

## Matthew 5:33-37

This section of verses does not give an all-out condemnation and commandment not to take vows or oaths. There are examples of swearing by and making oaths in the Bible including by Jesus.

### Examples of oaths in modern times

- Wedding vows
- Court settings and testimony performed under oath

### Examples of oaths in the Bible

- **Acts 2:30** And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* <sup>[a]</sup>of his descendants on his throne,
  - **Psalm 132:11** The Lord has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back:  
“Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.”
- **Romans 1:9** For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you,
- **Acts 18:18** Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea <sup>[a]</sup>he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.
- **Revelation 10:5-6** Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, <sup>6</sup>and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will be delay no longer,
- **Matthew 26:63-64** But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I <sup>[a]</sup>adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are <sup>[b]</sup>the Christ, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup>Jesus \*said to him, “You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, <sup>[c]</sup>hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
- **Genesis 15/Luke 1:73/Hebrews 6:13-20**- Read

### Old Testament verses on oaths

**Numbers 30:1-2** Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the word which the Lord has commanded. <sup>2</sup>If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

**Deuteronomy 23:21-23** “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, <sup>[a]</sup>and the Lord your God will surely require it of you. <sup>22</sup>However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. <sup>23</sup>You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God, what you have <sup>[b]</sup>promised.

**Leviticus 19:12** You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.

**Exodus 20:7** “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not <sup>[a]</sup>leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

**Ecclesiastes 5:4** When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for *He takes* no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

"The Jewish teachers and leaders had come up with a way around making an oath to God in the name of God as they knew that making an oath to God in His name was serious and sinful to break and not keep. They were using oaths in a way that was not intended by God as their oaths were deceptive and misleading. They would swear by things such as by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and on their own heads to indicate serious in their promises, and in their minds, they could escape judgment and the guilt of sins as the oath was not made to God and in His name. However, all that they were swearing by belonged to God as it was His creation and brought about sin and judgment as a result. Jesus is teaching that swearing by the things they were swearing by and upon was just as if they were swearing and making an oath to God directly and in His name as God is the omnipotent, sovereign creator of all things that can be sworn by. God is omnipotent and omniscient and knows all things including the motives of their hearts and oaths.

- **Matthew 23:20-22** Therefore, <sup>[a]</sup>whoever swears by the altar, swears *both* by <sup>[b]</sup>the altar and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And <sup>[c]</sup>whoever swears by the <sup>[d]</sup>temple, swears *both* by <sup>[e]</sup>the temple and by Him who dwells within it. <sup>22</sup> And <sup>[f]</sup>whoever swears by heaven, swears *both* by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

Jesus is warning to be careful about oaths and vows in our daily lives. In a sense the Christian should not need to make an oath or swear by anything because our word should be truthful and binding. Oaths and vows should not be made for just any reason or occasion, but rather those of special occasion and of ultimate weight and seriousness (courtroom in testimony, wedding). It is better to not make a vow or swear an oath than to swear an oath and have no intention or motive in keeping it. At all times, we are to let our word be truth.

### **Verses on keeping your word**

**Psalm 24:1-4** The earth is the Lord's, and <sup>[a]</sup>all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. <sup>2</sup> For He has founded it upon the seas And established it upon the rivers. <sup>3</sup> Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul <sup>[b]</sup>to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.

**Psalm 15:4** In <sup>[a]</sup>whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But <sup>[b]</sup>who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change;

**James 5:12** But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but <sup>[a]</sup>your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

### **The promises of God are always yes**

**2 Corinthians 1:20-22** For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. <sup>21</sup> Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, <sup>22</sup> who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a <sup>[u]</sup>pledge.

God swore by nothing greater than Himself when making the promise to Abram in Genesis 15. In swearing by Himself, He was saying if He doesn't come through on His promise of the Abrahamic covenant, then He will die and cease being God which means we have no hope of heaven. However, the good news is that He cannot die or lie, and we know His promise is eternal as all His promises are yes. As children of God let us be like Him and let our yes be yes and our no be no.