



Sermon on the Mount

Vows & Oaths

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Welcome to Jesus Time Where we spend time with Jesus in His time and culture.

As our Lord spoke upon the issues of anger betrayal and divorce, naturally Jesus next delved into the topic of not keeping our word.

✝ Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Matthew 5:33-37 NKJV

Here there are no fewer than 4 explanations as for Jesus giving His instructions upon keeping our word.

1st Within the original Greek, Christ actually said: "do not perjure your oaths to the Lord."

Perjure is word # 1964 in the Strongs Greek Concordance meaning to "self forswear falsely." (lie)

While from the original Websters Dictionary "Perjure" means to formally legally lie unto authority.

What Jesus is implying is when any degree of falsehood can be perceived when someone has said by G*D this is true. They have just perjured or lied unto the highest authority of all- unto GOD Almighty.

2nd What we overlook here is this Christly Decree does in fact forbid the use of GOD'S name thrown around loosely in our conversations especially amongst any idle talk or boasting.

Which historically was a very Middle Eastern thing to do in Jesus Time.

Even today people still pepper their musings with exclamations like; "you're not going to believe this, but by G*D I swear that it's true." Unfortunately, this was and is still a very common thing to do.

So yes, it certainly seems this swearing bothers Jesus greatly as a member of the Triune Holy Trinity.

In fact, swearing something tis true while nonchalantly invoking GOD'S Name is indeed an unintended offending of the 3rd Commandment of not taking or saying the Lord's name in vain.

By uncaringly invoking GOD'S name is like using His name as a curse word so says Christ Divine.

3rd Thusly it is accepted that this directive was not prohibitive of making oaths or vows of any solemn commitment be they personal financial or affirming an office nor forbidding of a testimony of witness.

4th As for Jesus additionally specifically saying for people not to swear by these things; the Temple (Jerusalem) nor the Earth, or by Heaven. (or modern examples of swearing by our children, parents, or even our life)

Because Jesus' comments were deliberate & binding not just for those present, but specifically by the context of Jesus's Words unto the Pharisee's, Sadducees, and Scribes as well. (His authority over them)

As in these 3 had an exacting litany amongst themselves as for swearing oaths of truthfulness.

Why? Because these 3- were considered to be, the most untrustworthy amongst the Jewish peoples.

So, they had an entire series of Oaths with Vows that they swore with each other in order to gain trust.

Such was the reputation of Israel's religious elite that they would say anything to get what they wanted.

This is also why Jesus said no oath can make a single hair on your head white or black because the Jewish Sanhedrin courts when the Jewish Judges were sworn into office, they swore by their own hair upon their heads. (Really, adults may presume promises, promises, or as children might say; liar liar pants on fire.)

These types of sworn oral depositions by the Sanhedrin members were deceptively evasive as they related unto the actual GODLY Oaths and Vows of individuals found within the Old Testament.

Which I remind you that these Sanhedrin members were required to memorize to even be eligible for consideration unto appointment of any local regional or national Sanhedrin court.

These 3 be the common Old Testament Vows of truthfulness:

“The Lord do so to me.” Or “As the Lord liveth.” Or “The Lord as my true and faithful witness.”

Furthermore, by Biblical example when anyone states by GOD this be true, this is technically each an admission as for Heavenly Father being the Supreme authority and the ultimate purveyor of Truth.

As such someone is either invoking GOD or trying to evoke a GODLY response from another.

Notice the difference; Jesus just stated that the Sanhedrin court members in His Time were sworn into office by making promises upon their own heads. As in not by GOD’S Word.

Get that?

This being by the most self proclaimed pious and supposedly reverent men of all time.

Who had the audacity to boast that Jehovah GOD Almighty was actually indebted unto them.

As in fact owing them the Pharisee’s, His Salvation.

What the Pharisee’s were avoiding by swearing on their own name.

✠ The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.

Proverbs 12:22 NIV

What GOD honors, the keeping of our word even to our detriment.

✠ in whose eyes (GOD) a vile person is despised, but who honors those

who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; Psalm 15:4 ESV

Oaths are an appeal to GOD as our witness of truth or can be promissory of repentance for an immoral or indecent infraction against someone and ultimately for the offense of violating GOD’S Law.

Whereas Vows are straight up promises made to GOD or to others through GOD.

These Vows can be for public or even for our own personal good.

Christian or Priestly Vows or even in gratitude Vows to abstain from pleasures or from such things as alcohol for a brief or extended period of time, are not commanded in Scripture save for particular people such as the Nazarite Priests.

But what is worth mentioning here is : Jesus is making this clear, that once a Vow is willingly given- it then does become a Sacred Oath personally unto GOD. You have given & pledged your word to Him.

With Heavenly Father expecting the Vow maker to keep his or her word for the duration they had specified. E.g. many abstain from things during the Lenten season or others partake of Clergy Vows.

Now you can perceive Why? Jesus warns against taking lightly such Oaths and Vows.

Because of the seriousness if someone finds themselves unable or unwilling to complete said promise.

As in a broken promise unto GOD.

Can a broken Promise unto the Lord be forgiven? Yes, it can. (do we loose Heavenly reward- probable)

Only the Sin of unbelief is the unforgivable Sin.

But a broken Holy promise does damage our conscience & reputation even if only we & GOD know.

So, Christ Jesus warns us not to harm ourselves intellectually emotionally & Spiritually by making unnecessary Oaths & Vows that He knows only too well that we may struggle to keep.

(Our) Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41

Sadly, for those not adhering to Christ's teachings; lying to achieve ones perceived needs has become almost routine for those seeking power and prestige.

You know- the end justifies the means. Well certainly not according to GOD'S Law.

Another case in point:

Within the Islamic world today there is a well-known tradition called "Taqiyya."

Qur'an 2:225 states that only the intentions of the heart are to be regarded as valid.

Meaning for a Muslim deceptive words being Oaths or Vows are allowed.

From the Shi'ite Encyclopedia: (Ahiul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project)

The word "al-Taqiyya" literally means: "Concealing or disguising one's beliefs, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions, and/or strategies at a time of eminent danger, whether now or later in time, to save oneself from physical and/or mental injury.

To say that permissible lying is allowed to prevent mental injury can mean just about anything.

Taqiyya is an art of being deceitful no matter if it be an official treaty between nations, or the swearing of truthfulness between individuals as in permission for being outright dishonest.

Simply put, this is a legal "get around" for any Muslim to acquire by deception whatever they desire usually from a non-Muslim.

Get that?

As in all Muslims have permission to "lie" legally, morally, & spiritually to conceal their true intention against anyone not Islamic.

Yes, this also means even any legal documents which can be discarded within Islamic Sharia courts when a Muslim makes a statement of "Taqiyya" against any non-Muslim they have a contract with.

From the Nation.com (Islamic) 6.14.2012

The law (Sharia) declares that any court decision will be considered void if it relies "in whole or in part on any foreign law, legal code, or system. Meaning from any nation or jurisdiction not Sharia.

Let's conclude with two final examples echoing our Saviors Words one each Scriptural & Historical.

Note how Jesus's half brother relates Christ's Words, yet James did not participate in Jesus's Ministry.

✝ Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned. (No question James had heard Jesus speak on this issue before.) James 5:12 NIV

Augustine of Hippo, (Aurelius in Latin) the author and scholar of much great medieval & modern Theological Doctrine once wrote:

"The multiplicity of oaths is a great evil, and the administration of them is profane."

Truth be told if Lying was not so common Oaths & Vows would hardly be necessary at all.

As such the 3rd and 9th Commandments of GOD herby do ever apply.

So, do not falsely or lightly swear by GOD'S Holy Name & most certainly do not lie or deny the truth.

Christ in Jesus expects everyone who believes in Him to be believable.

Our character is to be trustworthy enough that it is not necessary to take or make promises by GOD'S Holy name to ensure that our words are valid and true.

Indeed, Oaths or Vows should & are to be an unnecessary redundancy.

We who believe should not be gossips nor liars or proven to be untrustworthy in deed or word.