

**August 4, 2019 - Num. 30:1–16 - Vows**  
**Torah Reading: Numbers 30:1–16 - Vows**  
**Psalm 106:1-5**  
**Haftarah: Isaiah 45:23-25 + 46:3-5, 8-11**  
**Jeremiah 1:12**

## Vows

Recall that vows were allowed but discouraged in Judaism. If you made a vow it had to be carried out to the letter.

It was a very serious matter.

**Deuteronomy 23:21-22** - "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee."

**Ecclesiastes 5:5** - "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." (NET - "It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it")

The Kol Nidre on Yom Kippur annuls any personal or religious oaths or prohibitions, to preemptively avoid the sin of breaking vows made to God which cannot be or are not upheld.

Jesus is emphatic:

**Matthew 5:33-37**: - "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord. But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'-- anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

James seems to include even our plans into this category of vows:

**James 4:13-16** - "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."

James takes a hard line on vows, saying they lead to hypocrisy:

**James 5:12** - "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (hypokrisis)."

This chapter of Numbers show how Jesus - as "husband" to his Bride - can annul our VOWS.

**Numbers 30:1-2** - "And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded. If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."

A man must be at least 13 years old for his vow to count. According to the Targum of Jonathan, he must be thirteen years of age; it is said in the Misnah (Niddah, c. 5. sect. 6.), "a son of twelve years and one day, his vows are examined; a son of thirteen years and one day, his vows are firm, and they examine the whole thirteenth year before that time.

Men should be careful how they vow, and not rashly do it; but when they have vowed, they ought to perform it.

**Other restrictions**, - The vow must concern a thing that is lawful to be done, which is not contrary to the revealed will and mind of God, and which may tend to the glory of God, the honour of religion, the service of the sanctuary, the good of a man's self or of his neighbour; or in things purely indifferent, which may, or may not be done, without offence to God or man; as that he will not eat such a thing for such a time, or he will do this or the other thing. He may forbid himself what is forbidden, and forbid what is free and lawful; but he may not make free or lawful what is forbidden, that is, he may not vow to do a thing which is contrary to the law of God, such a vow will not stand

### **A Father can Disallow his Daughter's Vow**

**Numbers 30:3-5** - "If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."

### **A Husband can Disallow his Wife's Vows**

**Numbers 30:6-8** - "And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her."

Christ as our husband has not "held his peace" about vows. He tells us, "Simply let your

'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'-- anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (**Matthew 5:37**)

As His Bride, we cannot project into the future, make plans that are not tempered by "if God wills it" nor conversely project our expectations onto others, judging them when they fail. All this is forbidden.