

# Numbers 30 Commentary

PREVIOUS Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 30:1 Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which the LORD has commanded.**

- Nu 1:4-16 7:2 34:17-28 Ex 18:25 De 1:13-17
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Jensen** - Vows were too sacred to be entered into lightly, hence God's strong and clear safeguards against the abuse of this sacred domain of worship. This truth God considered to be of such paramount importance for the family life in Canaan that He enunciated its specifics at this time.

**Guzik** - Some people today believe that vows or oaths are not permitted for a Christian today. They think this because of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:34–37: But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. (See also James 5:12) But, in context of the rest of Scripture, we see that Jesus was not forbidding oaths, as much as telling us that we should be so filled with integrity in our words that an oath is unnecessary.. Jesus answered under oath in a court (Matthew 26:63–64), and God Himself swears oaths (Luke 1:73, Acts 2:30, Hebrews 3:18, 6:13, 17).

**Ronald Allen** has an interesting point - I suggest that these chapters are placed here as guarantors of hope: the very fact that plans are being made for the sacrifices and vows that will be performed in the land are sure indicators that God is going to complete his work for his people. All one needs to do is to prepare for the coming battle. For victory under the Lord is the hope for the people of the second generation. (EBC)

**Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which the LORD has commanded** - God spoke to Moses who spoke to the leaders to disseminate the truths about the sacredness of vows.

**Numbers 30:2 "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.**

NET Numbers 30:2 If a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath of binding obligation on himself, he must not break his word, but must do whatever he has promised.

NLT Numbers 30:2 A man who makes a vow to the LORD or makes a pledge under oath must never break it. He must do exactly what he said he would do.

ESV Numbers 30:2 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.

NIV Numbers 30:2 When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

- If a man: The preceding chapters had treated of sacrifices required by law; and in the laws here delivered in respect to vows must have been very useful, as they both prevented and annulled rash vows, and provided a proper sanction for the support and performance of those which were rationally made, and which were made to the Lord.
- vow a vow: Nu 21:2 Ge 28:20-22 Lev 27:2-34 De 23:21,22 Jud 11:11,30,31,35,36 Jud 11:39 Ps 15:3 56:12 76:11 119:106 Pr 20:25
- swear: Ex 20:7 Lev 5:4 Mt 5:33,34 14:7-9 Ac 23:12 2Co 1:23 9:9-11
- to bind: Nu 30:3,4,10 Mt 23:16,18 \*Gr: Ac 23:12,14,21
- break: Heb. profane, Ps 55:20 \*marg:
- he shall do: Job 22:27 Ps 22:25 50:14 66:13,14 116:14,18 Ec 5:4,5 Na 1:15
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Solomon's advice on vows -**

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. 2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few. 3 For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words. 4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! 5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. 6 Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? 7 For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

**Comment** - The point is that God takes vows so seriously, it is better to now even make a vow.

Vows are discussed in Lev 27 and Nu 6 but the vows in this chapter are different, for here the stipulations do not deal with the kind of vow one could make but place emphasis of the importance of keeping a vow one makes. A vow may be one in which a person promises to perform an act (Gen. 28:20–21; 31:13; Num. 21:2–3) or to refrain from something (Ps. 132:1–4). Once a vow was made it was binding for men but there were "outs" for women!

**HCSB Study Bible** - A **vow** was a conditional promise, made in the context of petitionary prayer

**Richards on vow** - In the OT and the NT, a "vow" is always a pledge or a promise made to God, never to other persons. A vow was always an expression of unusual devotion or commitment and was usually voluntary. (NIEBW)

**Vow** - A vow is a solemn pledge to do something or behave in a certain manner. A vow is often thought of as a human act alone, but in the Bible a vow is made before God alone. While a person could swear to a person or to God, they could vow only to God. In the Old Testament, the Lord saw and heard all vows; not honoring a vow was therefore a grave sin. Vows played an important part in Israel's worship, especially with regard to individual commitment to the Lord. In Isaiah 19:21, the prophet envisions a time when Egypt will show allegiance to the Lord not only by offering sacrifices and offerings, but also by making and keeping "vows" to

Him as their God (Isa. 19:21). Vows were made in times of distress, but also in times of blessing and rejoicing (Lev. 23:38; 1 Sam. 1:21). When God performed an action described in a vow, not only sacrifices were promised to God, but also public praise and thanks could be offered (Pss. 40:6; 50:12–15; 69:30–31). Of the thirty-three verses in the Pentateuch where neder occurs, nineteen are in the book of Numbers. In the Nazirite vow, while there were certain prohibitions, the stress was upon the individual's consecration to the Lord during the time of the vow (Num. 6:2–8). Vows were part and parcel of Israel's worship (Num. 15:3). Numbers 30 is solely about "vows" and neder is mentioned in twelve of the sixteen verses. As stated earlier, the person who makes a vow must not break his or her word (Num. 30:2). Failing to honor one's vows was a sin (Deut. 23:22). It was considered better not to make a vow than to make it and not keep it (Eccl. 5:4–6); simply saying, "I made a mistake by making the vow" was no excuse. The seriousness of taking a vow is as significant today as it was in the time of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Paul made a vow and considered it binding upon himself to keep it. He may have carried out the vow as thanks to God for being delivered from mortal dangers. He then had his head shaved at Cenchrea marking the end of the vow (Acts 18:18). Paul later joined in the rites necessary for four Jews who had made vows. He accompanied these Jewish Christians to demonstrate that he had not rejected the essence of the Law of Moses. (**Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words**)

It is a trap for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!" And after the vows to make inquiry.

-- Proverbs 20:25

**Guzik** - Many vows are just plain foolish. "I'll never do that again" is a foolish vow, and it is foolish and unwise to demand such a vow from someone else.

**If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth** (whatever he has promised) - Vows were to be kept and not broken. In other words the vow of a man is declared to be absolutely binding and there is no release from the vow.

**NET NOTE** on **makes a vow** - The expression is "swear an oath" (הִשְׁבַּע שְׁבֻעָה, *hishava' shévu'ah*). The vow (נִדֵּר, *neder*) was a promise to donate something of oneself or one's substance to the LORD. The solemn oath seals the vow before the LORD, perhaps with sacrifice. The vocabulary recalls Abraham's treaty with Abimelech and the naming of Beer Sheba with the word (see Gen 21).

**NET NOTE** on **bind...binding obligation** -The Hebrew text has לְאִסֹּר אִסָּר (le'isor 'issar), meaning "to take a binding obligation." This is usually interpreted to mean a negative vow, i.e., the person attempts to abstain from something that is otherwise permissible. It might involve fasting, or abstaining from marital sex, but it might also involve some goal to be achieved, and the abstaining from distractions until the vow is fulfilled (see Ps 132). The נִדֵּר (*neder*) may have been more for religious matters, and the אִסָּר more for social concerns, but this cannot be documented with certainty.

**Jensen** - The vow could be a positive one, involving presentation of one's property to the Lord (the word *neder* is translated "vow"); or a negative one, involving some type of abstinence (the word *issar* is translated "bond") (30:2). Note that the Nazirite's vow of chapter 6 was called a *neder*, to emphasize the positive aspect of his vow, even though a negative aspect was involved.

**Jesus on vows...**

Matthew 5:33-37+ "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

**Comment** - Jesus' point is that our speech should always have integrity, such that adding vows is not even necessary! Our words should speak for themselves!

---

## Numbers 30:2 As Good As Your Word by Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

Numbers 29-31, Mark 9:1-29

Key Verse: Numbers 30:2

Although today a Christian is not under responsibility to fulfill the ceremonial law, the New Testament emphasis on the moral law is strong. We may not make vows as is referenced in Numbers 30:2, but we are to be truthful people. Moses commanded the Israelites that a man "must not break his word but must do everything he said."

In the course of a year, a person makes many more "vows" than is probably realized. For example, each credit card slip we sign is a vow. Don't sign unless you intend to pay. A tax form will ask if the answers given were truthful. Don't sign unless they were. A code of conduct may be included in the regulations for a student or an employer. Don't sign unless you plan to live by it.

Then there are the other slips-not of paper, but of tongue. "I'll get back to you about that." "The check is in the mail." "We will get together for a meal while you are in town."

Jesus said, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Mt 5:37-see note Matthew 5:37).

How good is your word? And are you as good as your word?

Think before you speak today. Ask yourself, "Will I do what I am about to say?" Keep your word.

### **Numbers 30:3 "Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth,**

NET Numbers 30:3 "If a young woman who is still living in her father's house makes a vow to the LORD or places herself under an obligation,

NLT Numbers 30:3 "If a young woman makes a vow to the LORD or a pledge under oath while she is still living at her father's home,

ESV Numbers 30:3 "If a woman vows a vow to the LORD and binds herself by a pledge, while within her father's house in her youth,

NIV Numbers 30:3 "When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge

- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Jensen** points out the significance of vows - The anticipation here was of a family situation in a land of plenty where a woman, with material abundance at her disposal, might in deep fervor over the laws of Sinai rashly and unfairly upset the household economy by vowing an overabundance of things in her worship....Vows made by women of a household were subject to the judgment of the head of the household. This is understandable, since the head of the household was responsible for its physical sustenance, which rash and hasty vows of property, uncontrolled, could very quickly upset.

**Pfeiffer** - Every culture devises ways of making human intention binding. In civil matters the Bible world used both the signed document and sworn testimony (oaths). In religious matters people made vows. The unspoken intention was made binding when embodied in speech. Laws regulating vows are taken up in Deut 23; Lev 27; and Num 6; but here special emphasis is laid on the validation of a woman's vow. (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

NIVSB - In Near Eastern society, women were subject to the authority of their fathers (vv. 3–5) or husbands (vv. 6–8), who could disallow the carrying out of a vow.

### **Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth**

**Makes a vow** (05088)(**neder** from **nadar** = to vow) conveys the root idea of verbally consecrating (or dedicating to the service) of God. **Neder** is a noun describes the vow that was sworn or taken.

"The word **neder** is related to the verb נָדַר (nādar, "to make a vow"). A **neder** in the OT is always a vow made to God, never between two human beings. The **neder** is either the result of the vow or the thing offered to fulfill a vow. It was a type of thank offering in return for God's favor (Num 21:1–3), and it could either accompany or be a burnt offering (Lev 22:18; Psa 66:13) or a peace offering (Lev 7:16). Numbers 30:2 mentions not only a **neder** but also an oath (שְׁבוּעָה, šəbū'ā) and the obligation (אִסָּר, 'issār) and is therefore instructive when considering how these terms differ. The vow (**neder**) was vowed (nādar) and sealed (שָׁבַע, šāba') with an oath (šəbū'ā) of binding obligation ('issār)." (Lexham Theological Wordbook)

**Neder** conveys the root idea of verbally consecrating (or dedicating to the service) of God. Making a conditional vow in Ge 28:20-21. Make a vow to abstain (Ps 132:2 with specifics of the vow in Ps 132:3-5). It denotes a voluntary obligation in a context of a promise made to Yahweh, generally in exchange for divine

favor, as the terms of nādhār usually center upon divine aid. Baker says it is "an oral, voluntary promise to give or do something as an expression of consecration or devotion to the service of God. 1Sa 1:11 Hannah vowed a life long vow for her son Samuel. God required a lifelong vow of Samson (Jdg 13:5+).

**Gilbrant - The first environment for making a vow to Yahweh** is a transaction in which the human promises something, usually a sacrifice or abstinence from an act, in exchange for a deed to be performed by Yahweh. A prime example is found in the account of Jephthah (Judg. 11:30). Jephthah exchanged the death of what first appeared from his household upon his return for a victory over the Ammonites. Numbers 30:2 declares that someone who vows must complete or pay the vow. The exception to this was that if a woman made a vow, it was subject to approval to the head of the estate she belongs to (father for unmarried women, husband for married ones). Hannah promised to give her son to tabernacle service after his weaning (1 Sam. 1:11). She offered the boy (Samuel) because of her great desire to have a son. **Another example of this type of vowing** would be that of devoting an object to the ban, cherem (HED #2869). This was required by God in the case of certain cities in the Promised Land, in which all living things were to be killed, and all material objects were to be either dedicated to the tabernacle or destroyed. The Israelites abstained from the booty in order to claim the land. Common vows of this type made by people concern bountiful harvests (Ps. 65:2), deliverance from danger (Jon. 1:16) and recovery from illness (Ps. 22:25). **Another type of vow** is one in which the vower declares a commitment to some task for Yahweh. This type of vow generally involved abstinence of some sort. An example of this is found in David's declaration that he would not go home or sleep until the Ark was brought to the new capital of Israel, Jerusalem (Ps. 132:1-5). No deal was made in the course of entering the vow on the part of David, nor was any requirement of act asked of Yahweh. The gain for David in this environment was whatever blessing Yahweh decided upon—a wise move on David's part. **The Nazirite** in Num. 6 also made this type of vow. A Nazirite vow was often for a specified time period. An example of a lifelong Nazirite in the Hebrew Bible was Samson. Offerings were common upon the completion of most vows in Israelite society, "Your vows are on me, O God; I will pay thank offerings to you" (Ps. 56:12). The object offered, as witnessed above, was varied, including humans (Jdg. 11, albeit not originally intended), animals (Lev. 27:9ff), houses (Lev. 27:14f), land (Lev. 27:16-22), booty (Num. 21:1ff) or worship (Gen. 28:20ff). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**N a d a r** - 27v - votive(3), votive offering(1), votive offerings(5), vow(26), vows(24). Ge 28:20; Ge 31:13; Lev. 27:8; Nu 6:2; Nu 6:21; Num. 21:2; Nu 30:2; Nu 30:3; Nu 30:10; Dt. 12:17; Dt. 23:21; Deut. 23:22; Deut. 23:23; Jdg. 11:30; Jdg. 11:39; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 15:7; 2 Sam. 15:8; Ps. 76:11; Ps. 132:2; Eccl. 5:4; Eccl. 5:5; Isa. 19:21; Jer. 44:25; Jon. 1:16; Jon. 2:9; Mal. 1:14

**Numbers 30:4 and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand.**

NET Numbers 30:4 and her father hears of her vow or the obligation to which she has pledged herself, and her father remains silent about her, then all her vows will stand, and every obligation to which she has pledged herself will stand.

NLT Numbers 30:4 and her father hears of the vow or pledge and does not object to it, then all her vows and pledges will stand.

ESV Numbers 30:4 and her father hears of her vow and of her pledge by which she has bound herself and says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which she has bound herself shall stand.

NIV Numbers 30:4 and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand.

- Nu 30:2
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FATHER'S SILENCE BINDS DAUGHTER'S VOW**

**and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her-** In

other words he makes no objection. He has clearly heard it and is silent.

**then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand-**

**NET NOTE** - The verb  $\text{qum}$  (qum) is best translated “stand” here, but the idea with it is that what she vows is established as a genuine oath with the father’s approval (or acquiescence).

**Numbers 30:5 "But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her because her father had forbidden her.**

NET Numbers 30:5 But if her father overrules her when he hears about it, then none of her vows or her obligations which she has pledged for herself will stand. And the LORD will release her from it, because her father overruled her.

NLT Numbers 30:5 But if her father refuses to let her fulfill the vow or pledge on the day he hears of it, then all her vows and pledges will become invalid. The LORD will forgive her because her father would not let her fulfill them.

ESV Numbers 30:5 But if her father opposes her on the day that he hears of it, no vow of hers, no pledge by which she has bound herself shall stand. And the LORD will forgive her, because her father opposed her.

NIV Numbers 30:5 But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.

- Ho 6:6 Mt 15:4-6 Mk 7:10-13 Eph 6:1
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FATHER VETO CANCELS DAUGHTER'S VOW**

**But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her because her father had forbidden her** - Note the father needs to act fast and nullify it the same day he hears it! NLT - "But if her father refuses to let her fulfill the vow or pledge on the day he hears of it, then all her vows and pledges will become invalid. The LORD will forgive her because her father would not let her fulfill them."

NET NOTE on **LORD will forgive** - The verb has often been translated “forgive” (cf. KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, NRSV, NLT), but that would suggest a sin that needed forgiving. The idea of “release from obligation” is better; the idea is like that of having a debt “forgiven” or “retired.” In other words, she is free from the vow she had made. The LORD will not hold the woman responsible to do what she vowed. (NIV has "the LORD will release her")

**Pfeiffer** - One of the verbs used to express invalidation of a woman’s vow is  $\text{hên}$ , “to hinder, restrain, or frustrate.” The root, though rare, is used mostly in Numbers and appears in 14:34 (see note), where we are told that, for forty years, God frustrated, or restrained, Israel from entering into the promised land. The same root is also used to describe what the spies did in “discouraging the hearts of the people” (32:7, 9). Here in Numbers 30 provision is made for a daughter to be forgiven if she is hindered by her father in fulfilling her vow; and for a husband to “frustrate” the intention of his wife for the good of his household. (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

---

**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - Numbers 30:5, 8, 12 The Lord shall forgive her.

If the father or husband disallowed the vow a woman made, it would not stand, nor would she be held responsible for its fulfillment. God would not keep her to a promise which was hindered from execution by causes over which she had no control. This is a profound principle.

You may feel that a certain step is required of you by Christ; that indeed you are bound by your allegiance to Him to take it; nay, you have already promised Him that you will take it; but, suddenly and most unexpectedly, you are prevented from taking it. The express prohibition of those who have a right to determine your action, or the verdict of the physician, or the evident call of duty in another direction, makes it needful for you to relinquish your project. What then: is God grieved and angry? Not so; He understands the whole of the case perfectly, and accepts your will for the deed, and bids you go in peace. This, however, does not affect matters in which conscience is clear in demanding or prohibiting a certain line of conduct.

Sometimes God's silence is consent. You made your solemn dedication in His holy presence: there was no answering voice, or rush of emotion, or witnessing seal; He held his peace from day to day. But in that silence He established all your vows, all your bonds.

If parents capriciously forbid their children carrying out solemn resolutions and vows, the burden of blame must rest on their shoulders. They must render their account to God, and give answer for their action. It will go hard with those who put needless hindrances and obstacles in their brothers pathway.

**Numbers 30:6 "However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself,**

NET Numbers 30:6 "And if she marries a husband while under a vow, or she uttered anything impulsively by which she has pledged herself,

NLT Numbers 30:6 "Now suppose a young woman makes a vow or binds herself with an impulsive pledge and later marries.

ESV Numbers 30:6 "If she marries a husband, while under her vows or any thoughtless utterance of her lips by which she has bound herself,

NIV Numbers 30:6 "If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself

- she vowed: Heb. her vows were upon her, Ps 56:12
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## VOWS PRIOR TO MARRIAGE

**However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself-**

These are vows made before marriage. Note the phrase rash statement (mibta - only here and Nu 30:8) which Baker says "refers to a promise or verbal commitment made under insufficient conditions or reasons for the vow to have been made. It may refer to a foolish vow on the spur of the moment" (CWD)

**NET NOTE on rash statement** - The Hebrew text indicates that this would be some impetuous vow that she uttered with her lips, a vow that her husband, whether new or existing, would not approve of. Several translate it "a binding obligation rashly uttered."

**Pfeiffer** - Women were largely untaught concerning the details of religious ceremony and therefore could make rash pledges (see note on v. 6) or vows harmful to their husbands' households. A disaffected wife might purposely make a vow or pledge that would injure her husband. So his legal ability to invalidate his wife's oath protected his estate, since a vow might include the payment of a large sum. If the vow was the kind that placed an affliction or prohibition on the wife, the husband was free to validate the vow and so share this burden, or to veto it. (Ibid)

**Numbers 30:7 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears it, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand.**

NET Numbers 30:7 and her husband hears about it, but remains silent about her when he hears about it, then her vows will stand and her obligations which she has pledged for herself will stand.

NLT Numbers 30:7 If her husband learns of her vow or pledge and does not object on the day he hears of it, her vows and pledges will stand.

ESV Numbers 30:7 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her pledges by which she has bound herself shall stand.

NIV Numbers 30:7 and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand.

- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HUSBAND'S SILENCE ALLOWS VOW TO STAND

and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears it, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand - Silence is not golden here because it may end up costing the husband's "gold" depending on the obligations of the new wife's vow!

**Numbers 30:8 "But if on the day her husband hears of it, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the LORD will forgive her.**

NET Numbers 30:8 But if when her husband hears it he overrules her, then he will nullify the vow she has taken, and whatever she uttered impulsively which she has pledged for herself. And the LORD will release her from it.

NLT Numbers 30:8 But if her husband refuses to accept her vow or impulsive pledge on the day he hears of it, he nullifies her commitments, and the LORD will forgive her.

ESV Numbers 30:8 But if, on the day that her husband comes to hear of it, he opposes her, then he makes void her vow that was on her, and the thoughtless utterance of her lips by which she bound herself. And the LORD will forgive her.

NIV Numbers 30:8 But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD will release her.

- Ge 3:16 1Co 7:4 14:34 Eph 5:22-24
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HUSBAND'S CAN ANNUL NEW WIFE'S VOW

**But if on the day her husband hears of it, he forbids her,-** "But if when her husband hears it he overrules her," (NET)

**then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the LORD will forgive her** - Note that it says **the LORD will forgive** her indicating that whatever the vow was, to not keep it would be a sin against Yahweh.

**Allen** comments that "This is a protective clause. It also works for her in that she might have been pressured into making a vow that was not at all in her best interests to keep. This provision frees her from unnecessary complications to her life as well. In both the case of the married woman and the woman who lives with her father, the vows may be released by another, but only if he acts immediately on the information he has."

**Numbers 30:9 "But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.**

NET Numbers 30:9 "But every vow of a widow or of a divorced woman which she has pledged for herself will remain intact.

NLT Numbers 30:9 If, however, a woman is a widow or is divorced, she must fulfill all her vows and pledges.

ESV Numbers 30:9 (But any vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, anything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.)

NIV Numbers 30:9 "Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.

- Lev 21:7 Lu 2:37 Ro 7:2
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## VOWS BY WIDOWS OR DIVORCEES UNCONTESTABLE

**But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her-** Not only is her vow uncontestable, it is also binding on the woman. Notice that a divorced woman is considered her own authority with the same legal status as a widow (at least in the case of vows).

**NET Note** - The Hebrew text says her vow “**shall stand against her.**” In other words, she must fulfill, or bear the consequences of, whatever she vowed.

**Allen** - this woman, along with the widow, is able to negotiate contracts, take vows, make promises—to function like any man in society. This is not to say that she could do anything; certainly some restrictions are placed on her just by virtue of her gender and her status as one who is divorced (see Lev 21:7 again). But even though she is the freest woman around, she is the one most apt to be bound by vows. (EBC)

**Numbers 30:10 "However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath,**

NET Numbers 30:10 If she made the vow in her husband's house or put herself under obligation with an oath,

NLT Numbers 30:10 "But suppose a woman is married and living in her husband's home when she makes a vow or binds herself with a pledge.

ESV Numbers 30:10 And if she vowed in her husband's house or bound herself by a pledge with an oath,

NIV Numbers 30:10 "If a woman living with her husband makes a vow or obligates herself by a pledge under oath

- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath-** This refers to a vow AFTER they were married

**Numbers 30:11 and her husband heard it, but said nothing to her and did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand.**

NET Numbers 30:11 and her husband heard about it, but remained silent about her, and did not overrule her, then all her vows will stand, and every obligation which she pledged for herself will stand.

NLT Numbers 30:11 If her husband hears of it and does not object to it, her vow or pledge will stand.

ESV Numbers 30:11 and her husband heard of it and said nothing to her and did not oppose her, then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which she bound herself shall stand.

NIV Numbers 30:11 and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand.

- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and her husband heard it, but said nothing to her and did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand**

**Numbers 30:12 "But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the LORD will forgive her.**

NET Numbers 30:12 But if her husband clearly nullifies them when he hears them, then whatever she says by

way of vows or obligations will not stand. Her husband has made them void, and the LORD will release her from them.

NLT Numbers 30:12 But if her husband refuses to accept it on the day he hears of it, her vow or pledge will be nullified, and the LORD will forgive her.

ESV Numbers 30:12 But if her husband makes them null and void on the day that he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning her pledge of herself shall not stand. Her husband has made them void, and the LORD will forgive her.

NIV Numbers 30:12 But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the LORD will release her.

- her husband hath made: 1Co 11:3
- and the Lord: Nu 30:5,8 15:25,28
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the LORD will forgive her**

**NET NOTE on nullifies** - The verb is the imperfect tense in the conditional clause. It is intensified with the infinitive absolute, which would have the force of saying that he nullified them unequivocally, or he made them null and void.

**Numbers 30:13 "Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it."**

NET Numbers 30:13 "Any vow or sworn obligation that would bring affliction to her, her husband can confirm or nullify.

NLT Numbers 30:13 So her husband may either confirm or nullify any vows or pledges she makes to deny herself.

ESV Numbers 30:13 Any vow and any binding oath to afflict herself, her husband may establish, or her husband may make void.

NIV Numbers 30:13 Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself.

- and every: 1Co 11:3,9 1Pe 3:1-6
- to afflict: Nu 29:7 Lev 16:29 23:27,32 Ezr 8:21 Ps 35:13 Isa 58:5 1Co 7:5
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself** - NET = "Any vow or sworn obligation that would bring affliction to her," NET Notes adds that "The sentence uses the infinitive construct לְעַנּוֹת (lé'annot, "to afflict"), which is the same word used in the instructions for the day of atonement in which people are to afflict themselves (their souls). The case here may be that the woman would take a religious vow on such an occasion to humble herself, to mortify her flesh, to abstain from certain things, perhaps even sexual relations within marriage."

**her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it.**

**Numbers 30:14 "But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them."**

NET Numbers 30:14 But if her husband remains completely silent about her from day to day, he thus confirms all her vows or all her obligations which she is under; he confirms them because he remained silent about when he heard them.

NLT Numbers 30:14 But if he does not object on the day he hears of it, then he is agreeing to all her vows and

pledges.

ESV Numbers 30:14 But if her husband says nothing to her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows or all her pledges that are upon her. He has established them, because he said nothing to her on the day that he heard of them.

NIV Numbers 30:14 But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them.

- Nu 30:7
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them**

**Numbers 30:15 "But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt."**

NET Numbers 30:15 But if he should nullify them after he has heard them, then he will bear her iniquity."

NLT Numbers 30:15 If he waits more than a day and then tries to nullify a vow or pledge, he will be punished for her guilt."

ESV Numbers 30:15 But if he makes them null and void after he has heard of them, then he shall bear her iniquity."

NIV Numbers 30:15 If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt."

- he shall bear: Nu 30:5,8,12 Lev 5:1 Ga 3:28
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt-** In other words he will bear the consequences of his wife not keeping the vow. It was considered as if he made it and broke it.

**NET NOTE** - In other words, he will pay the penalty for making her break her vows if he makes her stop what she vowed. It will not be her responsibility.

---

**G Campbell Morgan** - These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter- Num. 30.16.

This is really a very arresting chapter. At first it may seem to have very little application to our modern civilization. But if it be carefully considered, it will be seen that it consists of a series of enactments based upon a fundamental principle of human society. The chapter is concerned with vows; and principally those of women. Let us state these provisions in other words: The vow of a man is declared to be absolutely binding; from it there is no release. In the case of women this is not so. If a woman dwelling in her father's house take a vow upon her, her father has the power to forbid, and so to release her. If he do not so, then the vow is binding. In the case of a woman dwelling with her husband, the husband has a like power. If he does not exercise it, then her vow is also binding. In the case of a widow, or one divorced, if her vow is made in her widowhood or while she is divorced, it is absolutely binding. If it was made while she dwelt with her husband, and he forbade it, she is released. If he did not forbid it, then it is binding upon her. Now what did these careful enactments mean? They are of the utmost importance, as they reveal the Divine conception of the necessity for the maintenance of the unity of the family. In no family must there be two supreme authorities; and here, as always in the Divine arrangement, the headship is vested in the husband and father. It can easily be seen how, were this otherwise, through religious vows discord and probably disruption in family life would ensue. The measure in which modern society has departed from this ideal, is the measure of its insecurity. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

**Numbers 30:16 These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, as between a man and his wife, and as between a father and his daughter, while she is in her youth in her father's house.**

NET Numbers 30:16 These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses, relating to a man and his wife, and a father and his young daughter who is still living in her father's house.

NLT Numbers 30:16 These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and a young daughter who still lives at home.

ESV Numbers 30:16 These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses about a man and his wife and about a father and his daughter while she is in her youth within her father's house.

NIV Numbers 30:16 These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

- Nu 5:29,30 Lev 11:46,47 13:59 14:54-57 15:32,33
- [Numbers 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SUMMARY OF WOMEN'S VOWS**

**These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, as between a man and his wife, and as between a father and his daughter, while she is in her youth in her father's house**

**Guzik** - This is an outworking of the principle of headship. When God declares someone to be in a position of rightful authority and others are expected to submit to that authority, the head also is accountable before God for the result.. God never grants authority without accountability. When this is understood, it makes submission much easier.

**NIVSB** - In the centuries leading up to the NT, the legal decisions on vows became even more complex. The words of Jesus that one is to avoid all such oaths (Mt 5:33–37) are liberating.