

Numbers 6 - Thursday, June 3rd, 2010

- I've been looking forward to this chapter since we started in the book of Numbers because of the encouragement that we can find in it.

- As one commentator said; "Whereas chapter 5 dealt with suspicion and conviction, chapter 6 deals with consecration and purification. And that's the way it always is, for there must be a dealing with the issue of moral purity before there can be the possibility of ministry."

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,

- The Lord now speaks concerning the vow of a Nazirite, which was for the purpose of separation and dedication for and to the Lord.
- We do have accounts of those taking the vow of the Nazirite in the scriptures; among them are Samson, John the Baptist, and Paul.

3 he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

- Now we get into the specific requirements for those taking the Nazirite vow, and as you can see it's really quite involved.
- First, wine and anything that is similar is explicitly forbidden, as it would be a source of intoxication for the one taking this vow.
- Second, grape juice, fresh grapes or raisins were forbidden as well. One thought is that this speaks symbolically to denying of self.
- Third, even the eating of anything produced by the grapevine or from the seed to the skin was forbidden. Again, this is a denying of self.

5' All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

- We now go from the inward, with the drinking of wine, to the outward, with the growing of the hair.
- Those taking the Nazirite vow were not to shave or even cut their hair, rather, they were to allow it to grow long.
- The thought is that this would be an outward demonstration of the inward consecration so the others would know they've taken the vow.
- This is interesting because it would have a built-in accountability of sorts because everyone would be watching you and what you did.

6 All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. 8 All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

- In addition to not drinking wine or cutting their hair, those taking this vow were not to go near a dead body lest they become unclean.
- This carries the idea of not coming into contact with anything that would represent the curse of sin which was evidenced by death.
- It's interesting to note that, as it relates to Samson, he had broken the vow by drinking, touching a dead carcass, and having his haircut.
- It was only because of his final act of breaking the Nazirite vow when Delilah cut his hair that he had ultimately lost his strength.
- It's believed that this was because the growing of the hair was the most public and thus would bring more reproach to the Lord.

9' And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. 10 Then on the Eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; 11 and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. 12 He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

- God is providing for one who takes the vow, and through no fault of their own, has someone next to them suddenly die and touch them.
- In the event this unfortunate event were to happen, they would need to shave, bring an offering, and start their vow over from day one.
- Now, at first glance, this seems a little strange at best, but upon further examination, it's really God giving them a second chance.
- By way of personal application, this speaks to the nature of God in that He's the God of second chances, and new beginnings.

13' Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 14 And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, 15 a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings.

- This is interesting because it details specific instructions for the fulfilling of the vow by having a public ceremony at the Tabernacle door.
- Notice that it was quite involved in that they had to bring a number of sacrifices and drink offerings, and it was to be a public event.
- This would explain why the Apostle Paul, in Acts 21:23-24, was asked to pay the expenses of those who had fulfilled this Nazirite vow.

16'Then the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering;17 and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering.18 Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. 19'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair,20 and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.' 21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

- Now we have the instructions for the priest related to his role in the completion of the Nazirite vow there in the Tabernacle entrance.
- It's important to understand that the vow was not officially completed until all the sacrifices and offerings had been made.
- Be that as it may, we now complete the chapter with the Aaronic blessing the Lord wanted to be pronounced upon the Israelites.

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.'"

- Aaron is to pronounce this blessing on the Israelites whenever they would meet at the Tabernacle sometimes it was many times a day.

"The Lord has blessed his people, and he would have them know it. He has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and it is his wish that they should experience the fullness of this blessedness. Are any of the Lord's people without a sense of this blessing? It is not the will of God that you should continue in this low condition."

Charles Spurgeon

- There are six parts to this blessing; bless, keep, smile, gracious, attentive, and peace, which is interesting as six is man's number.
- Also, this blessing is triune in nature and triune in picture, in that it beautifully illustrates our Triune God creating us in His Triune image:

God the Father	Blesses Me and Keeps Me	Body	Giving
God the Son	Shines His Light of Salvation by Grace for Me	Soul	Revealing
God the Holy Spirit	Brings Joy and Peace to Me	Spirit	Comforting

27 "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

- There's something in this last verse that is easily missed at first read. Notice God says He will put His name on the children of Israel.
- In the Middle-Eastern culture, God's name was considered the highest blessing that you could possibly pronounce upon someone.
- Not only has God put His name on the children of Israel, He has also chosen to put His name on Jerusalem forever, perhaps literally.

- **2 Chronicles 6:6a** But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there;
- **2 Chronicles 12:13b** ...he (Rehoboam) reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there.
- **2 Chronicles 33:7b** ... in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:
- **2 Kings 21:4b** ... In Jerusalem will I put my name.

One commentator wrote; "It is generally accepted that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. It is commonly accepted that Job lived during the patriarchal age, and possibly even predated Abraham. For Job a common title for God was 'El Shaddai.'"

Adam Clarke in his commentary wrote: "El Shaddai, I am God all-sufficient; from shadah, to shed, to pour out. I am that God who pours out blessings, who gives them richly, abundantly, continually."

Pastor J. Mark Martin of a Calvary Chapel in Phoenix Arizona had this to say; "The Hebrew letter "Shin" is used by the Jews as the abbreviation for the name "El Shaddai". The "Old City of Jerusalem" resembles the shape of the "Shin" making it possible that God Almighty literally put His name in Jerusalem.

