

## **Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**

### **Bible Study Notes**

**9-8-21**

### **Numbers 6**

#### **The Purpose For The Vow Of A Nazirite - Verses 1-2**

**6** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the LORD as a Nazirite,

**6:1-2** In Moses' day, a personal vow was as binding as a written contract. It was one thing to say you would do something, but it was considered much more serious when you made a solemn vow to do it. God instituted the Nazirite vow for people who wanted to devote some time exclusively to serving him. This vow could be taken for as little as 30 days or as long as a lifetime. It was voluntary, with one exception—parents could take the vow for their young children, making them Nazirites for life. The vow included three distinct restrictions: (1) He must abstain from wine and fermented drink; (2) his hair could not be cut, and his beard could not be shaved; (3) touching a dead body was prohibited. The purpose of the Nazirite vow was to raise up a group of leaders devoted completely to God. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were probably Nazirites for life.

#### **Requirements For Fulfilling The Vow Of A Nazirite - Verses 3-8**

<sup>3</sup> they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. <sup>4</sup> As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. <sup>5</sup> "During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the LORD is over; they must let their hair grow long. <sup>6</sup> "Throughout the period of their dedication to the LORD, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body. <sup>7</sup> Even if their own father or mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of their dedication to God is on their head. <sup>8</sup> Throughout the period of their dedication, they are consecrated to the LORD.

**6:3** He shall separate himself from wine and similar drink: The Nazirite was forbidden to eat or drink anything from the grape vine; this was a form of self-denial connected with the idea of a special consecration to God. Generally speaking, wine and grape products were thought to be a blessing (Proverbs 3:10), something to be gratefully received from God (Psalms 104:15).

**6:5** No razor shall come upon his head: The hair was to be allowed to grow all during the period of the vow, and then cut at the conclusion of the vow. This was a way of outwardly demonstrating to the world that this man or woman was under a special vow.

In the case of Samson, his strength came from his Nazirite's vow of consecration and separation to God - so when Delilah cut his hair (the most public, visible example of the vow), his strength was lost. Samson had broken the vow before - both at drinking parties (Judges 14:10), and at touching a dead carcass (Judges 14:8-9). But not in the most obviously public way of allowing his hair to be cut. There is a sense in which public sins do matter more, because they bring more reproach to the name of God.

**6:6** He shall not go near a dead body: Dead bodies - even those of a close relative - were not to be approached during the vow of a Nazirite. Separation from death - the effect of sin - was essential during the period of the vow.

### **Consequences Of Breaking The Vow - Verses 9-12**

<sup>9</sup> **"If someone dies suddenly in the Nazirite's presence, thus defiling the hair that symbolizes their dedication, they must shave their head on the seventh day—the day of their cleansing. <sup>10</sup> Then on the eighth day they must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>11</sup> The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement for the Nazirite because they sinned by being in the presence of the dead body. That same day they are to consecrate their head again. <sup>12</sup> They must rededicate themselves to the LORD for the same period of dedication and must bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. The previous days do not count, because they became defiled during their period of dedication.**

**6:9** If anyone dies very suddenly beside him: If one's vow was broken - perhaps by someone dropping dead next to the Nazirite! Then the Nazirite's hair was to be shaved off, sacrifice made, and the vow would begin all over again.

### **Items Needed For Sacrifice - Verses 13-15**

<sup>13</sup> **"Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the period of their dedication is over. They are to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>14</sup> There they are to present their offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, <sup>15</sup> together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made with the finest flour and without yeast—thick loaves with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves brushed with olive oil.**

**6:13** He shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting: The vow of a Nazirite ended with a public ceremony, with extensive sacrifice: One male lamb ... one ewe lamb ... one ram ... a basket of unleavened bread ... drink offerings.

**6:14-15** He shall present his offering to the LORD: No wonder when Paul visited Jerusalem, he was invited to pay the expenses of some Christians who had taken a Nazirite vow and were ready to conclude it with this sacrifice (Acts 21:23-24). The Nazirite vow was not something that could be entered into lightly.

## The Sacrifice Offered - Verses 16-21

<sup>16</sup> "The priest is to present all these before the LORD and make the sin offering and the burnt offering. <sup>17</sup> He is to present the basket of unleavened bread and is to sacrifice the ram as a fellowship offering to the LORD, together with its grain offering and drink offering. <sup>18</sup> "Then at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that symbolizes their dedication. They are to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering. <sup>19</sup> "After the Nazirite has shaved off the hair that symbolizes their dedication, the priest is to place in their hands a boiled shoulder of the ram, and one thick loaf and one thin loaf from the basket, both made without yeast. <sup>20</sup> The priest shall then wave these before the LORD as a wave offering; they are holy and belong to the priest, together with the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. After that, the Nazirite may drink wine. <sup>21</sup> "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows offerings to the LORD in accordance with their dedication, in addition to whatever else they can afford. They must fulfill the vows they have made, according to the law of the Nazirite."

**6:16-21** Then the priest shall bring them before the LORD: The priest and the Nazirite would sacrifice each item, and at the conclusion of the sacrifice, the vow would be completed.

## The Priestly Blessing To The People - Verses 22-23

<sup>22</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>23</sup> "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

**6:22-23** This is the way you shall bless: Moses, Aaron, and their spiritual descendants were commanded to bless the people, and they were to do it according to the formula detailed in the following verses. "The priests were always there pronouncing this blessing at the close of the daily morning service in the temple and later in the synagogues."

## The Aaronic Blessing - Verses 24-27

<sup>24</sup> "The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." <sup>27</sup> "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

**6:24-27** A blessing was one way of asking for God's divine favor to rest upon others. The ancient blessing in these verses helps us understand what a blessing was supposed to do. Its five parts conveyed hope that God would (1) "bless" and "keep" (favor and protect) his people; (2) make his face shine on them (be pleased with them); (3) be gracious (merciful and compassionate) to them; (4) turn his face toward them (give them his approval); and (5) give them peace. When you ask God to bless others or yourself, you are asking him to do these five things. The blessing you offer will not only help the one receiving it, it will also demonstrate love, encourage others, and provide a model of caring to others.