

Swearing Oaths

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Introduction

In the Bible, the swearing of an oath was a solemn and sacred act, wherein one affirmed his veracity, often by calling upon the God of heaven. Let us, therefore, consider those Greek words that communicate the concept of swearing oaths. The Greek verb *omnuō* means “to swear” or “take an oath.” The noun *horkos* signifies “an oath.” The related noun *horkōmosia* refers to “the process of taking an oath.” It is noteworthy that the concept of an oath is akin to a fence or enclosure. Though a man of integrity swears to his own hurt, yet, he changes not (Ps. 15:1-5). Consider also the sacred nature of the marriage vows (Gen. 2:18-24; Mal. 2:13-16; Matt. 19:3-9).

Psalm 15:1-5 ... 1 A Psalm of David. O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. 3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. (NASB95)

Genesis 2:18-24 ... 18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” 19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (NASB95)

Malachi 2:13-16 ... 13 “This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 “Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 “But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. 16 “For I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the

God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the Lord of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” (NASB95)

Matthew 19:3-9 ... 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” 4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” 7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (NASB95)

The Verb Omnuō

Thomas defines *omnuō* as “to swear, take an oath” [3660]. BDAG say it means “to affirm the veracity of one’s statement by invoking a transcendent entity, frequently with implied invitation of punishment if one is untruthful, swear, take an oath” (cf. Job 31:7-10; Ps. 137:4-6). This word occurs 26x in the NT (Matt. 5:34, 36; 23:16, 18, 20, 21, 22; 26:74; Mark 6:23; 14:71; Luke 1:73; Acts 2:30; Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:3; 6:13, 16; 7:21; James 5:12; Rev. 10:6).

Job 31:7-10 ... 7 “If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, 8 Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted. 9 “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway, 10 May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. (NASB95)

Psalms 137:4-6 ... 4 How can we sing the Lord’s song In a foreign land? 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill. 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy. (NASB95)

*Matthew 5:34 ... 34 “But I say to you, ***make** no ***oath** at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, (NASB95)*

*Matthew 5:36 ... 36 “Nor shall you ***make** an ***oath** by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 23:16 ... 16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever ***swears** by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever ***swears** by the gold of the temple is obligated.’ (NASB95)*

*Matthew 23:18 ... 18 “And, ‘Whoever ***swears** by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever ***swears** by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ (NASB95)*

*Matthew 23:20 ... 20 “Therefore, whoever ***swears** by the altar, ***swears** both by the altar and by everything on it. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 23:21 ... 21 “And whoever ***swears** by the temple, ***swears** both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 23:22 ... 22 “And whoever ***swears** by heaven, ***swears** both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 26:74 ... 74 Then he began to curse and ***swear**, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. (NASB95)*

*Mark 6:23 ... 23 And he ***swore** to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.” (NASB95)*

*Mark 14:71 ... 71 But he began to curse and ***swear**, “I do not know this man you are talking about!” (NASB95)*

*Luke 1:73 ... 73 The oath which He ***swore** to Abraham our father, (NASB95)*

*Acts 2:30 ... 30 “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had ***sworn** to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 3:11 ... 11 As I ***swore** in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 3:18 ... 18 And to whom did He ***swear** that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 4:3 ... 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, “As I ***swore** in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 6:13 ... 13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could ***swear** by no one greater, He ***swore** by Himself, (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 6:16 ... 16 For men ***swear** by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 7:21 ... 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has ***sworn** And will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’ ”); (NASB95)*

*James 5:12 ... 12 But above all, my brethren, do not ***swear**, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment. (NASB95)*

*Revelation 10:6 ... 6 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, (NASB95)*

The Verb Horkizō

Thomas defines *horkizō* as derived from *horkos*, meaning “to make (one) swear, to adjure” [3726]. BDAG say it means “to give a command to someone under oath, adjure, implore.” This word occurs 2x in the NT (Mark 5:6-7; Acts 19:13).

*Mark 5:6-7 ... 6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I *implore You by God, do not torment me!” (NASB95)*

*Acts 19:13 ... 13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I *adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” (NASB95)*

The Noun Horkos

Thomas defines *horkos* as akin to *erkos* [fence, enclosure], meaning “an oath” [3727]. BDAG say it simply refers to an “oath.” This word occurs 10x in the NT (Matt. 5:33; 14:7, 9; 26:72; Mark 6:26; Luke 1:73; Acts 2:30; Heb. 6:16, 17; James 5:12).

*Matthew 5:33 ... 33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your *vows to the Lord.’ (NASB95)*

*Matthew 14:7 ... 7 so much that he promised with an *oath to give her whatever she asked. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 14:9 ... 9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his *oaths, and because of his dinner guests. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 26:72 ... 72 And again he denied it with an *oath, “I do not know the man.” (NASB95)*

*Mark 6:26 ... 26 And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his *oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her. (NASB95)*

*Luke 1:73 ... 73 The *oath which He swore to Abraham our father, (NASB95)*

*Acts 2:30 ... 30 “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an *oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 6:16 ... 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an *oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 6:17 ... 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an ***oath**, (NASB95)*

*James 5:12 ... 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other ***oath**; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment. (NASB95)*

The Noun *horkōmosia*

Thomas defines *horkōmosia* as derived from *horkoō* [to make (one) swear], meaning an “affirmation or oath” [3728]. BDAG say it refers to “the process of taking an oath, oath-taking, oath.” This word occurs 3x in the NT (Heb. 7:20, 21, 28).

*Hebrews 7:20 ... 20 And inasmuch as it was not without an ***oath** (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 7:21 ... 21 (for they indeed became priests without an ***oath**, but He with an ***oath** through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’ ”); (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 7:28 ... 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the ***oath**, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever. (NASB95)*

Sinful Oaths

The New Testament warns against making false, foolish, or frivolous oaths. King Herod foolishly swore to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she might ask, up to half of his kingdom (Matt. 14:6-10; Mark 6:21-28).

*Matthew 14:6-10 ... 6 But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, 7 so much that he promised with an ***oath** [3727] to give her whatever she asked. 8 Having been prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” 9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his ***oaths** [3727], and because of his dinner guests. 10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. (NASB95)*

*Mark 6:21-28 ... 21 A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee; 22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you.” 23 And he ***swore** [3660] to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.” 24 And she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.” 25 Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” 26 And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his ***oaths** [3727] and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and had*

him beheaded in the prison, 28 and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. (NASB95)

The Jewish leaders employed a complicated, corrupt system of deceptive oaths (Matt. 23:16-22).

*Matthew 23:16-22 ... 16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever ***swears** [3660] by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever ***swears** [3660] by the gold of the temple is obligated.’ 17 “You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 “And, ‘Whoever ***swears** [3660] by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever ***swears** [3660] by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ 19 “You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 “Therefore, whoever ***swears** [3660] by the altar, ***swears** [3660] both by the altar and by everything on it. 21 “And whoever ***swears** [3660] by the temple, ***swears** [3660] both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 “And whoever ***swears** [3660] by heaven, ***swears** [3660] both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. (NASB95)*

Simon Peter denied the Christ, attempting to hide his discipleship by cursing and swearing (Matt. 26:71-74; Mark 14:69-71).

*Matthew 26:71-74 ... 71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” 72 And again he denied it with an ***oath** [3727], “I do not know the man.” 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.” 74 Then he began to curse and ***swear** [3660], “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. (NASB95)*

*Mark 14:69-71 ... 69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, “This is one of them!” 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.” 71 But he began to curse and ***swear** [3660], “I do not know this man you are talking about!” (NASB95)*

Avoiding unnecessary oaths, the disciple’s word should be counted as binding and obligatory (Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12).

*Matthew 5:33-37 ... 33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your ***vows** [3727] to the Lord.’ 34 “But I say to you, ***make** no ***oath** [3660] at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 “Nor shall you ***make** an ***oath** [3660] by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil. (NASB95)*

*James 5:12 ... 12 But above all, my brethren, do not ***swear** [3660], either by heaven or by earth or with any other ***oath** [3727]; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment. (NASB95)*

Sacred Oaths

Holy Scripture makes reference to various divine oaths. If the word of the Lord is authoritative and trustworthy (Prov. 30:5-6; Ps. 18:30), how much more so His promises and oaths (Heb. 6:13-20)?

Proverbs 30:5-6 ... 5 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. (NASB95)

Psalm 18:30 ... 30 As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (NASB95)

Hebrews 6:13-20 ... 13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NASB95)

God swore to Abraham that He would fulfill His promises (Luke 1:67-75; Heb. 6:13-18; cf. Gen. 22:15-18).

*Luke 1:67-75 ... 67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant— 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old— 71 Salvation from our enemies, And from the hand of all who hate us; 72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The ***oath** [3727] which He ***swore** [3660] to Abraham our father, 74 To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 6:13-18 ... 13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could ***swear** [3660] by no one greater, He ***swore** [3660] by Himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men ***swear** [3660] by one greater than themselves, and with them an ***oath** [3727] given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an ***oath** [3727], 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. (NASB95)*

Genesis 22:15-18 ... 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (NASB95)

God swore to David to seat one of His descendants on His throne (Acts 2:29-31; cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3-4, 35-37; 132:11-12).

*Acts 2:29-31 ... 29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had ***sworn** [3660] to him with an ***oath** [3727] to seat one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. (NASB95)*

2 Samuel 7:12-16 ... 12 "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, 15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." ' ' (NASB95)

Psalms 89:3-4 ... 3 "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, 4 I will establish your seed forever And build up your throne to all generations." Selah. (NASB95)

Psalms 89:35-37 ... 35 "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. 36 "His descendants shall endure forever And his throne as the sun before Me. 37 "It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful." Selah. (NASB95)

Psalms 132:11-12 ... 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. 12 "If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever." (NASB95)

The Father swore to the Son, saying "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:20-22, 28; cf. Ps. 110:4).

Hebrews 7:17-22 ... 17 For it is attested of Him, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." 18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we

draw near to God. 20 And inasmuch as it was not without an ***oath** [3728] 21 (for they indeed became priests without an ***oath** [3728], but He with an ***oath** [3728] through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has ***sworn** [3660] And will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’ ”); 22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. (NASB95)

Hebrews 7:28 ... 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the ***oath** [3728], which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever. (NASB95)

Psalm 110:4 ... 4 The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” (NASB95)

God swore to wayward Israel that they would not enter into His rest (Heb. 3:7-11, 17-19; 4:3; cf. Num. 14:20-35; Deut. 1:34-40; Ps. 95:8-11).

Hebrews 3:7-11 ... 7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. 10 “Therefore I was angry with this generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they did not know My ways’; 11 As I ***swore** [3660] in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” (NASB95)

Hebrews 3:17-19 ... 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He ***swear** [3660] that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. (NASB95)

Hebrews 4:3 ... 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, “As I ***swore** [3660] in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. (NASB95)

Numbers 14:20-35 ... 20 So the Lord said, “I have pardoned them according to your word; 21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. 22 “Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. 24 “But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. 25 “Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.” 26 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. 28 “Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; 29 your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 30 ‘Surely

you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. 32 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 33 'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 34 'According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition. 35 'I, the Lord, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.' ” (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 1:34-40 ... 34 “Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying, 35 ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the Lord fully.’ 37 “The Lord was angry with me also on your account, saying, ‘Not even you shall enter there. 38 ‘Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it. 39 ‘Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it. 40 ‘But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.’ (NASB95)

Psalms 95:8-11 ... 8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, 9 “When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. 10 “For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. 11 “Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.” (NASB95)

Finally, the angel of the Lord swore there would be no further delay in judgment upon the corrupt culture of Rome (Rev. 10:5-7).

*Revelation 10:5-7 ... 5 Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and *swore [3660] 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, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets. (NASB95)*

Conclusion

While warning against sinful oaths, the Bible also records various sacred and solemn vows. Let us be wise enough to mark the difference. There may be special circumstances, wherein we call God as our witness (Rom. 1:9-10; Phil. 1:8), and even make solemn vows in the presence of witnesses, as in a wedding ceremony or court of law (Acts 18:18; 21:23-24); nevertheless, our basic communications must needs be simple: Let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No” be “No” (2 Cor. 1:17-20; James 5:12).

Romans 1:9-10 ... 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, 10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. (NASB95)

Philippians 1:8 ... 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

Acts 18:18 ... 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 he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. (NASB95)

Acts 21:23-24 ... 23 "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 1:17-20 ... 17 Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time? 18 But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. 19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. 20 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. (NASB95)

James 5:12 ... 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment. (NASB95)