

Was OT YHWH really SATAN? – Part 7

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Mr. [Glenn's Friend], I want to know who the real Father is, and who He is, and the truth much much much more than I want to defend a set of OT books where problems and inconsistencies abounding.

I want the truth, and I believe if I seek I will find, as this is the promise.

But at this point, there are too many verses on Yahweh that don't stack up to a good god. To many to ignore, and too many to excuse. Here is just a small sampling as not to overwhelm you, there are that many to share...I can keep sending, but these are a good starters. There are so many verses of Yaweh that are just pure cruelty, totally opposed to how Jesus says to treat others or as the the nature of the Father.

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By this point—if you have been following the thread of thought and consulted the scriptures prayerfully—you should be realizing that 'all is not as you have heard'... We have seen over and over that either:

1. Jesus and his disciples were confident in YHWH's goodness, OT scripture, Mosaic Law, and YHWH's identity with the Father—even in the events of the exodus, flood, future judgements—which they knew about and taught about;

Or:
2. Jesus was aware of all these many 'problems' and cruelties, and yet deliberately misled his disciples into such a confidence;

Or:
3. Jesus was ignorant of the scriptures (that the disciples said HE AUTHORED himself) and was too blind to see what the YouTube teacher apparently knows clearly, and therefore misled his disciples unintentionally.

Those are the only options—once you face up to all the NT data i offered in the initial post or two.

And I must offer somewhat of a **warning/alert** to you:

- There are **ZERO verses in God's word that He will ALLOW you to 'ignore'** – whether you 'like' your current understanding of those verses or not. He is the God of Truth and will FORCE YOU to face up to them as divine revelation (honored by the Son) and your conscience and other people will stand at the judgment to testify whether you TRIED to find the correct understanding or just followed the teachings of another and ASSUMED god was evil.
- There are **ZERO verses in God's word that He will ALLOW you to presume His 'guilt'** and then issue deceitful explanations/**excuses** for (along the lines of what 'theologians' are being accused of). If you don't give Him a chance to 'clear His name'—and just judge by appearances—you are silencing God's word.

If you have seen one thing from all the stuff that has been written on this so far, you should know that
(a) good solutions to your problems with His goodness are available; and
(b) that it takes honest, active, and opening minded spirituality to create a soul that is OPEN to God's demonstration of His character.

Just by way of reminder—and pointing out that there are ‘too many verses to ignore’—here are topics and points we demonstrated from the NT:

In part one, these were the Topics we covered:

1. Jesus said explicitly: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement.”
2. If we ONLY use appearances (like much of YS’s arguments are based on), **we would also have to believe Jesus to be a liar**, and to ‘**change his mind**’ (unlike the Father), to **use curses**, and to **speak under oath** – based on NT data.
3. As students trying to know the Father better, we must align OUR BELIEFS about the scriptures with JESUS teachings (either in the gospels or through his student-emissaries).
4. **Jesus trusted** and used the OT as being truthful and accurate (even in passages ascribed to YHWH), and affirmed that the scripture could NOT be ‘broken up’ into God-given and Satan-given parts. He never hinted at such a bizarre notion.
5. Who did Jesus think gave the 10 Commandments (the NT God or Satan)—**The NT GOD**.
6. Is only PART of the OT ‘breathed out by the NT god’ or ALL of it? **ALL OF IT was breathed out**.
7. Was ANY prophecy in the OT produced by ANYONE other than the Holy Spirit? **NO**
8. In fact, were the predictions of the Messiah’s sufferings produced by Satan or by the pre-Incarnate Christ himself? **By the pre-Incarnate Christ himself!**
9. Psalms 2 and 110 are by David and refer to the Son of YHWH—the messiah—as ‘*breaking the nations with a rod of iron*’ and calling on the nations to ‘*Do homage to the Son, that He not be angry and you perish—for His wrath may soon be kindled*’. 110 refers to the *submission of enemies at his feet* and the ‘*shattering of kings in the day of His wrath*’. Do the NT teachers believe Satan wrote this or the NT God of Jesus? **They ascribed it to the NT God of Jesus.**
10. Isaiah 6 is referred to several times in the NT. It speaks a word of judgment on Israel, saying ‘make their hearts dull... so they will not be healed’. Do the NT teachers believe Satan wrote this or the NT God of Jesus through Isaiah? **They ascribed it to the NT God of Jesus.**
11. Jesus and the NT authors cite, reference or allude to at least 200 OT passages—without once expressing a doubt about God’s authorship or expressing some belief that Satan authored them. They ABSOLUTELY TRUST, quote, and reference passages in:
 - **all the books of Moses** (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy),
 - **all of the historical books** (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles),
 - **all of the poetical books** (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes),
 - **all the Major prophets** (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel), and
 - **most of the longer Minor Prophets** (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah).

12. They LIVED the reality that ‘all scripture was God-breathed’. They submitted to it, delighted in it, accepted it—even the **‘hard passages’ we will look at below**. They found it to be beautiful in character—connecting the OT YHWH with the NT God of Jesus and the disciples:
13. The hypocrisy that Jesus called out against often was likewise **found in the OT prophecies of Isaiah**—ascribed to the God of Jesus/NT:
14. The promises of YHWH to David are ascribed to the NT God, with David being called a prophet pointing to the resurrection of Christ:
15. The Word of God – the **OT scriptures from YHWH** – was food for life, eternal power, and the **source of the New Birth**:
16. **We asked the soul-searcher question**: The reader should stop here and face these verses before the Father – do you accept the teachings of the New Testament about the inspiration of the **ENTIRE Old Testament scriptures?** – Jesus and the NT authors DID – do you trust THEM or your own (or YS’) opinions more?
17. The beautiful text of 2 Timothy 2:15 does not teach anything like us needing to ‘separate the bible’ into good and bad verses!
18. The injunction to ‘test the spirits’ in 1 John 4.1 had nothing to do with sitting in judgment over passages in the Word of God.

In part 2-3, we covered these:

19. **Soul searcher question again**: can I trust Jesus when he tells me to trust the Hebrew Bible He used, taught, submitted to, and interpreted His life/mission by’...
20. **It should be crystal clear that Jesus and his disciples believed that ‘all scripture was God-breathed’** and that all prophecy was produced by the Holy Spirit, and that at least all messianic prophecy was produced also by the Spirit of the (pre-Incarnate) Christ. In other words, **the entire trinity wrote the Old Testament!** – The New Testament God (God of Jesus and His students), the Holy Spirit (both author of the OT, and promised by Jesus to guide the NT authors into all truth), and the pre-incarnate “second person of the Trinity”—the Son of God, the Word, the pre-incarnate Jesus.
21. You need to be clear on this – **Jesus was not ‘confused’ about the God of the OT being the Person He address as “God” or “Father”**. **Jesus’ disciples were not confused either**—because Jesus had taught them about the Father—their writings will show the same identification of the OT YHWH with the NT GOD/FATHER. **Jesus was a successful teacher** and the promised Holy Spirit ‘sealed the deal’ (“He will bring all things I have said to you into remembrance”).
22. Did the disciples of Jesus believe the YHWH of the OT was the God of Jesus and His disciples?
YES

23. Did Jesus' disciples identify the God (of Jesus and the NT) with OT YHWH, even in imagery or commands? **YES**
24. Do the Gospels and Epistles show a *Theos* (GOD) that acted like the OT YHWH? **YES**
25. Who created the world according to Jesus and his disciples, their GOD or Satan? **The NT God.**
26. Who SENT THE FLOOD according to Jesus and his disciples, their GOD or Satan? **The NT God.**
27. Who SPOKE out of the burning bush according to Jesus and his disciples, their GOD or Satan? **The NT God.**
28. Who gave the 10 commandments and the Law 'out of the fire'—the NT GOD or SATAN—according to Jesus and his disciples? **The NT God.**
29. Who used force to free the Israelites from suffering in the Exodus event and led them through the events of the Wilderness Wanderings— The NT God or Satan? **The NT God.**
30. In fact, the NT students of Jesus taught that it was the pre-incarnate Christ that did the Exodus and wanderings???? Not SATAN??? **Yes, it was CHRIST.**
31. Who drove the nations out before Israel and Joshua at the "Conquest" – SATAN or the NT God? **The NT God.**
32. Did Jesus and his students repudiate all blood sacrifices? (as not being from GOD who gave the LAW)? Or did they still use them in the gospels and Acts? **NOT AT ALL**
33. All of these references to YHWH in the OT are connected to the New Testament speaker's or writer's God—the God/Father that Jesus revealed to them, imaged to them, taught them about, and commanded them to emulate! Jesus and his **students do not seem to be embarrassed** in the least by these passages. Many of us are. What do they know about God that we don't?! How can they TRUST this God? How can the disciples accept that Jesus worshipped and submitted to and approved and even claimed to be SENT by such a one? Was the life He lived in front of them somehow in consistent alignment with the picture of OT YHWH He taught and they knew from the Hebrew Bible? That the image of the Father He showed them, was consistent with the image of the OT YHWH?
34. YS and others can talk all day about fire and death and lies and cruelty and horrors they want in these passages— but at the end of the day, **our/your judgment had better line up with the EXPLICIT and CLEAR and CONSISTENT teachings of Jesus—from His own lips and from the lips and pens of His trusted Spirit-empowered disciples.**
35. Once you see this clearly, you will **either** have to REJECT JESUS (and this students) as being **DELUDED** and therefore **worthless** as guides to knowing God, or **as being IN LEAGUE WITH Satan** in trying to deceive us; or **have to REJECT sources of teaching** that deny what our Lord believed, lived, and taught – the implications of all these passages (and upcoming ones) we bring to your attention in these write-ups.

36. We explored: “How different was Jesus from the OT YHWH?”—finding the answer to be YES to all of these aspects of the question:

- Did Jesus and His disciples ascribe OT events to both YHWH and the pre-Incarnate Christ?
- Did Jesus ever require ultimate allegiance to him – at the same level as YHWH?
- Were Jesus' God and YHWH opposite on their attitude toward death?
- Did Jesus share imagery with the OT YHWH?
- Did Jesus share titles with the OT YHWH?
- Did Jesus align himself with the emotions of OT YHWH?
- Did Jesus align himself with the morality of OT YHWH?
- Did Jesus' teaching align with those of OT YHWH (even affirming the Law of Moses)?
- Did Jesus submit willingly to OT Yahweh?
- Did Jesus TRUST, PRAY to, and SUBMIT to the God who 'crushed him' (Is 53) as "Father"?
- Did Jesus tell others to submit willingly to OT Yahweh?
- Who did Jesus think made Him the cornerstone?

These all show the alignment and continuity of Jesus' life with the revealed life of YHWH in the OT—in its beauty and grace and truth and faithfulness.

37. Jesus warned of judgment, and judgments in which HE was a key participant and agent. His first sojourn on the earth was aimed at getting as many people OUT OF the judgement, but if they rejected the offer, they would still face Him in less pleasurable settings (e.g. courtroom).

38. God will right the wrongs in the future, but that this will necessarily involve loss to the oppressors.

39. Did Jesus repudiate the promise of Yahweh's to correct imbalances, remove evil doers from our environment, and reward the good (judicial vengeance, social justice)? **Absolutely not**—the Meek (for example) will have their stolen lands ripped from the hands of the powerful who stole them in the first place. Is this violence?—Yes, but it is correction of social injustice and wrongs that flowed from the fall from innocence and the effects of moral anti-good.

40. Did Jesus ever indicate that he would punish, reject or push people away, in his future kingdom? **DEFINITELY.**

41. Did Jesus ever see himself in prophecies that included words of judgment, vengeance, recompense-for-deeds, and death? **DEFINITELY.**

42. This role as judge in the future—as based on the prophecies about Him—was communicated to the disciples who also shared that sobering ‘reality-check’ with those they were sent to.

43. Did Jesus' disciples ever indicate that he would punish, reject or push people away, in his future kingdom? **DEFINITELY.**

44. Jesus did NOT repudiate the promise of Yahweh's to correct imbalances, remove evil doers from our environment, and reward the good (judicial vengeance, social justice). In fact, **His ministry of forgiveness was aimed at producing a people of righteousness, but some evils and adjustments will require a sovereign God and a fair-but-pure Jesus as Judge.**

45. At the end of the day, when we ask the question of ‘image of the father’ – was Christ really so different from the OT YHWH that somebody could believe Jesus’ Father could NOT HAVE BEEN the OT YHWH Jesus and His followers worshipped, honored, and tried to obey—the likeness of the Son to the Father (the express image) becomes more and more pronounced....

In part 4, we covered this:

46. I realize that this is a lot of material, but I wanted to show how a close reading of the text—and the related texts—show that there is no contradiction here about “the Face of God”. Noting the visual words from the auditory words, noting the contrasts between direct and dreams, and observing the use of the word ‘form’ of something to mean something different than the thing itself should be enough to help one soften and modify any earlier understanding that might construct a ‘case against the God of Jesus’.

In part 5, we covered this:


47. We saw that the texts themselves showed us how the two parts of Ex 6 both were historically true, how they fit together, and how they showed the good heart of YHWH.

If you want to talk about ‘too many verses to ignore’, then you can go to work trying to ‘explain away’ or ‘spin’ ALL OF THE ABOVE—smile!

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Okay, so let’s now look at **this OATH topic**. Here’s the slide you offered as (presumably) something you found convincing from another site:

Yahweh says “take oaths” – Jesus says don’t!

1. Jesus taught not to take swear and take oaths. He also said that anything more than a simple Yes or No is from the wicked one, which is Satan. Yahweh tells the people to swear / take oaths in his name. That makes Yahweh the wicked one which is Satan.
2. **Matthew 5:33-37 NKJV** Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' (34) But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither  by heaven, for it is God's throne; (35) nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. (37) But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.
3. **Deuteronomy 6:13 NKJV** You shall fear the LORD (Yahweh) your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.
4. **Deuteronomy 10:20-21 NKJV** (20) You shall fear the LORD (Yahweh) your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. (21) He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.

When I look at this, I am tempted to laugh—honestly. Did this author expect NONE of his readers to check these verses and their contexts?!

Look at **Number 4 – Deuteronomy 6.13**. This verse is given as being the voice of the 'EVIL YHWH'.

Did anybody think to check if it was used or repudiated in the New Testament?

Well, it DOES show up in one passage—Matthew 4.10—on the lips of Jesus, repudiating SATAN:

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.' "

The first part of the verse is from Deut 6.13 and the 2nd is from 1 Sam 7.3.

Why would Jesus be so stupid as to quote Satan (as the supposed author of Deut 6.13) as a repudiation of Satan?! The verse DOES repudiate something—but its not YHWH!

Now, we need to understand a couple of things about the terminology (oaths, vows, swearing):

Oaths were like our court language ("I swear to tell the truth, the whole...."). They were legal constructs that carried a penalty (or even 'curse') with it.

"An oath was taken **to confirm an agreement** or, in a political situation, to confirm a treaty. Both in Israel and among its neighbors, **God** (or the gods) **would act as the guarantor(s)** of the agreement and his name (or names) was invoked for this purpose. When Jacob and Laban made an agreement, they erected a heap of stones as a witness and declared, "The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us" (Gn 31:53). If either party transgressed the terms, it was a heinous sin. **For this reason one of the Ten Commandments dealt with empty affirmations: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain"** (Ex 20:7)." [BEB]

Taking the Lord's name in vain included to 'swear falsely or deceptively)":

"So how do we take God's name on our lips in an empty way (see note on 20:7)? There are several possibilities. God may be invoked as **guarantee of an oath we do not intend to fulfill**. God may be referred to in trivial or profane ways. We may ask for illegitimate or trivial things in his name. We may say things in God's name that are not true (e.g., false prophecy). All of these make God appear insignificant or faithless, that is, not holy. Thus, they defame his character [CBC]

Oaths were either the veracity of an account IN THE PAST, or the certitude of a promise concerning something IN THE FUTURE:

"An oath is the **strongest possible confirmation** of the **truthfulness** of a statement about **what has transpired ("assertive oaths")** or a **promise about one's future actions ("promissory oaths")**. In Scripture, oaths nearly always invoke (at least implicitly) divine witness (Gen. 31:50; Jer. 42:5) to the veracity of a statement as well as **divine retribution** (1 Sam. 3:17; 14:44) **should the statement prove false or the promise empty**. Rabbinic literature and biblical scholars often distinguish between oaths and vows, but there is considerable overlap in practice. Both forms include promises about future actions, but oaths also include statements about present or past situations. [Dict. Of Scripture and Ethics]

"In OT life, swearing had nothing to do with foul language and everything to do with the assurance that one would faithfully keep his or her word. **OT oaths consist of a promise that is strengthened by the addition of a curse, with an appeal to a deity (or even a human king) who could stand as the power behind the curse.** --- In BH, oaths have the basic form "Thus and more may God do to me/you, if I/you do/do not so and so ..." When Eli adjured Samuel to recite his night vision, he said "May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you" (1 Sam 3:17). When Israel's king swore to do away with Elisha in 2 Kgs 6:31, he also used this typical form: "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today. --- The making of oaths as a religious institution was widespread and of considerable importance in Israel, because everyone from the lowliest peasant to the strongest king could call on the name of God to validate his or her word. Oaths could be made to **affirm a statement of fact** (1 Sam 20:3), to **attest one's innocence** (Exod 22:11 [10]), to **assure certain behavior** (Gen 24:37; 50:24), to **confirm a peace treaty** (Josh 9:15), to **express one's loyalty or love to another person** (1 Sam 20:17; Neh 6:18), or even to **demonstrate one's commitment to God** (2 Chron 15:14). Israel believed that God himself had made oaths to his chosen people in order to underscore the surety of his word (Gen 24:7; 26:3; Exod 13:11)." [NIDOTTE]

The curse part of an oath is the basic meaning of the biblical word 'swear' ('*alā*). It is simply the agreement that one would accept the curse/consequences if they failed in promise or attestation.

"The אָלָא is **properly a curse by** which a person is bound to an obligation that is most often contractual in nature. Covenantal associations are frequently prominent. The covenant-making Gerarites requested Isaac that there should be "a sworn agreement between us" (Gen 26:28), i.e., a covenant sanctioned by curse clauses in case of default by either party (cf. "therefore a curse consumes the earth," Isa 24:6; Ezek 16:59).

Vows were promises about the future—either to persons or to God. They typically involved taking an 'oath' to fulfill the promise, but not all vows mentioned such a formal pronouncement. The vow of the Nazarite, for example, has 'makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite' which possibly included a public statement of intent, although the priest is not involved until the end (or in the event of a problem).

"In the Bible, **a vow is a promise spoken directly to God by a petitioner** who offers to dedicate property, self, or other persons to God on the condition that God fulfill the request made by the individual. **Vows were made by individuals, typically were spoken in private prayer to God, did not require mediation by religious officials,** and usually involved situations of great distress. Thus, the making of vows operated largely within the arena of popular religious devotion apart from official or formal worship. **However, payments of vows often were done in the context of communal worship** and praise in thanksgiving for God's fulfillment of the vow's request (Pss. 22:25; 50:14; 116:12–19). **Priests also played a role** in certifying that sacrificial animals offered as payment for vows were without blemish (Lev. 22:18, 21; Mal. 1:14)." [DictSE]

Vows are about 'giving something up' – **abstinence**.

"The vow is one of **abstinence**, i.e., it is a negative promise to abstain from something (...). The idea of abstinence is associated with the root נָאָח, which means prohibit in Mish. Heb., bind in Bib. Aram. (Dan 6:8)..." [NIDOTTE]

“A pledge or OATH of a religious character, and a transaction in which a person **dedicates** himself or his service **or something valuable to God**. A common feature in ancient religions, the vow was also a frequent exercise in religious life among the Israelites. Though it was generally a promise made in expectation of a divine favor eagerly sought, there were also vows of voluntarily imposed self-discipline for the achievement of character, and of self-dedication for the attainment of certain goals.” [ZPEB]

And—since it is generally YHWH/God who is the generous giver (not us!) -- **Vows were NOT compulsory** at all!

“Unlike tithing, sacrifices and offerings, Sabbath-keeping, and circumcision, **vow making was not something commanded by the Mosaic Law**. There are rules regulating the carrying out of vows which have been taken (even to the possible cancellation of a woman’s careless vow by a discerning father or husband—Nm 30:5, 8), **but the making of them seems to be more a traditional and personal matter**. ... For example, Psalm 50:14 says, “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the Most High.” The command is to “pay,” that is, to keep or fulfill a pledge that has already been made. **No order is given to make such promises** in the first place. The practice is **accepted and regulated, but not demanded**. ... Most important is that once a vow is made, the obligation is serious. **To refrain from making any vow is no sin (Dt 23:22)**, but once declared, the vow must be kept (Dt 23:21–23; see also Nm 30:2; Eccl 5:4–6).” [BEB, s.v. Vow]

“Vowing is a purely voluntary activity, **by no means required by God**, and there is no penalty for not making vows; but once a vow is made, delay in fulfilling it is hypocritical and disrespectful. Implicit in this verse is a teaching that vows are not necessary for securing God’s aid or remaining in His favor.[JPS]

Both oath and vows were regulated by the Law.

“**Rash vows**” sometimes had an ‘escape clause’, but normally vows had to be fulfilled. God expected truthfulness and integrity from His people, as He had demonstrated to them.

Oaths and swearing – since they involved invoking a deity for enforcement – **were restricted by God to only Israel’s God YHWH**. When oaths were required by the Law, they were commanded to ONLY use the name of YHWH in the invocation:

- Joshua 23:7 that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods **or swear by them** or serve them or bow down to them,
- Zephaniah 1:5 those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and **swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom**,
- Jeremiah 12:16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, **to swear by my name, ‘As the LORD lives,’ even as they taught my people to swear by Baal**, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.

“Specifically, she is not to call to remembrance the names of their gods (Exod 23:13; Isa 26:13), that is to praise them and to acknowledge their divine power. If the MT is correct (cf. Notes), she is not to take oaths in the name of other gods (cf. Deut 6:13; 10:20), that is **to call upon other gods to guarantee the fulfillment of promises, for this is at the same time a recognition of the power of the god** (C. A. Keller, THAT, 2 [1976] 860–61; cf. Jer 5:7; 12:16; Zeph 1:5). [WBC]

“Swearing an oath was a religious act, and doing so by a false god was tantamount to recognition of that deity. Swearing by the Lord’s name, on the other hand, is sometimes described as the sum of true religion (Ps. 63:12 [Eng. 11]). This shows the centrality of these prohibitions (cf. Jer. 12:16). The other nations are teaching Israel to swear by the name of their gods. However, when they turn to the Lord they themselves will begin to swear by his name. Thus the separation enjoined here may have a positive end in providing an ethnic entity in which the true name is revered, so that others may come to acknowledge it.” [NICOT]

The passages in Deuteronomy occur right before Israel enters their first REAL TEST of fidelity to YHWH – in the commands to avoid all OTHER “gods”.

So the context of Deut 6.13 shows this clearly. The command is about not swearing in OTHER GODS’ names – not about swearing itself:

“And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, 12 then take care **lest you forget the LORD**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 **It is the LORD your God** you shall fear. **Him** you shall serve and **by his name** you shall swear. 14 You shall not go **after other gods**, the **gods of the peoples who are around you**—

“swear only by his name Swearing by the Lord’s name is an **expression of loyalty** to Him, and **swearing by the name of another god** would indicate a belief that that god is effective and has authority (see Comment to 5:11). The Bible therefore considers it a test of fidelity that the Israelite swear by YHWH alone. When foreign nations in the future recognize the Lord exclusively, they too will swear by Him alone. Like much else in biblical theology and law, this expression of loyalty to God is **comparable to the ways of showing loyalty to a king**; in a Sumerian prayer the writer **denies that he has sworn an oath by a foreign king**. [JPS]

And in Deut 10:17ff, this is repeated in a **loyalty** context (quite beautiful):

“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and **loves** the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve **him** and hold fast to **him**, and by **his** name you shall swear.”

This is just a call to monotheism. God is the core, and anything involving a god (like swearing) could only be done with YHWH.

Again, it is no different than saying that when you have to swear to testify in court, you cannot say “I swear to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so help me Zeus”. You have to say ‘so help me God’. It is not telling you to go out making countless oaths, but just that the oaths are regulated.

There is a special case of swearing allegiance to God (or a king). This still involves an oath and is even going to be a (theologically legitimate) part of the eschatological future:

- Isaiah 19:18 -- In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and **swear allegiance to the LORD** of hosts. One of these will be called the City of Destruction.
- Isaiah 65:16 -- so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall **swear by the God of truth**; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.
- Isaiah 45:23 -- By myself I have **sworn**; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall **swear allegiance**.'

Notice that this last verse is repeated in the NT (albeit translated a bit differently):

- Romans 14:11 -- for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Philippians 2:10–11 -- so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the Romans passage, the 'swear allegiance' is stated as a 'confess [loyalty]' as it is in Philippians.

So:

1. Vows were never commanded,
2. When a vow was made, it must be faithfully done
3. When you were required to swear in civil or religious ceremony, it could only be done invoking YHWH as enforcer (and not another god)
4. When you chose to create a legally-binding and theologically enforced covenant-level verbal commitment, it could only be done invoking YHWH as enforcer (not another god).
5. Any swearing by YHWH's name must be absolutely truthful and performed (if a commitment).
6. Any swearing could only be in YHWH's name, in opposition to the names of other gods.

With that background and looking at the passage now, the OT statement Jesus gives is this:

You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.

Where does this come from?

- The closest parallel to the FIRST HALF ('shall not swear falsely') is this:

Leviticus 19:12: You shall not steal; you shall not deal **falsely**; you shall not **lie** to one another. 12 You **shall not swear by my name falsely**, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD."

- The closest parallel to the SECOND HALF ('perform your oaths to the Lord') are these:

Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, saying, "This is what the LORD has commanded. 2 **If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge**, he shall not break his word. He **shall do** according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. (Numbers 30.1-2)

"If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. 22 **But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin.** 23 You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have **voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.** [Deut 23.21ff]

"When you **vow a vow to God**, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. 5 **It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay** [Eccl 5.4-5]

So, the verses pointed to by the **first half** are about **NOT** swearing – avoiding deceit – and there is no 'command' to swear there at all. (There are other situations in judicial proceedings that require it, of course.).

And the verses pointed to in the **second half** explicitly say that the Israelites were NOT COMMANDED to make oaths/vows to YHWH.

So, it might be considered a false claim to say that "YHWH commanded oaths to be taken", whether in His name or not.

So, whatever Jesus is referring to in this "but I say to you" statement, it cannot be considered a repudiation (or vilification) of the two statements about oaths/vows referred to in the opening slide.

So, what WAS His antithesis about?

Taking into consideration all the historical data between Moses and Jesus, we see a strong parallel to His antithesis on divorce.

In that one, He says the '*you have said – give a writ of divorce – but I say to you—anybody who divorces does something bad*'.

In that case, the 'concession' made by God in the law was due to the 'hardness of heart' and by the time we get to Jesus' time, the abuses of that concession were horrendous. The ability to dump a life-long wife for a younger woman reeked of our 'Las Vegas weddings and divorce weekends'. So, Jesus – pointing to the spirit of the law -- strengthened the law CONSIDERABLY, eliminating loopholes that were exploited by men.

In our case, the abuses of swearing had also proliferated hugely, even from OT times.

Swearing falsely can only be done when you 'swear' and Jesus was cutting off much (but not all) of that abuse.

In the OT, we see YHWH's displeasure at such deceit 'in His name':

- Psalm 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and **does not swear deceitfully.**
- Is 45:48 Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, **who swear by the name of the LORD** and confess the God of Israel, **but not in truth or right.**
- Jeremiah 4:2 and **if you swear, 'As the LORD lives,' in truth, in justice, and in righteousness,** then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory."

- Jeremiah 5:2 Though they say, “As the LORD lives,” **yet they swear falsely**.
- Jeremiah 7:9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, **swear falsely**, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known,
- Hosea 4:15 Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and **swear not, “As the LORD lives.”** [NOTICE that this is worded as an absolute PROHIBITION, just like JESUS seemed to be saying.]
- Malachi 3:5 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, **against those who swear falsely**, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. [Notice that swearing falsely is right up there in YHWH’s eyes as oppression and road bandits!]
- Zechariah 8:17 do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, **and love no false oath**, for all these things I **hate**, declares the LORD.”

So, these things were problems in the OT itself, and between the testaments this growing use of oaths and deceptive use of oaths was noted in the literature:

“The closest intertestamental parallel seems to be *Sir. 23:11*: “The one who swears many oaths is full of iniquity, and the scourge will not leave his house. If he swears in error, his sin remains on him, and if he disregards it he sins doubly; if he swears a false oath, he will not be justified, for his house will be filled with calamities.” (...) *Second Enoch 49:1–2* **twice swears that it is good not to have to swear!** Josephus (J.W. 2.135) contends that the **Essenes avoid oaths and that what they say is firmer than an oath**, but we have no such command from the Dead Sea literature itself. The entire mishnaic tractate *Šebu‘ot* is given over to **detailed casuistic legislation** on making and keeping oaths, while the tractate *Nedarim* devotes extensive attention to vows. [Commentary on the NT use of the OT]

So, at the time of Jesus we have a parallel situation to that of divorce: abuse of what was a basic staple of covenant, court, legal, and diplomatic life: the oath, with an appeal to God for witness and enforcement.

“Oaths were permitted in the OT hence the legislation to insist on keeping one’s oaths quoted here. Now Jesus seems to be excluding them altogether. But, second, **there are other NT texts that call into question an approach that would absolutize Jesus’ words** to the same degree as in the first set of antitheses (...). Paul twice invokes God’s name to assure the truth of his claims (Gal. 1:20; 2 Cor. 1:23), while Heb. 6:13–14 refers to God himself “swearing” in his own name. In Matt. 26:63–64, Jesus will reply to the high priest’s question “under oath.” **The context in Matthew (5:34–36) explains the kind of swearing that Jesus is prohibiting: that in which at least some of the Jewish leaders were caught up, establishing an elaborate casuistry of which kinds of oaths were binding and which were not, so that it became difficult ever to take certain people at their word.** The goal for believers is to be so trustworthy in keeping their promises that oaths prove unnecessary (5:37). France (1985: 124) explains, “An oath is needed only if a person’s word alone is unreliable; it is an admission of failure in truthfulness.” Jesus expands on several of these sentiments in Matt. 23:16–22. James 5:12 either alludes to or actually quotes Matt. 5:37. [Commentary on the NT use of the OT]

[The same motif can be seen in YHWH’s frequent condemnation of ‘empty’ or ‘manipulative’ **sacrifices** in the OT. Sacrifices offered with pure hands and heart were accepted and honored; Israelites that offered sacrifices in malice or deception were ordered to NO LONGER bring them. No contradiction—just a conditional.]

When we look at the fuller quote in Matthew, we see some additional verbiage added:

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by **heaven**, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the **earth**, for it is his footstool, or by **Jerusalem**, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your **head**, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

[Not sure I understand why somebody would swear by their ‘head’ back then. This doesn’t fit the pattern of the first 3, nor does it show up in the OT. The closest meaning might be something like “I swear by my life”—meaning you can TAKE my life (as collateral?) if I am false. But the ‘you cannot make one hair white or black’ I find confusing too. Maybe because it is not THEIRS to offer--?—since they cannot control the tiniest feature?]

This criticism is supplemented by His comments in 23:16ff:

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ 17 You blind fools! **For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?** 18 And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ 19 You blind men! **For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?** 20 **So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.”**

Notice that this is similar to His words in the ‘no oaths’ passage, but in this passage He seems to UPHOLD the practice of oath-taking, stating that such oaths are binding.

- “In the third woe Jesus pointed out the tricky character of the leaders. (In the first two woes Jesus spoke of the leaders’ effects on others; in the other five woes He spoke of the leaders’ own characters and actions.) **When taking oaths, they made fine lines of distinction that could possibly invalidate their oaths.** If one swore by the temple, or by the altar of the temple, it meant nothing to them. **While thus appearing to be making a binding oath, they inwardly had no intention of keeping it.** But if one swore by the gold of the temple or the gift on the altar, he would be bound by the oath. But Jesus said they were wrong in suggesting that gold was greater than the temple and a gift greater than the altar. Jesus pointed out that any oath based on the temple or things in it **was binding** for behind the temple was the One who dwelt in it. This was parallel to making an oath by God’s throne, for that oath was also binding because of the One who sat on the throne. **Such distinctions by the religious leaders were condemned by Jesus, for they were clearly deceptive and dishonest.** Jesus denounced those leaders as blind guides (v. 16), blind fools (v. 17), and blind men (v. 19; cf. vv. 24, 26). [BKC]
- “The discussion here is at first a **surprise** after Mt. 5:33–37, with its ‘You are not to swear [an oath] at all’. But in both cases part of the **concern is to assert the need to take full personal responsibility for one’s own word** (whether supported by an oath or not). Whereas the discussion in Mt. 5 is about whether one should (voluntarily) make oaths, the discussion in Mt. 23 is about the binding nature of oaths once they have been taken. [NICGNT]

- “Saul Lieberman (Greek in Jewish Palestine [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1942], pp. 115–43), after studying the difficult and conflicting Jewish evidence, argues that the rabbis fought the abuses of oaths and vows among the unlearned masses. This is doubtless so. **But the way they fought them was by differentiating between what was binding and what was not.** In that sense, wittingly or unwittingly they encouraged evasive oaths and therefore lying. Jesus cut through these complexities by insisting that men must tell the truth. ... Some writers have supposed that 5:33–37—which, formally at least, abolishes oaths—contradicts 23:20–22, which maintains that all oaths are binding but does not abolish them. In fact, however, vv. 20–22 provide the rationale for 5:33–37. All oaths are in some way related to God. All are therefore binding, **and thus evasive oaths are disallowed.** On the other hand, the heart of the issue is telling the truth; and it **is probably a new kind of casuistry that, failing to see this, insists that Jesus in 5:33–37 abolishes all oaths of every kind.** [EBC1]
- “This casuistry of the Pharisees amounted to an **evasion of duty** before God and was roundly condemned. **Two different loopholes** involving empty distinctions are exposed, one in 23:16–17 concerning the Temple and gold within it, and another in 23:18–19, involving the altar and what is sacrificed on it. Although the scribes and Pharisees viewed some oaths as binding and others as non-binding, Jesus taught that this distinction was meaningless and **that all oaths are valid** (23:20–22). He totally rejected their halakhic distinctions on valid and invalid oaths. Previously in this Gospel, Jesus flatly denied the need for any oaths at all (5:33–37). It is well known that the halakha on oaths and vows was very important in Second Temple Judaism (m. Nedarim and CD 15). [CBC]

And this heightening of the law’s intent was **not in itself a new law**, because we noted earlier that Jesus accepted the high priest’s order to swear under oath, that there are several legitimate oaths by believers in the NT, and that there will be oaths of allegiance in the Kingdom of the Son. And we should note that Jesus’ own use of “*amen*” -- (“truly, I say unto you”) even sounds more than a simple “YES” or “NO” – and looks like a ‘solemn’ marker. Why did he use that word in front of simple statements—instead of just the simple statements THEMSELVES? Why say “Truly, I say to you...” instead of “I say to you...”?

“Despite the differences with the first three antitheses noted above, Jesus continues to be the law’s sovereign interpreter. He also opposes a system of legal interpretation that introduces loopholes or exceptions into moral commands that vitiate the original intent of those commands. **At the same time, he is not replacing one law with another; contemporary application will have to be sensitive to each individual context** [CNTOT]

Okay, last points:

Jesus never actually said that those OT **laws themselves were authored** by the Evil one—only that anybody using such devices in His time would be creating LESS TRUTH (e.g. evil) than simply being honest.

In fact, the Greek construction there is **not clear on whether the reference is to “general evil” or to “General Evil** – i.e. satan), so it is presumptuous to say that it is a CLEAR reference to SATAN, when the text itself is not so precise:

- “*Tou ponērou* could be rendered **either** “of evil” or “of the evil one” (“the father of lies,” John 8:44). The **same ambiguity** recurs at Mt 5:39; 6:13; 13:38. [EBC1]
- “*Let your word be, ‘Yes, yes’, ‘No, no’; what is [more] ‘abundant’ than this is of evil [origin]* .Anything beyond the bare assertion takes away from the consistent transparent truthfulness to which Jesus calls, and inasmuch as it does this it is the product of **an evil impulse**. [footnote here: “A reference to the **Evil One** is less likely, but not impossible.”; NIGTC]

- “Jesus’ prohibition of swearing is based on the assumption that God requires truthfulness. A simple Yes or No should be all that is needed. As soon as it is necessary to bolster it with an oath in order to persuade others to believe what is said, the ideal of transparent truthfulness has been compromised. The need for such an addition is “from evil: [footnote 129: “Cf. *Sir* 23:11: “The one who swears many oaths is full of iniquity.” *Sir* 23:9–11 is a strong invective against swearing as inevitably linked with sinfulness.”] it betrays our failure to live up to God’s standard of truthfulness. **The option of translating “from the Evil One” (see p. 193, n. 55) would not essentially change the sense:** whether the moral failure is blamed on an abstract principle of “evil” or on the personal intervention of the devil (the “father of lies,” John 8:44) does not affect its evil character. The context here gives us no obvious reason for preferring the personal to the abstract sense. [NICNT]
- “The tendency to take oaths concedes to prevarication and thus originates in evil, which **may subtly refer** to Satan, the originator of deception. [BECNT]

A good summary of how this is understood – as being the higher plane of ethics versus the compromises of reality—are highlighted in the comparison with divorce:

“A more pertinent question for us is **whether Jesus’ words here are intended as a literal regulation for all human circumstances**, including **oaths of political allegiance** or the oath required in **many courts of law**: should Christians refuse to take such oaths? The issue is **similar to that with regard to divorce: Jesus’ absolute pronouncement sets out the true will of God, but in human life that will is not always followed, and there is still a place for legal oaths** (as for divorce regulations) to cope with the actual untruthfulness of people, even sadly sometimes of disciples. They **should** not be needed, but in practice they **serve a remedial purpose in a world** where the ethics of the kingdom of heaven are not always followed. **Refusal to take a required oath can in such circumstances convey quite the wrong impression.** Jesus’ illustrations of the “greater righteousness” are not to be treated as if they were a new set of literal regulations to replace those of the scribes and Pharisees. For Jesus’ own response when “put on oath” by the high priest see below on 26:63–64, and for other NT oaths cf. 2 Cor 1:23; Gal 1:20; 1 Thess 5:27.” [NICNT]

At the end of the day, the data indicates that Jesus was neither nullifying the use of oaths in required settings, nor was He somehow vilifying the YHWH of the OT in this passage. Like the divorce antithesis and the retaliation antithesis, He was calling people back to the core VALUES in the OT passages—truthfulness/transparentcy, fidelity/loyalty to one’s spouse, and pre-emptive goodness as a deterrent to social evil—instead of ‘instant revenge’.

We will see this pattern in the upcoming issues too – but here I remind you to prayerfully submit to the Word, in your search to know the Living, loving, faithful Father—

On to the next – when I can – my prayers are with you (and I hope you ask Father to help me in my interactions with His Word too-thanks.