

# DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

MICA (P) 231/07/2011



SEP  
Lord's Days 36 - 39

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 36

**Question 99.** What is required in the third commandment?

*Answer.* That we, not only by cursing or [\[a\]](#) perjury, but also by [\[b\]](#) rash swearing, must not profane or abuse the name of [\[c\]](#) God; nor by silence or connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and, briefly, that we use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence; so that He may be rightly [\[d\]](#) confessed and [\[e\]](#) worshipped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.

**Question 100.** Is then the profaning of God's name, by swearing and cursing, so heinous a sin, that His wrath is kindled against those who do not endeavor, as much as in them lies, to prevent and forbid such cursing and swearing?

*Answer.* It undoubtedly is, [\[f\]](#) for there is no sin greater or more provoking to God, than the profaning of His name; and therefore He has commanded this [\[g\]](#) sin to be punished with death.

[a]: [Lev. 24:11](#); [Lev. 19:12](#); [Mat. 5:37](#); [Lev. 5:4](#)

[b]: [Isa. 45:23,24](#)

[c]: [Mat. 10:32](#)

[d]: [1Tim. 2:8](#)

[e]: [1Cor. 3:16,17](#)

[f]: [Lev. 5:1](#)

[g]: [Lev. 24:15](#)

**September 3 – LD 36, Day 1: The Greatness of God’s Name  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Read: Ezekiel 36:16-28

Exodus 20:7: *“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.”*

Such is the greatness of the name of the one only true God that it must always be held in highest honour. The third commandment does not only forbid the profane abuse of God’s holy name. It condemns the vain use of God’s name. As we must understand, that makes the prohibition of the third commandment very broad!

Eze 36 confirms that especially in verses 20-23. God’s sinful people were rebuked sharply for their sinful walk of life, which God condemned by saying, *“they profaned my holy name.”* As those who bore the name of the children of God, the people of Jehovah, their sinful walk profaned His name. The Lord told His people that He would sanctify His great name by cleansing them, with the consequence being this: Eze 36:31 *“Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.”* That is how they had profaned God’s name.

That means positively that our calling is to use the holy name of God with fear and reverence always. That is a calling that reaches into every aspect of our life and everything that we do and say.

Remember, this commandment comes to us as the redeemed of Jehovah, those who have been delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and who therefore desire to serve God in thankfulness for Who He is and what He has done for us in Christ Jesus. Do you know Him in that way? That must be our perspective as we consider the calling of the third commandment.

**September 4 – LD 36, Day 2: The Revelation of God  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 8:1a: *"O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"*

At the foundation of the third commandment is the truth that the great God has revealed Himself to us by His name. Frequently in Scripture, emphasis is given to the name of God. To sing Psalm 81 is to express: How excellent is Jehovah, our Lord, as He has revealed Himself in all the works of His hands.

We read in Psalm 75:1, *"Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."* There again the *name* of God denotes Him and His presence. It is the revelation of His divine Being.

To mention yet another text from the Psalms, Psalm 115:1: *"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."* Again, we who are the children of God acknowledge that all glory belongs to God alone.

That God's name reveals Himself is also evident in the New Testament with the name *Jesus Christ*. Think, for example, of John 1:12, which speaks of those elect whose spiritual birth would be seen not of men, but of God: *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:"* Clearly, the reference to believing on His name is a reference to believing on Him. God's name *JESUS CHRIST* is the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

By His names God reveals Himself to us as the one only true God. He makes Himself known as the Creator. He alone is the Sustainer and Preserver of all His creation. To His people in particular, He reveals Himself in His name *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, the *I AM*. Malachi explains that name so beautifully in Malachi 3:6, *"For I am the LORD (i.e. I am Jehovah), I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* God reveals Himself in the name *Jehovah* as the God Who is unchangeably faithful to His covenant people. He will never fail us who are His. God is God alone.

**September 5 – LD 36, Day 3: The Majesty of God**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 111:9: “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name.”

Repeatedly God reveals Himself in the Bible as the Holy One. He is the One set apart. Because He is the Almighty, the Lord Who as the Creator, rules over all, He is also totally consecrated to Himself. He sovereignly governs all things to accomplish the purpose of His own will and the glory of His own name.

The Lord is clothed with honour and majesty (Psalm 104:1). His own perfections or attributes are also His name. They belong to His own Being. Some of those attributes are so strongly tied to His own Being, as it were, that no other creature can even bear them. For example, His eternity (Psalm 90:2) and His unchangeableness (Malachi 3:6), are so powerfully intertwined with Him that they belong to no created Being. They are exclusively God's attributes.

God reveals Himself also by other perfections which are *communicable*. That is, God has been pleased to have some of the light rays, as it were, of those attributes shine forth from His creatures as a reflection of how good He is. Even though His people may be said to be holy or just or merciful or loving or good by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit in them, yet none of them is that way in himself or herself, and not one bears any of those attributes perfectly and infinitely. Only the name of God Himself is revealed by those perfections of His own Being. He is love. He is mercy. He is holy. He is good. Those are His names.

So with just this brief reminder of the significance of His name, and of every single revelation of Himself in the various names by which He has revealed Himself, we remember that God's name is so great, that there is no other name to be compared to it. For that reason the use of His name requires deepest reverence and honour.

**September 6 - LD 36, Day 4: Profanity**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

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

Any one who is not completely sheltered from the world knows how common this sin is today. The prevalence of this sin is in fact one of the signs which tell us that Christ is coming quickly. Rev 17, that chapter that tells about the great beast, the Antichrist, particularly in its religious aspect, speaks of that beast being *“full of names of blasphemy.”* That tells us of the direct attacks upon the name of God that are prevalent in the kingdom of Antichrist. The prevalence of such blasphemy in our day indicates the nearness of Christ’s coming in judgment.

Still more, this sin is not limited to any age group or class of men. Profanity is heard in the corporate board rooms, as much as among the drunkards. What was once referred to as “the language of sailors” has now become just as much the language of women. That is the development of sin.

Men think that there is no consequence to this sin. They take God's names on their lips without any thought whatsoever. If not using God’s proper names as fillers or in expressions of anger, they use God’s attributes in profanity. The latter has even affected Christians. How quickly we can use expressions like, “mercy,” or “goodness,” or “holy,” or “gracious,” without even realizing that we are taking the very attributes of God upon our lips and making them common. That is what profanity is. It is to *make common*. It is to take that which reveals God and His glory, and to drag it down to the level of nothingness. It is to take the name which is so full of glory and majesty that it ought never to be spoken but with fear and reverence, and to make it something “light” and “frivolous.”

We must understand that swearing is not merely, as it is sometimes described, “the effort of a feeble mind to express itself forcefully.” Oh no. Cursing and swearing is the effort of the carnal mind to drag God from His throne! That is why God will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

**September 7 - LD 36, Day 5: Mindless Worship**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 15:8: *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”*

It isn't just coarse profanity that grievously violates this third commandment, but also the sinful silence that fails to give to God the glory that is His due. Positively, we are called to use God's name only with fear and reverence. It is only by taking His name upon our lips in that way that we rightly confess Him and worship Him, and that He is glorified in our words and works.

That means that whenever we use the name of God without thought or without due consideration and reverence, we violate the third commandment. Whenever we use God's name without gratitude of heart for Who He is and what He has done, we profane His name. That is a piercing thought. Then we might well ask the question: Who has been more guilty of profaning the name of God — the man who sits in the tavern, making a ruckus with his friends, or we who take that name so often upon our lips in the worship service?

What do we do to God's name, when, after arguing and bickering at home, we rush off to church — not having prepared at all for worship — not having prayed for God's blessing, and we sing, "O Lord of Hosts, how lovely Thy tabernacles are...My soul is longing, fainting, Thy sacred courts to see; My heart and flesh are crying, O living God, for Thee"? Aren't we the guilty ones, who take His name repeatedly upon our lips without thought, who let our minds wander at His Word? Are not we the guilty ones, who voice our prayers without thought to Him, Whose majesty causes the angels to hide their faces before Him?

Is our talk, as those who represent God's name, directed to the advancement of His glory? The name of God is profaned, when it is used without due consideration and reverence, or when it is misrepresented by us who bear His name, being known as *Christians*. How we need a Savior! How blessed are we when, as members of Christ by faith, we may worship God in joyful thoughtfulness!

**September 8 - LD 36, Day 6: Sinful Silence**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Leviticus 5:1: *"And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity."*

Scripture reminds us that even our silence can involve us in profaning God's name. By silence or connivance we become partakers of this horrible sin in others. Connivance is faking ignorance of a sin, acting as if nothing is wrong when God's name is under attack.

The issue in sinful silence is the question of neutrality. Can we be neutral toward God? The Bible says, "Impossible!" The words of our Lord are unmistakably clear (Matt 10:32,33): *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."* We are called to *confess* the holy name of God with fear and reverence.

Obedience to the third commandment is not merely a matter of obligation to say something to the one who openly abuses God's name in our hearing. Yes, we must tell such a person that we are offended because of our love for God Whose name he profanes. But we must also understand that the third commandment requires that we glorify God in all that we do and say! To ignore God and His Word is simply intolerable wickedness. If we have any spiritual life within us, how can we possibly ignore the God of our salvation or pay Him less attention than a common pet? How can we possibly say, "Let us declare His name in the Church;" but ignore Him when it comes to school or job or home or life in general?

To walk in such neutrality toward the great name of God is sin which proves that love is lacking. And, don't forget, love is the fulfillment of the law! To the Church, to us, comes the call of Isa 40:9: *"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"* We shall not be silent.



**September 9 - LD 36, Day 7: The Blessed Privilege of Confessing God's Name  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 116:13: *"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD."*

Let us not forget, we are viewing this commandment, and all the commandments, in the light of what we are *by grace*. We are those whom He has delivered out of the house of bondage, whom He has freed from sin and death and hell.

Because we have so often taken God's name in vain, failing to honour Him with fear and reverence, failing even to worship Him with the attention due to His name, failing to confess Him as we ought in the midst of the world, Jesus stood before God to bear the wrath that had to be borne for the violation of this precept. God would not hold Him guiltless. Though Jesus was perfectly innocent and without sin in Himself, yet He took our sins upon Him. For our sins He experienced in His own body and soul what it meant when God commanded that such profanity of His name be punished by death.

By Christ's perfect satisfaction of God's justice we have been reconciled unto God, received by Him into the very fellowship of His covenant life of perfect love. In that light, we rejoice in the name of the God of our salvation. When the Spirit of this great God, the Spirit of Christ, dwells in us, we view these commandments with a love that motivates us to walk in them out of thankfulness to God. God's name is glorious, and rich blessings accumulate with the right confession and worship of Him.

*"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,"* says the Scripture in Matt 12:24, Luke 6:45. When our hearts are the dwelling places of the Spirit, we cannot be silent bystanders, but must glorify God in all our words and works. We bear His name and have been formed to show forth His praise. Thus the third commandment lays the greatest calling upon us, and gives us the most blessed privilege. Let us live in thankfulness to Him. Let us be aware of the name that we bear, and of Him Whom we are called always to reverence. For in His name is also our strength and our salvation.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 37

**Question 101.** May we then swear religiously by the name of God?

*Answer.* Yes: either when the magistrates demand it of the subjects; or when necessity requires us thereby to confirm [\[a\]](#) fidelity and truth to the glory of God, and the safety of our neighbor: for such an oath is [\[b\]](#) founded on God's word, and therefore was justly [\[c\]](#) used by the saints, both in the Old and New Testament.

**Question 102.** May we also swear by saints or any other creatures?

*Answer.* No; for a lawful oath is calling upon God, as the only one who knows the heart, that he will bear witness to the truth, and punish me if I swear [\[d\]](#) falsely; which honor is [\[e\]](#) due to no creature.

[a]: [Ex. 22:11](#); [Neh. 13:25](#)

[b]: [Deut. 6:13](#); [Heb. 6:16](#)

[c]: [Gen. 21:24](#); [Jos. 9:15,19](#); [1Sam. 24:22](#); [2Cor. 1:23](#); [Rom. 1:9](#)

[d]: [2Cor. 1:23](#)

[e]: [Mat. 5:34,35](#)

**September 10 - LD 37, Day 1: God's Name and the Oath  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Deuteronomy 6:13: *"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name."*

The Heidelberg Catechism devotes one Lord's Day to each of the Ten Commandments — with this exception. A whole Lord's Day is given to the matter of the oath. That indicates the significance of the oath historically. But today, when the oath is taken so frivolously and violated so brazenly, we must understand how it must be used aright.

Historically, the Reformers insisted on developing the biblical teaching of the oath because many Anabaptists laid hold of one thing concerning the oath, and that was the biblical injunction, *"Swear not at all."* They connected that position with their view of an absolute separation between the sacred and the secular: The Christian must live a life of absolute separation — not just spiritual separation, as is certainly true; but absolute separation. And therefore, the Anabaptists insisted that they must not be subject to the magistrates and their requirements of the oath to confirm truth in the public realm. Some of the descendants of the Anabaptists still hold that idea today.

But we see the same idea today from a very different perspective. While the Anabaptists at least based their ideas on Scripture, albeit a misinterpretation of Matt 5:34,35 and James 5:12, the prevalent idea today is not based upon Scripture at all. Today, from the highest office of the land to the lowest citizen, the idea is simply that we may each exercise a personal religion, but must not come with the Scripture to any area outside the Church. The Bible does not belong at all to the public sphere of labor or politics or education. Religion, even professed Christianity, is put into a little box to be opened up only on Sunday, and that only if a person feels like it on Sunday.

Lord's Day 37 takes up the sword of God's Word against all such unbiblical and unchristian thinking, and develops the biblical truth concerning the oath as a world-and-life view. For a Christian, the oath may be sworn in select occasions as a fruit of grace, out of a life of thankfulness. It is taken properly only by those who live in the consciousness of belonging to their only Savior in life and death.

**September 11 - LD 37, Day 2: Fidelity and Truth**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

I Peter 2:13-14: *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."*

The occasion for the oath is found not in the church, but in the public realm, where the Christian lives in the midst of the world of unbelief and sin. We may swear an oath by the name of God "when the magistrates demand it" of us their citizens, or "when necessity requires us thereby to confirm fidelity and truth to the glory of God and the safety of our neighbor." Other circumstances can be eliminated. It is on very limited occasions, therefore, that the oath may be used.

The fundamental calling of the magistrate (I Pet 2:14 and Rom 13) is to punish the evildoers and praise those who do well. The magistrate, therefore, must make judgments of the actions of men in the public realm. Justice and just judgment can only be exercised on the basis of truth. But Scripture exposes the sinfulness of man, telling us in Jer 17:9: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*

Because of man's depravity the oath is necessary in the public realm. The magistrate cannot know men as anything but liars. Therefore, to uphold truth, the magistrate must call every one before God's face as occasion requires it. It is as God's servant that the government official may summon a man before the highest tribunal, and ask, "Do you promise before God to perform the discharge of your office faithfully?" It is as God's servant that the officer of the court must summon me before the face of God and ask me to declare God as my witness that I will speak the truth.

By swearing such an oath, we who are the children of God honor Him. We do so by honoring those whom God has appointed to govern, confirming before God's face fidelity and truth. *Fidelity* is the promise faithfully to execute one's calling. *Truth* is confirmed by taking God as our witness in a court of law. These two — fidelity and truth — are the very pillars of society.

**September 12 - LD 37, Day 3: The Biblical Use of the Oath**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Hebrews 6:16: *"For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."*

When a government is characterized by corruption and when citizens are wrongfully charged with crimes and convicted by lies, the result can only be moral decline and chaos in society. God will not and cannot tolerate the profaning of His holy name by false oath-taking. But we must examine our use of the oath as Christians. "May we then swear religiously by the name of God?" The answer, for these limited occasions, is *yes*, for we will do so to the glory of God, expressing our conviction that God is the God of truth before Whom we stand.

The oath is biblical. The Catechism points out that "such an oath is founded on God's Word, and therefore was justly used by the saints, both in the Old and New Testaments." Notice, we don't just follow the examples of believers in Bible times. We sometimes have to tell our children, "You may not do this or that just because so-and-so does it." But the oath itself is scriptural. It is "founded upon God's Word, and therefore was justly used by the saints. God Himself commanded the oath to be sworn in His fear (Deut 6:13).

That compels us to face more carefully the charge of the Anabaptist, who appeals to the words of Jesus and of James, *"Swear not at all."* To them, those words settle the matter completely. All oaths are forbidden by Scripture, rather than sustained and approved by Scripture as our Catechism maintains. Both appeal to Scripture. It seems that we have a contradiction in the Bible. We see Deut 6:13 instructing the Church to swear by God's name; and we see in Heb 6:16 that men swear by God's name, even following His example. But when we come to Matt 5:34-35 and James 5:12 we find the exhortation, *"Swear not."*

Whenever we stand before Scripture and find texts which apparently are at odds with each other, it is time to stop and examine more carefully the truth set forth. For all Scripture is in harmony, and never contradicts itself.

**September 13 - LD 37, Day 4: No Contradiction**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 5:34a: *"But I say unto you, Swear not at all;"*

Jesus does not contradict the biblical use of the oath. The Lord was confronting and exposing as grievous sin, the frequent use of oaths in everyday conversation. The Jews had become accustomed to making strong expressions, often without thought. It had become common to emphasize statements with expressions such as "I swear," or "As truly as the Lord lives," and such like statements. That, Jesus said, is the taking of God's name in vain. Still more, in the Church such oath-taking ought not to even have a place. For us who are in Christ Jesus, our statements must be true. Our *yes* must mean exactly that, and our *no* must mean just that. An oath is out-of-place among those who are brothers in Christ. That is the emphasis.

But that the Lord — and the same holds true with James — did not mean to totally forbid the oath is evident from the fact that the oath continued to be used with approval in the New Testament age. Even Christ Himself, when standing before the judgment seat of the Jews, did not refuse the oath, declaring that He was the Son of God. As we read in Heb 6:17, the great God, Who has no cause to add emphasis to His words, accommodated Himself to the weakness of men, and swore an oath by Himself. He Whose word is truth itself, confirmed by an oath the immutability of His counsel. When we, therefore, might be required to swear an oath, our thought and our prayer must immediately be, "Let me, O Lord, be an imitator of Thee, that my words, as words of truth, might be a reflection of my conscious standing before Thy face."

Even while living in a world which does not fear God, and which repeatedly takes His name in vain by ungodly violations of the oath, we are called to use the oath to confirm fidelity and truth to the glory of God. The oath must be taken seriously. The oath must be kept. Therefore the oath must be understood by us.

**September 14 - LD 37, Day 5: God's All-Seeing Eyes**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 11:4: *"The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men."*

To swear an oath is a tremendous event. It is an amazing thing that God allows His name to be used in confirmation of truth. To take an oath in God's name is to say, "I stand here in the presence of God Whose eyes are as flames of fires, penetrating even to the deepest thoughts and intents of the heart. I recognize that the day is coming when I shall appear before Him in final judgment, when He shall reveal all that is true." That is what swearing an oath means.

Still more, because we call upon God as the God of truth, to swear an oath in God's name is to call all His punishments upon us, if we swear falsely. How great the sacrilege, how gross the dishonor, to take the name of Him Who is eternal and unchangeable Truth, and use it to cover a lie! To swear falsely is to pervert the name of the only true God. To swear in His name without regard to the greatness of that name is to dishonor Him; and He sees it. *"His eyes behold."*

That is why, as you can well understand, God's name is not to be introduced thoughtlessly in an oath, and the oath is not to be taken without necessity. When we who swear by His name must present ourselves before His tribunal, and acknowledge Him to be the Avenger against all who take His name to support a lie or who take His name without due consideration, will we view the oath most seriously. Then we understand that swearing an oath is a kind of divine worship, where honor must be given to God, even the God of our salvation. Let's not forget that! As we take His name, His majesty is brought before us, His glory. The God of our salvation stands before us to know and uncover the hidden things, and to maintain the truth. When truth and faithfulness are extinguished or covered by the lie and unfaithfulness, God's name is blasphemed. His name is glorified when faithfulness and truth shine brightly.

**September 15 - LD 37, Day 6: The Infinitely Glorious God**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Isaiah 45:22-23: *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 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."*

The oath reminds us that we are but creatures, finite and of dust. Men boast in their accomplishments, but the oath declares that not even the wisest man is able to penetrate the deepest recesses of man's heart. Who of men knows what a man is made of? Which judge can know precisely if the witness speaks the truth? Who knows whether those taking office will be faithful to that office? God alone knows! And that is why finite man, and particularly the magistrate, must invoke the assistance of the infinitely glorious God Who alone knows all things. That is why men are put under oath, to invoke the presence of the great God, Who will punish him who swears falsely, Who will eventually reveal justice and cause the truth to triumph. It is the name of God that is extolled and magnified by the oath.

But the necessity of the oath also reminds us that we are sinners. The God before Whom we stand and from Whose perfect righteousness we cannot escape is the One Who says, *"Look unto me, and by ye saved."* From Him alone comes salvation. From His mouth comes the Word in righteousness. To Him alone belongs all glory and honour. Especially was His righteousness and truth revealed in His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As those redeemed by Christ, we desire to express our love for God and for our neighbor, also in the proper use of the oath.

Part of our expression of glorifying God is seeking the welfare of the neighbor. Seeking the neighbor's good or safety is an extension of our glorifying our Redeemer. When truth and fidelity are maintained by the proper oath, not only is God glorified thereby, but the welfare of our neighbor and all of society is promoted.



**September 16 - LD 37, Day 7: Speaking the Truth in Love**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 4:25: *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."*

We stand before the oath as those who are in Christ Jesus, Who Himself said of His calling and office, Heb 10:9 *"...I come to do thy will, O God..."* Our view of the oath, therefore, is a view through special eyes and from a special place. We are the redeemed. We have our citizenship in heaven. That governs what we say and do, and what we don't say and do. That is true in public life, where the oath is necessary because of the power of Satan's influence. We, of all people, are able to take an oath in God's name; for we are His. But in the Church, it is because we are in Christ Jesus that the oath ought have no place. We are called always to speak the truth in love.

As Christians, our whole life is an oath. Each word and each action as a child of God is just as weighty as an oath. When at marriage, a husband promises to love and to honor, or wife promises to submit and assist, and both to live faithfully according to God's Word, that is just as weighty as an oath. We represent God's name in those callings. We represent God's name in everything we do, and in every station of life. Our lives, therefore, are to be lives which faithfully represent the glory of our God in truth.

Then we are reminded too that the only way we speak the truth in love is by the Holy Spirit of Christ our Savior living in our hearts. After all, we have failed, too many times to count, to live before God's face in holiness and truth. While the holiness of God demands the death of all those who violate even in the least degree one of His commandments, the weight of His wrath fell upon His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who took our punishment upon Himself. Let us, then, who have failed faithfully to perform our vows, come and reverently bow before Him Who caused all our unrighteousness to be borne by Christ. Then we shall express our gratitude to God and live to His glory.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 38

**Question 103.** What doth God require in the fourth commandment?

*Answer.* First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be [\[a\]](#) maintained; and that I, especially on the sabbath, [\[b\]](#) that is, on the day of rest, [\[c\]](#) diligently frequent [\[d\]](#) the church of God, to hear his word, to use the sacraments, [\[e\]](#) publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the [\[f\]](#) poor, as becomes a Christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me: and thus [\[g\]](#) begin in this life the eternal sabbath.

[a]: [Deut. 12:19](#); [Tit. 1:5](#); [1Tim. 3:14,15](#); [1Cor. 9:11](#); [2Tim. 2:2](#); [1Tim. 3:15](#)

[b]: [Lev. 23:3](#)

[c]: [Acts 2:42,46](#); [1Cor. 14:19,29,31](#)

[d]: [1Cor. 11:33](#)

[e]: [1Tim. 2:1](#)

[f]: [1Cor. 16:2](#)

[g]: [Isa. 66:23](#)

**September 17 - LD 38, Day 1: Busy on the Lord's Day**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Deuteronomy 5:12: *"Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee."*

Do you live with a fervent desire for the Sabbath rest? If our obedience to the law of God is to be honest obedience, true obedience, the reflection of a spiritual life in Christ, that is the question we must face. We may not think that we have obeyed God's law in the fourth commandment, if we have gone to church on Sunday only. As children of our heavenly Father, as those delivered from the bondage of sin and death, we stand before the law. That law, therefore, is a light upon our pathway, a guide to the life that we want to live in thankfulness to God Who has so loved us. So also do we view this fourth commandment. The Sabbath rest, for us, is far more than an obligatory appearance in church on Sunday. Worship in God's house, even if it is true worship, is only the beginning of the Sabbath rest. That is evident from our Heidelberg Catechism's exposition of the fourth commandment.

It is striking that the Catechism, in its consideration of this commandment, doesn't even mention the negative part which forbids Sunday labor. Ex 20:10 emphasizes that on the Sabbath day, we shall not do any work. Six days thou shalt labor (another positive Christian calling); but not on this day. In fact, you may not even have employees doing work for you on the Sabbath day. So says the fourth commandment. But the Catechism doesn't even mention that. That does not mean that the negative part of the law no longer applies. There is no approval given to working on Sunday. Not at all. But the approach is entirely different. The approach is positive. It isn't to say, "Don't." Rather, it tells us that we are to be so busy in other things on the Lord's Day, that we don't have time for work. We don't have time even for earthly pleasures.

What could keep us so busy on the Lord's Day? This: Enjoying fellowship with our God through Jesus Christ and laboring to enter into the spiritual rest which He has given us on the Sabbath day, which, since the resurrection of Christ, is now the first day of the week.

**September 18 - LD 38, Day 2: True Rest**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Read: Exodus 31:12-17. Exodus 31:15a: *"Six days may work be done: but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD:"*

What is the idea of the *rest* to which we are called on the Sabbath? When we think of *rest*, we probably think of some form of relaxation, perhaps even sleep. But that certainly is not the idea of the Sabbath rest. It cannot be, for we are told in Scripture that God never slumbers and never sleeps. His rest does not take on that form. Furthermore, we are told in Heb 4 that there remains a rest for the people of God, to which we look forward and for which we long.

The Sabbath rest points to a perfect work into which we may enter with all the enjoyment of body and soul. God Himself is the prototype of this rest. He is the One Who instituted the Sabbath day and revealed His own life as the example for us entering its rest. What is His prototype? The fourth commandment itself explains: *"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

The Bible teaches us that God constantly upholds and governs everything. There is nothing that takes place in this creation that is outside God's sovereign control. That means that He is never idle. He never ceases to work. He is always accomplishing His purpose, moving all things toward the end that He has in mind. But at the same time, God always rests. Everything He does, He does for His own glory and enjoyment. Therefore He constantly enters into the enjoyment of His own perfect work.

We must not think that God needed to take one day for the enjoyment of His perfect work. But He revealed Himself in such a way for our sake, that we also may enter into the rest which He has ordained for us, His redeemed people, and that we might do so in a special way during a day set apart for that purpose.

**September 19 - LD 38, Day 3: God's Perfect Work**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Deuteronomy 5:15: *"And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."*

The Sabbath, now observed on the first day of the week in the Christian church, was set apart by God for our sake. It was set apart that we might enter His perfect work, the enjoyment of His covenant fellowship with us in Christ Jesus.

What is that perfect work? It is not a work of our own. Our works are all corrupted with sin. The perfect work into which God calls us to enter is His work. Deut 5 explains. After telling us that the Sabbath is the Sabbath of Jehovah our God, God gives the command that in it we shall not do any work, in order that we, our families, and any who are our servants, may rest. He then explains that rest in verse 15: *"And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."*

The purpose of the entire Sabbath day, therefore, is to enter into the enjoyment of the salvation that God has given us. It is very important that we understand this: The purpose of the Sabbath and the meaning of the Sabbath rest is to enter into the enjoyment of the salvation that God has given us.

The history of Israel's deliverance from bondage represented their deliverance from the bondage of sin and death by the wonderful work of God's grace. The salvation, which we God's people enjoy, is God's mighty work of sovereign grace, by which He has delivered us from the bondage of sin and death and has given us new life in Christ. By that new life in Christ, we are not only delivered from death and hell, which is the wages of sin (Rom 6:23), but we are taken into the very fellowship of God Himself! That is the rest God gives us to enjoy especially on the Sabbath.

**September 20 - LD 38, Day 4: A Lasting Rest**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Isaiah 57:19-20: *"I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."*

That we Christians may enter the rest which is fellowship with God is truly something special. We believe in the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That isn't just an abstract doctrinal truth to us, but a truth of very practical and personal implications. The Triune God, being three distinct Persons in one Divine Being, lives a perfect life of fellowship and love within Himself. He didn't need us. The unity of the Godhead is characterized by perfect fellowship and love, self-sufficiency and independence. But when God saves us, He takes us into His own life! He takes us into the enjoyment of His own covenant life of fellowship and love, His family life as it were.

To enter into His rest on the Sabbath day is to enter into the enjoyment of His love and fellowship in a special way, and to receive a taste of the riches that are ours in Christ. Do you know that rest to which God calls His people? Do you desire it? Do you enjoy it?

The Sabbath is not for everyone. The last verses of Isa 57 tell us that *"the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."* There is no rest for those who are outside of Christ. Where there is no personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, there is no desire for the Sabbath rest. There is no desire for the house of God, no longing to hear Christ in the preaching of the gospel, no urgency for fellowship with those who are members of the body of Christ. Then one would rather work and make money or seek his entertainment and pleasure.

That we may enter into the rest of the Sabbath, and that we desire it, is something special. It is, in fact, the beginning of the eternal Sabbath. There is more to this rest than what we enjoy here and now on the first day of the week.

**September 21 - LD 38, Day 5: A Day Set Apart**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Hebrews 4:9: *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."*

We sometimes speak of the Sabbath as the foretaste of everlasting glory. That's what it is when we are truly entering into that rest. We experience in a special way the fellowship of our God and enjoy His conversation with us, His instruction, His gospel. We gather with His people to remember His mighty work of grace with us and to glorify Him, as the body of the redeemed. When we focus our whole-hearted attention upon Him, to the praise of the glory of His grace, then we are enjoying a foretaste of heaven. That is the Sabbath. That's the day of rest.

In order for the Sabbath to be a day of rest, however, it must also be a day for holiness. That is why it is a day *set apart* for the people of God. The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. There are those who like to quote a passage like Mark 2:27b, *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath,"* as if Jesus meant to say that we now have the freedom to do what we wish on the Sabbath. But let us not forget, our freedom is not in self-seeking, but in serving God. So he should also continue to say, *"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."* We keep the Lord's day holy by using it unto the Lord.

The catechism emphasizes from a positive point of view *how* we set apart the Sabbath day and make it holy. We do so as members of His Church on this earth. We do so particularly by gathering for worship on the Lord's Day. If the character of the Sabbath day is that of entering into fellowship with God by contemplating the revelation of Himself in Holy Scripture, then the heart of this day is found pulsating through the ministry of the Word. Preaching must always receive the primary emphasis in the Church's worship. To keep the Sabbath day holy we must hear faithful preaching. Living in obedience to the fourth commandment means that we diligently frequent the church of God, fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and join in the worship of Jehovah our God. He alone gives rest.

**September 22 - LD 38, Day 6: God's Wonderful Provision**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 11:28-29: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*

The Sabbath is sorely needed by us. We need this rest because we are weary and heavy laden. Christians are not those who are better than everyone else. Christians are those who realize their need for Christ. The burdens that we must bear cannot be carried by us alone. Sometimes in our pride, we like to think that we are able to get along quite well with our own ability and strength. That pride will be crushed. We stand always before death. Do you live in that consciousness?

Some say that this commandment doesn't apply any more. We have seen that the law of God embodied in the Ten Commandments is unchangeable. The fourth commandment is part of that unchangeable law of God. Yet in our day, there are multitudes who act as if this commandment doesn't even apply to them. Why is that? Would we be those who pick and choose the commandments that we would obey?

More pertinent is the question: Are we thankful Christians who live in the joy that only comes through fellowship with the living God? Are we those who have seen the wonder of that salvation which is ours only by the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Then we also recognize that we are completely dependent upon His grace for our whole life and our entire Christian walk. We are sinners. There is not a moment that goes by that we can be without Christ, lest we perish. This is the day, the one day of every week, the first day, in which we may enjoy the fellowship of our God in such a way that it carries us through the week and through all our trials and sorrows. This is the day in which we may receive strength from on high, strength which comes in knowing that our Savior walks with us and talks with us. This is what makes this day such a precious gift of God to us. Would we act as if we don't need this day?



**September 23 - LD 38, Day 7: Calling the Sabbath a Delight**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Isaiah 58:13-14: *"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."*

Our Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life on the cross of Calvary to enter God's rest on our behalf. He now says, "Come unto me and rest." That is our need.

If we recognize that need, some of us may have to re-evaluate our lives with respect to the Sabbath. This day isn't made for our earthly pleasure. This day isn't given us for earthly labour. For the sake of devoting our entire focus to our spiritual labour of entering into the Sabbath rest, we are to set aside our normal daily labours. We are to be too busy in spiritual things to have time for the earthly. Yes, we recognize that there are some labours necessary on the Lord's Day — but not as a normal practice which robs us of our necessary fellowship with God. We don't take jobs that regularly rob us of fellowship with our Redeemer. So important is the continual nourishment of our spiritual life and our fellowship with God that we would allow nothing to rob us of that fellowship! We long for the rest which only He can provide through His appointed means of grace.

So we begin already in this life the eternal Sabbath. *"He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul"* (Prov 19:16a). He keeps His soul in fellowship with His Redeemer, and therefore in the rest which shall finally find its culmination in everlasting glory. In that comfort we live in hope. We are Christ's! To Him we come in repentance. In Him we find forgiveness. Through Him we enjoy rest in the fellowship of God's covenant. May God give us grace, so that in our celebration of our Sabbath today, we receive a foretaste of the everlasting Sabbath that awaits us.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 39

**Question 104.** What doth God require in the fifth commandment?

*Answer.* That I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and [\[a\]](#) submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their [\[b\]](#) weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases [\[c\]](#) God to govern us by their hand.

[a]: [Eph. 6:1ff](#); [Col. 3:18,20](#); [Eph. 5:22](#); [Rom. 1:31](#)

[b]: [Prov. 23:22](#)

[c]: [Eph. 6:5,6](#); [Col. 3:19,21](#); [Rom. 13:1-8](#); [Mat. 22:21](#)

**September 24 - LD 39, Day 1: Father and Mother and All in Authority**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Exodus 20:12: *“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”*

As we continue our study of the Ten Commandments as the rule of our life of gratitude to God, we enter now the second table of the law and those commandments which treat specifically our relationship to our neighbor. The law begins with our closest neighbor and those relationships that develop from that nearest bond, that of the family. So we are told, *“Honour thy father and thy mother.”* The fifth commandment, therefore, calls our attention to the significance of authority, and the requirement of honour and due obedience.

As the Heidelberg Catechism points out, the truth set forth in the fifth commandment is not only a matter of how children must behave themselves toward their parents, but also how we must act with respect to all who are placed in positions of authority over us. That becomes very clear when you put the law in the light of the whole Bible, and as Scripture interprets itself.

The fifth commandment only mentions father and mother because the family is the cell, from which all the other relationships of life where authority is exercised grow. When that is understood, we see how the light of God’s Word in the fifth commandment shines not only upon family life, but upon the school, the church, the state and the work place. As we approach the law from our peculiar perspective of the redeemed in Christ and find here a guide for our life, we see how God’s Word directs us to live before every figure of authority.

The application of this commandment is powerfully revealed in our day against the background of an appalling rejection of authority in every sphere of life. The day of the Lord draws near. For we are told by the apostle in II Tim 3 that a rejection of and defiance toward authority would mark the perilous times of the last days. And Paul wrote not only of the sins of the world, but of those who have *“a form of godliness.”* As we stand before the fifth commandment, therefore, let us hear what Scripture has to say about honouring those in authority.

**September 25 - LD 39, Day 2: Due Obedience**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Colossians 3:20: “*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*”

To the question, “What does God require in the fifth commandment,” the Catechism answers, “That I show all honour, love and fidelity, to my father and mother and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction with due obedience....”

*Due obedience* is required of a thankful Christian. There is an obedience exercised by those who are not Christians. Asian culture is noted for its honour toward those in authority. Many non-Christian Asians who come to the United States are appalled at the lack of respect for authority that is observed in America today. In many Asian cultures, respect for elders is held as the honourable way of life, and words such as *authority, obedience, order* and *discipline* are recognized as pillars of society. Yet, even though non-Christians might exercise obedience to those in authority over them, their obedience is not that which is *due to God*, because they do not acknowledge God as the Source of that authority.

We who are in Christ Jesus cannot be satisfied with that kind of obedience. We cannot, because such obedience fails to fulfill the law of *love* that is at the heart of God’s precepts — love for God, which also comes to expression in love for our neighbor.

Still more, there is an obedience which does its duty grudgingly, against one’s will — a forced obedience. That is the obedience that we perform when we do what we are told, but despise being told what to do. Sometimes we can even obey without complaining, but our obedience is a calculated attempt to please man. It serves only our selfish motivations and attempts to promote self. That also fails to fulfill what is required of us in the fifth commandment.

The expression of thankfulness to God is an expression of love. *Due obedience* comes to expression in *honour, love and fidelity* — toward God. We are to live as those who are in Christ. To us for whom Christ has fulfilled the law, the emphasis is now upon the Christian life as a life of sanctification, a life of being in the Lord, and therefore a life by which we express our thankfulness to the God of our salvation.

**September 26 - LD 39, Day 3: Obedience in the Lord**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 6:1: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”*

Our obedience to the fifth commandment is obedience *in the Lord*. That is why this fifth commandment is expounded by the Catechism in the section on *Thankfulness*. Christ holds forth the law now for us who are His! That is how we stand before the law. The law no longer provokes us. The law no longer irritates us with its “impossible” demands. Christ holds forth the law, saying to us, “You are mine.” He has redeemed us from the disobedience to authority that brought down the first man — disobedience to God’s authority, the authority of His Word. He has not only delivered us from the punishment of our guilt; but by the empowering work of His Holy Spirit, He has called us efficaciously to a life of thankfulness. That we learn obedience, that we again acknowledge God’s sovereignty, that we submit to His authority, is Christ’s redeeming work in us. That is *due obedience*.

It is God’s will that we, who by nature are quite rebellious, learn the sacred act of honoring authority in the family. The foundation is laid in the home with father and mother. What goes on in our homes is of utmost importance. Even though the focus falls upon the calling of the child, parents also are given by God a tremendous calling. Parents must exercise godly authority that requires the honour and obedience of their children. Parents must also teach their children by their own word and example — proper honour toward all authority. In the family, we stand at the source of all the other relationships in church, state, school and society. How the parent (and the father bears the greatest responsibility for this) teaches the child in this matter will have a profound and usually lasting influence on the attitude the child takes with respect to the fifth commandment.

When you as a parent require honour and obedience for God’s sake, the child will not forget it. When you hold in esteem your children’s teachers, the office bearers of the Church, and the magistrate, you teach your children to honour those in authority. This is necessary — for the honour and glory of the God Who has saved us.

**September 27 - LD 39, Day 4: Honour  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Deuteronomy 5:16a: *“Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee;”*

While obedience to the fifth commandment involves honour, love and fidelity, *honour* is first. That is because authority has to do with a God-appointed office, and not merely with a person. Our first concern must not be the person of father and mother or authority figure, but rather their particular office. God appointed father and mother to be office bearers in the home! God appointed school teachers to stand before our children as office bearers in that area. God appointed elders, ministers and deacons as office bearers in the Church. God appointed our government officials, judges, police officers, and so on, as office bearers in society. The same holds true with our employers, our bosses. That is why God tells us to *honour* them.

We are called to love them too, insofar as that is possible. That may seem somewhat easy for parents who themselves love us, care for us and provide for our every need. But love is not a mere feeling. Love is the exercise of the will and a spiritual activity. That is why love expresses itself by obedience. Jesus Himself said it (John 14:15): *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* There are those who, for Christ’s sake, must forsake father and mother, who must disobey unbelieving parents in order to be faithful in their obedience to Christ. Even in such cases, we have the calling to obey the fifth commandment. That includes being respectful to unbelieving parents, explaining why we cannot obey them in a particular matter, showing humility toward them, and living as peaceably as possible with them. We must also show faithfulness toward them, especially when they become old and infirm, or in need of help. And if, due to various infirmities, they must receive special care by others, in faithfulness we will brighten their day by our regular visits or calls.

Nor is half-heartedness acceptable with God when it comes to this fifth commandment. He requires that we show *all* honor, love and fidelity, to our father and mother.

On the other hand, if unbelieving parents cast us off, we are not in bondage in such cases. Rather, God has given us a more beautiful expression of those relationships in His own family, the church.

**September 28 - LD 39, Day 5: Submitting to Correction  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Hebrews 12:6: *“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”*

Not only must we submit to the good instruction of our parents, but also to their correction. Submitting to correction is not so easy. God Himself corrects us. Every Sunday, we come under the preaching of the Word, and in the course of that grand gospel message, we are also disciplined and corrected. We must submit to that correction too. We must turn from our iniquities. God chastens us by His Word. But He does so in love. That’s what the Bible tells us in Heb 12. *“Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”*

Love corrects. Parents who do not correct, show by their permissiveness that they do not love their children. Prov 13:24, *“He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”* Parents, that rod must be used so carefully! But it must be used! In obedience to God and for the proper correction of the child it must be used. And woe to those who think they know better than God!

But children must not only submit to that good instruction and correction, they must also patiently bear with the weaknesses and infirmities of their parents. Honour is required from us no matter the faults, infirmities and sins of those who are over us. Parents carry many weaknesses, too many to count. But children must patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities. That is also the calling of every one of us with respect to those who stand in authority over us.

We are quick to find fault with those who are in authority over us. But we walk in disobedience to God and sin greatly when we refuse patiently to bear with the weaknesses and infirmities of those whom God has appointed to positions of authority over us. What grief we bring to ourselves, what grievous consequences are reaped by such sin against the fifth commandment. Let us learn to exercise patience, remembering how much patience the Lord must exercise with us, in bearing our weaknesses and infirmities.

**September 29 - LD 39, Day 6: God-Given Authority**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Hebrews 13:17a *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:”*

We must never forget that God alone rules. He clothes parents with that authority and with all the responsibilities that come with that position. God rules by parents in the sphere of the home.

God gives authority to office bearers in the Church. That is also emphasized repeatedly by Scripture, Heb 13:17 and I Thess 5:13 being just two examples. Ecclesiastical affairs are under their supervision, and no one may interfere with that.

God is the one who gives authority to the magistrate as well. When we understand that, then we will receive the instruction of Rom 13:1-2, *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”* The apostle wrote this, not about a Christian, but a pagan government, with ungodly rulers. Nevertheless, for God’s sake, we are required to honour and submit to them. That call to subjection is unconditional.

There is a difference between subjection and obedience. When those in authority require of us disobedience to God, we may not obey them. We obey God rather than men. But even when obedience to God requires disobedience to an ungodly magistrate, we submit to the magistrate, subjecting ourselves willingly to the punishment of our disobedience for God’s sake, remembering the words of I Pet 2:19: *“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”*

If we keep these things in mind, then it will be much easier for us to serve God with proper gratitude of heart. Christ our Savior reigns. He reigns over us in our family relationships. He reigns over us in the Church. He reigns over us in the workplace and in the state. The purpose in it all, His purpose, is to gather His Church, preserve and protect her, unto the final realization of His perfected kingdom. We serve the Lord Christ!



**September 30 - LD 39, Day 7: The First Commandment with Promise  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 6:2-3: *“Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may go well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”*

The reward spoken of in the fifth commandment (Exo 20:12b) is entirely a reward of grace. After all, it is only by the work of the Spirit of Christ in us that we can possibly show all honour, love and fidelity to father and mother and all in authority over us. That is only of grace. Apart from that grace, the whole law does nothing but condemn us, provoke us and harden us in our sin. God so works in His people that they walk in obedience to Him, and thus enjoy the promised blessing.

What is that blessing? It is not earthly, though it is spoken in an earthly form. For we know that there are many children of God who by grace walk in the way of God’s commandment, who yet die young. There are increasing multitudes of disobedient persons who defy this commandment, and yet live to an old age. Let us not look, therefore, for the fulfillment of this promise in a long earthly life. After all, do we not look for our life in heaven?

This promise is in a form that the Old Testament children of God could understand in all its spiritual significance.

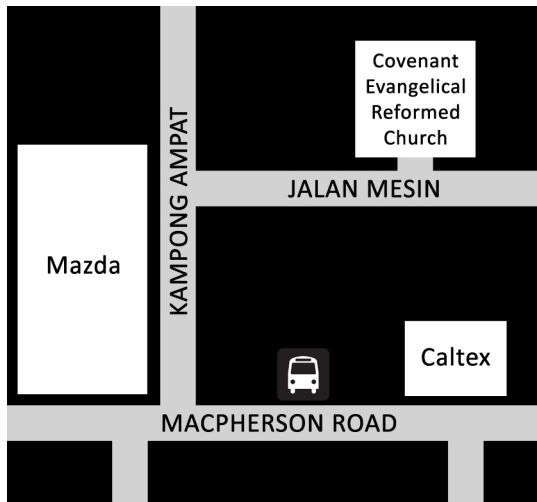
What was the promised land to the children of Israel? It was Canaan. And Canaan was a picture of the promised land, for which, according to Heb 11, the people of God looked, even as did Abraham. *“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* God promises us the enjoyment of heaven as we walk in obedience to the fifth commandment. What a thrilling promise! What a blessed reward is set before us, to motivate us in our often difficult calling to honor all in authority.

It is a promise to us and our children, a blessing upon the generations of those who walk in the way of God’s commandments. For the obedience of Christ in His chosen people bears precious fruit. It is the fruit of thankfulness offered in the heartfelt prayer, *“Lord, make me an obedient Christian; and grant me thy blessing.”*



## COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

PLACE OF WORSHIP  
11 Jalan Mesin #04-00  
Standard Industrial Building



### Public Transport:

Buses 8, 62, 62A, 90, 151

10 min walk from Tai Seng MRT Station (CC11)

(Take Harper Road exit, walk to Mactaggart Road, turn left to Kampong Ampat and left again to Jalan Mesin)

### TIME OF WORSHIP

Every Sunday

9.30 – 11.00 am

2.00 – 3.00 pm

[www.cerc.org.sg](http://www.cerc.org.sg)

Published by Christian Literature Ministry,  
Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church

cover photograph from rawpixels.ca