

“VOWS, PAY BACK & LIVING ON THE EDGE” **NUMBERS CHAPTERS 30-32**

CHAPTER 30 – “THE LAW OF VOWS”

(v1-2) **Defining “A man’s vow”** – A *VOW* is a solemn promise or pledge that binds a person to perform a specified act or to behave in a certain manner. Vowing was voluntary. But after a vow was made, it had to be performed (Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6). Vows, therefore, were to be made only after careful consideration (Proverbs 20:25) and in keeping with what pleased God (Leviticus 27:9-27). Sinful man does not know what will please God; he needs God’s direction in making vows. (from Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

One commentator writes, “The Old Testament **ethics** firmly underlines the fact that a man is unconditionally bound by a verbal vow. This starts with the vows he makes to God but extends to those made to other men. In a day when modern business implements such as notaries, contracts, recorded deeds, and notes were not available, a man’s word must be as good as his bond. Certainly this was true with regard to the vows made to God.”

(v3-5) **A daughter’s vow and her father’s approval / disapproval.**

(v6-8) **A wife’s vow and her husband’s approval / disapproval.**

(v9) **A vow made by a widow or divorced woman.**

(v10-15) **Same situation as v.6 – 8.**

(v16) **So be it!**

(Insight from J.V. McGee regarding **the greatest vow of all**, “God keeps His vows, and He expects His children to keep theirs. He made a vow to Abraham. He made a promise to David. God will stand behind His vows. He has kept His promises in the past and will keep His promises in the future. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). That is the Word of God, God’s promise to you and me. And the Word of God stands. He has vowed that He will save you if you trust in Christ, and that vow stands.”)

CHAPTER 31 – “PAY BACK IN MIDIAN”

(v1-2) **“Take vengeance on the Midianites” – Why?** (Understanding the MIDIANITES from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.)

(v3-6) **Two types of warriors are listed:** (1) *Physical warriors* – 1000 men from each tribe of Israel; (2) *Spiritual warriors* – Phinehas, the holy articles and the signal trumpets. (PHINEHAS - A son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron (Exodus 6:25). During the wilderness wandering, Phinehas killed Zimri, a man of Israel, and Cozri, a Midianite woman whom Zimri had brought into the camp (Numbers 25). This action ended a plague by which God had judged Israel for allowing Midianite women to corrupt Israel with idolatry and harlotry. For such zeal Phinehas and his descendants were promised a permanent priesthood (Numbers 25:11-13). Phinehas became the third high priest of Israel, serving for 19 years. His descendants held the high priesthood until the Romans destroyed the Temple in A.D. 70, except for a short period when the house of Eli served as high priests.) Always remember that all warfare is spiritual (**Ephesians 6:10-20**).

(v7-24) When a people become vial and wicked (i.e. – Midianites) without remorse or repentance, then in God’s righteous justice they will be judged; thus we see judgment upon these wicked Midianites. The Midianites were involved in idolatry (occult/satanic practices), immorality (producing various diseases), and sacrifice of children as a burnt offering to Baal, Chemosh, or Molech.

(v25-47) **Divide the plunder.**

(v48-54) **This was a special thank offering given to the LORD for not a man was missing according to v49-50.** (The 16,750 shekels would be over \$300,000 by comparison.)

CHAPTER 32 – “LIVING ON THE EDGE”

(v1-5) C.I. Scofield writes, “The Reubenites and the Gadites, who chose their inheritance just outside the land, symbolize world-borderers—carnal Christians.” (**1 Corin. 3:1-4**; **Ro. 8:5-7**).

(v6-42) How sad it is when people will not follow the Word of God, they will not trust in the promises of God, they are self-reliant, full of worldly compromise and satisfied with material justifications. (There is a final carnal manifestation of Gad in **Mark 5:1-20**.)