

Numbers 30:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

If she had at all an husband, when she vowed—This verse introduces marital authority superseding paternal authority at marriage. The emphatic infinitive absolute construction (ve'im hayo tihyeh le'ish) stresses the certainty of this transfer: when she becomes **an husband's** (לִישׁ, le'ish, literally 'to/for a man'), covenant headship shifts.

Uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul (מִבְטָא שְׂפָתֶיהָ, מִבְטָא שְׂפָתֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר אָסְרָהּ עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ, *mivta sefateyha asher as'rah al-nafshah*)—Mivta means rash utterance or hasty speech. The verb asar (to bind) indicates self-imposed obligation upon the nefesh (soul, life-essence). Marriage doesn't eliminate personal spiritual agency but places it within covenantal accountability, picturing Christ and the Church's mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Historical Context

At marriage (typically ages 13-16 for women in ancient Israel), legal authority transferred from father to husband. This verse addresses vows made before marriage but operative after marriage—a complex legal situation. The law's careful attention to such edge cases demonstrates Scripture's comprehensive wisdom for covenant community life.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the transfer of vow-authority at marriage reflect the 'leaving and cleaving' principle of Genesis 2:24?
2. What does this passage teach about the relationship between personal spiritual commitments and covenantal household structures?

Interlinear Text

וְאִם	הִי וְ	תְהִיָּה	לֹא יֵשׁ	וְנָדָר יְהִי	עַל יְהִי
H518	H1961	H1961	H376	H5088	H5921
			And if she had at all an husband	when she vowed	
וְ	מִבֶּטֶן	אֶת יְהִי	אֲשֶׁר	אֶסְבֶּה	עַל
H176	H4008	H8193	H834	H631	H5921
	or uttered	ought out of her lips		wherewith she bound	
נַפְשָׁהּ:					
H5315					
her soul					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 56:12 (Parallel theme): Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

