

Numbers 6

Verses 1 - 4

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man or woman makes a special vow, *namely*, the vow of a Nazirite, to live as a Nazirite for the Lord, ³ he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he shall consume no vinegar, *whether made* from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes. ⁴ All the days of his consecration he shall not eat anything that is produced from the grape vine, from *the* seeds even to *the* skin.

² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man or woman makes a special vow, *namely*, the vow of a Nazirite, to live as a Nazirite for the Lord

This chapter has the rules for those who became Nazirites. There were two types of this vow:

1. A Nazirite for Life

They were dedicated to the Lord by their parents before they were born. This included the following people.

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| 1. Samson | Judges 13:5 | 1118 BC |
| 2. Samuel | 1 Samuel 1:11 | 1100 BC |
| 3. John the Baptist | Luke 1:15 | 4 BC |

Neither Samuel nor John the Baptist is called a Nazirite but due to the circumstances of their birth and the manner of their life, they are usually designated as Nazirites for life. The Nazirites were a special class of people raised up by God

¹¹ **Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets,**
And some of your young men to be Nazirites.
Is this not so, you sons of Israel?” declares the Lord.

2. A Nazirite of Days

This included any man or woman who offered themselves to God with the Nazirite vow for a short period of time. It is likely that Paul took this vow. See Acts 18:18

¹⁸ Now Paul, when he had remained many days longer, took leave of the brothers and sisters and sailed away to Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. Paul first had his hair cut at Cenchrea, for he was keeping a vow.

Shaving the head was a sign that a Nazarite's period of special dedication was complete. This suggests that Paul's Nazarite vow was for a limited time.

⁴ All the days of his consecration he shall not eat anything that is produced from the grape vine, from *the* seeds even to *the* skin.

The prohibition was absolute; nothing of the grapevine was permissible to the Nazirite.

The Jews made a sour drink that was made from the seeds of unripe grapes and cakes were often made of the husks (skins) of grapes. These products would have been forbidden for a Nazirite.

Verse 5 - 8

⁵ ‘All the days of his vow of consecration no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled which he lives as a Nazirite for the Lord; he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long. ⁶ ‘All the days of his life as a Nazirite for the Lord he shall not come up to a dead person. ⁷ He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his consecration to God is on his head. ⁸ All the days of his consecration he is holy to the Lord.

⁵ ‘All the days of his vow of consecration no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled which he lives as a Nazirite for the Lord; he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long.

For those who took the Nazirite vow long hair was a sign of devotion to the Lord.

When Samson disobeyed this vow (by telling Delilah the secret of his great strength) he paid a high price for doing so (they gouged out his eyes, restrained him with chains and put him in prison) but when it grew back he won a huge victory over the Philistines.

See Judges 16

⁶ ‘All the days of his life as a Nazirite for the Lord he shall not come up to a dead person. ⁷ He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his consecration to God is on his head.

This rule was stricter for the Nazirite than for the priests.

See Leviticus 21:1- 3

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘No one shall defile himself for a *dead* person among his people, ² except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother, ³ also for his virgin sister who is near to him because she has not had a husband; for her, he may defile himself.

However, this was the same restriction given to the High Priest

See Leviticus 21:10-11

¹⁰ ‘The priest who is highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; ¹¹ nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself *even* for his father or his mother;

Verse 9 - 12

⁹ ‘But if *someone* dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his consecrated head *of hair*, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave it on the seventh day. ¹⁰ Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young doves to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹¹ And the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him regarding his sin because of the *dead* person. And on that same day he shall consecrate his head, ¹² and shall live his days of consecration as a Nazirite for the Lord, and shall bring a male lamb a year old as a guilt offering; but the preceding days will not count, because his consecration was defiled.

⁹ ‘But if *someone* dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his consecrated head *of hair*, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave it on the seventh day.

This concerns a violation of the law that was unintentional.

See Leviticus 5:17

¹⁷ “Now if a person sins and does any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, he is still guilty and shall bear his punishment.

Some sin could be unintentional.

1. See Acts 3:17 - 19

¹⁷ “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers also did. ¹⁸ But the things which God previously announced by the mouths of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has fulfilled in this way. ¹⁹ Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Peter told his Jewish brothers that they killed the Author of life because they acted in ignorance.

2. See Acts 17:30

³⁰ So having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now proclaiming to mankind that all people everywhere are to repent, ³¹ because He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead.”

Paul told his Greek audience that God had overlooked the times of ignorance.

¹⁰ Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young doves to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹¹ And the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him regarding his sin because of the *dead* person.

Even though what happened was unintentional it required the following:

1. A sin offering.
2. A burnt offering.
3. To make atonement regarding his sin.

There are two additional requirements in the next two verses.

.... And on that same day he shall consecrate his head, ¹² and shall live his days of consecration as a Nazirite for the Lord, and shall bring a male lamb a year old as a guilt offering; but the preceding days will not count, because his consecration was defiled.

4. A guilt offering (a male lamb)
5. Begin the full term of his vow over again

Even though Samson did not willingly have his hair cut off, rather Delilah called for a man to come in while Samson was asleep and he shaved off the seven locks of his head, he was not without sin concerning the Nazirite vow.

What happened may have been unintentional and out of ignorance in trusting Delilah but Samson broke the Nazirite vow. This episode demonstrated how important the vow of the Nazirite was in the eyes of God.

Verses 13 - 20

¹³ ‘Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his consecration are fulfilled: he shall bring his offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹⁴ And he shall present his offering to the Lord: one male lamb a year old without defect as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb a year old without defect as a sin offering, one ram without defect as a peace offering, ¹⁵ and a basket of unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offering. ¹⁶ Then the priest shall present *them* before the Lord and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering. ¹⁷ He shall also offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord, together with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. ¹⁸ The Nazirite shall then shave his consecrated head *of hair* at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and take the consecrated hair of his head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. ¹⁹ And the priest shall take the ram’s shoulder *when it has been* boiled, and one unleavened loaf from the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put *them* on the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated *hair*. ²⁰ Then the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. It is holy for the priest, together with the breast *offered* as a wave offering, and the thigh *offered* as a contribution; and afterward the Nazirite may drink wine.’

¹³ **Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his consecration are fulfilled: he shall bring his offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting.**

He shall present his offering to the Lord:

1. One male lamb a year old without defect as a burnt offering,
2. One ewe lamb a year old without defect as a sin offering,
3. One ram without defect as a peace offering,
4. A basket of unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil
5. Unleavened wafers spread with oil,
6. Their grain offering
7. Their drink offering.

Why did the completion of a Nazirite vow require a sin offering? The answer to this question seems to be an enigma.

In any case the cost at the completion of the Nazirite vow, offering 2 lambs and a ram, was fairly expensive.

¹⁸ **The Nazirite shall then shave his consecrated head of hair at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and take the consecrated hair of his head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings.**

There may have been some symbolism in the burning of their hair but it is not clear what it might have meant?

Verse 21

²¹ **“This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the Lord according to his consecration, in addition to what *else* he can afford; corresponding to his vow which he makes, so he shall do according to the law of his consecration.”**

Those who took the Nazirite vow had a feast when it was completed. The feast was augmented by whatever else the Nazirite was able to bring. The friends who attended may have added to the feast.

See Acts 21:23-26

²³ Therefore, do as we tell you: we have four men who have a vow upon themselves; ²⁴ take them along and purify yourself together with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and *then* everyone will know that there is nothing to what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also conform, keeping the Law. ²⁵ But regarding the Gentiles who have believed, we sent a letter, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and what is strangled, and from sexual immorality.” ²⁶ Then Paul took along the men, and the next day, after purifying himself together with them, he went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

As stated above Paul may have been under the Nazarite vow in Acts 18 and here in Acts 21 he is told to pay the expenses for four men who were under a vow. Since the offerings at the completion of the Nazirite vow were costly and Paul was told to pay the cost for these four men it seems likely they were under the Nazarite vow.

Verse 22 - 27

²² Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘In this way you shall bless the sons of Israel. You are to say to them:

²⁴ The Lord bless you, and keep you;

²⁵ The Lord cause His face to shine on you,
And be gracious to you;

²⁶ The Lord lift up His face to you,
And give you peace.’

²⁷ So they shall invoke my name on the sons of Israel, and *then* I will bless them.

This blessing is commonly called the Aaronic Blessing. It was used following the daily sacrifices. It is a beautiful blessing.