

Doctrine of Vows

February 25, 1975

- I. Vocabulary
 - A. Hebrew, נִדְּחַר nedher, vow, votive offering.
 - B. Greek, εὐχή euche, vow, prayer.
- II. Definition: It is a voluntary promise to God to do or to abstain from something in return for something. (e.g. the birth of Samuel)
- III. Standard procedures for vows.
 - A. They were not a requirement. Deut.23:22-23
 - B. Once the vow was made, it was binding. Deut.23:21-23, Judges 11:35, Eccl.5:4, Ps.66:13
 - C. A vow had to be verbally uttered to be binding. Deut.23:23
 - D. Fathers and husbands could veto their daughter's and wife's vows. Num.30
 - E. But, if they did not veto it, or they caused them to break the vow, the men were liable. Num.30
 - F. Almost anything could be vowed such as: slaves, lands, homes, possessions, or animals. Lev.27.
 - G. Except what was already the Lord's (tithes) or what was an abomination. Deut.23:18 (note: the term "dog" is slang for a homosexual prostitute.)
 - H. The Levitical system received the vows under the Mosaic Law. Lev.22:18,22,23
- IV. Examples of erroneously or rashly taken vows.
 - A. Jacob's vow to build God a house in order to gain Living Grace. Gen.28:20, 31:13
 - B. Paul's vow in Jerusalem so the orthodox Jews would accept him. Act.18:18
- V. The Nazarite Vow was a picture of the condescension of Jesus Christ during His incarnation. Num.6:1-23
- VI. David kept his vows illustrating his mature attitude toward keeping his word. Ps.22:25, 50:14, 61:5, 65:1, 66:13, 76:11, 116:14-19, cp. Job 22:27
- VII. Jephthah's vow was legitimately fulfilled because: Judg.11:30,31
 - A. He was not ignorant of the law forbidding human sacrifice.
 - B. He was intimately acquainted with the Law of Moses.
 - C. He was under the influence of the HS when he made the vow. Judg.11:29
 - D. He and the nation had separated from the Ammonite idol, Chemosh, who demanded human sacrifice. Judg.10:6,16
 - E. He is listed in the roster of heroes of the faith in OT times (Heb.11:32).
 - F. He fulfilled the spirit of the vow by his daughter's perpetual virginity.
 - G. Finally, this episode was memorialized in Israel with a new law. Judg.11:40

- VIII. Jesus spoke against the abuse of vows in His day. Matt.5:35-37, Mk.7:10:13
- A. The religious crowd of His day was swearing by heaven, by earth and by Jerusalem.
 - B. This was a gimmick so they did not have to honor their vow.
 - C. Since they had not sworn by God they excused themselves.
 - D. They gained the approbation of the people before whom they made their grandiose vows.
 - E. Jesus called such activity evil.
 - F. Application: Modern pledging is the same.
- IX. Ananias and Sapphira died the sin unto death for their failure to keep their vow (Acts 5:1-10).
- X. Final verse: Jam. 5:12 “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but your yest is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

Reviewed: December 2018