

Numbers 6:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Numbers 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate *themselves* to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate *themselves* unto the LORD:
Numbers 6:3 He shall separate *himself* from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.
Numbers 6:4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

Nazarite – Hebrew: nazir = separate; consecrated

This chapter introduces and explains the Nazarite vow. Verse two provides a simple definition: A Nazarite vow is made by one who wants to separate himself unto the LORD; it's special vow of dedication to God. One who makes a Nazarite vow is required to abstain from drinking wine or vinegar or any type of intoxicating drink; he is also not to drink any type of grape juice or eat any grapes—either moist or dried. He is not to eat anything made from any part of the grape or vine tree.

It was interesting to note that this vow could be made by man or woman. I don't remember reading about any woman in scripture making this vow. The closest possible example is of Samson's mother who was forbidden to drink wine or strong drink or eat anything unclean from the time she was told she would have a son until his birth. It is also the first example of one purposed by God to be a Nazarite from birth.

Judges 13:3-5 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

In chapter 30 we are told that a woman's vow could be annulled by her father or husband.

Numbers 6:5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

This verse indicates that the duration of the vow is at the choosing of the person making the vow. No haircuts are allowed during the time of dedication; the hair is to be allowed to grow for the whole time designated for the duration of the vow. It provides public testimony that the person is purposed to remain holy before God.

Numbers 6:6 All the days that he separateth *himself* unto the LORD he shall

come at no dead body.

Numbers 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head.

Numbers 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD.

A person making the Nazarite vow was also forbidden to approach or touch any dead body. There were no exceptions for the death of father, mother, brother or sister. His consecration to the LORD is to take precedence over any other of life's obligations or responsibilities.

Guzik makes an important observation I think: "Separation from death - the effect of sin - was essential during the period of the vow."

Numbers 6:9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

Numbers 6:10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Numbers 6:11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.

Numbers 6:12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

This section provides instructions for one who has made a Nazarite vow but finds himself defiled by the unexpected death of someone in his presence. He is to shave his head on the 7th day, the normal day of purification after being defiled. On the 8th day he is to bring two turtledoves or young pigeons to the priest at the door of the tabernacle. The priest will offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement for the one who had sinned accidentally through his connection to the dead body. To "hallow his head that same day" means that his vow starts anew on that day. He is also to bring a lamb of the first year to offer as a trespass offering. Emphasis is made again that the days of consecration vowed before the LORD were to begin anew and continue through the originally determined timeframe.

Numbers 6:13 And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Numbers 6:14 And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings,

Numbers 6:15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings.

Numbers 6:16 And the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD, and shall

offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering:

Numbers 6:17 And he shall offer the ram *for* a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering.

Once a person had fulfilled his Nazarite vow, he is to bring one unblemished male lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, one unblemished ewe lamb for a sin offering, and one unblemished ram for a peace offering. He is also to bring a basket containing unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, meat offerings and drink offerings. The priest would then bring all these offerings before the LORD and offer them accordingly.

Numbers 6:18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

Numbers 6:19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put *them* upon the hands of the Nazarite, after *the hair* of his separation is shaven:

Numbers 6:20 And the priest shall wave *them for* a wave offering before the LORD: *this is* holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

Numbers 6:21 *This is* the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and of* his offering unto the LORD for his separation, beside *that* that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

The Nazarite was to shave his head at the door of the tabernacle and put the hair in the fire under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. After this, the priest would then take the sodden shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake, one unleavened wafer and put them on the hands of the Nazarite. The priest would wave these offerings before the LORD, and the Nazarite would then be free to drink wine.

This completes the instructions regarding a Nazarite vow.

As I thought about this process, it stood out to me that the person making the Nazarite vow purposed to set himself apart before the world as dedicated to God. Isn't that how we as Christians should seek to present ourselves before the world? The unsaved should be able to look at our lives and notice a huge difference in how we live, the things we enjoy doing, the entertainment we embrace, how we dress, how we treat others, etc. When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are consecrating our lives to him—or should be. Paul worded it this way in his letter to the Roman.

Romans 12:1–2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Numbers 6:22 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Numbers 6:23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

Numbers 6:24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

Numbers 6:25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Numbers 6:26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Numbers 6:27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

The chapter closes with the well-known Aaronic or priestly blessing. The LORD instructed Aaron and his sons through Moses to bless the people using specific words. It stands out to me that God's desire is to bless His people. I also believe that this is true of all His people—not just the Jewish people. Yes, there are many promises in scripture directed specifically to the people of Israel; but many promises—such as this one—I believe are for all of His people of all times based on the unchanging character of God.

For the LORD to bless and keep you is a reference to His abundant provision and his protection. For His face to shine on you and be gracious to you speaks of His desire to be kind and merciful to you. To experience the LORD's countenance upon you and grant you peace is to be healthy and prosperous without fear—to experience the best this life has to offer. To be identified with the LORD's name implies blessing with accountability.

I liked this comment in the NIV Commentary: "While these words are directed to the entire community, the pronouns are singular. The Lord blesses the whole by blessing individuals; he blesses individuals by blessing the whole."

I also liked the following observation by Guzik:

- God the Father blesses and keeps His children.
- God the Son makes God's face to shine on us and brings us grace.
- God the Holy Spirit communicates God's attention to us, and gives us peace.