

**Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Days 36 & 37, "God's Name"**

Scripture Lesson: Exodus 3:1-15

<b>Lesson Aim</b>	To understand two things: First, to understand how God's nature is revealed through his name and second, what it is to honor God by honoring his name.
<b>Steps to Learning</b>	Read the <a href="#">Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Days 36 &amp; 37</a> and <a href="#">Exodus 3:1-15</a> . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
<b>Discuss</b>	<p><b>Why does God require that his name be honored, why the emphasis on his name?</b> The answer is that God's name is the primary way in which he is revealed. We know who he is by his name. His name identifies and gives information about his nature. The way in which people in our culture use God's name in familiar and sloppy ways reveals that they don't know who God is; they have a vague understanding of God. One can only understand who God is by reading or hearing the Word of God.</p> <p><b>How does God reveal his nature through his name according to Exodus 3?</b> Before Moses is approached by God in the burning bush, we can understand that Moses already knew that God's name was Yahweh (the LORD). So, when Moses asks for God's name in Exodus 3, he is asking about the significance of his name for the task of speaking to the Israelites about leading them out of Egypt. When God says to Moses, "I am who I am" or "I will be who I will be," he is saying that he is absolutely independent, self-existing and unchangeable; that is who he is, and he is really present for his people. That's what the words reflect about God's character in the name "Yahweh."</p> <p><b>The issue in the third commandment is that by honoring God's name, we approach him rightly in our thoughts and in our worship. That being the case, we cannot take his name in vain. What does that mean?</b> It means that we are not to trivialize his name by false or insincere worship and also to mean what we say when we confess Yahweh as the one, true God known through Jesus Christ.</p> <p><b>What are the practical implications of following the third commandment?</b> We must use God's name with care referring to him as the Scriptures refer to him and not using cultural ideas of who God is. We must not curse in the sense of using God's name carelessly in conversation. This includes using God's name as a "curse word." That is, we ask and desire evil to any one from God. God should not be made the executioner of our corrupt wishes and passions. We are not to swear falsely, which is to commit perjury, which is to intentionally lie under oath as could be the case in a courtroom. Also, we are not to make any unnecessary oaths. Finally, we are always to use God's name with fear and reverence. This applies to worship and in everyday affairs.</p>
<b>Bible Reading</b>	<a href="#">Luke 20-24</a> (Reading through the Gospels)