

Matthew 23:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

Analysis

And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon—Jesus's climactic conclusion: heaven (ouranos, οὐρανός) is God's throne (thronos tou theou, θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ), and swearing by heaven invokes the One sitting on it (kathēmenō epanō autou, καθημένω ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ). No oath, however worded, escapes invoking God as witness and judge.

This echoes Jesus's earlier teaching: Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne (Matthew 5:34). The Pharisees thought substituting 'heaven' for 'God' created a loophole—Jesus declares this impossible. All reality belongs to God; invoking any part of creation invokes the Creator. The entire oath system collapses into simple integrity: speak truth always, needing no oaths to guarantee it (Matthew 5:37). This verse demolishes religious pretense—before God, there are no technicalities, only truth or lies.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism often substituted circumlocutions ('heaven,' 'the Name,' 'the Power') for God's name out of reverence for the Third Commandment. While this showed respect, it also enabled evasion—people could swear by 'heaven' while mentally reserving the right to break the oath, since they hadn't used God's name explicitly.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus insist that all oaths ultimately invoke God, regardless of wording?
2. How does simple integrity ('let your yes be yes') replace the need for elaborate oath systems?
3. What does God's throne in heaven teach about His sovereign authority over all creation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ὁ ὁμνύει ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁμνύει ἐν
And he that shall swear by heaven he that shall swear by
G2532 G3660 G1722 G3772 G3660 G1722

τῷ θρόνῳ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπάνω
the throne of God And by him that sitteth G1883
G2362 G2316 G2532 G1722 G2521

αὐτῷ

thereon
G846

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:34 (References God): But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Isaiah 66:1 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Psalms 11:4 (Parallel theme): The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

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