

NOTE: This file contains Parts 1-2 of the message: "BOUND BY AN OATH".

## OPENING SCRIPTURE(S): Ecclesiastes 5:1-6, James 5:12

**"4**When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. **5**It is better to say nothing than to promise something you don't follow through on. **6**In such cases, your mouth is making you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and He might wipe out everything you have achieved." Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

**"But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned for it."** James 5:12 NLT

**"My friends, above all else, don't take an oath. You must not swear by heaven or by earth or by anything else. "Yes" or "No" is all you need to say. If you say anything more, you will be condemned."** James 5:12 [Contemporary English Version](#)

### Question:

- (1) How "reliable" is your word? How likely are you to honor and keep your word?
- (2) How prone are you "changing your mind" once you make a promise?
- (3) Would the people who know you well say you're bound to keep your word—EVEN if it hurts you to do so?

## BOUND BY AN OATH, part 1

For simplicity sake, an OATH is also a VOW or PROMISE to DO or NOT DO something; SAY or NOT SAY SOMETHING.

### 1. The "beauty and enduring power" of a promise made in "good faith".

NOTE: The author of Psalm 132 is clearly not David.

**Psalm 132:1-4** WE CAN INITIATE THE OATH OR PROMISE.

**"1**LORD, remember David and all that he suffered. **2**He took an oath [made a solemn promise] before the LORD. He vowed to the Mighty One of Israel, **3**"I will not go home; I will not let myself rest. **4**I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber **5**until I find a place to build a house for the LORD, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel."

**Psalm 132:11-12** THE LORD CAN INITIATE THE OATH OR PROMISE—OR RESPOND TO A PROMISE WE INITIATE WITH A PROMISE OF HIS OWN!

**"11**The LORD swore [an oath] to David a promise He will never take back: "I will place one of your descendants on your throne. **12**If your descendants obey the terms of my covenant and follow the decrees [laws] that I teach them, then your royal line will never end."

### 2. What's wrong with "making a promise or entering into an oath"?

**IN A POINT—WE CAN RENEGE OR GO BACK ON OUR WORD OR BREAK OUR PROMISE—EXPECTING OTHERS AND THE LORD TO "ACCEPT AND UNDERSTAND" THAT WE'RE ONLY HUMAN!**

**Heb. 6:16:** "Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding."

- (1) We are "bound" by that oath—*even if we took it under pressure or under duress!*
- (2) We are "bound" by that oath—*even if we didn't "ask or understood" all the "terms and details" of that oath!*
- (3) We are "especially bound" by any oath or promise—*we entered into with "good intentions"!*

Thinking back to James 5:12:

**"But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath [or strengthen a promise by swearing], by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you be condemned for it."**

**"My friends, above all else, don't take an oath. You must not swear by heaven or by earth or by anything else. "Yes" or "No" is all you need to say. If you say anything more, you will be condemned."** James 5:12 [Contemporary English Version](#)

**WHEN PETER DENIED THE LORD—HE "INVITED" THE LORD INTO A LIE—SOMETHING THE LORD IS INCAPABLE OF! MARK 14:66-72**

**LET ME ASK YOU THIS: HAVE YOU EVER CALLED ON SOMEONE TO "SWEAR BY GOD" OR "SWEAR BY GOD AS YOUR WITNESS"?**

**DON'T BE GUILTY OF DOING THAT ANYMORE!!**

**If we "urge, entice, or persuade" someone to "swear by God" or say "With God as their witness" to "THEM ON THE RECORD"—we potentially lead them into serious transgression against the LORD—IF they DON'T MEAN EVERYTHING THEY SAY or IF THEY DON'T KEEP THEIR PROMISE!**

### **3. The Lord not only expects us to keep “every promise” we make to Him—He holds us “accountable” for “every promise” we voluntarily make to people—EVEN WHEN IT HURTS!**

ECCLESIASTES 5 ALLUDES TO THE KIND OF HURT WE CAN VISIT UPON OURSELVES BY RENEGING ON A PROMISE WE MAKE TO THE LORD OR PEOPLE:

**“4**So when you make a promise to God, don’t delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. **5**It is better to say nothing than to promise something that you don’t follow through on.

**6**In such cases, your mouth is making you sin. And don’t defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger [human or angel] that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and He might wipe out everything you have achieved.” Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

**GO TO JOSHUA CHAPTER 24:11-28 JOSHUA ASSURES THE PEOPLE THEY ARE BOUND BY THEIR OATH.**

**19**Then Joshua warned the people, **“You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.**

**20**If you abandon the LORD and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.” **21**But the people answered Joshua, **“No, we will serve the LORD!”**

**22**“You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. **“You have chosen to serve the LORD.”** “Yes,” they replied, **“we are witnesses to what we have said.”**

**23**“All right then,” Joshua said, **“destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”**

**24**The people said to Joshua, **“We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him alone.”** **25**So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem, committing them to follow the decrees and regulations of the LORD. **26**Joshua recorded these things in the Book of God’s Instructions. As a reminder of their agreement, he took a huge stone and rolled it beneath the terebinth tree beside the Tabernacle of the LORD.

**27**Joshua said to all the people, **“This stone has heard everything the LORD said to us. It will be a witness to testify against you if you go back on your word to God.”**

That’s the end of Part 1 of BOUND BY AN OATH.

Stay tuned for Part 2—where we’ll look at detailed examples of some who were “bound by an oath to their own hurt”!

## **MY CLOSING THOUGHT AND INVITATION TO ETERNAL LIFE**

SOME PEOPLE THINK THEMSELVES SO WISE or SO INCAPABLE OF KEEPING A PROMISE THAT THEY WOULDN’T DARE ENTER INTO A “COVENANT” WITH THE LORD!

**Such people have not qualms about signing a 10-year promissory note to fund a college tuition or a 30-year promissory note to repay a mortgage...**

**THEY’RE JUST “UNDECIDED” ABOUT THE LORD...AND HEAVEN...AND IMMORTALITY!**

**TO ANY “UNDECIDED” WHO MAY BE LISTENING. DON’T WORRY...**

**The strength and enforcer of any covenant with the LORD is NEVER US—but the LORD HIMSELF!**

Of which Ezekiel 20:37 makes crystal clear:

**“I will examine you carefully and hold you to the terms of the covenant.”**

## BOUND BY AN OATH, part 2

### QUICK REVIEW OF PART 1

**1. The “beauty and enduring power” of a promise made in “good faith”.**

WE CAN INITIATE THE OATH OR PROMISE. THE LORD CAN INITIATE THE OATH OR PROMISE—OR RESPOND TO A PROMISE WE MAKE TO HIM WITH A PROMISE OF HIS OWN!

**2. What’s wrong with “making a promise or entering into an oath” we haven’t seriously thought or prayed about?**

WE CAN RENEGE, GO BACK ON OUR WORD OR BREAK OUR PROMISE—EXPECTING OTHERS AND THE LORD TO “ACCEPT AND UNDERSTAND” THAT WE’RE ONLY HUMAN!

**IF WE EVER CALLED ON SOMEONE TO “SWEAR BY GOD” OR “SWEAR BY GOD AS YOUR WITNESS”—DON’T DO THAT ANYMORE!!**

If we “urge, entice, or persuade” someone to “swear by God” or say “With God as their witness” to “GET THEM ON THE RECORD”—we potentially lead them into serious transgression against the LORD—IF they DON’T MEAN EVERYTHING THEY SAY or IF THEY DON’T KEEP THEIR PROMISE!

**3. The Lord expects us to keep “every promise” we make to Him—and He holds us “accountable” for “every promise” we make to people!**

<sup>4</sup>When you make a promise to God, don’t delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. <sup>5</sup>It is better to say nothing than to promise something you don’t follow through on. <sup>6</sup>In such cases, your mouth is making you sin. And don’t defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and He might wipe out everything you have achieved.” Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

HERE’S YOUR 1ST OF 4 POINTS...

**1. We’re more prone to make “rash promises” or “mindless offerings” to the LORD when we’re in deep trouble than when all is well and secure! That’s because when we’re in some kind of trouble—we just want out of it—and we tend to worry about the consequences later!**

WHETHER WE KEEP THAT PROMISE SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT OUR TRUSTWORTHINESS! EVEN SO—HE HOLDS US TO THAT PROMISE!

**“The vow you heard me make when I was in deep trouble.” Psalm 66:8-15**

- The psalmist called the vows he made to the LORD “sacred vows”. 66:14
  - That is why I am sacrificing burnt offerings to you—the “best” of my rams...” 66:15
- DO WE FOLLOW THROUGH WITH “OUR BEST” or OUR “MINIMUM EFFORT”?

**2. To help us understand the “binding nature of an oath”—WE NEED UNDERSTAND AND REMEMBER HOW THE LORD SEES ANY PROMISE WE MAKE—AND WHAT HE EXPECTS IN RETURN! Hebrews 6:16**

**“When people take an oath, they swear by someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without question that oath is binding.”**

**3. The Lord expects us to keep “every promise” we make to Him and to people—EVEN WHEN IT HURTS!**

**“4Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.”**

READ PSALM 15:1-4.

### 3 EXAMPLES OF WHEN PROMISES HURT

**(1) Two women agree to eat each other sons. 2 Kings 6:24-33**

**Note:** Even though one son apparently survived because his mother broke her promise; the other mother’s son perished nonetheless!

*Speaking of not keeping our word...*

**(2) Suppose you and 10 other believers [that makes 11] agree to “purchase or lease a building” and all enter into a 20-year promise to pay or repay—but 7 years into the lease or mortgage...you and 2 other believers decide to “part ways or disassociate” from the other 8—who expected you to keep your promise to pay?**

**ALL WHO LEFT ARE STILL BOUND BY THEIR PROMISE—OTHERWISE IT MIGHT CREATE AN UNDUE “FINANCIAL BURDEN” FOR OTHERS!**

**(3) The Gibeonites deceived the Israelites into an oath “they could not escape”! Joshua 9:14-27**

<sup>14</sup>So the Israelite leaders examined their bread, but they did not consult the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>And Joshua went ahead and signed a peace treaty, and them, and the leaders of Israel ratified their agreement with a binding oath.

<sup>16</sup>Three days after the facts came out—these people of Gibeon lived nearby!

<sup>17</sup>The Israelites set out at once to investigate and reached their towns in three days! The names of these towns were—Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.

<sup>18</sup>But the Israelites did not attack the towns, for their leaders had made a vow of the congregation had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. <sup>19</sup>All the leaders answered, “We have sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. <sup>20</sup>This is how we will treat them: We will let them live, so that no wrath will fall on us because of the oath we swore to them.”

<sup>21</sup>They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the whole congregation.” So the leaders kept their promise.”

<sup>26</sup>...That arrangement continues to this day.”

#### 4. Five Events—“Present or Future”—that are “eternally bound” by an promise.

1. **The Rainbow and the Eternal Promise Never to Destroy the Earth Again with a Flood. Genesis 9:8-17**  
 “**8**Then God told Noah and his sons, **9**“I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, **10**and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds, and livestock and wild animals. **11**I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth.” **12**And God said, “I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. **13**I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and all the earth.  
**14**When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, **15**and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there a flood that will destroy all life. **16**When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” **17**Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures on earth.”
2. **Jesus’ Solemn Promise to Return. John 14:1-3**  
 “**1**“Don’t be troubled. You trust God, now trust in Me. **2**There are many rooms in my Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. **3**When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me where I am.”
3. **The Promise of the Resurrection on the Last Day for those who Believe in Jesus. John 6:38-40**  
 “**38**For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do what I want. **39**And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them to eternal life at the last day. **40**For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life—that I should raise them up at the last day.”
4. **The Weight of Jesus’ Words. Matthew 24:35**  
 “Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will remain forever.” Matthew 24:35
5. **The Promise of a New Heaven and a New Earth. Go to Revelation 21:1-5.**  
 “**1**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone.  
**2**And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband.  
**3**I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.  
**4**He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or crying or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.”  
**5**And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making all things new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” Amen!

And that’s the end of Part 2—and the message BOUND BY AN OATH.

#### CLOSING THOUGHTS AND INVITATION TO ETERNAL LIFE

ARE YOU BOUND BY “A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP” WITH GOD THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST?