

Numbers 30:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Her father shall hold his peace at her (הַחֲרִישׁ לָהּ אָבִיכָה, heherish lah aviha)—The father's silence constitutes legal ratification. Harash (to be silent) here carries juridical weight: what is not vetoed is validated. This principle reveals God's care for order within covenant households while protecting young women from rash oaths.

Then all her vows shall stand (וְקַמּוּ כָל-נְדָרֶיהָ, veqamu kol-nedareyha)—The verb qum (to stand, be established) indicates legal validity. The father's headship includes authority to annul (hefer, v. 5) vows that might harm his daughter, but silence equals consent. This anticipates Christ's headship over the Church (Ephesians 5:23), where His intercession either establishes or removes our obligations.

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern patriarchal culture (c. 1400 BC wilderness period), a father's authority over unmarried daughters was absolute. Unlike surrounding cultures where women had almost no legal standing, Mosaic law provided protection mechanisms—fathers could nullify harmful vows, preventing exploitation while honoring women's spiritual agency to make vows to Yahweh.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the father's authority to annul vows reflect both protection and responsibility rather than mere control?
2. In what ways does Christ's intercessory work as our Advocate parallel the father's role in evaluating and potentially nullifying our misguided commitments?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁמַע עָבֵד יְהוָה	אָבִיךָ	אֶת	נִצְרַת יְהוָה	אֶת	רָאשָׁךָ
hear	And her father	H853	at her then all her vows	and every bond	H834
H8085	H1		H5088	H632	
אָסַב הָעֵל	נֶפֶשׁ הַ	וְשָׁלַח	לְהַ		
wherewith she hath bound	H5921	her soul	shall hold his peace	H0	
H631	H5315		H2790		
אָבִיךָ יְהוָה	כָּל	נִצְרַת יְהוָה	כָּל	אֶת	רָאשָׁךָ
And her father	shall stand	H3605	at her then all her vows	H3605	and every bond
H1	H6965		H5088	H632	
אָסַב הָעֵל	נֶפֶשׁ הַ	וְשָׁלַח	וְשָׁלַח		
wherewith she hath bound	H5921	her soul	shall stand		
H631	H5315		H6965		