

## **AA38. Not Swearing Oaths Lightly.**

*We are not to swear oaths Lightly.*

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

### **Key New Testament Scriptures**

#### Matthew 5:33-36

*Again, you have heard that our fathers were told, 'Do not break your oath,' and 'Keep your vows to ADONAI.' But I tell you not to swear at all- not 'by heaven,' because it is God's throne; not 'by the earth,' because it is his footstool; and not 'by Yerushalayim,' because it is the city of the Great King. And don't swear by your head, because you can't make a single hair white or black.*

#### James 5:12

*Above all, brothers, stop swearing oaths- not "By heaven," not "By the earth," and not by any other formula; rather, let your "Yes" be simply "Yes" and your "No" simply "No," so that you won't fall under condemnation.*

### **Additional New Testament Scriptures**

None

### **Related New Testament Mitzvot**

AA58 Letting Our “Yes” be “Yes” and Our “No” be “No”

### **Supportive Tanakh Scriptures**

#### Leviticus 5:21(6:2)-23(6:4)

*If someone sins and acts perversely against ADONAI by dealing falsely with his neighbor in regard to a deposit or security entrusted to him, by stealing from him, by extorting him, or by dealing falsely in regard to a lost object he has found, or by swearing to a lie- if a person commits any of these sins, then, if he sinned and is guilty, he is to restore whatever it was he stole or obtained by extortion, or whatever was deposited with him, or the lost object which he found,*

#### Leviticus 19:12

*Do not swear by my name falsely, which would be profaning the name of your God; I am ADONAI.*

#### Deuteronomy 6:13-15

*You are to fear ADONAI your God, serve him and swear by his name. You are not to follow other gods, chosen from the gods of the peoples around you; because ADONAI, your God, who*

*is here with you, is a jealous God. If you do, the anger of ADONAI your God will flare up against you and he will destroy you from the face of the earth.*

Deuteronomy 10:20

*You are to fear ADONAI your God, serve him, cling to him and swear by his name.*

**Comment**

This is a particularly difficult *Mitzvah* to understand because the words of the *Tanach* seem to contradict those of the New Testament. Deuteronomy 10:20 states: “You are to fear ADONAI your God, serve him and swear by his name.” and Leviticus 19:12 states: “*Do not swear by my name falsely.*” Both of these infer that swearing an oath is authorized so long as it is in God’s name and not sworn falsely. However, James 5:12, states: “*Above all, brothers, stop swearing oaths- not "By heaven," not "By the earth," and not by any other formula;*” which seems to preclude swearing oaths altogether.

The issue is discussed more fully in *Mitzvah* #A9 in Volume #1 of this compilation but, since publishing that volume, I have come to believe that, among the various possible explanations, Dr. Daniel Juster’s opinion that follows is most likely correct:

*“I am of the opinion that, in his "Sermon on the Mount," Yeshua preaches a higher standard for truth-telling and for verbalizing oaths than the one commonly practiced in his day; his exhortation is to return us to the standard that was always implied in the Torah. Yeshua is saying that our truthfulness as believers and our commitment to doing what we say we will do should have such integrity, that oaths become unnecessary among us. This would limit our oath-taking to public law contexts where it is required for testifying in court and for entering into certain contracts. As Yeshua-believers, we should become known for our trustworthiness.”*

**Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2**

A05 *Swearing Oaths Only in God's Name*

A09 *Swearing Falsely*