

## Preparing the Individual to Serve God The Nazirite Vow (6:1-21)

There were certain offerings that the LORD required the Israelites to bring before Him, but there were others that were voluntary. One such voluntary "offering" was the Nazirite Vow. Nazirites were people who dedicated themselves to the LORD in a special way. By various outward regulations that they chose to follow, they could demonstrate that their hearts were wholly committed to God. It is important to keep in mind that the Nazirites did what they did *voluntarily*. Their commitment did not make them holier in the sight of God than those who chose not to make it. It simply gave them an opportunity to express their faith and trust in God.

### The Nazirite Requirements

The vow could be taken by a man or a woman

The Nazirite must not drink wine or any fermented drink (including vinegar)

Not allowed to eat anything from the grapevine

The hair must not be cut

No allowance for going near dead bodies (even if a close relative died)

If someone died accidentally in his presence and made him unclean, it was necessary to shave the head on the seventh day. Then on the eighth day, the priest offered a sin offering and a burnt offering for him. A year-old male lamb was also brought as a guilt offering.

The Nazirite Vow did not necessarily last until death. The vow could be taken for a period of time— days, months, or years. Verses 13-21 discuss what was expected once the vow was over.

### Conclusion of the Vow

Once the period of separation was over, the following would happen: 1) The one who made the vow was brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 2) He presents his offerings to the LORD; a year-old male lamb (burnt), a year-old ewe lamb (sin), a ram (fellowship), grain and drink offerings. 3) The priest brings the offerings to God. 4) The Nazirite shaves off his dedicated hair and puts it in the fire under the fellowship offering. 5) The vow concluded with the fellowship offering.

- ! How do you think the Nazirites might have been similar to the monks of the middle ages? How were they different? More importantly, *why* were they different?
- ! The Nazirite vow included abstaining from fermented beverages. Do you think God might have more in mind than just keeping them from abusing drink?
- ! According to v7, why didn't God want a Nazirite's hair to be cut?
- ! Discuss how being "dedicated to the LORD" is really a matter of the heart.

## **God Serves the Individual God's Blessing (6:22-27)**

These verses contain some of the most well-known words in the Old Testament. We take note here of God's great love for the people. Although they would grumble and complain against Him in the near future, He wanted them to know that He had *put His name on them*. They were His people. His creation. His children. He had made them. He would save them. He would be with them.

Although all three persons of the Trinity are active together at the same time, this "Aaronic" blessing reflects the special work of each individual person of the Trinity— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **The Lord Bless you and keep you**

The special work of God the Father is that of creation. He formed Adam from the dust of the ground and it is by His power that we all "live, and move, and have our being." We could not breathe without the Father's Almighty power! But God does not just create and then leave His creation. He protects and preserves it— He *keeps* it.

### **The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you**

How is it that God can look on us favorably? We are wretched sinners who turn away from Him time and time again! It is only by His grace— by His grace in *Christ Jesus*. On the phrase "make his face shine" picture how your face "lights up" when you recognize someone you love. That's how it is with God. He looks down on us and His face light up because He sees sinners who have been forgiven through the life and death of Jesus. He is gracious to us because of our Savior.

### **The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace**

Before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples that after He was gone He would send the "Comforter" to them, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would fill the disciples in a special way, giving them boldness and confidence. The Spirit also gives *peace*. He gives peace to each and every one of us, opening our hearts to Jesus through the word and causing us to understand the wonderful blessings that are ours through the forgiveness of sins. We have peace in the world because we have peace with God (Hebrew word for peace *shalom*).