

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“God replied to Moses: ‘I am who am.’

And then God added, ‘This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you.’”

Exodus 3: 14

The Second Commandment of the Ten Commandments is this: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.” Why is that such an important commandment? Because the name designates the person. If you take the name of a person in vain, if you use it to curse, or use it as an expletive, or use it to batter someone with it, then it is the same as doing that to the person himself or herself. You disparage not just the name but the person.

My name is my identity. I know who I am. I have a regard and an honor for myself as a person. I deserve, as a person created and endowed by God himself, to be treated with reverence and respect. This applies to God himself, it applies to the Holy One of God and it applies to you and to me and to everyone created by the will of God.

So. What is God’s name? We do not know. Why? Because if we know God’s name we bring God under our sway and that can never happen. We cannot handle God’s name even though we are surely not to use it vainly. We refer to the deity as God or Lord. When the Lord our God revealed himself to Moses by the burning bush, God said: I AM WHO AM! God is The Great I AM. Link that with all those professions from the mouth of Jesus of Nazareth. I AM the Good Shepherd. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life. I AM the Resurrection and the Life. I AM the Bread of Life. I AM the Vine. I AM the Sheepgate. This is who I AM, Jesus says. And then He asks you and me, like He asked Peter and the apostles. “By your words, your actions, your life and your demeanor, who do you say that I AM?” That is truly the question of the week.