

210414-4 Nu 30, Establishing Vows—CThurman

In chapters 28 and 29 there were times for national burnt offerings to be offered. There were the daily burnt offerings (every day at morning and at evening), the Sabbath burnt offerings (weekly), the new moon offerings (monthly), and several offerings that were to be observed annually (yearly). Some of these times were treated as if they fell upon the 7th day of the week. In other words, as they rested on the 7th day Sabbath of the week so they would rest on these days regardless of what day of the week they fell on. These are called holy convocations.

(i.e., the 15th and 21st days of the 1st month & 50 days later, and then on the 1st, 10th, 15th and 22nd days of the 7th month.

We are also told that the daily burnt offerings were to be offered in addition to the other burnt offerings. And included with all of these offerings were their meal offerings (flour, oil, and salt) and their drink offerings (strong wine, always poured out before the Lord), along with their peace offerings; and some included sin offerings. These chapters pay particular attention to the kind, quality, and number of animals and the amounts of flour, oil, and strong wine for the offerings. And all of these did not disannul the personal offerings of the people which are offerings for vows, freewill or voluntary offerings, burnt offering, meal offerings, and drink offerings for your peace offerings. (cf. Nu.29.29)

Chapter 30 tells that vows shall be kept and how vows are established.

Vows of a Man

אֶל־רִאשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת

1 ¶ And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

which ... hath commanded, אֶשְׂרֶ־צִוָּה, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb צִוָּה, tsah-vah (vss. 1, אֶשְׂרֶ־צִוָּה, 16, אֶשְׂרֶ־צִוָּה), and is always intensive, whether it is in Piel or Pual (active or passive); this is tss. to command, to bid, to appoint, to order, to charge.

The LORD gave this commandment to Moses and now Moses communicates the same to the leaders of the people.

2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD,

vow, נָדַר, Qal fut. verb tss. always with the English *to vow*; the verb is in vss. 2, 3, 10.

a vow, נֶדֶר, neh-der, or נְדָר, ne-der, tss. always with the English, a *vow*.

or swear an oath

[To swear (שָׁבַע) is the verb form of the noun *oath* (שְׁבוּעָה)]

swear, הִשָּׁבַע, hish-sha-[g]ua, infin. constr. of the verb שָׁבַע, sha-vua, tss. *to swear, to make an oath, to charge, to adjure*; the verb is only this once in the chapter. The noun form is *oath*, see directly below.

oath, שְׁבוּעָה, sh'-vuah, defect. for the fem. noun שְׁבוּעָה, sh'-voo-[g]ah, tss. *an oath, a curse, and sworn*; vss. 2, 11, 13.

to bind his soul with a bond;
harness life harness

to bind, לָאָסַר, Qal infin. construction, of the verb אָסַר, tss. *to bind, to prepare, to ready, to harness, to tie, to order, to gird, to hold*; the verb is in vss. (Qal pret.) 3, *to bind*, 4, *to be bound*, 6, 9, 10, (Qal infin.), 2 *to bind*,

his soul, עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ, lit. 'upon his life'; נֶפֶשׁ, ne-phesh, (v.2, 4).

with a bond, אָסַר, is-sahr, or אֶסָר, e-sahr, a masc. noun, tss. *a bond or a binding*, vss. 2-5, 7, 10-14.

he shall not break his word,
profane, pollute, prostitute

he shall ... break, נָחַל, ya-cheyhl, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb verb לָחַל, cha-lal, tss. to wound, to defile, to profane, to pollute, to prostitute, to break, to slay.

he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

When a man swears an oath or makes a vow he should perform it.
Breaking vows brings judgment.

Ec.5.4 ¶ When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

Vows were for doing good,

Ps.66.13 ¶ I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

They were not evil for doing evil.

The harlot had evil designs.

Pv.7.14 I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

OT Israel vowed to offer to Asherah.

Jer 44:25 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have

vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her ...

The men of Israel vowed to kill Paul:

Ac 23:21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

Vows appear to be made on condition that the LORD grants some notable answer to our request.

*Ge 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,
21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God ...*

*Jud.11.30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,
31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

Vows of a Daughter in their Youth at Home

3 ¶ 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;

youth, נְעוּרֵי יָם, n'-goo-reem, masc. pl. noun and tss. from the youth, from childhood; vss. 3, 16.

4 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.

and ... shall hold his peace, וְהִקְרִישׁ, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb שָׁקַט, tss. *to hold peace, to be silent, to hold the tongue, to leave off speaking, to rest, to speak not a word, to be quiet*; vss. 4, 7, 13; Hiphil infin. v.14, *altogether*; Hiphil fut., *hold his peace*.

shall stand, וַיִּקְמוּ, a Qal pret. of קָוַם, qoom, tss. *to arise, to be established, to be assured, to stand*; vss. 4 (twice), 5, 7 (twice), 9, 11, 12, 14, *to stand*; v.14, *to establish, to confirm*, v.13, *establish*.

**5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth;
make of no effect vow**

disallow, וַאֲמַדְנִיאַ, is Hiphil (causative) pret. of the verb נָוָה, nōh, tss. *to discourage (Nu.32.7), to disallow, to make of no effect (Ps.33.10), to break*; v.5 (twice), 8, 11.

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.

forgive, וַיִּסְלַח־לָהּ, Qal fut. of סָלַח, sa-lach, tss. *pardon, to forgive, to spare*; vss. 5, 8, 12, *forgive*.

The Lord pardons the oath of this young daughter because the father has the right to allow or disallow her oath because she falls under the jurisdiction of his house.

Vows of a Wife

6 And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;

uttered ought, מִבִּטָּא, a masc. noun tss. v.6, *uttered ought out of*, 8, *that which she uttered with*; the verb בָּטָא or בָּטַף, is tss. *to speak, to pronounce, to speak unadvisedly (Ps.106.33 of Moses when he said, Must we [Aaron & I] fetch you water out of the rock ... [Nu20.10], after which saying he then smote the rock twice)*.

חָרַשׁ, v.4, 7, 13, 14

7 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day
spoke not a word

חָרַשׁ, *cha-rach*, tss. *to hold peace, to be silent, to hold the tongue, to leave off speaking, to rest, to speak not a word, to be quiet*; vss. 4, 7, 14 (3 times), to include *altogether*.

that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

Elkanah agreed to what Hannah had vowed.

1Sa.1.9 ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

*11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, **then** I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.*

...

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

8 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.

- void -

of none effect, וְהִפָּר, hey-pheyr, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb פָּרַר, pa-rar, tss. *to clean, to divide, to break, to break asunder, to void, to defeat, to make of none effect, to disannul, to fail, to disappoint, to frustrate, to dissolve*; Nu.30.8, *to make of none effect, 12 (twice), 13, 15, to make void, duplicated in verse 12, to utterly [make void], 15, duplicated, any ways.*

Vows of a Widow or Divorced Woman

9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced,

widow, אֶלְמָנָה, fem. noun tss. always tss. *widow* (53); the Hebrew adj. אֶלְמָן, al-mahn, once used and tss. *forsaken*; the masc. noun אֶלְמוֹן, al-mohn once used and tss. *widowhood*; the fem. pl. אֶלְמָנוֹת, al-m'-noth, tss. *desolate* [houses or palaces]; & the fem. noun אֶלְמָנוֹת, al-m'-nooth, is tss. *widow's* [garments] (1), *widowhood* (3).

divorced, וַיִּגְרָשָׁהּ, Qal part. of גָּרַשׁ, ga-rash, tss. *to cast up, to drive out, to put away, to divorce, as a noun, a divorced woman, to be troubled, to be thrust out.* The idea of divorce is always applied to the woman, never the man.

wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.

10 And if she vowed in her husband's house,

I.E., she made a vow during the life of her husband ...

or bound her soul by a bond with an oath;

11 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her
upheld for to

in the day that he heard them.

15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them;

any ways make them void, the verb פָּרַךְ, Hiphil fut. with the Hiphil infin. in succession, lit. 'making void shall make void.'

then he shall bear her iniquity.

then he shall bear, וְנָשָׂא, וְ, and, then, נָשָׂא, nah-sah, tss. to bear, to accept, to carry, to suffer, etc.

her iniquity, אֶת־עֲוֹנָהּ, masc. noun of עָוֹן, [g]ah-vōhn, tss. a punishment, an iniquity, a punishment of iniquity, a fault, a mischief.

So, once the vows are established he cannot disannul them. If he is the reason that the vow is broken he is faulted for it.

16 These are the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses,

which ... commanded, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb צִוָּה, tsah-vah (vss. 1, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה, 16, אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה), and is always intensive, whether it is in Piel or Pual (active or passive); this is tss. to command, to bid, to appoint, to order, to charge.

between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter,

being yet in her youth in her father's house.

youth, נְעוּרֵי יָם, n'-goo-reem, masc. pl. noun and tss. from the youth, from childhood; vss. 3, 16.

A man must keep his vows. A young daughter still in her father's house and a married woman making a vow, a divorced woman that made a vow while married to her husband, and a widowed woman that made a vow before her husband died, if in the day that the man heard the vow he rejected, then they are released from keeping the vow. But if he held his peace their vows stand.

This is built on the understanding of headship. The man is the head of his house. A young daughter still in her father's house is under his charge. A married woman is under the charge of her husband. Women of age, divorce and widowed women are responsible for themselves.

Vows in Light of the NT

Making vows was a well-established practice by the time of the giving of the Law. Though the law regulated making vows it was not the LORD's original intent to establish the words of men. Just as there was polygamy, divorce and remarriage before the Law, so the Law regulated these practices though it was not the LORD's original intent for marriage. For example, the LORD brought one woman to one man in, but very early in human history men began practicing both polygamy and divorce.

Polygamy

Ge 4:19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Abraham has two at the same time. (Sarah & Hagar, Ge.16.3)

Polygamy Regulated

De 21:15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated ...

Divorce

De 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

The Original Intent of Marriage

*Mt 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: **but from the beginning it was not so.***

Ge.2.23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

So, the same could be said of vows. The practice was early in human history. (Ge.21.23, 31, Abimelech & Phichol with Abram; 24.9, Abraham binding Eliezar to an oath; 28.20, Jacob to the LORD; etc.) So, making vows is not commended, though it is regulated.

Le 27:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons shall be for the LORD by thy estimation.

This is probably the most repeated phrase that I will ever make from this platform: words mean something. The words of all men should be trustworthy, *especially* the words of the children of God. Whether or not a vow was made their word should have been kept. But because of the public nature of a vow there is attached with it a public liability. I believe that vows should be avoided and that this is not a good practice for Christians. As a matter of fact the Lord condemns it.

Brethren in the NT made vows. Paul came to Jerusalem because he made a vow to keep one of the great feasts of the Lord.

Ac 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

That Paul made a vow does not commend the practice. It simply shows that the practice was still in vogue among the Jews, even among the believing Jews. Notice in Ac.21.23 what James, pastor of the church at Jerusalem, says to Paul. Now this is about seven years after the visit he made because of his vow. (Albert Barnes puts this account at about 58 A.D.)

Ac 21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them ...

We assume that everyone knew all that we know of the Scriptures. We say this, but it is true. They did not turn to the gospel of Matthew like we do. It didn't exist yet. While I can't answer how comprehensively the saints were aware of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ at this time it does appear that they did become more and more aware of them as time passed. Let me explain.

Consider that at the time when Paul vowed to come to Jerusalem Luke was a relatively young Christian. He had only recently joined with the apostle Paul in Acts 16.10. To put this into perspective it is certain that the two books of the Bible which shall come from the pen of Luke have not been written; the Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. According to history neither the gospels of Matthew or Luke were written before 60 A.D. The book of Acts would follow sometime after. Perhaps the only gospel at this time is the Gospel According to Mark, which is said to have been written about 40 A.D., but I need to say this here, that Mark's gospel does not contain the Sermon on the Mount which is portion which deals with vows or swearing of oaths. It seems to me that had the Paul, James, and these other brethren been aware of Christ's teaching on this issue it is doubtful that they would have made such vows. Christ condemned the swearing of oaths, the making of vows.

Mt.5.33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

for swear, ἐπιορκήσεις, 2ps. fut. ind. of the verb ἐπιορκέω, ἐπί against + ὄρκος, a noun tss. *an oath* (10), and a verb ὀρκίζω, tss. *to adjure, to charge*; so the verb ἐπιορκέω & ἐπίορκος, respectively *to forswear thyself* and of *perjured persons* is to contradict or stand against the oath made.

to forswear, Dict., it means to reject or denounce an oath, and so to be a liar.

34 *But I say unto you, Swear not at all (ὁμόσαι, aor. infin.);*
Or, *But I say unto you not to swear at all ... (it's not an imperative)*

34 *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

35 *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

36 *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

37 *But let your communication (λόγος, word) be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

If the timing of the writing of these books is correct it is interesting to see how quickly James has a change of mind concerning the swearing of oaths. It could be less than two years after the Gospel According to Matthew was penned that James wrote this in his letter. (62 A.D.)

Ja.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.

It is beyond question that James is referring to the words of our Lord Jesus in his letter. By now 2/3rd of the Scriptures have come into written form and with these a greater clarity of the doctrine of Christ. In this case swearing oaths comes from evil. When we swear an oath we are presumptuous. We have no control over anything. But God, by swearing an oath proves the immutability of His counsel to us.

He.6.16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us ...

Nu 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Let us simply say yes or no.