

## Numbers 6 - 8

### I. This chapter could be divided as follows

6:1-8 – The Prohibitions; what the Nazirite was forbidden to do

6:9-12 – The Violation; how the vow could be broken

6:13-21 – The Completion; what the Nazirite was to do when the time of his vow came to an end

6:22-27 – The Priestly blessing for the nation

### The Nazirite Vow

The term Nazirite is from a root word that means, “*to separate.*”

God is instructing Israel concerning someone who desires to separate himself unto the LORD, or to give himself wholly to the LORD.

The principle behind the vow is simple; God is calling the people to a deeper level of commitment to Himself.

#### A. 6:1-8 – The Prohibitions; what the Nazirite was forbidden to do

##### **Numbers 6:2**

*“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,*

*When a man or woman consecrates himself or herself to the Lord*

The purpose of the vow was for a person to devote themselves more fully to the Lord; to His ways and His services

Key phrase - "he shall separate himself..." 6:3)

**Separate** - Heb. nāzi'r, from nāzar, 'to separate, consecrate, abstain'; cf. nēzer, 'a diadem', the 'crown of God',

The word denotes generally one who is separated from others and consecrated to God.

Vineyards that were not pruned in sabbatical or jubilee years were said to be nazir.

### They were separated from 3 things

- First from **wine** or similar drink. Anything fermented that could cause drunkenness nor anything from the vine
- Second from **the razor**. No shaving of the head could take place during the vow. This was the outward sign of the separation that others could see. It is important to notice that the vow ended with the cutting of the hair. That is explained in detail at the end of the chapter.
- Third, they must keep themselves from **dead bodies**. It is not as though bodies were lying around Israel but this would mean he could not attend funerals or be part of any preparation process for a loved one

(It is worth noting that the terms of the Nazirite vow did not preclude the carrying out of other domestic and social duties)

When we commit ourselves to the Lord it should not keep us from being a part of daily living. We still need to help around the house, with the kids or be relatable to those who do not know Christ.

The idea that to be spiritual a person must live in seclusion from the world is not a biblical doctrine.

Times of seclusion are necessary for growth;

- Jesus retreated to the hilltop
- Paul spent time in Arabia
- Joshua dwelt in the Tabernacle of meeting

**But those times are temporary and are designed to make us more effective in everyday life**

We are not given specific reason why these three things were restricted but we can make certain applications by comparing this with other Biblical texts.

Wine:

#### **Numbers 6:3**

*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.*

Drunkenness is clearly forbidden for all believers

Ephesians 5:18

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

The reasons are numerous but include the fact that alcohol leads to folly.

Proverbs 20:1

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

But the Nazirite was forbidden from **all** alcohol not just the abuse of it.

Two possible reasons

- May be because of what wine symbolizes.

Wine is a picture of joy.

It is possible that the restrictions upon the Nazirite would illustrate the fact that those devoted to the Lord receive joy, peace and comfort from the Lord not from a bottle

Today it is common for people to drink socially for a number of reasons. For some it is a way to fit in, for others it is a way to take the edge off while for others it is a way to give them that extra little edge in communicating with others. For the believer these are not good motives for drinking. First, we are not supposed to try to fit into the world but to influence the world to turn to Christ. Second, the Holy Spirit is the one who desires to give us boldness, comfort and peace.

- May be a precursor to the requirement placed upon elders who were forbidden to drink alcohol.

1Tim 3:1-3

*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; **3** not given to wine*

- This was also a requirement placed on the priests who served at the Temple

Leviticus 10:9-11

*“Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.”*

No haircuts:

**Numbers 6:5**

*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*

A possible reason for refraining from haircuts may be:

- Long hair would give a visible sign to the whole community that a person had devoted himself fully to the Lord.

1Corinthians 11:14

*Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?*

Hollywood Samson has long, blonde, feathered hair; he was cut, tan and looked more like a surfer out of the 70's than a Jewish man.

In reality his hair would have been a dishonor. When people saw Samson they would recognize him to be one of those fanatics that were “over-committed to the LORD.” His commitment to the LORD would result in humility and his humility would result in a greater commitment to the LORD.

In verse 7 the word for consecrate is the Hebrew word “nezer” which is used of a diadem or a crown. In other words the crown on the head of the Nazirite was his hair or rather his humility. ***The same long hair that was a shame to the world was considered a crown by the Lord.***

No contact with dead bodies:

**Numbers 6:6-7**

*All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body. 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*

I think there's an interesting New Testament parallel to this. Remember when Jesus said:

Luke 14:26-27

*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

Jesus is not teaching us to hate one another. Instead He expects our love for Him and our commitment to Him to be superior to our love for anyone or anything else.

The High Priest was also forbidden to touch the dead even in the case of the close relative. They had to understand that although he had a duty to his family he had a higher, stronger duty to God. The best way for him to minister to his family and to the whole of Israel was to remain pure and holy in his commitment to the LORD.

The best way to show love to those that we love is to be fully devoted to the Lord. The greatest way that I can show my wife that I love her is by my commitment to the LORD. The greatest way that I can show my children that I love them is by my commitment to the LORD. The

greater my commitment to the LORD, the greater the love I'm expressing to my spouse and to my children.

2 John 1:6

*This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.*

It wasn't an unloving thing to be removed from the funeral and to have to watch from a distance. Instead, it was an expression of love that was higher. After all it was their commitment to the LORD that would make the nation powerful and give them the ability to have victory over their enemies.

#### B. 6:9-12 – The Violation; how the vow could be broken

If any of these requirements were broken, the vow ended and an offering was made

**Numbers 6:10**

*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;*

The days prior to his defilement were lost and the vow started over

**Numbers 6:12**

*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.*

#### C. 6:13-21 – The Completion; what the Nazirite was to do when the time of his vow came to an end

In most cases the Nazirite vow was temporary. They would dedicate a season of life specifically to the Lord.

When that season came to an end they would present themselves to the priests along with offerings.

(The Mishna and Talmud put a limit of at least 30 days on a person taking the

Nazirite vow, but the Scriptures put no time limit)

**Numbers 6:16-17**

*“Then the priest shall bring them before the Lord and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; 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.*

The act that brought the vow to an end was a hair cut. This hair became an offering to the Lord symbolizing the time dedicated to God.

**Numbers 6:18**

*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.*

Understanding this will help us to understand the story of Samson. His strength was not in the length of his hair but in his commitment to the Lord. He constantly compromised that commitment but it was the cutting of his hair that symbolized that his vow was over. In essence he was saying that he was no longer devoted to the Lord. His hair was cut, his vow broken and his strength gone.

**Offerings**

They are told to bring 5 different offerings and verse 16 tells us the order:

Numbers 6:16-17

*Then the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his **sin** offering and his **burnt** offering; .... then his **peace** offering, then his **grain** offering, and then his **drink** offering.*

After completing the Nazirite vow the worshipper was to bring a sin offering to the Lord. This particular offering was an admittance of the fact that we are sinners and cannot stand before God on our own merit. The same is true of us. If we choose today to surrender ourselves completely to the LORD we won't make it to the end of the day without sinning. Thankfully God has set a system in place where we are not held accountable for our sin any longer. All sin was paid for by the shed blood of the Son of God

The burnt offering represented total surrender to the Lord. When a Nazirite vow ended it did not mean their commitment to the Lord ended. It meant a season of life came to an end and a new season was beginning. This new season needed to be devoted to the Lord as well.

Then came the peace offering that represents enjoying fellowship with the Lord and His people. It was also called the fellowship offering because a portion was burned to the Lord, the priest and another eaten by the one offering ate another portion. Fellowship is sweeter the more we commit our ways to Christ

The grain offering would represent the service that will continue even when the Nazirite Vow ends. And finally the drink offering would represent a life poured out to the LORD. While in prison in Philippi Paul made reference to the drink offering. He said, "if I'm being poured out as a drink offering..." He viewed his whole life as an offering to the Lord to help others succeed in following Jesus

## II. The Bible is filled with examples of people who took the vow of the Nazirite

Two traditional forms of the Nazirite are found.

- One was for a specific period;
- The other was a lifelong devotion

In other words, some were Nazirites by devoting a period of time to the Lord much like a person who plans, prays and prepares for a short-term mission trip. This should not be the highlight of life but a part of your walk with God.

Others were Nazirites by calling. They would be like the person who



senses the call of God to full time ministry

Some better-known examples of Nazirites in Scripture include:

- John the Baptist

Luke 1:15

*For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.*

- Samuel

1 Samuel 1:11

*Then she made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."*

- Samson

Judges 13:4-5

*Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."*

Samson is an interesting case because, although he was dedicated to the Lord, he never lived up to that dedication. His life is more a picture of compromise than it is a picture of consecration. We learn more what not to do from Samson than what to do

- Joseph

Although never actually called a Nazirite, partly because he lived 400 years before the law was given, the word "Nazar" translated Nazirite is used of Joseph

Genesis 49:26

*...They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was **separate** from his brothers.*

This passage speaks of Joseph's strength and the secret of that

strength was his dedication to the Lord.

This dedication is seen in his behavior when tempted by Potiphar's wife as well as his treatment of his brothers when he had the chance to strike

- Rechebites

The Rechabites were a family of believers that lived during the time of Jeremiah. While most of the nation lived in compromise this family remained dedicated to the Lord and became an example of commitment.

**Jeremiah 35** records how in the midst of a nation that had turned its back on the Word and ways of God, these men chose to remain committed to the Lord.

Whether they lived by all 3 of the standard of the Nazirite vow we cannot be sure but we do know they chose to rise above the culture and refused to drink alcohol and chose to reflect the fact that they were pilgrims on earth by living in tents.

We don't need to set up tents in the yard but we must remove ourselves from the ways of the world and demonstrate our commitment to the Lord.

If we choose to talk like the world, dress like the world, drink like the world one is left to wonder how we will demonstrate that we are in any way different from the world

The Bible does not teach aestheticism as we think of it. We are not more holy just because of the things we don't do, **but** the bible does teach that we are to deny the flesh its desire for sinful things and that we are to remove ourselves from things that will stumble others and ourselves.

- Jesus

In some ways Jesus should also be considered a Nazirite

Matthew 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.”*

“In the New Testament it is likely that one of the significances attached to Jesus’ being called a ‘Nazarene’ (Matt. 2:23) is that he too should be viewed as a Nazirite in the sense of being consecrated to God from the womb.”

- Paul

In the NT Paul took the Nazirite vow for a specific period of time (Acts 18:18; 21:22–26).

This suggests that by necessity certain periods of life require deeper levels of consecration than normal

- Absalom

One of the main character traits of Absalom was his long hair. It seems to have been admired by some. This may have been because of the Nazirite vow since we know from Paul that long hair on a man was not desirable in the culture.

Absalom is an example of someone who looked like a Nazirite but certainly did not care about the things of God.

This was also true of the Pharisees (a word meaning separated ones). Outwardly the Pharisees looked as though they were committed to the Lord but Jesus revealed that on the inside they remained corrupt

**There came a time in Israel's history when those who devoted themselves to God were looked down upon and people were encouraged not to practice this vow**

Amos 2:11–12

*And I raised up some of your sons for prophets,  
and some of your young men for Nazirites.*

*Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?”*

*declares the Lord.*

*“But you made the Nazirites drink wine,  
and commanded the prophets,  
saying, ‘You shall not prophesy.’*

What a tragic testimony on the current culture in our nation. We find that those who dishonor God are honored and those

who seek to honor God are looked upon as intolerant and evil

### III. The New Testament Counterparts

Perhaps it would be of value for us to consider ourselves as a Nazirite from time to time and devote periods of time to the Lord

A New Testament counterpart to the Nazirite vow is **fasting**.

Fasting is designed as a way to focus more intensely upon the things of the Lord for a specified period of time. **A person could not live in a state of perpetual fasting** although taking times to deny the flesh for the sake of our walk with the Lord will always prove helpful

What the NT teaches regarding fasting

The primary NT teaching regarding fasting comes from Jesus

Matthew 6:16-18

*“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

- **When we fast** - implies it is expected

We find the same truth in Matthew 9:15

Matthew 9:15

And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

- **Don't be like the hypocrite** - suggests that fasting is never to be done as a means of showing others your spirituality. Instead it is designed as being a time between you and the Lord.
- **Will reward you openly** - implies that there is much to be gained from taking time to fast. Fasting requires faith

because by itself failing to eat something can do little more than help you lose a pound or two

We find one example of believers fasting in the book of Acts. When the church was seeking to determine how to take the great commission seriously and put it into practice as a church

Acts 13

We find **one** reference in the epistles to fasting, where husbands and wives are encouraged to fast and pray together. The context of the passage implies that there are difficulties in the relationship and these can be resolved by devoting more attention to the Lord together. Sometimes intimacy issues in a relationship stem from a spiritual problem

1 Corinthians 7:5

*Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

It would be wrong to think that a person could live however they wanted and then take a periodic Nazirite vow.

God is not establishing a roller coaster like relationship with us

The vow was given to people who had already consecrated themselves from the world and to YHWH.

The vow provided deeper commitment during specific times in life.

We see a New Testament example of this same truth.

For those of us who have chosen to follow Christ we understand that certain seasons require more intense seeking after the Lord.

Like when the 12 encountered a demon possessed young man and Jesus explained this kind would not come out except by prayer and fasting.

**There are times when we must devote more attention to the things of the Lord.**

- When we are facing a tough decision

- When we are encountering heightened spiritual warfare
- When we are stepping into ministry
- When we are interceding on behalf of a loved one

## Blessing God's People

*<sup>22</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way **you shall bless the children of Israel.***

The word "Bless" carries the idea of benefiting. God used it when he blessed Adam and Eve and gave them the whole planet to possess. God required the priests to stand before the people in order to benefit their lives. I think there is a great principle for those of us who stand before the people of God. The best way to bless the people of God is to declare to them the Word of God which explains who God is and what God wants to do in the life of His people.

## What God is like

*<sup>24</sup> "The LORD **bless you and keep you;***

The LORD wants to bless you and take care of you.

- Jesus spoke of wanting to gather you as a hen gathers its chicks under its wings.
- In another place he speaks of us abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

**Both of these speak of the loving protection that God provides for His people.**

Jesus told Peter that Satan was on the prowl and that he wanted to destroy him. That must have been a very frightening thought. Satan going around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour and then he sets his sites on Peter. But then Jesus gave

words that would be of great comfort, “but I am praying for you.” As dangerous as the devil is he is no match for the Son of God. Jesus sits high above all principality and power. He is above every name that is named. He has conquered Satan making a public spectacle of him.

The same is true of you and me. There are many pitfalls in our journey that seek to pull us away from the LORD. Quite often I feel as though I do not have a chance. I want with all my heart to “finish well,” but I confess that there are times when I doubt whether I will finish at all. But then I remember, Jesus promises to keep me. Not only is Christ in me, but I am in Christ. He will care for me and He will keep me.

<sup>25</sup> ...*Make **His face shine** upon you,*

The face of the LORD is a reference to who He is. We recognize someone when we see his or her face. God wants us to see who He is. Moses prayed “show me your glory” and God passed before Him and told Moses what He was like. Moses saw the backside of God and began to reflect His glory. The same idea is found here. As God is revealed through His word we begin to reflect God. The greatest way to cause the people to reflect the LORD is to simply declare to them what the LORD is like.

*And be gracious to you;*

We are sinners and we cannot really show others the holiness of God but we certainly can show off His grace.

There are a lot of things that motivate us to work.

- Guilt is a motivator, we all have people in our families that motivate us by guilt. I have a friend I used to affectionately call “G.T.” or “Guilt Trip” because he would always try to get me to do things by making me feel sorry for him. And even though he was teasing I would often feel so guilty that I would do what he wanted.
- Another motivator is fear. We do some things because we’re afraid not to.
- Another motivator is pride. There are things we do because we want people to think we are something that we are not.
- The greatest motivator is the grace of God. His grace gives us everything we need to effectively serve Jesus. In a moment of weakness Paul was reminded that God’s grace is sufficient for us.

*<sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,*

The countenance of the Lord speaks of His presence. This may be the greatest asset to holy loving. The more aware we are of the presence of God the less likely we are to be involved in things that are forbidden. We need to recognize the presence of God in our lives.

And give you peace.”

There are some things that the world just can’t offer. All the money in the world, all the success, all the fame, all the power won’t ever provide a person with peace. In fact in many ways the more we have the more worry and fret we have that it might be lost. The Lord alone can provide peace for His people regardless of what they face.



John 16:33

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will[a] have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

We have a beautiful picture of this when Jesus is asleep in the storm. The wind is blowing, the seas raging, the disciples freaking, yet Jesus is at perfect peace. What a contrast to Jonah. Remember when Jonah was asleep in the storm? Jonah did not have peace, instead he was hiding from the storm and from the Lord. That's the world approach to peace; if we ignore it maybe it will go away. If we take a pill, go to a theme park, join this club then maybe we will feel better about the life we are living. What a joy to know that Jesus offers peace to the child of God.

## Numbers 7-8

### **Numbers, chapter 7:1**

*<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, that he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; so he anointed them and consecrated them.*

In order to understand this more fully, Exodus 40:34,

### **Exodus 40:34**

*<sup>34</sup> **Then** the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

Moses set up the Tabernacle, filled it with furnishings, set up the altar and offered the sacrifices to consecrate it. When he finished the cloud of the LORD descended upon the tabernacle and the glory of LORD appeared within

the tabernacle. The presence of the Lord was so great that Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle. That's the scene as we pick up in Numbers 7.

### **Numbers 7:2 - 3**

*<sup>2</sup>Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who were the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, **made an offering**. <sup>3</sup>And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two of the leaders, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle.*

Once the tabernacle was set up and arranged the leaders of Israel brought a voluntary offering to Moses.

- This offering was a result of experiencing the presence of the LORD
- This is not a compulsory offering, it wasn't required but was given willingly out of a heart tuned to the Lord
- This offering was designed to make ministry more effective.

The offering included:

- 6 carts
- 12 oxen to pull the carts

### **Numbers 7:5**

*"Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, to every man according to his service."*

The carts were given to the Levites based upon their service or what they had been called to do.

### **Numbers 7:7-9**

*Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.*

- Gershon received 2 carts and 4 oxen
- Merari received 4 carts and 8 oxen
- Kohath received no carts or oxen

The discrepancy in giving was based upon their calling. Those who carried the heavier implements were in need of the carts; those who carried the holy objects were to do so by hand

We see two very important ministry principles illustrated within this text

**First** - God always supplies what is necessary for ministry to be accomplished.

We often unnecessarily focus on what we do not possess and question whether or not ministry can be accomplished. We fail to step out and serve the Lord because we have limited talents, treasure or time. How often have we read a letter from someone who has yet to begin serving the Lord because they have not reached the arbitrary financial goal they have placed upon themselves? While it is true we need to eat and most provisions come from cash flow it is also true that God is never limited by what we don't have.

- A widows empty jars were enough for her provision to be met
- Jesus had 5 loaves and two fish
- Peter and John were penniless as they approached the beautiful gate of the Temple

It is important to realize that ministry is not fueled by finances but by the spirit of God. We are not limited from accomplishing things for the Lord when our resources are small any more than we are equipped for ministry because we have abundant resources.

**Second** - ministry must be done God's way.

The Kohathites received no carts because they were responsible for the Holy things and God desired those to be carried by hand.

It is interesting that years later this was violated when David attempted to move the Ark of the Covenant on a cart. The result was catastrophic and even cost one man his life. The idea to move the cart by hand came from the Scriptures; the idea to move it on a cart came from looking at how the Philistines had done it.

It is always dangerous when we look at the world to come up with models for ministry.

The remainder of the chapter focuses upon the "dedication offering from the 12 tribes

**Numbers 7:10**

*Now the leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar.*

One leader from each tribe would bring an offering each day for 12 days.

**Numbers 7:11**

*For the Lord said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."*

All the offerings were the same. 7:84-88 sums up the combined dedication offering

- 12 silver platters,
- 12 silver bowls
- 12 gold pans.
- All the oxen for the burnt offering were 12 young bulls,
- 12 rams
- 12 male lambs in their first year
- 12 kids of the goats as a sin offering
- 24 oxen for the sacrifice of peace
- 24 bulls,
- 60 rams
- 60 male goats
- 60 lambs in their first year

All this was offered for the purpose of dedicating the altar that would serve as the place of substitutionary sacrifice.

After the offerings were completed Moses entered into the Tabernacle where he met with the Lord

**Numbers 7:89**

*Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.*

Chapter 8 records what Moses heard from the Lord

## Lamps that give light in the Tabernacle

The light from the lamp illuminated all ministry that took place in the tabernacle

This is a good illustration of the importance of the Word to ministry.

- Just as salvation is based upon clear biblical doctrine, so is service.
- The priests must serve in line with the means and methods of the Lord.
- It is not enough to do ministry we must do it well

Ex 37:17-18 describes what the lamp looked like:

*He also made the lampstand of pure gold; of hammered work he made the lampstand. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and its flowers were of the same piece. 18 And six branches came out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.*

**The Lamp** is one of only 2 of the furnishings in which the Scripture gives us no measurements. The other was the wash basin. Both illustrate the work of the Word of God to illuminate and cleanse.

God said, *"Make it exactly as I tell you"* but He does not tell them the size.

Josephus tells us that it was 31/2 feet wide and 5 feet tall. It was made of solid gold, perhaps weighing as much as 94lbs.

### **An Illustration:**

As the lamp was the only means of light in the Tabernacle so Israel was the only means of light to the world. Israel lost sight of that and as we follow their history they began to think of themselves as an exclusive club better than the rest of the world who needed to remain isolated from the world.

This thinking even infected the early church. Remember when Cornelius the gentile wanted to know how to get saved, Peter was

afraid to even enter his home to share the Gospel because he had never been in a gentiles home. And when he returned to the church many were more concerned that he had eaten with a gentile than they were that the gentile got saved. That certainly was not God's design. He wanted His people to be a light to the gentiles.

In Revelation chapter 1 Jesus uses this same candlestick to picture the church.

*Rev 1:20*

*The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and **the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.***

Now the church is the light of the world. In order to be light we must remain undefiled (Paul spoke of how we have been "*delivered from this present evil age.*") However we must also guard against isolation. There will be a time when we will be completely removed from all and every influence of the world. That time is in eternity. Until then we are to live our Christianity in view of all in order to influence others to follow Jesus much in the same way that we were influenced and led to saving faith in Christ.

How did the lamp give its light?

*Ex 27:20*

*And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.*

The lamp did not burn candles but oil. The oil is used symbolically in Scripture to represent the Holy Spirit. The oil powered the lamp that provided light in the Tabernacle.

In the same way if we are going to be a witness to the world we must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Didn't Jesus say that the power to be a witness was provided when the Holy Spirit comes upon us? The lamp is a picture to teach us of the need for the enabling of the Spirit for ministry.

*"Not by might or by power but by my Spirit says the Lord"*

### **Numbers 8:5**

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

The next subject Moses receives instruction in is regarding the Levites

- We have seen previously that the Levites were separated from the other tribes and called to ministry

Numbers 1:50

*but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle.*

- They were chosen in place of the firstborn from each family

Numbers 3:12

*"Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine,*

- Their role was to assist the Priests in Tabernacle ministry

Numbers 3:9

*And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel.*

- Their roles were divided into three subgroups based upon the clan they came from and resources were given to assist them in the ministry.

**Now we will read about the consecration process. It will involve washing, shaving, changing and sacrificing**

It is here where the Levites are ordained to ministry. And we have a picture of how a person is called to ministry.

- **Number 1:** we see that the Levites were called by God. They didn't sit around in a council and decide, "*Let's pick the Levites.*" God chose them.
- **Number 2:** once the Levites were called, they separated themselves unto the work. We're told that they washed ceremonially and they shaved. Shaving, to the Jewish men, was an act of humility. You remember one time as David's servants had half of their beard shaved off as a way to humiliate them. So they would shave as an act of humility, or an act of repentance.
- **Number 3** they gathered the Levites together and the people laid their hands on them. God had already called them. If the people didn't want to lay their hands on them that did not really matter, God had already called them. They had already been set apart unto the work of the LORD, the people are simply recognizing that.

**We see that same process in the church today.** Those who sense a call of God to ministry must set themselves apart to the Lord and to His service. Ministry is a high calling and requires High living. It does not take long for people to recognize when a person has the call of God on their lives. On his second missionary journey Paul met timothy and immediately selected him to join the team. God calls people to serve Him. If you sense a call of God on your life, spend time with Jesus, get to know the Lord and look for ways to faithfully serve Him.

**Levi is a gift to Aaron and his sons to do the work of the Tabernacle**



Num 8:17-19

*17 For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to Myself. 18 I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19 And I have given the Levites **as a gift** to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the work **for the children of Israel** in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary."*

The work of the Tabernacle was led by the high priest who was supported by the priests, who were supported by the Levites, who were doing work for the people

What a picture of how the New Testament church is to operate.

### **Years of service**

Num 8:23-26

*23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "This is what pertains to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; 25 and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more. 26 They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of meeting, to attend to needs, but they themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties."*

The Levites were allowed to carry these things from the time they were 25 years old until the time they were 50

I think that is very important for the minister to understand. We are involved in something bigger than ourselves and we need to approach the ministry that way. Should the Lord tarry until I go on to be with

the Lord, the work of God should be able to continue without me. That is only possible if the church is built upon the teaching of the Word instead of the personality of the leader.