

Dedicated Numbers 6:1-21

Dedicated Introduction

- The world has never been holy.
- It is unholy today.
- It will remain so in the future – till Jesus comes.

- The church is supposed to be holy.
- The difference between the world and us should be evident to anyone watching closely.
- Sometimes this is true, sometimes it's not.

The vow of the Nazirite.

- An option for any Israelite, regardless of tribe.
- A special type of separation to God.
- A dedicated time of special commitment.

Key questions to ask:

- Am I genuinely dedicated to God?
- Am I kidding myself about this?
- What would it mean to be totally dedicated to God in my present circumstances?

Our radical dedication to holiness should be an attractive option in a hopeless world – and a source of severe conviction to a compromised or hypocritical church.

The Nature of the Vow 6:1-8

- Watch for words like *holy* or *separate*.

- 6:1-2 Men and women both eligible.
- The name Nazirite comes from a word meaning “to separate, consecrate or dedicate.”
- Similar vows may have been practiced prior to this.
- Jewish tradition tells us that they usually lasted at least 30 days. A few examples in the Bible are lifelong.

- None of the things mentioned in becoming a Nazirite are intrinsically right or wrong.
- It was a vow in which a person set him/herself apart from everyday aspects of life in special devotion to God.

Three Areas of Separation

- 6:3-4 Abstinence from wine or other alcohol – and everything connected with grapes.
- 6:5 Letting the hair grow long.
- 6:6-8 No touching of a dead body.
- None of this was especially harsh or austere, just different from other people.

A Broken Vow 6:9-12

- The Bible uses an extreme case.
- Any form of breaking the vow is covered by this.
- The defilement is referred to as “sin” and, after sacrifices, the vow is supposed to start over.

A Completed Vow 6:13-21

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- The number and variety of sacrifices remind us that the vow was very costly.
- 6:13-18 The offering of the hair visually illustrates that the entire Nazirite experience was dedicated to the Lord.

Nazirites in the Bible

In the Old Testament:

- Samson in Judges 13:1-7
- Samuel in 1 Samuel 1:1-11
- Both of these would have been lifelong.
- In Samson's case it didn't work out.

In the New Testament:

- John the Baptist in Luke 1:5-17
- Paul in Acts 18:18
- Paul and others in Acts 21:17-26
- Nazirites in the Bible

- Question: Why would Paul have done this?
- Possible Answer: Corinth was a corrupt environment.
- There was tension between the Jews and Christians.
- The Jews understood the significance of uncut hair.
- Paul showed visible dedication to God while simultaneously associating with Gentiles.

Dedication to God Today

Our radical dedication to holiness should be an attractive option in a hopeless world – and a source of severe conviction to a compromised or hypocritical church.

- The world has never been holy.
- It is unholy today.
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Encouragement from the New Testament:

- Romans 12:1
- 2 Corinthians 7:1
- Hebrews 12:14, 13:15-16
- 2 Peter 3:11-13

- A dedicated life will bring opposition.
- Prophets and Nazirites in Amos 2:11-12

Key questions to ask:

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- Details of the Nazirite vow would communicate nothing to our culture.
- We have to be very careful to think in terms of sincere, voluntary devotion – and not of acquiring religious merit.

Areas in which to potentially abstain:

- Places we go.
- Food and drink.
- Forms of entertainment.
- Vocabulary – watching our words.
- Magazines, movies and other media input.

Areas in which to potentially engage:

- Meaningful forms of service.
- Tangible expressions of love to others.
- Befriending those with few friends.
- Secret prayer.
- Reading or study of Scripture (enhancing biblical literacy).
- Spiritual activities with others.

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