

THE NAZARITE VOW

The word Nazarite literally means 'one separated'. The common Israelite could take upon him/her-self the Nazarite Vow, and for a specific period, he was able to live up to the ideal of the High Priest. The vow was voluntary, but once taken, the laws were obligatory. However, there are examples of men who were brought up as Nazarites from the womb, so that they might be able to fulfil a particular mission.

	REFS.	LAW	REASON
HAIR	Num. 6:5-7 Gen. 49:26 Exo. 28:36-38 Judg. 13:5 I Sam. 1:11	No razor to come on head. Locks of hair to be left to grow.	An outward sign to other of separation from the world. The long hair was a figure of the crown of the High Priest - <i>"the consecration of his God is upon his head"</i> . (Num. 6:7)
VINE	Num. 6:3-4 Lev. 10:8-11 Lev. 25:1-5 Isa. 28:7 Amo. 2:11-12 Luke 1:15	Not to drink wine or strong drink. Not to eat grapes (fresh or dried) or any product of the vine.	Wine can dull the senses and impair judgment, causing inappropriate behaviour. The Nazarite was to abstain from all products of the vine because he himself was a figure of the vine - i.e., the 'vine undressed' seen in the sabbath year of rest.
DEAD BODY	Num. 6:6-12 Lev. 21:10-12	Not to come near a dead body - not even that of a close relative.	The Nazarite must not be defiled with death. Presumably the law applied specifically to the dead body of a person rather than an animal. The underlying principle was that of being separate from uncleanness - death being the ultimate consequence of the inner uncleanness of men.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17-18)

		OFFERINGS MADE	SIGNIFICANCE
BROKEN VOW	Num. 6:9-12	Hair shaved on 1st day after defilement. A lamb for a Trespass Offering. 2 pigeons or 2 turtle doves for a Sin Offering.	The main emphasis was upon the Trespass Offering, because the Nazarite had broken his Vow - whether his fault or not - and was unable to continue his promised service to God. This offering was also a cleansing process for the Nazarite and is similar to the offering made for recovery from leprosy. (Lev. 14:1-32)
COMPLETED VOW	Num. 6:14-21	A ram, unleavened bread, cakes and wafers for a Peace Offering. A male lamb for a Sin Offering. A Meal and Drink Offering. The hair of the Nazarite.	The main feature of these offerings was the Peace Offering, which enabled the Nazarite to have fellowship with God - a fitting conclusion to his completed service. His hair was offered on the altar with the Peace Offering as a token of his dedication. After this ceremony, the Nazarite was permitted to drink wine. Christ, after his resurrection, on his completion of the spirit of the Nazarite Vow, did not drink wine, but he promised to wait until he could share it with his disciples in a true fellowship meal. (Matt. 26:29)

"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. 7:26)