



SERIES:	04 Numbers - 2013
MESSAGE:	Numbers 30-31
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Numbers 30-31

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Numbers 30-31 can be summed up in three words: vows, vengeance, and victory. In these chapters, God gives the children of Israel a set of regulations for vows, they war against the Midianites, and the Lord gives them victory. As we apply the text to our lives, we learn that our word is sacred, vengeance is the Lord's business, and God gives victory to those who are obedient.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Chapters 30-31 could be summed up by three words
 1. Vows: promises are made
 2. Vengeance: plans are made for war
 3. Victory is given by God
 - B. From the personal to the national, from the private to the public
 - C. Vows were given based on two criteria
 1. The recognition of human nature: it has a tendency toward lying
 2. The response to the divine nature
 - a. Because God has been good to us
 - b. Psalm 116:12
 - D. Oaths were never commanded by God to make; but if you do make a vow, then you need to keep it
 - E. Most of the vows in ancient times were verbal oaths
 1. Sometimes supplemented by the raising of a hand or the mentioning of a monarch
 2. It made it more binding and solemn
 - F. Abraham, Jacob, David, Jonathan, and Paul all made oaths
 1. Even Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" or "Most assuredly, I say unto you" (see John 3:3, 5)
 2. God Himself made an oath
 - a. Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13
 - b. Numbers 23:19
 - c. He doesn't do it to produce credibility, but to produce our loyalty
 - d. God descending to that lower human level for our benefit
- II. Numbers 30
 - A. No requirement is given; but if you make a vow, you keep it
 1. Ecclesiastes 5:4
 2. Matthew 21:28-31

- B. When a woman under the authority of her father or husband made a promise, it could indenture her father or husband
 - 1. They could be liable for her promise
 - 2. Hence, the father had the authority to overrule it
 - C. Promises are holy and sacred, but there have been some unfortunate ones
 - 1. Judges 11:30-39
 - 2. 1 Samuel 14
 - D. The husband is the head of the wife; Ephesians 5:23
 - E. The Lord is saying, "It's more important that that young woman obey her father or that wife obey her husband than she fulfill any promise that was made without their agreement"
 - F. This helps us understand what happened in Genesis 3
 - 1. Eve made a rash choice, or vow, that Adam was privy to: she saw, she was tempted, and she ate
 - 2. Adam also ate and was held responsible in the Scripture; his silence to what was going on made him culpable
 - G. New Testament
 - 1. The formula for oath taking became more important than the promise itself
 - 2. Matthew 5:33-37
 - a. A call to verbal integrity
 - b. Quakers believed that this forbade oath taking, even in a court of law
 - c. This is legalistic and wrong; Matthew 26:63-64
 - H. A promise is holy
 - 1. If you tell your brother or sister you'll pray for them, pray for them
 - 2. "I do"; don't make that vow unless you keep it
- III. Numbers 31
- A. Verse 1: did you know that you're going to fight battles till the very end?
 - 1. You won't have heaven till you get to heaven
 - 2. Learn how to fight your battles well—they get harder sometimes when you get older
 - 3. David was a warrior, but when he took his ease in Jerusalem, that's when he fell (see 2 Samuel 11)
 - B. This was not a political battle; it was a spiritual battle (see Numbers 25)
 - 1. Because of what the Midianites and Moabites did to the Israelites under the direction of Balaam—sexual immorality and idolatry
 - 2. 24,000 Israelites died in a plague
 - C. We're called to be peacemakers; Matthew 5:9
 - 1. However, for the last 1,600 years, the majority of the church has followed the just war tradition, which says there are certain circumstances that justify a nation going to war
 - 2. Between the second and fourth centuries, Christians avoided the Roman military; it meant being involved in idolatry
 - 3. Then Christians were accused of helping the enemy in the fall of Rome
 - 4. Augustine and Aquinas developed the just war theory
 - a. There has to be a just cause
 - b. There must be a just intention
 - c. It has to be a last resort effort

- d. There must be a formal declaration of war
 - e. There must be limited objectives
 - f. There must be a proportionate means
 - g. Non-combatant immunity
 - 5. Abraham, David, and the judges all went to battle
 - a. The centurion; Matthew 8:10
 - b. Romans 12:18—peace is sometimes not possible
 - 6. "Pacifism in this poor world in which we live—this lost world—means that we desert the people who need our greatest help" —Francis Schaeffer
 - 7. If need be, you must use force to enforce the peace
 - D. Phinehas was zealous for the Lord
 - 1. Numbers 25:6-13
 - 2. Because there was a spiritual component in this battle, a spiritual man went out to battle
 - E. At the end of his first prophecy, Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" (Num. 23:10)
 - 1. God didn't grant his request
 - 2. If you don't live the life of the righteous, you can't expect to die the death of the righteous
 - F. We have difficulty with passages like this (vv. 14-19)
 - 1. The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (see Gen. 15:16)
 - 2. Lowest level of immorality they were operating at: heterosexual activity with prostitutes, homosexuality, bestiality, and the sacrifice of babies
 - 3. One commentator said, "It would've been impossible for their civilization to continue to survive with just their practices"
 - 4. God was patient for hundreds of years; He did the same with the flood
 - G. They purified the spoils of war (vv. 19-24)
 - 1. This is the only example we have of purification by fire in all Scripture
 - 2. This was probably due to corpse contamination
 - H. They divided the spoils of war equally between those who went to battle and those who stayed behind (vv. 25-27)
 - 1. The warriors didn't get a special status
 - 2. David at Ziklag; see 1 Samuel 30:21-24
 - I. Not one man died (vv. 48-49)
 - 1. This was a supernatural battle
 - 2. How would you explain Jericho?
 - 3. Also, the Midianites were nomadic people; they were not used to warfare
 - J. The men made an offering to the Lord (vv. 50-54)
- IV. Closing
- A. Vows
 - 1. Your word is sacred—or it should be
 - 2. *Sincere* comes from two Latin words
 - a. *Sine*, meaning without
 - b. *Cera*, meaning wax
 - c. In ancient times, dishonest dealers would take cracked works of art and fill them in with wax and powdered marble
 - d. The honest dealers would certify their work by making a vow

3. Let your words be without wax
- B. Vengeance
 1. It's the Lord's business, not yours
 2. Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19
- C. Victory
 1. God will give you the victory as you obey Him in these areas
 2. All of the victory that God gives you is for one reason: that you, like the Israelites, might come back and render Him praise and glorify Him

Figures referenced: Augustine, Aquinas, Francis Schaeffer

Latin words: sine, cera

Cross references: Genesis 3; 15:16; 22:16; Numbers 23:10, 19; 25; 30-31; Deuteronomy 32:35; Judges 11:30-39; 1 Samuel 14; 30; 2 Samuel 11; Psalm 116:12; Ecclesiastes 5:4; Matthew 5:9, 33-37; 8:10; 21:28-31; 26:63-64; John 3:3, 5; Romans 12:18, 19; Ephesians 5:23; Hebrews 6:13

Topic: Warfare

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