

NUMBERS: MOVING FORWARD AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Part II: God's Sanctifying His People, Numbers 5:1-10:10

B. Personal Consecration To God

(Numbers 6:1-21)

I. Introduction

- A. "The principal lesson of Numbers is that God's people must walk by faith, trusting His promises, if they are to move forward" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Numbers: Theme," p. 206), so avoiding spiritual stagnation and moving forward makes Numbers a timeless book for all God's people!
- B. We thus view Numbers 6:1-21 on personal consecration to God for God's people to move forward:

II. Personal Consecration To God, Numbers 6:1-21.

- A. "The counterpart to cleansing (chap. 5) is consecration (chap. 6)" (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 222). Where God required every individual to be cleansed and separate from sin in Numbers 5:1-31, He made provision for *any man or woman* who was *not even a Levite or a priest* to decide to be committed to God for any special purpose. This provision was made possible by one's taking a Nazarite vow as clarified in Numbers 6:1-21.
- B. The word "Nazirite" came from the Hebrew verb *nazar*, meaning "to dedicate," and it referred to one who was dedicated unto God for some reason (Op. cit., B. K. C., O. T.). A Nazirite was to abstain from all products of the grape vine (Num. 6:3-4), he could not shave his head (Num. 6:5) or come in contact with a dead body (Num. 6:6-8). Were he inadvertently to violate any such requirement, he was to face a complex rituals of cleansing, shaving his head and offering sacrifices, Num. 6:9-12a. Though he could then resume his time of consecration to God, the days of his defilement would be lost due to that past defilement, Numbers 6:12b!
- C. In cases where a Nazirite had not vowed to be a life-long Nazirite, but he had consecrated himself for a period of time in his lifetime to God, when his "temporary vow terminated, the Nazirite had to offer peace, grain, drink, sin, and burnt offerings and shave his head and burn the hair," Op. cit., Ryrie, fn. to Num. 6:13-21.
- D. Significant cases in Scripture where people were under the Nazirite vow are listed as follows:
 - 1. Samson was a lifelong Nazirite from the tribe of Dan, Judges 13:1-5, 24:
 - a. God directed that Samson be a Nazirite from his mother's womb so that he could be used of God as a "one-man army" to begin to deliver Israel's people from Philistine domination (Judges 13:1-5).
 - b. Remarkably, Samson soon violated the Nazirite rules against contacting a dead body (Judges 14:5-9) and participating in the wedding feast likely with his ingestion of wine (Judges 14:10), but God graciously continued to empower him to destroy Philistines because his hair had not been cut (Judges 15:1-20).
 - c. When he finally allowed his hair to be cut by a prostitute in the final violation of his Nazirite vow, God withdrew His power from Samson, and the Philistines tortured, abused and mocked him (Judges 16:21).
 - d. In imprisonment, Samson's hair began to grow, and he asked God to empower him to avenge himself of the loss of his eyes by Philistine torture, so God enabled him to kill many Philistines (Jud. 16:22-30). This last deed by Samson cost him his life, but he slew more Philistines in his death than in his life (Jud. 16:30).
 - 2. Samuel was a life-long Nazirite from the tribe of Levi, 1 Samuel 1:1 with 1 Chronicles 6:33-34:
 - a. When his barren mother Hannah who was married to a Levite who lived in Ephraim had prayed to the Lord to ask for a son, she promised that such a son would become a lifelong Nazirite (1 Samuel 1:9-11).
 - b. Though a Levite, Samuel served God much as a priest of Aaron's line, wearing a linen ephod (1 Sam. 2:18; 1 Chron. 6:33-34; Op. cit., B. K. C., O. T., p. 433). The Levites helped the priests when there were too many sacrifices for them to perform at Hezekiah's revival (2 Chr. 29:34), so God in the apostate era of the Judges (Jud. 21:25) may have mercifully used Samuel to perform needed godly priestly acts for Israel.
 - c. God used Samuel to lead Israel through Saul's bad reign until David arrived (1 Sam. 1:9-11; 16:1, 13).
 - 3. John the Baptist was a lifelong Nazirite of the priestly line of Aaron, and he functioned as Messiah Jesus Christ's Forerunner in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 4:5-6 (cf. Luke 1:5-17 with 3:15-22).
 - 4. The Apostle Paul was a temporary Nazirite of the tribe of Benjamin, and he wrote half of the New Testament and was Church History's greatest missionary (Acts 18:18; Op. cit., Ryrie, fn. to Num. 6:1-8).

Lesson: *Though God directed that Israel's individuals be separate from sin, He also made it possible for anyone in Israel regardless of gender or lineage to consecrate himself or herself as a Nazirite to God for any special purpose.*

Application: *If we desire to be used greatly of the Lord, regardless of our heritage, history, lineage or gender, may we consecrate ourselves to live separate from sin and dedicated to God for Him to use us for His glory.*