



Portion:

SCRIPTURES

- Numbers 4:21-7:89
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-14
- James 1:2-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
- Numbers 3:36-37
- Proverbs 23:29-35
- Proverbs 20:1
- Amos 2:11-12
- Acts 15:6-21
- Acts 21:17-26

Title:

COUNTED IN FOR KINGDOM

BUSINESS...TAKE A VOW

- Gershonites and Merarites
- Census of the Levites
- Unclean Persons
- Confession and Restitution
- The Unfaithful Wife
- The Nazirite Vow
- The Priestly Benediction
- Offerings of the Leaders
- The Birth of Samson

Y'shua's words in Matthew 5:33-37 are often cited as evidence that making promises to Yahweh, or in more "Biblical Terms" swearing a vow or an oath, is erroneously thought to be something we ought not do. But, taking a deeper look into His words reveals quite the opposite conclusion; yes, do make vows, but under no circumstances swear falsely. Let your "yes be yes, and our no be no." Have you ever seriously considered the vow you made to

Yahweh? Are you truly "set apart" and less concerned for who society says you are, and more focused on your "promise" to be who Yahweh says you are in Him? In this week's Torah Portion we explore what "our" Nazirite Vow should look like. Yes! The vow you took as a Born-Again believer closely resembles the instructions Yahweh gave Moses in the Book of Numbers.

THEME: MAIN SCRIPTURE(S) THAT HAS INSPIRED MESSAGE

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins." All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his

separation to God is on his head. All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD. (Numbers 6:1-8)

For just as the body is **one** and has **many members**, and all the members of the body, **though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.** (1 Corinthians 12:12)

OUTCOME: MAIN TAKEAWAY(S) I AM HOPING FOR PEOPLE

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—**and all were made to drink of one Spirit.** For the body **does not consist of one member but of many.** (1 Corinthians 12:13-14)

My brothers, count it all **joy** when you fall into different kinds of temptations, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

For what is our hope or **joy**, or crown of rejoicing? Are you not even to be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and **joy.** (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

1. This Torah portion finishes up the census of the Levites that was underway at the end of the last Torah portion, before going on to discuss the purification of the camp, the ritual for a woman suspected of adultery, the laws of the Nazirite vow, the priestly benediction and the gifts the heads of the twelve tribes brought for the dedication of the altar.
2. This week's Torah Portion begins with the Lord asking Moses to finish a census of the people of Israel. More specifically of three families. The Kohathites, the Gershonites and Merarites.
3. The Census was to count the amount of "Viable" servants to **"come on duty"** for the work required to dismantle the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) and to reassemble it after following Yahweh.
4. The age for being placed into service was from the age of thirty years to fifty years.
5. Each family was given a **specific** set of tasks.
6. The Kohathites were charged with carrying the items inside of the Holy Place (The lampstand, The Table of Shewbread, The Altar of Incense, The Veil, The Mercy Seat, The Ark of the Covenant) and all of the coverings.

7. The Gershonites were charged with carrying “the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting”
8. The Merarites were charged with carrying “ Numbers 3:36-37 and charge of the sons of Merari were the boards of the tabernacle, and its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets, and its vessels, and all its service, and the pillars of the court all around, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.”

COUNTED IN FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS-- TAKE A VOW!

1. In Numbers chapter 6 , God speaks to Moses about a Nazirite Vow- And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, (Numbers 6:2)
2. The Vow of the Nazirite could be made by both, Man and Woman
3. It was to be specific in behavior and appearance for those who accepted it.
4. Other sections of the Old and New Testament retell stories of those who have taken this vow. Some were given to this vow prior to their birth, such as in the case of Samson.

5. He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins. (Numbers 6:3-4)
6. "All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. (Numbers 6:5)

WHAT ABOUT US? HAVEN'T WE MADE A VERY SIMILAR VOW?

1. Part of the Nazirite Vow was to give up drinking for the period of consecration.
2. Wine or anything from the fruit of the vine, in ancient times, was considered a symbol of Joy.
3. In abstaining from consuming these items. The person making the vow was letting the community know that their joy was to be found in that which the LORD was doing in their life.
4. Can we say the same thing? Being "Holy To The Lord" can that fill us with enough joy to keep us from looking at the world for more?
5. One of the most common substances we can wrongfully look to for joy is alcohol.

6. "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. "They struck me," you will say, "but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink." (Proverbs 23:29-35)
7. Can you relate to what King Solomon wrote in connection to getting accustomed to consuming alcohol?
8. The Bible does not condemn the consumption of Alcohol. However, it does provide warnings for extended use.
9. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1)
10. Those who choose to NOT consume alcohol are to have their choice respected, not mocked!
11. "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.'" (Amos 2:11-12)

12. Having taken a vow to be separated unto the Lord, should we also not keep a safe distance from the dead?
13. Dead in the spiritual sense. There is a corollary for the Nazirite to keep away from the dead and the Born again believer to keep away from those who are walking spiritually. Yes, we have a charge from our Savior to preach the Gospel and to touch lives. However that is different from mingling with unbelievers making a part of their lives a part of ours.

POINT OF INTEREST: FOR ALL WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREWS ROOTS OF OUR FAITH AS CHRISTIANS

The Nazarite Vow: When reading Numbers 6:1-21, we cannot help but be reminded that the Apostle Paul participated in such a vow in Acts 21, ironically as he was being accused of teaching his disciples to violate the Torah (Laws, Instructions, Statutes, Precepts, Judgments, etc. of Yahweh as recorded by Moses). James warns Paul that there are many who will know he has come to Jerusalem and that there are some terrible accusations about him swirling in the air. To answer for the accusations that he is, *“teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they*

ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs,” James asks him to make an open declaration by making a vow, with four other men, a vow rooted in the TORAH (Numbers 6). He further asks Paul to even pay the expenses for the vow of the other men. By doing so, he would be openly submitting to the Torah as proof that there is no truth to the accusation that he is teaching against the Law. What does Paul, the man most credited with the establishment of Christian doctrine, do? Does he submit to James and take the vow from Torah, to prove the accusations are false? Or, does he rebuke James, thus setting Christianity on a course away from Torah, essentially affirming that Christ came to start a new religion?

*“And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, **“You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according***

to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men **who have taken a vow [Nazirite Vow]**. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know **that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.** But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things **offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.** *[*Referring to the Jerusalem counsel ruling in Acts 15]* Then Paul took the men, and the next day, **having been purified with them,** entered the temple to **announce the expiration of the days of purification,** at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.” Acts 21:17-26 NKJV **[He takes the vow and announces how long it will be for, and that he will make the offering according to the law after his days of separation, as per Num. 6:13-14.]**

“Now this is the law of the Nazirite: **When the days of his separation are fulfilled,** he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt

offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering,” Numbers 6:13-14 NKJV

The answer is clear; Paul takes the vow, openly declaring that Christianity is NOT TO MOVE AWAY from Torah. What a travesty that Christianity did just that over the past 2000 years.

*The ruling concerning the gentiles coming to faith that James is referring to in Acts 21:25 comes from the Jerusalem Counsel in Acts 15:6-21, when the Spirit revealed to James the “categories” of commands that former Gentiles are immediately required to obey: no Idolatry, no blood or things strangled (in other words, clean eating as per the Law), and no sexual sins. It is vitally important that you recognize that these are not just a few commands out of the Old Testament, but actually categories of commands under which there are many, many laws for living in community according to Torah (as one people, Jews and former Gentiles alike)!

A key takeaway from the counsel ruling is in verse 21. After the ruling, James makes the simple, yet profound, statement that was easily understood back then, but so foreign to Christians today. *“For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him*

in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”” (Acts 15:21) Yes, new converts would be trained in the ways of living according to the Torah, on the Sabbath, over time after their conversion, all things not being thrust upon them at once as there is so much to learn in the “sanctification process.” This is James properly responding to the grace of Yahweh’s Spirit as he is familiar with the process of being raised in Torah and how Yahweh’s people are expected to mature over time. The same is true for those coming out of their Gentile lifestyles.

So no, Paul never taught against the Laws of Yahweh, on the contrary, he was fully submitted to them and taught all those whom he disciplined the same.

Look how he extols the value of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (all the other books of the Old Testament), as he encourages Timothy, one of his favorite “spiritual sons.” Does this seem like a man who is *“teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”*?

The key to your understanding here, before you read these verses, is what Paul means by “Holy Scriptures.” The only Scriptures in

existence at the time, and therefore the only ones he could be referring to are the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (all the other books of the Old Testament). The New Testament, as Scripture, DOES NOT EXIST yet, at the time Paul penned these words.

*“But you must **continue in the things which you have learned** and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that **from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you **wise for salvation through faith** which is in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” II Timothy 3:14-17
NKJV*

It should now be abundantly clear to you that Paul never taught against Yahweh’s Laws, but rather that they are the very words that contain instruction for righteous living and equip God’s people for every good work!

Christ and the Law: *““Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, **one jot or***

one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV

Paul and Christ: *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* 1

Corinthians 11:1 NKJV

Paul and the Law: *“Do we then make void the law through faith?*

*Certainly not! On the contrary, **we establish the law.**”* Romans 3:31

NKJV

CLOSING THOUGHTS

1. Our desire to be set apart and to live out our vow, should be a supernatural source of joy all by itself.
2. Having been counted in for Kingdom business has both benefits, and challenges. At the end of the day we should be much more excited about the benefits than the challenges. But, most of the time we get hung up on the challenges.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. In recognition of the fact that we have been given a task for the Kingdom:

- A. Do we go about carrying out that task while looking around to see if others match your efforts in order to have a reason to

become more lax, or to pat our backs for seemingly doing more?

2. Drinking, where is that topic on your radar?

- A. When the subject is brought up, what is your reaction?
- B. Is it one of justification?
- C. Do you find yourself wrangling with the scriptures to permit yourself to a few glasses of whatever?
- D. Be careful brothers and sisters!

Seek First His Kingdom!

Pastor Manny