

Treasure Hunt

- What is the difference between a vow and an oath?
- Which one is our Lord talking about in Matt 5:33-37?
- Why do people name God in taking an oath?
- Why did the Jews substitute something else for the name of God? (There are two reasons.)
- Why should we not swear oaths? (There are at least three reasons.)
- If we do not invoke God's name in a promise, does that mean he doesn't care whether we keep it?

The Structure of the Sermon

	Setting	4:25-5:2	7:28-8:1
Consequences →	Blessings & Warnings	5:3-12	7:13-27
	Our Mission	5:13-16	
	Law & Prophets	5:17-19	7:12b
Conduct →	Toward Man	5:20-48 It was said ... but I say	7:1-12a
	Toward God	6:1-18 Be not as the hypocrites	6:19-34

The Structure of 5:21-48

The Manward Contrasts

	21 Murder	27 Adultery	31 Divorce	33 Oaths	38 Revenge	43 Love
Ye have heard that	x	x		x	x	x
it was said	x	x	x	x	x	x
to them of old time	x			x		

- “it was said” → The Oral Law (Jewish tradition)
- “it is written” → The Written Law (the OT)

Both are promises: Vows and Oaths

Num 30:2 If a man **vow a vow unto the LORD**, or **swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond**; he shall not break his word, **he shall do** according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

- Vow: a promise to God
- Oath: a promise to men

Matt 5:33-37 deals only with oaths → part of the manward law

Oaths invoke God to enforce them:

[David to Amasa:] 2Sa 19:13 God do so to me, and more also, **if thou be not** captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab. = **Thou shalt surely be** captain of the host ...

(The punishment is often omitted, but the name of God and the conditional promise remain)

Swearing as a sign of faith

Deu 6:13 Thou shalt **fear** the LORD thy God, and **serve** him, and shalt **swear by his name**. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

Who swears oaths in the OT?

Abraham, Abraham's servant, Moses, the spies at Jericho, David...

Required of a woman in the ordeal for adultery:

Num 5:19 And the priest shall charge her **by an oath**, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:

Even the Lord:

Gen 22:16 **By myself have I sworn**, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Hebrews' Commentary:

Heb 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, ... 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

The Tradition and the OT

Matt 5:33

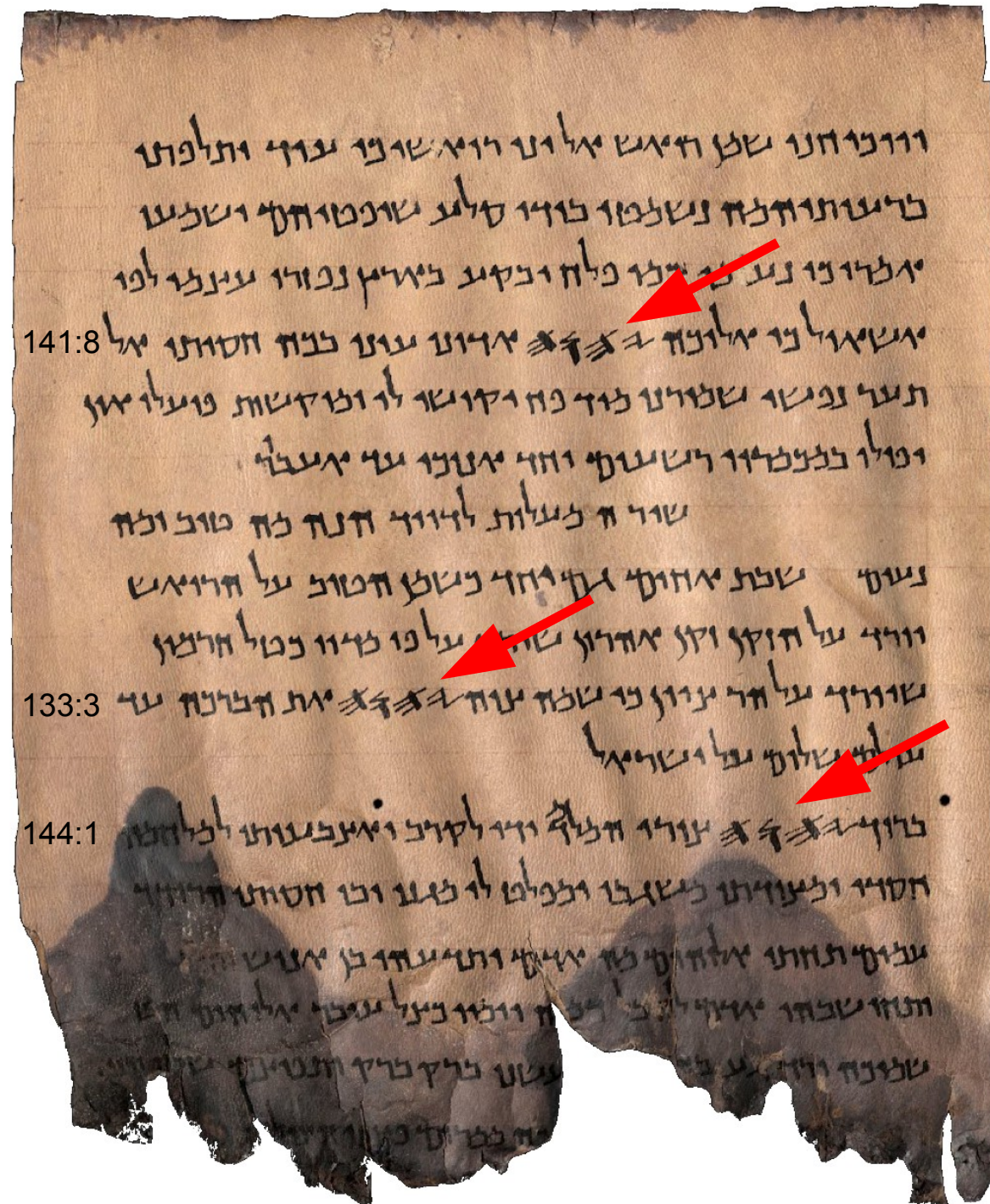
The OT

Thou shalt not forswear thyself	Lev 19:11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. 12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely , neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I <i>am</i> the LORD.
but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths	Psa 50:14 (LXX 49:15) Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Substitutions for the Name of God

- Pronounce יהוה as “Lord”
- Use distinctive script for the divine name (right)
- Replace “God” with a substitute (e.g., “kingdom of heaven”)

Psa 141:5ff from 11Q Psalms a,
online at www.deadseascrolls.org.il



A Consequence of Substitution

Mat 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

v. 37 for whatsoever is more than these cometh of [the] evil του πονηρου

What is “the evil? Three possibilities.

- Evil as a principle → oaths result from the fallen nature within us.
- The evil person, that is, the devil → oaths result from external temptation by Satan.
- The evil person, generically → evil people typically use oaths, because they are not generally trustworthy.

Jam 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation [MT “hypocrisy”].

Does Paul disagree with our Lord?

Rom 1:9 For **God is my witness**, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Rom 9:1 **I say the truth in Christ**, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

2Co 1:23 Moreover **I call God for a record upon my soul**, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

2Co 11:30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31 **The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

2Co 12:19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? **we speak before God in Christ**: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Gal 1:20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, **before God**, I lie not.

Phi 1:8 For **God is my record**, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

1Th 2:5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; **God is witness**:

1Ti 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (**I speak the truth in Christ**, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

Enjoining Others

1Th 5:27 I charge you **by the Lord** that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

1Ti 5:21 I charge thee **before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels**, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

1Ti 6:13 I give thee charge **in the sight of God**, who quickeneth all things, and **before Christ Jesus**, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

2Ti 2:14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them **before the Lord** that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

2Ti 4:1 I charge thee therefore **before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ**, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Cf. Pro 6:16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, **a lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 **A false witness that speaketh lies**, and he that soweth discord among brethren.