

Sermon Handout

“Oaths and Vows”

Exodus 20:7

- I. Bearing God’s Name
 - a. “Take” means to “lift up” or “bear”
Thus, we are told not to “bear” God’s name vainly
We are not to carry it in a way that ruins God’s reputation
 - b. The covenant people of God bear his name
Numb 6:22-27 – the benediction places his name on us
Ps 24:1, 3-4 – the earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it
The righteous does not “lift up his soul to vanity”
 - c. Visible items in creation represent the presence of God
The heaven (God’s throne) Mt 23:22; 5:34
The earth (his footstool) Mt 5:35a
Jerusalem (his city) Mt 5:35b
The altar (his prescribed worship) Mt 23:20
The temple Mt 23:21 (it is not “nothing” v. 16)
Your own head (you are God’s) Mt 5:36
- II. Oaths and vows are integral to life and society
 - a. God takes vows
Gen 22:16-18 (*cf.* Lk 1:67-73); Gen 26:3; Heb 6:17-18
Ps 89:3-4 (*cf.* v. 49); Ps 110:4
 - b. Men are directed to vow in God’s name
Ex 22:10-11; Dt 6:13; 10:20; Is 65:16; Jer 12:14-17
See also Heb 6:16
 - c. Angels take vows Rev 10:5-6
 - d. St Paul used vows and oaths
Acts 18:18; Rom 1:9; 9:1-2; II Cor 1:23; 11:31; Gal 1:20;
Phil 1:8; I Thess 2:5, 10
 - e. Men placed under oath are to speak the truth
Jesus – Mt 26:62-64 (*cf.* Josh 7:19)
Christians – I Thess 5:27
 - f. The church has always understood oaths to be appropriate
WCF 22:1
e.g. wedding vows, ordination vows, baptism vows
- III. To vow before God is to call him as a witness to our verity.
“Calling upon God to witness is asking him to use his power
against us if we lie.” __ John Frame