

## MARCH 6

### Numbers 6-7

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Vs. 1-21 The Nazirite vow was taken by a person wanting to dedicate themselves to the Lord for some special task or perhaps in seeking some answer from the Lord. There is no time limit determined. The two notable things in this vow are that the person couldn't eat or drink anything having to do with a grape (the symbol of pleasure and prosperity) and they had to let their hair grow long, making them stand out socially. In spite of all the depictions of men's hairstyles in ancient days so that the guys looked like Chip & Dale (sp?), I think short hair was the rule. Long hair, like the Nazirite had, would have stood out.

Vs. 9-12 This was a provision if something should happen that defiled a Nazirite during his/her vow.

The three notable men in the Bible who were Nazirites were Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. Samson and Samuel, who lived during the same time, were both dedicated by their parents at birth to be life-long Nazirites. Some people think (hope) this is what Jephthah did to his daughter. Samson, it should be noted, broke all the rules of a Nazirite but one; and you know what happened there. Of all men born, Jesus was the most dedicated to God. When it says in Matthew 2:23, *that he would be called a Nazarene*, it is referring to where He grew up and to His title in Isaiah 11:1, *branch* (Nazareth means branch). Although Matthew is referring to something in the OT, there is no specific reference that anyone has ever found. Jesus couldn't have been a Nazirite because Jesus drank wine and touched dead things (Ok, He did make them alive again). Also, Jesus probably had short hair, otherwise Paul maligned Him when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:14, *Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him...?* So actually, it doesn't seem likely that Jesus had long hair, which he would have had if he'd been a Nazirite.

There is a very interesting reference to Nazirites in Amos 2, if you're up to looking for it.

Vs. 22-27 There was intentionality in everything God did. Even in the blessing of the people, God didn't leave it up to Aaron to come up with his own blessing.

Now just for fun, imagine what this blessing would sound like if you changed out some of the words and it went like, "Lord, I need you to bless me and keep me...I need you to make your face..." You get the idea. It all has to do with our need for the Lord.

V. 27 God's name was to be put upon the people. For an interesting connection here, read John 17 in any version other than the NIV and look for the word "name." Jesus put the name of His Father on all of his disciples. Note too, that John 17 is often referred to as Jesus' "high-priestly prayer."

## Numbers 7

Vs. 1-9 Apparently this is looking back to the dedication of the tabernacle and the altar for burnt offerings. In preparation for the moving of the tabernacle toward the promised land, the tribes brought an offering of oxen and carts for the service of the Levites and then offerings to dedicate the altar.

Notice v. 9. David should have read this, or rather, he should have been advised by the priests and Levites. These guys didn't need any oxen, because all of this holy furniture was to be carried on poles on their shoulders.

Vs. 10-89 The order of the tribes giving their offering reflects their lodging position around the tabernacle as given in Numbers 2. It is significant that Judah is the first tribe to offer their sacrifice. They will be the "alpha" tribe for the rest of Israel's history. We have seen the name of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, three times prior to this. These names appear in Jesus' genealogy in the NT, Jesus being from the tribe of Judah. But one other point of interest is that Aaron's wife was Nahshon's sister. That means that the priests of Israel would all be related to the tribe of Judah. Again, this is just trivia; but Jesus' mother Mary, who was of the tribe of Judah, was a relative of Elizabeth, who was a Levite related to Aaron.

2.5 shekels was about an ounce. If you're curious, you can figure out the value of the metals by Googling the exchange rates for today.

V. 89 This is as if to say that all was complete. When Moses walked into the tabernacle, into the Holy Place, he heard God's voice coming from beyond the veil *above the mercy seat*. This symbolic separation from God is important in that it shows how different our relationship to God is in Jesus. As disciples in the harvest, the good news we are able to share is that in Jesus that veil is gone, and *we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him*. (Ephesians 3:12) *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)

Everything that we are reading had an immediate application to Israel, teaching them and us about God's holiness and the importance of being clean and ready to serve Him. But the Lord was also getting ready to show us the fulfillment of these symbols in our Savior and our salvation.

## **Mark 12:38-13:13**

Mark 12:38-44

Vs. 38-40 In Mark, these are Jesus' last publicly spoken words in His ministry. The rest will be for the disciples.

Funny that the last thing He said was to *beware of the scribes*. The scribes figured out and taught the laws that issued down to the people. Apparently, some of the "laws" they made either took widows' houses from them or persuaded the widows to give their houses to the temple and the scribes lived in them.

Vs. 41-44 Oddly enough, the next, and last, story of Jesus' public ministry has to do with a widow who gave everything she had, in contrast to those who gave much more, but out of their abundance.

For us as disciples, we need to think about this. We tire quickly of giving out of our abundance. Most people in the western world have reserves that are undreamed of by other people on this planet. The Lord has a special place in His heart for sacrifice that shows absolute desire to give everything to Him.

## Mark 13:1-13

Vs. 1-8 We've already had something like this in Matthew. What does it make you think of? I see two things happening. First, things will get a lot worse. Second, there will be persecution of those who follow Christ. What Jesus is saying here has a near and a far fulfillment. The near fulfillment will be the judgment of that particular generation, climaxing in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The far fulfillment will be in the Tribulation.

Vs. 9-13 These words are not only written for the disciples then, but they are written for all disciples who will endure persecution. Jesus has already said these things to His disciples on a couple of occasions. The group of disciples that this will really apply to will be those who come to faith during the seven-year Tribulation.

For us as disciples, we know that things will only get worse, so the work we need to do is in the harvest now, not trying to make heaven on earth or thinking the next election will save the day. As the storm clouds gather on the horizon, we are here to keep working in the harvest with our Lord, reaching the lost and making disciples, who make disciples.

## Psalm 49

Vs. 1-4 Notice the universal call to all people. The mention of rank and wealth will be important themes in this psalm.

Vs. 5-6 So, in a sense, this psalm has to do with living without fear, particularly from others who have rank and wealth.

Vs. 7-12 After what we've read in Leviticus regarding redemption and what we know about redemption in the New Testament, this is interesting. Verses 7-8 explain the dilemma. When it comes to our lives before God, humanly speaking, there is nothing we can pay God and there is no one who can take our place. The evidence of this is death. Nothing can keep us from dying, and so, death shows there is nothing we can pay for our souls before God. The end is spiritual death.

I was reading about Jesus telling His disciples that they shouldn't fear those who could only kill the body but could not kill the soul. God is the one who can cast into hell, where people become eternally separated from Him. It is interesting that fear is mentioned in v. 5.

Vs. 13-14 Verse 14 struck me where it says, *death shall be their shepherd*. I know there is a sense in which the arrogant and unbelieving get what they deserve, but we still need to try and flag them down as they go speeding by, to warn them the bridge is out. Death as a shepherd is a very gripping image.

V. 15 This must have been understood by those who loved God, that God would make a way of redemption. He would supply a redeemer. Think back on the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

Vs. 16-20 With all of this truth in mind, the psalmist agrees with Jesus. There is no need to fear for our daily needs. We have a very present and caring Heavenly Father. On the other hand, Jesus gave His disciples a double warning about pursuing riches in Luke 12:15. They were not only to take heed, but beware.

## Proverbs 10:27-28

Amen again! *The fear of the Lord* molds our view of life and expectations, leading us to joy. Those who disregard the Lord have no clue. This is what leads them to a tragic end. As the psalmist says, they will perish like the beasts, without understanding or hope of eternal life.