

Numbers 6:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

Analysis

The Nazirite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle, and take the hair and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. The vow's completion involved cutting the hair grown during consecration and burning it with the peace offering. This marked transition from special consecration back to ordinary life. The hair, symbol of the vow, was offered to God—even the physical symbol of consecration belonged to Him. The peace offering context emphasized restored fellowship as the vow concluded. This demonstrates that even temporary special consecrations honor God and require proper completion. The ritual's carefulness teaches that vows to God are serious commitments requiring faithful fulfillment. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 warns: 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it... Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.'

Historical Context

The Nazirite vow's conclusion required elaborate sacrifices (Numbers 6:13-20): sin offering, burnt offering, peace offering, and accompanying grain and drink offerings. The shaving occurred at the tabernacle entrance, emphasizing public nature of the vow's completion. Burning the hair with the peace offering symbolically returned the consecration period to God. Ancient Near Eastern votive

practices sometimes involved hair offerings, but Israel's practice had unique covenantal significance. Acts 18:18 and 21:23-24 describe Paul's involvement with Nazirite vows, showing the practice continued in the New Testament period. Rabbinic tradition specified detailed procedures for vow completion. The emphasis on proper vow fulfillment appears throughout Scripture—Jonah 2:9 declares 'I will pay that that I have vowed.' Modern application focuses on keeping commitments to God rather than replicating specific Nazirite rituals.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the ceremony marking the Nazirite vow's completion teach about the seriousness of commitments made to God?
2. How can we apply the principle of faithful vow-keeping in our Christian lives today?

Interlinear Text

וְגִלַּח ח	וְהַנָּזִיר יר	פֶּתַח	אֵל הֵל	מוֹעֵד ד		
shall shave	And the Nazarite	at the door	of the tabernacle	of the congregation		
H1548	H5139	H6607	H168	H4150		
אֶת	רֹאשׁ אִשׁ	נִזְרָו ו	וְלָקַח ח	אֶת	שְׂעַר	רֹאשׁ אִשׁ
H853	of the head	of his separation	and shall take	H853	the hair	of the head
	H7218	H5145	H3947		H8181	H7218
נִזְרָו ו	וְנָתַן	עַל	הָאֵשׁ ש	אֲשֶׁר	תַּחַת	
of his separation	and put	H5921	it in the fire	H834	H8478	
H5145	H5414		H784			
זֶבַח	הַשְּׁלָמִים:					
which is under the sacrifice	of the peace offerings					
H2077	H8002					

Additional Cross-References

Acts 21:24 (Parallel theme): Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

Numbers 6:9 (Parallel theme): And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

Acts 18:18 (Parallel theme): And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.