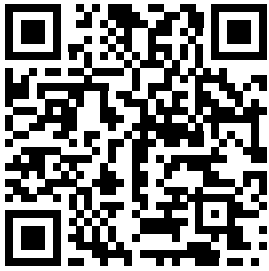
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