

EXODUS

Lesson 18 - Chapter 20 Continued

Today we continue a deep and detailed look at what among the Church is labeled as The Ten Commandments. How could such a standard icon of the Christian Church as the 10 Commandments be labeled as controversial? That's what we began with last week in our study of Exodus chapter 20. And, what we discovered is that even the title "The Ten Commandments" is itself not only made up and NEVER appears in the Bible, but the word "command" or "commandments" also never appears regarding these instructions. The Hebrew word that is usually translated as "command" or "commandment" is *mitzvah*. And *mitzvah* means "ruling", such as a judge ruling on a legal issue. A *mitzvah* is not technically the original law, it is NOT a command.

Instead, the word ***dabar*** is used. And, ***dabar*** means, "word". So, the Greek translation of this Hebrew phrase is correct: Decalogue, meaning 10 words. This is not minor; because what the so-called 10 Commandments amount to are statements of fact from the Lord; they are the foundational principles from which all the following laws of Torah shall come.

The 2nd controversy we discussed concerned the **numbering** of the commandments or words. And we found that in the original Scripture the first commandment was NOT "you shall have no other gods before me"; rather it was "I am Yehoveh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt". So, the first statement or principle of God is to identify Himself as YHWH. This was acutely important and necessary because all gods had names, and one needed to know just WHICH god was communicating his instructions. And so the god of the Hebrews gave the people of Israel His name: Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh. We're not going to get into some long argument about pronouncing this name because there are varying reasonable opinions; but since the Jews stopped, about 300 BC, pronouncing the Lord's name the vowel sounds used have been lost so it is difficult for anyone to claim with certainty that they know how it was verbalized.

Be that as it may, the "you shall have no other gods before me" was the original 2nd commandment. Sometime before the Babylonian exile, the Jews stopped treating the "I am Yehoveh who brought you out of the land of Egypt" as one of the Ten Words. After Babylon the Jewish sages began to once again include "I am Yehoveh your God....." as the 1st commandment. At the approach of the 2nd Temple Period it was once again excluded, and back and forth it has gone over the centuries. Later, Christians adopted the off-and-on Jewish Tradition and format of making the 2nd commandment as the first but for entirely different reasons; the original 1st commandment explicitly directed these 10 commands to Israel; and, since Constantine had officially deemed the Church as a gentile religion the mention of Israel had to be removed if the new anti-Jewish Church was going to consider the 10 Commandments as pertaining to Christians.

Well, the controversies don't end there. Today we shall take up the actual commandments, or better "words" themselves and delve into the meaning they originally held within the Hebrew culture they were given.

Let me say right up front that we are going to be dealing with some difficult and sensitive subjects over the next couple of weeks. It is my goal to discuss them in the most inoffensive and loving and honest manner possible with you. However.....we cannot simply avoid the challenges these principles represent, nor can we simply go on saying on the one hand how much we believe in these Scriptural God-principles and on the other ignoring them. And neither can we determine to honor our cherished and familiar Traditions.....whether Jewish Traditions or gentile Christian.....**above** the plain meaning and expression of the Holy Scriptures, especially when they seem to conflict.

In some cases there will be what I believe are quite definitive answers and solutions; in other cases there will be deep shades of gray that remain. But in all cases I want us to leave here today loving the Lord and one another as much or more as when we walked in.

RE-READ EX. 20:2

The first Word:

Here God, Yehoveh, is making it clear to Moses and Israel just whom is speaking. Remember, at that time the people of Israel still did not fully grasp the concept that there is but One God in all existence. And, Yehoveh is also stating very plainly, that HE is the God of the Hebrews, that same one who struck Egypt, rescued Israel from Egypt, and brought them here, to Mt. Sinai. And, therefore, it is ISRAEL with whom He is making this covenant, not anyone else. But, we will find as we study the Mosaic Covenant, that foreigners, gentiles, may JOIN Israel, and they are to be considered as 1st class citizens. In other words, this covenant is with Israel and all who join themselves to Israel. This is nothing new, frankly. This provision of non-Israelites being joined to, grafted into, being adopted by, Israel was also part of the covenant Yehoveh made with Abraham.

The Lord is also making something else very clear, and we all need to take note: those people whom the Lord has redeemed have obligations to Him. Among those obligations are loyalty and obedience to His principles and ordinances. This brings up a principle that we often forget: the Torah commands, and all the Bible instructions (including those of our Savior) are ONLY for the redeemed. To follow the Lord's principles and commands without FIRST being redeemed is the truest definition of legalism. But for a saved person to follow the Lord's commands is the normal and expected response.

There is another underlying principle at play here: as a result of our acceptance of the Lord's redemption, we take on certain obligations that the rest of the world does not have. Yehoveh says: I brought you out of bondage, and now HERE is what I expect of you. I cannot tell you how it depresses me that so many Believers honestly think that their redemption is the last "work" or "obligation" they ever have to God. Because our redemption is not a work of ourselves or any man in the first place: our redemption is a 100% work of the Lord.

RE-READ EX. 20:3-6

The second Word:

This must go down as one of the most important of all the commandments; and as the one that might be the principle most consistently violated by God's people throughout the entirety of the Bible. And this is because the insidious nature of idolatry shows up in ways that neither the people of the Bible era, nor we modern folks, expect.

Notice that there are 4 identifiable principles set down in the 2nd word: a) no other gods, b) don't **make** images or symbols of deity, c) don't **worship** images or symbols, and d) there is punishment for violating the previous 3 principles AND this punishment will go beyond you in time and affect your children. Yehoveh telling Israel they are to have no other gods is NOT just some quaint little saying. The Hebrew people ABSOLUTELY believed there were other gods in existence....gods that were gods for other nations and peoples. At this time, Israel's take on what God meant by this, was that HE was to be the only God that they were permitted to have.

What is key to understanding the 2nd Word is that while the prohibition against making carved images and representations certainly applies to **any** Deity, real or imagined, this statement absolutely INCLUDES, and in fact may refer primarily to, the making of representations of the God of Israel. And the reason for this prohibition against god-images is twofold: first NO representation of Yehoveh can possibly be adequate or sufficiently holy. And, second the Lord is NOT of this world and therefore nothing that a man could make from his mind or hands, and nothing that could exist in a mere physical realm could ever capture God's image. The Lord is NOT a part of this creation. He is NOT physical. He is above all things as the maker of all things; His is NOT IN all things. He is entirely different than any other being, or entity, or thing. Therefore any attempt at representation of His image is pure folly, inaccurate, and here in Exodus 20 He labels it as against His will.

Now, this (the 2nd Word) confronts me personally...it hits me head-on (and it might you as well).... and in some ways I wish it didn't. We are told in these verses, rather plainly with no wiggle room at all, NOT to make any representation of Deity (and most certainly NOT the holy Godhead) that incorporates a depiction of anything in the heavens, anything that lives on the dry earth, or anything that lives beneath the sea. This was a revolutionary concept for the world at that time, and the Hebrews really didn't know how to take this command. Every known god from the time Mankind turned corrupt, right on up to the time of the Exodus, had some type of familiar visible representation.....and in fact demanded such a representation..... based on some creature or object that occurred in nature. Typically it was a star, or the sun, or the crescent moon, or an animal of some kind.....and in many cases it was a human form, or a hybrid animal-and-human form. The mind of that era thought that if one didn't have a visible god-figure to worship, how could one worship at all?

Although many times the animal or object chosen to represent a particular god was what the people actually envisioned that god as looking like, as often as not it was that the form simply represented some attribute or ability of that god. A bull represented strength. A frog represented the life giving qualities of water. An eagle represented lofty majesty. Often if a god had multiple attributes several different symbols would be used for the same deity. Symbols for

the same god could even vary from region to region and they might change over time and tended to reflect a society's cultural traditions.

But here for the first time is a god, Yehoveh, that makes it an unbendable instruction that absolutely NO representation, no symbol, of any kind is to be made of His Person. Probably nobody in this room would disagree with this interpretation of this commandment.

If we look back into history we'll see that only RARELY does an entirely new symbol come along. Humans have proven to be better copycats than creators. Most of the time one culture simply adopts a symbol from another or earlier culture, perhaps making a minor change in a symbol so as to make it his or her own, and then attaches a new meaning to it. Time passes and pretty soon the new user of that old symbol loses any idea of where it came from in the first place or that it is by no means their culture's unique invention. Such is how it is with symbols, which for some reason mankind simply cannot seem to do without. Men are visually oriented creatures.

Ishtar was the goddess of fertility (BTW, she is also, sadly, the source of the name and several traditions for EASTER). She had many symbols but the most predominant one was the rabbit. In general those who worshipped Ishtar did NOT believe that she was, nor did she look like, a cute little bunny rabbit. Rather for rather obvious reasons the rabbit was simply an appropriate symbol of Ishtar's primary attribute: fertility.

Ishtar is but the Western European name for Astarte; Astarte is but the Greek name for the Biblical Canaanite goddess Ashtoreth. They're all one in the same. The Scriptures show us that this imaginary bunny-god Ashtoreth was a constant problem for Israel because from time to time the Hebrews would take up Ashtoreth worship and naturally Yehoveh condemned this practice (and Israel for worshipping her). Now, I doubt anyone would argue against this is a prime example of what God is talking about in His prohibitive command against the manufacture and use of symbols and images.

So far, so good; but, here's where it gets sticky. As I was researching about the history of symbols, particularly ones that used animal representations, it struck me: one of my favorite and most precious symbols; one that I associate with my faith, is a fish....a sea animal. I started wondering about how many of us have the fish-symbol on our cars, or around our necks, or on our bookmarkers, or who knows where else? And, I thought, well, certainly that couldn't possibly have any connection with the meaning of the 2nd Commandment. After all we don't **worship** that fish symbol. But, the more I read and re-read the 2nd Commandment, looked it up and went over it in the original Hebrew, examined Biblical scholarship documents about it; then went to Websites that had various explanations as to the supposed origin of the fish symbol; reviewed numerous articles in Christian publications explaining what the fish symbolized, and counter-articles refuting what others claimed, the more confusing the whole issue became.....and the more the wisdom behind Yehoveh's principle of the 2nd Commandment started to become clear to me.

In the end I could no longer deny that the fish symbol I so dearly love might be something I've got to reconsider; might it actually violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the principle of the 2nd

Word? We all know what fish symbol I'm talking about, so I don't need to explain it to you. Therefore I would like for you to consider this: have you ever seen that same fish symbol with little legs added and the word "Darwin" written in the middle of it? It has become a popular anti-Christian symbol to combat the Christian fish symbol. The idea is similar to capturing the enemy's flag, desecrating it, and then displaying it to humiliate the enemy. So, not to be outdone, some clever Christian came right back with another new symbol that had a Big Fish with a cross in it, eating a smaller fish with the word Darwin in it. One desecration deserves another, right? Although that's pretty funny what, exactly, does it demonstrate about the lofty position that this symbol holds in our thoughts and our hearts when we'll fight over it, and even have to get into a one-upmanship game over it with non-Believers?

At the very least within the Church the fish symbol most certainly has come to represent Yeshua, who, in case we have forgotten, is Himself God....the very same God who set down this principle of no images. Now I've heard some Believers say that it doesn't represent Jesus; it represents the religion of Christianity in general. Well, I can accept that; and I think a lot of people see it as simply a general religious icon that indicates the user of it as identifying him or herself as being a Christian. But I can also tell you that millions, including myself have, either consciously or unconsciously, to some degree or another looked upon that symbol as representing Jesus Christ. And therein lies part of the problem: we create or use symbols that please us, symbols that we feel very comfortable in justifying and rationalizing, and then don't think too much about just what it is that that symbol represents to others, or even, deep down, to ourselves. We can get awfully careless and frivolous with these things in an effort to create an outward identity for ourselves. Where most Believers get in trouble is not that we intentionally set out to offend the Lord by sinning; rather, we take that first seemingly harmless if not completely well-intentioned step and then eventually look up and find ourselves a long way from the path of righteousness.

I'm sure you've noticed that many variations of those fish symbols have now been created. Some are just the bare outline of the fish. Others have the word "Jesus" in English written in it. Still others have the Greek Letters that transliterated into the English alphabet, are I-X-Q-U-S, in the middle of the fish. BTW: Does any one here know what those letters actually mean? (answer) It's an acrostic. It takes the first letters, in Greek, of each word in the phrase "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior", and forms a word. In other words, it undeniably identifies the fish symbol with Yeshua. And, that word, in Greek, is Icthyus and it means.....FISH! So, it's pretty hard to ignore that a) that symbol is indeed of a fish, and b) that as concerns an awful lot of Believers, that fish as far as they are concerned is representative of Messiah.

My point is not to single out the fish symbol, it is merely an example that is in common usage; so catch your breath for a moment while I pick on something else. I've also heard many of my Catholic friends defend their use of statues of Christ, in that they don't worship those statues nor do they think that somehow there is an essence of the Savior in those pieces of plastic. Perhaps. But I can't count the times I've personally observed people praying at that statue, kissing it, wiping their tears onto it; or the number of times I've heard of an anti-Catholic desecrating one of the statues and touching off a melee.

As we get to the study of the Wilderness Tabernacle in Leviticus, and look at the design of it

and the various altars and implements that were to be used in it, we will see that each one of the items was God-ordained and given in detail, to be constructed precisely as instructed. Further, NOT ONE of these items were ever designed to represent Yehoveh: not the Father, not the Son, and not the Holy Spirit. None of these objects were symbolic of the Godhead. Some WERE representative, to a degree, of His attributes of Holiness and Mercy among others. But their main purposes were to instruct Israel about the Lord's holiness and to depict a future reality....a foreshadowing of things that would be accomplished by the Messiah. What we will notice when we study the Tabernacle is that none of these symbols violated the principle of the 2nd Word: nothing in the Tabernacle used representations of animals, or sea creatures, or humans, or stars or moons or suns to symbolize God. Yehoveh Himself designed all of the Wilderness Tabernacle tools and implements and altars especially for a purpose, which was the teaching of principles and the foreshadowing of future events....NOT as representations of the Hebrew faith or of Him.

The problem, folks, is this: we would prefer to believe that we CAN in all of our modern sophistication, make or buy and use our own representations of God or symbols of our faith because we wouldn't ever let ourselves look upon that symbol as an object of worship, or as actually being God. Yet human nature is such that some element of that occurring is almost unavoidable. The Israelites could NEVER seem to stop slipping back into idol worship.

But **worshipping** a symbol isn't necessarily the ONLY issue that is the point of the 2nd commandment. God didn't say: I give you permission to go ahead and make these symbols of faith and of Deity PROVIDED you will avoid worshipping them. He said: First, don't make any symbols and second, don't worship any symbols. He gave us those **two** instructions because, above anyone or anything, He knows human nature. Our Creator knows that step one, making the symbols, would inevitably lead to step two, worshipping the symbols to one degree or another.

Let me give you a familiar analogy that is readily accepted within most Christian denominations: our Pastors warn us not to attach too much importance to our jobs or our wealth or our cars or hobbies or anything. Why? Because the danger is that we'll put the importance of those things.....the importance of even our families.....ABOVE God. And we are told (and most of us rightfully accept) that anything that we put above or even on the same level as the importance of God in our lives is idolatry. Right? It is that these overly important things in our lives become our gods. And when most of us hear our Pastors speak this we shake our heads up and down in agreement because in our heart of hearts we know this is true. We hate it; we wish we could control it. We didn't intend to make our hobby more important than following God, but little by little it became that way. We didn't intend to make the earning of money more important than God, but little by little it came to dominate our lives. And even when **we do** attach more importance to earning and spending money than to God, we don't LIKE to think of it as worship of those things, but it is. It works the same way with symbols.

And, BTW, some of the oldest Hebrew teachings of the ancient Sages ever found agree that the MAKING of the symbols and the WORSHIPPING of symbols are two separate instructions and issues. Yehoveh knew that such symbols would be the source of disharmony, if not

downright anger or hatred, between people and nations who revered their FAVORED symbols, but opposed they symbols of others that were offensive to them. Wars are started over religious symbols.

We even have battles WITHIN the church over symbols. The Protestant denominations constantly criticize and demean the Catholic Church's use of the Cross because it usually depicts Jesus on it, and Protestants don't care for the Catholic proclivity to fill their houses of worship with statues of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints. The Catholics respond by jumping all over Protestants for use of the bare cross or the triple cross and, interestingly, for the use of the fish symbol. Various Protestant denominations constantly berate one another for using, or **not** using (as the case may be), the triple cross, banners hanging in the sanctuary, and too many more symbols and icons to go into now. Jews see the Cross as terribly offensive because it is, to them, nothing but a cruel execution device used to kill literally millions of their people. Most Christians see the Star of David as being an abolished or now meaningless Jewish symbol; or worse, as a defunct symbol of a people who refused to accept Christ or even participated in killing him. Often we even attach the term SACRED to our symbols....in other words the symbol itself takes on such importance that we actually attach some measure of holiness to it because of what we say it represents; so is it any wonder that these various symbols elicit such emotion and discord between opposing groups? And why it God speaks against it?

Yehoveh knew that while a few among the stronger in faith might be able to **make** the symbols as but something symbolic of their faith (without also making them objects of worship), the reality is that a substantial number of worshippers are not so strong. God's solution: don't make them in the first place. He doesn't see them as honoring to Him. Nowhere does the Lord define a symbol of His Deity and then say now fight to the death to protect it. No matter how well meaning, or of good intention, the making of these symbols might be the downside is often bigger than the upside.

Now I readily acknowledge that when it comes to obeying the LETTER of this God-breathed instruction what is prohibited seems to be: 1) objects we see in the skies, 2) land creatures, and 3) sea creatures as symbols of Deity. That DOES seem to leave the door open, perhaps, to a symbol that does NOT employ any of the forbidden 3. So, if we just have to have symbols then perhaps we ought to stick with the VERY few that we can unequivocally find in the Bible that are God ordained **to be used** as representations of God's attributes and foreshadows and principles. And the only ones I'm aware of are those used in the construction and service of the Wilderness Tabernacle. Yehoveh thought the issue of symbols was so important that He included it in the 10 Words, the 10 Commandments. I told you this was a sticky issue. And I want to make it crystal clear that I am not judging or condemning your choice to wear an icon. I am saying that at the least there is a warning here that while **you** may be able to resist the temptation to see it as but an outward expression of your faith and in NO way a representation of God, how things like this are taken by others.....even of your same faith..... are dangerous. I learned a long time ago to leave my crosses and fish and American flags at home when I went abroad....particularly to Israel. Because while we understand what we mean by these items, others have a rather different understanding and what might make a good witness for the Lord here, don't somewhere else.

In Ex. 20 vs. 5, still dealing with the 2nd Word, it says that God is a jealous God. Interesting use of a word....jealous. That has always kind of bothered me because frankly when we think of a man or woman being jealous it's a negative statement. In some ways when we harbor the emotion of jealousy it reveals serious faults in us even if there might be reasonable cause for it. Yet, looking at the word in Hebrew helps us a bit.

In Hebrew, the word is "**Qanna**". And, it is most often translated into English as jealousy. It has a sister word, "**Qinah**", which also means jealousy. Here's the difference between the two: **Qinah** is used some 43 times in the OT, and it refers to human activity. **Qanna** is reserved explicitly and EXCLUSIVELY for when referring to a characteristic of Yehoveh. **Qinah** is used to denote jealousy of rival lovers, or envy of another's wealth and possessions. It is, if you would, the HUMAN form of jealousy in all its unflattering qualities. **Qanna**, on the other hand, is not so much about jealousy as about being passionate; not the erotic form of passionate, but rather in the sense of great intensity, of being impassioned towards an ideal. It is the Lord in all His unwavering righteousness. Used here it is an expression that means that God accepts NO RIVALS, that He is utterly and absolutely intolerant of sins against Him. Frankly we ought to never see that word "jealous" in that spot in our Bibles, due to what it means to humans in our day. For it gives us an entirely wrong impression of what is meant and ascribes a characteristic to the Lord that is considerably off the mark.

Continuing vs. 5, and on into vs. 6, God speaks of punishing the children of those who violate the 2nd Word, on into the 3rd and 4th generations, BUT.....showing mercy to all who love God (love meaning an intention to be loyal and obedient to Him) into the 1000th generation. First, the easy part of this: saying "into the 3rd and 4th generations" is a Hebrew idiom, just as "into the 1000th generation" is an idiom. The first expression means that for sometime, but not forever, your descendants will be adversely affected by your sin. The 2nd expression, about the 1000th generation, means "forever". Note that God's wrath as a result of a man's sin is for a short time (3 and 4 generations), while His mercy and kindness is symbolized as being for a much longer period of time (1000 generations).

Now another stark contrast is drawn here using absolute and powerful words: those who **obey** this 2nd Commandment **love** God, and those who **disobey** it **hate** God. Love vs.. hate. And we can appeal by saying, 'but, even if I have ignorantly violated this Word, I don't HATE God, I love Him". The problem is that this command is, as are ALL of them, presented from God's view not ours. And our view is irrelevant. God says that as far as He's concerned the one who violates this Word, He sees as demonstrating hate towards Him. Man oh man that's tough. But that's how it is.

Yet He also sees the one who obeys this 2nd Word as loving Him. Does that mean that even a non-Believer who consciously obeys this command, God views as loving Him? Yes. That's exactly what it means. See that's the thing: **loving** God is not the requisite for Salvation. **Trusting** God, in the form of Yeshua of Nazareth, is the requisite for Salvation. On the coming day of Judgment, millions, probably billions of people who profess to love God (in their own way) are going to be condemned for all eternity.....because even though in their minds they loved God they didn't trust Him enough to accept the saving provision of His Son.

Conversely a Believer can be found violating this principle and also be regarded by Yehoveh as hating Him. That is God can look upon a Believer as hating Him, even though that Believer is eternally secured in Christ. Why? Because the ONLY relevant issue for Salvation is trusting Jesus.

Don't get all hung up on the love/hate issue. Christians, for centuries, have had this mistaken impression that Biblical love and hate are about feelings and emotions. From the Hebrew language viewpoint love is expressed in action and so is hate. So what loving God amounts to is DOING what He commands or avoiding what He prohibits, while hating God is the opposite.

RE-READ Ex.20:7

The 3rd Word is that we are not to use God's name in vain. By the way, what is God's name? YHWH. God is not God's name. God is just a general reference to Yehoveh. Let me repeat something I've said time and time again: the vast majority of the time in our Bibles that we see the word God or Lord the actual word in the original Hebrew is Yehoveh....God's personal name. This is NOT conjecture or opinion; it's just the simple truth. What do I mean by vast majority of the time? Something around 95%!! That's right... for every 10 times you see the words God or Lord in your Bible, more than 9 of those times, the actual word is Yehoveh, God's formal personal name.

While we often think of the primary principle of the 3rd Word in terms of a prohibition against using swear-words, that is not the entirety of what was meant by this... in fact that is a far too narrow sense of what is intended here. The Hebrew word that is usually translated as "in vain" is "**shav**". Shav indeed means vanity, but it also means falseness, or worthlessness, carelessness or emptiness of speech. It means that using God's name is to be done with great care, with the highest reverence.

It is this concept of human carelessness that eventually led the Jewish people into prohibiting the name of God to be spoken out loud altogether. In fact other than when copying Holy Scripture the Tradition is that His holy name is also not to be written. Therefore it is common in Jewish writings to see God written as G-d.

The Sages disagree a bit on exactly WHEN the prohibition against verbalizing the Lord's formal name occurred. The EARLIEST was probably the time of the Babylonian Exile, the latest about the time of Alexander the Great (so roughly 500 – 300 BC). However, the Sages and Rabbis generally agree that BEFORE that time the holy name WAS spoken and written. There is absolutely no known document or oral tradition prior to the time frame I just mentioned about **not** speaking God's name. So, for a period of at least 7 centuries, and as much as 1000 years, Hebrews openly spoke God's name. And ancient Hebrew artifacts have been found (and are on display in the Israeli National Museum) that have the Hebrew letters YHWH inscribed on them.

As much respect as I have for the intention of the Jewish people to reverence the Lord's name by not attempting to pronounce it, I don't agree with the concept. I have studied this thing backwards and forwards and I cannot escape the fact that the purpose of the 3rd

commandment is primarily NOT to invoke the Lord's name frivolously as part of a vow. Because when you vow something using Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh as surety of that vow, you have no choice but to accomplish that vow regardless of the consequence or you have, indeed, taken His name in vein. The secondary purpose is that one not commit perjury using God's name as surety for your statement.

Further I contend that because the Lord has His holy name written over 6000 times in the Word; and in several Scriptures it plainly says to call on His name or to do thus and so in His name, it is just not comprehensible to me that we cannot do the very thing we are told to do: say His name. I mentioned at the outset today that we cannot be sure just how to PRONOUNCE His holy name because we're not sure of the ancient Hebrew vowel sounds. But even if we DID know for sure the vowel sounds not everyone would pronounce His name perfectly uniformly because of language variations.

The principle of the 3rd word is NOT about ***mispronunciation*** of His holy name it is about ***misuse*** of His holy name. All that said, I would ask gentile Christians to be kind, respectful, and sensitive to our Jewish brothers and sister's tradition of NOT saying God's name. And, I would also ask our Jewish brothers and sisters to not be personally offended by those of us who see nothing wrong in an honest attempt to honor the Lord BY pronouncing His holy name, even if we don't do it perfectly.

Next week, we'll take up with the 4th commandment; honoring the Sabbath.