

Loving Christ in All of Life  
Week 7 - Public Worship & Blasphemy  
Exodus 20:4-7, Leviticus 24:10-16

- The law is a teacher - the severity of the penalty teaches us how serious an offense is
  - We should be asking why God considers public idolatry, blasphemy, and false swearing such grievous offenses to the civil community
- Rooted in the concept of law order - Yahweh is the sovereign Creator, and so His law alone is to be acknowledged and obeyed
  - If obedience to another god is prohibited, it naturally follows that worship of false gods must also be
    - Worship and service are intertwined, cannot be divided
    - Worship of false gods eventually becomes obedience to false gods (Ex. 32:1-6, 17-19; 1 Ki. 11:7-8)
  - Allowing public worship of a false god undermines the foundations of law in society
    - Deut. 13 - conspiracy against God's law order, enticement to subvert the fundamental law of the nation cannot be tolerated - essentially treason
    - This principle is followed even in "secular" societies - no government can allow open rejections and attempts to usurp its foundational principles
  - Prohibition of revolution - God's law has no place for true, offensive revolution
    - Acts 19:35-37 - even though the gospel is in itself "subversive" of false religion, missionaries do not flagrantly disrespect/blaspheme the structures of nations they're ministering in

*All law is religious in nature, and every non-Biblical law order represents an anti-Christian religion. But the key to remedying the situation is **not** revolution, nor any kind of resistance that works to subvert law and order...The key is regeneration, propagation of the gospel, and the conversion of men and nations to God's law-word. Meanwhile, the existing law order must be respected, and neighboring law orders must be respected as far as is possible without offense to one's own faith...The modern perspective leads to revolutionary intolerance: either a one-world order in terms of a dream, or "perpetual warfare for perpetual peace" (RJ Rushdoony).*

- This does not give the state the right to define doctrine, doesn't allow for ecclesiocracy
  - The state under God is accountable to Him to protect broadly the foundation of His law in society and public respect for it generally
- Blasphemy, as a civil crime, has to do with protecting foundations of society
  - Cannot permit incitement to revolution by publicly railing against, seeking to discredit the foundational authority of the nation

- Principle is observed and followed by “secular” societies as well
- State is not permitted to coerce confession of faith/enforce external religious practice or seek to govern the heart and conscience
- These laws also concern public integrity/trust
  - “Taking the Lord’s name in vain” specifically refers to taking an oath in God’s name and breaking it
    - Oaths are binding by law - if someone swears in God’s name falsely, this rightly involves the civil government
  - If the state does not fear God and uphold His law and authority, swearing by God’s name is meaningless and untrustworthy
  - Foundational to the trustworthiness of the whole society - cannot trust one who does not acknowledge the nation’s ultimate authority, doesn’t feel obliged to his oaths in that name
- Christians need to obey these commands by praising God publicly, serving Him openly, and reverencing His name
  - Gathering for public worship is asserting the supremacy of God and His law
  - We build our lives on His word, submitting to Him totally, in all things
  - We live with integrity before God, keeping our word, being accountable to Him
  - In a context that is becoming more and more “missionary” this is how we rebuild the foundations of our society