

200226-4 Nu 6, The Vow of the Nazarite & the Priestly Blessing—CThurman

In the previous chapters, immediately after the tabernacle was erected the LORD took an accounting of Israel, ordered the great camp, and assigned the camps of the Levites their work.

- 1. A census of Israel was taken (excluding the Levites), those that were 20 years of age and upward able for war were counted (ch.1);
- 2. A census of all of the Levites from a month old and upward was taken for these to stand in the place of Israel's firstborn to serve the LORD (ch.3.15);
- 3. A census of all of the firstborn of Israel that were from a month old and upward to be compared to the Levite's census. (3.40-43)

... where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Mt. 18.20

- 1. The LORD ordered the camp of Israel and posted them far off from the tabernacle on the four side of the Tabernacle (ch.2); &
- 2. The LORD ordered the camp of the Levites and posted them near to the tabernacle on its four sides. (3.17-38)(their government was ordered around Jesus Christ).

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear ... He.12.28

- The camps of the Levites are assigned their duties and the span of their service is established, being 30-50 years of age. (ch.4) And,
- The camp was purged of all those with leprosy, issues of the flesh, and that had become defiled by the dead. (5.1-4) Followed by the sacrifice for jealousy. (5.5-31)

But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. 1Co.5.13

It is easy to draw comparisons from some of these things and apply them to any church of the Lord Jesus Christ that has been organized according to the Biblical pattern. Before us now is the text concerning the vow of a Nazarite. This is the LORD's means for some in Israel which desired to specially consecrate themselves to the service of God.

Chapter 6

1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves (single themselves [himself] out)

shall separate, יִפְלֵא, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. 3psm. of פָּלֵא, pa-lah, tss. to be wonderful, marvelous, hard (as in difficult), wondrous, miraculous; Lev.27.2, which is the only other Hiphil fut., and it is tss. shall make a singular vow. So the idea is perhaps an exceptional vow among vows to be made.

to vow a vow of a Nazarite¹, to separate² themselves unto the LORD:

to vow, לְנֹדָר, lin-dor, pref. preposition לְ, to & indicating in this case an infin. verb, the root being, נֹדַר, which is always tss. to vow as is also tss. the noun נֹדָר; in this verse see to vow & to separate.

a vow, נֹדָר, ne-der, or נֹדֵר, ney-dehr masc. sing. noun, tss. a vow; see above.

a Nazarite, נָזִיר, na-zeer, masc. noun, found 15 times in the OT and tss. the separate, the Nazarite, and the undressed vine; another masc. noun; 6 times in Numbers ch.6 (2, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21).

to separate, לְהַזִּיר, infin. of נָזַר, na-zar, tss. to separate, consecrate.

נָזַר, ney-zer, another masc. noun, is found 24 times in the OT and tss. *the crown, separation, consecration, and hair*; **13 times in Numbers ch.6** (4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12 twice, 13, 18 twice, 19, 21 twice).

נָזַר, na-zar, a verb, is found 10 times in the OT and tss. *to separate, to consecrate*; **5 times in Numbers ch.6** (2, 3, 5, 6, 12).

These Hebrew nouns (נָזַר, na-zeer, *a Nazarite* & נָזַר, ney-zer, *separation, consecration*) and the verb (נָזַר, na-zar, *to separate, to consecrate*) are found in chapter 6 a total of 24 times. The #24 is the number for the priesthood. For easy reference I have underlined and added a super-scribed number to keep count.

A Nazarite is one who vows to consecrate himself wholly to the LORD for a certain period of time. The reason for this is not stated. It appears to be because one wants to be specially used of God. Whatever the reason it is interesting that the topic of the *issues of the flesh* were raised in the previous chapter. (Nu.5.1-4) Before anyone may separate himself to the LORD it is understood that there must be no *issue of the flesh*. All *issues of the flesh* must first be cleansed. There must be evidence that the *issue* has been stanchd; that the flow has truly been stayed. (Le.15.13) Until then he must remain outside of the camp. Certainly to come into the court in his uncleanness exposes him to the threat of death because he brought defilement to the LORD's tabernacle. (Le.15.31) However, if the issue has been stanchd for 7 days he may on the eighth day bring to the priest his sacrifices of two pigeons or doves to cover for the uncleanness that he once bore before the LORD. In this the LORD puts away the *history* of his defilement and makes restoration of this one to a state of holiness where he may abide in the camp. It is understood that only those who are cleansed from the defilements of the flesh may specially devote themselves to the LORD with the vow of a Nazarite.

3 He shall separate³ 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.

wine, vinegar of wine, & liquor of grapes. Wine is the fermented drink of the grape. Vinegar of wine is the soured wine of the grape. *Liquor* is archaic for liquid, and means *juice*. For all that will receive the truth of the Scriptures, this defines for us what the phrase *fruit of vine* means with reference to the Lord's Supper ordinance. (cf. Mt.26.29; Mk.14.25; Lk.22.18)

strong drink probably refers to any other fermented drink that could have been made of fruits besides the grape, and honey. Distilled liquor, as we know of them, very likely came later in the history of man. (reference Albert Barnes @ Lk.1.15)

Abstaining from these things might in a type have application to keeping the senses quick to right judgments; not being turned away from right judgments through *natural sweetness* or by coming under the influences of the various fermented drinks.

4 All the days of his separation⁴ shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

from the kernels, מִסְרָצִיִּים, prefixed ׀ָ, *from*, a pl. noun, סְרָצִיִּים, only this once.

husk, אֵלָה, only this once.

The term *from the kernel even to the husk* Gill says refers to everything from the outermost to the innermost parts of the grape. So this vow bans consumption of everything that could be derived from the grape vine as well as any other fermented or soured drinks made of other fruits. As far as drinking, he may drink water or fresh juices derived from other than the grape vine.

5 All the days of the vow of his separation⁵ there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth⁶ himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

razor, תַּעַר, ta-[g]ar, a masc. sing. noun, תִּגַּר, tss. a razor, to shave (lit. to cause a razor to), a sheath, [pen]knife, a scabbard.

To be *holy* is to be separated to the Lord. (cf. v.8)

קָדוֹשׁ, qa-dosh, an adjective tss. *holy* in vss. 5, 8; קָדַשׁ, qa-dash, a verb tss. *hallow* in v.11; קִדְשׁ, qo-desh, a masc. noun also tss. as an adjective *holy* in v.20.

Normally, *It is a shame for a man to have long hair* (1Co.11.14), and it may also be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven. (1Co.11.5, 6) In this instance both the man and woman allow the locks of hair to grow freely because the LORD has consecrated the head of the person making the vow. (v.9)

6 All the days that he separateth⁷ himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body.

This is explained in the next verse.

7 He shall not make himself unclean (יִטְמָא, Hebrew Hithpael, reflexive) for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration⁸ of his God is upon his head.

8 All the days of his separation⁹ he is holy unto the LORD.

Commitments always involve something difficult. If that isn't so I'm not sure that I understand what a commitment is? I think most of us make commitments because we perceive a weakness or vulnerability. I might have let some things go so far that if I don't do something now there is going to be a great price to pay later or I perceive that there will result some great loss. It might be related to how I'm living; or, something that affects my friends or family; or, something that involves where I work; or

my marriage, or my church. More often than not I think the Lord brings His people into times when they must take a hard look at what the scheme of things so that we have rearrange our lives and recommit ourselves as His servants.

9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration¹⁰; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

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

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.

12 And he shall consecrate¹¹ unto the LORD the days of his separation¹², and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation¹³ was defiled.

How suddenly and unexpectedly the man or woman that had taken this vow could become unclean. So it is for all that will commit themselves to Christ's service. In an unguarded moment, a poor judgment instantly we become defiled from our resolve to serve the LORD. There are things about us that if we aren't diligent to be watchful against we can be suddenly defiled from our commitment to Christ. What was this person that had this vow upon him to do? What was his option? Quit. No. He starts over. Sometimes we need to start over. Go back to where we might have gotten away from our commitment to Christ and get back on track. I think the life of the Christian is filled with *new beginnings*.

The result of the sacrifices of the two birds, one for sin and the other for a burnt offering: *Lev.5.10 ... and it shall be forgiven him.*

The person in this instance started over. Sometimes that is a hard to do, but sometimes it is all that we can do. Sometimes it is the best things we can do.

13 And this is the law of the Nazarite¹⁴, when the days of his separation¹⁵ are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

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,

his burnt offering, The lamb represents the most precious sacrifice. (The bull, the most costly, the fowls, the least esteemed) The burnt offering is a sacrifice totally consumed by fire before the LORD. Christ gave of Himself for our sins. (Gal.1.4; 2.20; Eph.5.25; 1Ti.2.6; Tit.2.14) It is a sweet savor unto the Lord, or in other words His sacrifice for us was accepted with God.

his sin offering, In this offering there is the putting of the blood upon the horns of the brazen altar, which speaks of the *power* of the blood of Jesus Christ by which God forgives our sins. The remainder is poured out at the bottom of the altar, meaning that the *ground* of our acceptance with God is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (cf. Lev.4.34) by this the priest ... *shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.*)

the peace offering, With both the burnt offering and the peace offering the blood of the beast was sprinkled round about upon the top of the brazen altar. Christ is that brazen altar. Our sins were purged by His shed blood. (Le.1.5; 3.2)

He.9.21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

In the peace offering (Le.7.16) there is such peace that all parties come together and feast with the LORD. So, in a type God we are reconciled so perfectly that there is a feast in which He, Christ, and we may eat together.

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 (meal) offering, and their drink offerings.

16 And the priest shall bring them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering:

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.

18 And the Nazarite¹⁶ shall shave the head of his separation¹⁷ at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

shall shave, חָלַךְ, the prefixed conjunction , and; חָלַךְ, gil-lach, Piel (intensive active) pret. 3psm. of חָלַךְ, tss. to shave or to poll; v.9, twice, v.18, 19.

and shall take the hair of the head of his separation¹⁸, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

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 Nazarite¹⁹, after the hair of his separation²⁰ is shaven:

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 Nazarite²¹ may drink wine.

21 This is the law of the Nazarite²² who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the LORD for his separation²³, beside that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation²⁴.

Scriptures reveal that John the Baptist had been consecrated to the LORD from his mother's womb but whether he had the vow of a Nazarite upon him I cannot say.

Lk.1.13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

The Lord Jesus was not under the vow of a Nazarite. He was called a Nazarene because for a time He lived in a city named Nazareth.

Mt 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus drank of that which was the produce of the vine. That contradicts the terms of the vow of a *Nazarite*.

Lu 7:34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

As we read, a man or woman taking the vow of a Nazarite specially separated himself to the LORD.

That I know of in the Scriptures there were only two men that were under this Nazarite vow and they were both dedicated for life to that vow. They are Samson (Jud.13.5, 7), & Samuel (1Sa.1.11). Both of these great men, in a sense, owed a great debt to their mothers. First the LORD had these mothers to commit themselves to the LORD, and then in turn they committed their sons.

Christian mothers might underestimate the role they play in the lives of their children, but God has revealed his will for mothers. His will for them is the home. Any mother whose priority is not her home has erred.

Tit.2.3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

I think I understand better the issue of teaching these women to *love their husbands* and to *love their children*. Marriages then were many time arranged. It wasn't as we think of it today. Marriage wasn't necessarily for love. Love in many instances was *learned*.

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home (οἰκουργος, οἶκός + ἔργον, lit. a home worker), good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The world has another philosophy concerning mothers which quite contradicts the doctrine of God. The world says, daughters, women, wives, and mothers must have a career that is outside of the home. What have we seen but the philosophy which says to the woman, 'leave the home and make a name for yourself.' Children are viewed as a burden, a set-back. So many mothers follow after the world and put their little babies into the care of others for the greater part of their lives. But it is the mother that is best suited to care for her children. The vow of the Nazarite brings to the forefront the powerful influence that a mother's commitment to Christ can have on her children. Mothers should consecrate their efforts to raising their children unto the Lord. Children are a grant from the LORD to be lent back to Him through a mother's dedication.

The mother of Samson was first consecrated, then her son:
Jud.13.3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman (wife of Zorah, of Dan), and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 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.

...

16:17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God

from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

Samuel's mother separated herself to the LORD with a vow to commit her son to the LORD:

1Sa.1.10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

...

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

...

2:20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

Now, according to the word of God the father must consent to the mother's commitment. (Nu. ch.30) So in effect, both parents are involved in the work of dedicating their children to the LORD. Clearly it would always be best if the father and mother were agreed with God and one another about the issue of raising children God's way. How difficult it is when either one breaks the divine order for the family. But we see broken homes everywhere around us. And I mean no slight to anyone who might ever have to manage a home alone. We simply acknowledge that this is certainly the best arrangement for a home.

The father of Samson gave assent to have his wife so dedicated to the LORD:

Jud.13.8 ¶ Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

The father of Samuel consented to Hannah's oath to give Samuel up to the service of the LORD in the priesthood.:

1Sa.1.23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

Fathers and mothers in this congregation, be dedicated to Christ and dedicate your children too. Husbands and wives agree together to keep your home ordered according to the word of God.

'Nazareth means separated or sanctified. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Is there any profit in *consecrating* one's life to the service of the Lord? There are still many sceptics, even among the Lord's people, as to any good thing coming out of the Nazareth of a *separated* life.' *Handfuls of Purpose*, James Smith, vol.1, Series 3, p.63, 64

Whatever we might think of these two men, Samson and Samuel, they were men that the LORD used in a powerful way. And it began with commitments of mothers even before their babies were born.

22 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

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

24 *The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:*

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

26 *The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

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

There's never been a nation like the nation of Israel. God has never spoken to any other nation like this nation. Considering everything they've suffered through the history of mankind, in the end they shall be the greatest nation the world has ever known because God's blessing is upon them. That blessing comes to them through the Messiah of God. And one day they shall know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.