

## THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

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**[Exodus 20:7 KJV] 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**

The Third Commandment actually means not to swear by the Name of Yehovah Elohim falsely. “IN VAIN” in this verse in Hebrew means “IN FALSEHOOD, OR FALSELY.” The Hebrew word/phrase is “lashav” – לָשָׁו.

**The JPS translation of Exodus 20:7 is clearer:**

**“You shall not swear FALSELY by the Name of the LORD your God: for the LORD will not clear one who swears FALSELY by His name.”**

Leviticus 19:12 below uses a different word/phrase – “lashaker” לִשְׁקֹר – which is basically a synonym of “lashav” - which is translated more clearly to mean “falsely.”

[Leviticus 19:12 KJV] 12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I [am] the LORD.

Deuteronomy actually takes the reverse of that Commandment to say TO SWEAR BY THE NAME OF YEHOVAH, although we know He means “in truth,” or honestly, not “in falsehood” or falsely!

[Deuteronomy 6:13-14 KJV] 13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and **SHALT SWEAR BY HIS NAME (וּבִשְׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע – UVISH’MO TISHAVE’A).**

14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which [are] round about you;

[Deuteronomy 10:20 KJV] 20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and **SWEAR BY HIS NAME.**

**“As the LORD lives” (“[As] YEHOVAH lives “ - חַי־יְהוָה - “CHAY YEHOVAH”)** is the main way we see in the Tanach that people would swear by His Name (I Samuel 20:3, Judges 8:19, Ruth 3:13, and many more). Sometimes it is “So shall Yehovah do to me and even more...” (I Kings 2:23).

The following are a few other scriptures show how important **ALL** our words are to Yehovah, especially vows TO Him:

[Deuteronomy 23:21-23 KJV] 21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 **That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform;** [even] a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

[Ecclesiastes 5:2-7 KJV] 2 **Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God: for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.** 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice [is known] by multitude of words. 4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for [he hath] no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better [is it] that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. 6 **Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin;** neither say thou before the angel, that it [was] an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words [there are] also [divers] vanities: **but fear thou God.**

**I believe the following verses from Jeremiah mean that EVEN IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM, Yehovah still blesses swearing by His Name (honestly)!!!:**

[Jeremiah 12:14-17 KJV] 14 Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. 15 And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. 16 **And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, TO SWEAR BY MY NAME, The LORD (YEHOVAH) LIVETH; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.** 17 **But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.**

That verse in Jeremiah is important to see the truth in what YEHOSHUA the Messiah actually said in Matthew 5:33-37. THE SHEM TOV'S HEBREW MATTHEW TEXT clears up the discrepancy between the KJV translation (based on the Greek manuscripts) of these verses and the obvious Torah and Prophet's telling us TO SWEAR (honestly) in the Name of YEHOVAH!

First, the KJV states:

[Matthew 5:33-37 KJV] 33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

The word "forswear" comes from a Greek word meaning "to swear falsely" (Strong's concordance G1964), so even the Greek manuscript has this quote from the Torah correct! So, YEHOSHUA begins with, in verse 33, reminding the people of the Torah commandment to not swear falsely by the Name of Yehovah! But, the KJV translation would lead one to believe that he is not to swear at all in verse 34.

The book, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, which presents the Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew text, also has Professor George Howard's English translation. This is Professor Howard's translation:

SHEM TOV'S HEBREW MATTHEW 5:33-37:

33) Again, you have heard what was said to those of long ago: YOU SHALL NOT SWEAR BY MY NAME FALSELY ("LASHAKER" - לשקר - as shown in Leviticus 19:12 earlier) , but you shall return to the Lord your oath.

34) **But I say to you not to swear IN VAIN ("FALSELY" is the clearest translation of "LASHAV" - לשוא - as shown earlier in Exodus 20:7) IN ANY MATTER ("BY ANYTHING" would be my translation by context) neither by heaven, because it is the throne of God,**

35) nor by earth because it is the footstool of his feet, nor by (Jerusalem) because it is the city of God,

36) nor by your head for you are not able to make one hair white or black.

37) But let your words be yes, yes or no, no. Everything in addition to this is evil.

However, in the Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew text, Yehoshua then adds and tells the people not only to not swear falsely by Yehovah's Name, but also not to swear **falsely ("lashav")** by anything! That one word in the Hebrew, which is not in the Greek manuscripts, changes the meaning completely! Dr. Nehemia Gordon says that it had become a common practice for people, even the Pharisees, to lie in their swearing, since the Third Commandment was limited to not swearing falsely in Yehovah's Name (Gordon, *The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus*, pp. 61-69). **The only thing on which I disagree with Dr. Gordon is that I do believe Yehoshua was taking the Third Commandment to a higher level, commanding us not to swear FALSELY - BY ANYTHING! Yehoshua then basically ends with Yehovah's heart for the people to "be completely honest in all your speech" when He says "let your yes be yes and your no be no!"**

So, I personally believe YEHOSHUA is saying that anything added to your words "to swear by" is evil, **EXCEPTING what has already been told to be good**, which the Torah and Prophet Jeremiah has told us to be good now and in the Messianic Kingdom: **TO SWEAR TRUTHFULLY "AS YEHOVAH LIVES."**

We need to now consider YEHOSHUA's words in Matthew 23:16-22. First, He tells us that He is speaking to the Pharisees and Scribes (Sages in Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew) in verses 13 and 14, calling them "hypocrites." The KJV reads:

[Matthew 23:13-22 KJV] 13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. 14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. 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.

Although not significantly different in meaning, here is the SHEM TOV'S HEBREW MATTHEW translation by Professor Howard of verses 16-22:

16) Woe to you, council of the blind, who say that he who swears by the temple is **NOT OBLIGATED**, but he that vows by anything which is consecrated to the structure of the temple is obligated to pay.

17) - Mad and blind men, which is greater, the temple or that which is consecrated to the temple? —

18) and whoever swears by the altar is **NOT OBLIGATED** but he who swears that he will make an offering is obligated to give it.

19) (Woe blind men), which is more, the gift or the altar, the temple or the gift?

20) He who swears by the altar swears (by it) and by everything which is in it.

21) (VERSE 21 IS OMITTED IN ALL NINE SHEM TOV HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS THAT PROFESSOR HOWARD HAD ACCESS TO. DR. NEHEMIAH GORDON HAS LOCATED TWENTY- EIGHT TOTAL SO FAR IN LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD [Gordon, *The Naming of Jesus in Hebrew Matthew*, p. 5])

22) He who swears by the throne of God swears by it and by the one who sits upon it.

I personally believe that YEHOSHUA is not contradicting his admonition in Matthew 5:37 not to add words to your “yes” or “no” to swear by anything (except “As Yehovah Lives”). **I believe he is simply showing their hypocrisy here – they are making a way TO NOT BE OBLIGATED to fulfill their vows.** I believe Yehoshua is showing their obligation to fulfill all their vows - regardless.

However, I also personally do not believe that this is an unpardonable sin... by sincere and true repentance to Yehovah and prayer to Him to forgive us by the blood of Yehoshua, asking according to His great mercy, with a true resolve not to commit it again, I believe even this sin is forgivable (Isaiah [Yehsa'yahu] 53:1-12, Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew 26:26-29). Praise Yehovah! But, the great magnitude of this sin and its consequence needs to be recognized...

**“You shall not swear FALSELY by the Name of the LORD your God: for the LORD will not clear one who swears FALSELY by His name.”**

#### SOURCES:

**(ALL EMPHASES ADDED [BOLD, CAPITALIZATIONS, EXPLANATIONS IN THE TEXT, ETC.] TO QUOTATIONS OF THESE SOURCES ARE MINE.)**

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