

# Deuteronomy 32:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.

## Analysis

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**For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever** (כִּי־אֶשָּׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדִי) —God swears by Himself, lifting His hand in oath-taking gesture. Humans swear by something greater (Hebrews 6:16), but God has none greater, so He swears by His own eternal life: *chai anokhi le-'olam* (I live forever). This oath form appears when God makes unconditional covenants (Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13-18).

The gesture of raising the hand (*nasa yad*) was standard oath-taking posture in ancient Near Eastern treaties, calling heaven as witness. But here God Himself is both oath-taker and witness—there is no higher authority. His eternal existence (*le-'olam*, forever/eternally) guarantees His promises cannot fail and His threats cannot be evaded. The self-existent, eternal God pledges His very being as surety for His word. What He declares will certainly come to pass because He lives forever to accomplish it.

## Historical Context

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Ancient treaty documents included oath formulas invoking gods as guarantors. Israel's covenant is unique: the Divine Suzerain guarantees His own treaty by His eternal existence. This became foundational for understanding God's immutability and faithfulness—He cannot lie (Titus 1:2) or break covenant because His nature is unchangeable. The New Testament sees God's oath to Abraham as model for Christian hope's certainty (Hebrews 6:13-20).

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's self-swearing oath strengthen your confidence in His promises?
2. What difference does God's eternity make when your circumstances seem unstable and temporary?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	אֲשׁוּא	אֶל	שָׁמַיִם	יָדִי	וְאָמַרְתִּי	חַי	אֲנִי	לְעֹלָם:
H3588	<b>For I lift up</b>	H413	<b>to heaven</b>	<b>my hand</b>	<b>and say</b>	<b>I live</b>	H595	<b>for ever</b>
	H5375		H8064	H3027	H559	H2416		H5769

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 14:22** (Parallel theme): And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

**Jeremiah 4:2** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.