

Torah Portion #35: Naso (נשא) "Take up"

Torah ~ Numbers 4:21-7:89 | Prophets ~ Judges 13:2-25 | New Covenant ~ Luke 1:13-16; Acts 21:17-26

The Nazirite

In this week's Torah Portion the Lord gives the people of Israel a special vow in *Numbers 6:1-8* called the Nazirite Vow. Through this vow the Lord was giving the non-priest an opportunity to live a life like a Priest. The basic requirements for a Nazirite was very similar to the requirements of a High Priest.

The purpose of the vow was not to afflict the Nazirite by self-denial, instead it was a way to draw closer to the Lord. It allowed the common Israelite to participate in the same sanctification unto God that was expected of the High Priest. Examples of the Nazirite vow in the Bible can be found in *Judges 13:2-5* with Samson, *1 Samuel 1:11* with Samuel, *Luke 1:13-16* with John the Baptizer, and in *Acts 21:22-26* with the Apostle Paul.

A Nazirite is to be set apart

The word "Nazirite" in Hebrew is *Nazir*, which means "to be set apart." In other words, the Nazirite was to be Holy.

Leviticus 19:2 "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." NASB

Romans 1:1 "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God" NASB

1 Peter 1:16b "You shall be holy, for I am holy." NASB

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 shows us one way to be set apart from the world by not being bound together with unbelievers.

Leviticus 19:37 "You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the Lord." NASB

1 John 5:18 "We know that anyone born of God does not keep on sinning" TLV

Matthew 7:15-20 says that everyone is known by their fruit. A believer's fruit is to be set apart from non-believers.

A Special Blessing for the Israelites

After the Lord gave the instructions for the Nazirite Vow, He then gave the Israelites a special blessing know as the Aaronic Benediction. God commanded the Priests in *Numbers 6:24-26* to speak this blessing over the people.

1 Peter 2:9 says that believers in Yeshua are a royal priesthood, therefore we have the authority to speak this blessing over one another. Tradition has it that the Priest would lift up his hands while giving the blessing.

Yeshua lifted up his hands in *Luke 24:50* when He blessed those who watched Him ascend into heaven. Everything in this blessing can basically be spoken in one word, "Shalom", which means completeness, wholeness, and lacking in nothing. God wants His people to be blessed beyond measure so that we can be a blessing to those around us.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "(8) For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.

(9) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." NASB

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans that I have in mind for you," declares Adonai, "plans for shalom and not calamity — to give you a future and a hope." TLV

The Biblical definition for prosper is "to make steady progress or push forward," not having excessive amounts of money.

3 John 1:2 "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." NKJV

In Closing

Through the sacrifice of our Lord and saviour, believers are now a kingdom of Priests. We are called to be Holy and set apart from the world by walking in the ways of Yeshua. Then God's "complete" Shalom will rest upon us.

Mt. 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." ESV