

## Nazarite Vow

**NAZARITE**, more properly NAZIRITE (one separated), one of either sex who was bound by a vow of a peculiar kind to be set apart from others for the service of God.

[**Smith's Dictionary**]

**NAZIRITE** (נָזִיר, nazir, ναζιραίους, naziraious). A man or woman who has taken the Nazirite vow, which is distinguished by abstinence from certain actions. Primarily seen in the Old Testament among the Israelites with possible New Testament examples.

### The Nazirite Vow in the Old Testament

The Hebrew term for “Nazirite” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to separate” (נָזַר, nazar). Numbers 6 presents the distinguishing features of the vow as:

- abstaining from anything related to grapes and/or alcohol
- refraining from cutting one's hair
- avoiding dead people (even family members)

The text goes on to detail the steps for being released from the vow: After bringing multiple prescribed offerings, the Nazirite would shave his or her head at the entrance to the tent of meeting and burn the hair. The priest would then offer the wave offering, and the Nazirite would be released from his or her vow.

Two well-known Old Testament characters were likely Nazirites:

1. Samson is specifically called a Nazirite [Judg 13:7]
2. Hannah's promise that a razor would not touch Samuel's head implies that Samuel was a Nazirite [1 Sam 1:11]

Although Numbers 6 implies that the Nazirite vow was a temporary vow, Samson and Samuel appear to have been lifelong devotees. Additionally, [Amos 2:11–12] presents divinely called Nazirites and states that Nazirites would be raised up from among Israel. The prophet also states that the Israelites had sinned by making the Nazirites drink wine<sup>1</sup>[**The Lexham Dictionary**]

**NAZARITE** (Heb. form Nazirite), the name of such Israelites as took on them the vow prescribed in Num. 6:2–21. The word denotes generally one who is separated from others and consecrated to God. Although there is no mention of any Nazirite before Samson, yet it is evident that they existed before the time of Moses. The vow of a Nazirite involved these three things, (1) abstinence from wine and strong drink, (2) refraining from cutting the hair off the head during the whole period of the continuance of the vow, and (3) the avoidance of contact with the dead.

When the period of the continuance of the vow came to an end, the Nazirite had to present himself at the door of the sanctuary with (1) a he lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, (2) a ewe lamb of the first year for a sin-offering, and (3) a ram for a peace-offering. After these sacrifices were offered by the priest, the Nazirite cut off his hair at the door and threw it into the fire under the peace-offering.<sup>2</sup>[**Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, and Literature**]

---

<sup>1</sup>