

# Matthew 23:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

## Analysis

---

**And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein**—the verb *katoikounti* (κατοικοῦντι, dwelling) is a present participle describing God's continuous habitation in the Temple. Jesus's argument climaxes: swearing by the Temple invokes God Himself, who dwells there. The phrase *en autō kai en tō katoikounti auton* (ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ κατοικοῦντι αὐτόν) links the physical structure inseparably to the divine presence inhabiting it.

The Temple's holiness derived entirely from God's shekinah glory dwelling there (1 Kings 8:10-11). To swear by the Temple while claiming not to invoke God was theological nonsense—the building's significance was God's presence, nothing else. Jesus exposes the Pharisees' pretense: they wanted to appear religious (swearing by holy things) while avoiding accountability to God. Tragically, within 40 years, God would abandon this Temple (Matthew 23:38), and Rome would destroy it (Matthew 24:2).

## Historical Context

---

Solomon's Temple and its Second Temple successor (expanded by Herod) represented God's earthly dwelling place among His people. The Holy of Holies contained the Ark (in Solomon's Temple) or was empty (in the Second Temple), yet God's presence still sanctified the structure. Psalms 27:4, 132:13-14 celebrate God dwelling in His sanctuary.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

---

1. How do people today invoke God's name religiously while avoiding submission to His authority?
2. What does God's dwelling in the Temple teach about the incarnation—God dwelling in Christ's body (John 2:21)?
3. Why is it impossible to separate sacred symbols from the God they represent?

## Interlinear Text

---

καὶ	ό	όμνύει	ἐν	τῷ	ναῷ	όμνύει	ἐν	αὐτόν	καὶ
<b>And</b>	G3588	<b>swear</b>	<b>by</b>	G3588	<b>the temple</b>	<b>swear</b>	<b>by</b>	<b>it</b>	<b>And</b>
G2532		G3660	G1722		G3485	G3660	G1722	G846	G2532

ἐν	τῷ	κατοικοῦντι	αὐτόν
<b>by</b>	G3588	<b>him that dwelleth</b>	<b>it</b>
G1722		G2730	G846

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Psalms 26:8** (Parallel theme): LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

**1 Kings 8:13** (Parallel theme): I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

**2 Chronicles 6:2** (Parallel theme): But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.