

## COMMENTARY

*PC* proposes that the numbering in this census is rounded out by tens rather than to show each individual. Further, it is said, the task of carrying all the items of the Tabernacle as listed would not have required such a large number of people; hence, the duties were also assigned by units of ten. It is also suggested that something has disturbed the relative numbers between the Merarites and the other families, with such an abnormally high percentage of those counted being between thirty and fifty years of age. In the ordinary situation, we might expect the age bracket to account for about one-fourth of the total population; the Merarites double this figure. We are given no explanation of the fact. The same source advances the possible thoughts that an abnormally high number of children of this tribe might have been slaughtered as infants in Egypt, or that they may suddenly have reduced the number of marriages. We can only speculate on the actual solution.

## QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

92. Is the suggestion that the census here is computed by tens out of harmony with the totals from the other tribes?
93. What advantage would there be to tallying in this fashion?
94. What explanations might be offered for the unusually high percentage of Merarites between the ages of thirty and fifty?

## VII. ASSORTED LAWS (5:1-6:27)

## A. EJECTION OF THE UNCLEAN vv. 1-4

## TEXT

Chapter 5:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead; 3. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them: that they defile not their

camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the Lord spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone with leprosy, and everyone having a discharge, and anyone who is unclean because of a dead person. 3. You shall put out both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camps, among which I dwell." 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside of the camp; as the Lord spoke to Moses, so did the children of Israel.

#### COMMENTARY

Full details for detecting the initial symptoms of leprosy for isolating him for three successive weeks before being consigned to perpetual separation or restoration to society, and for his ultimate return in the event of its cure are given in Lev. 13 and 14. The leper's expulsion from camp was immediate; his life must be spent where contact with others, even in the most casual manner, would be virtually impossible. Neither the Israelites nor any other ancient people have the vaguest concept of the manner in which the disease was spread. But the wisdom of such isolation would never be questioned today. The God whose hand was leading Israel long anticipated the discoveries of medical science in prescribing this treatment.

Other issues, discussed in Lev. 15, are cause of defilement as long as they obtain. They might spring from a wide variety of problems, and the victim remained separate from the nation until the matter was overcome. The term "issue" would refer to any unnatural oozing of blood, pus, or any similar liquid from the flesh, other than as the natural consequence of an injury. We are told that, until the time of Maimonides at least, a common custom in the East required the women's isolation during menstrual periods, (*ICC*, p. 40).

Defilement also occurred as a consequence of contact with a corpse, (Lev. 11:24, 21:1). The former reference applies when the corpse is that of an unclean animal; the second exempts from the law of uncleanness one who has come in contact with the body of his near of kin. These laws of exclusion from the camp were put immediately into force, and obtained when the people occupied Canaan, as prescribed in Lev. 13:45, 46.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

95. Explain the reasons for such harsh treatment of lepers as this commandment requires.
96. Review the laws relative to the period of isolation of one who is suspected of having leprosy. What provisions were made for his reinstatement into society if the problem disappeared?
97. What various kinds of bodily issues rendered a man or a woman unclean?
98. Why should an individual be considered unclean for having touched the corpse of an unclean animal?
99. This is one of the all-too-few instances in which the Israelites are said to have complied fully and immediately with the commandment of the Lord. What other such instances can you find during the period of wandering?

### B. RESTITUTION AND OFFERING FOR THEFT vv. 5-10

#### TEXT

Chapter 5:5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; 7. Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. 8. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an

atonement shall be made for him. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10. And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:5. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6. "Speak to the children of Israel, 'When a man or a woman commits any sin that men commit, sinning against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 7. then he shall confess the sins which he has committed, and make restitution in full for the trespass, and shall add one-fifth to it, and give it to him who has been wronged. 8. But if the man has no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the trespass, let the restitution which is made to the Lord be the priest's, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10. And every man's holy things shall be his: whatever any man gives to the priest, it shall be his.' "

### COMMENTARY

The law here supplements that of Lev. 6:1-7 telling the proper procedure to follow in the event of the death of the original owner, who has left no kinsmen who might receive repayment. By no means is he exempted from restitution, since his offense is primarily against God. As David was later to say so well, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," Ps. 51:4. Whether discovered or not, whether restitution in full is made to the wronged person in the event of robbery or any other crime, the essential thought is that all sin is first of all an assault upon the laws and will of God. *PC*, p. 36, cites the "general principle that the priest was the visible representative of the invisible majesty", hence, the offender's recompense is given him. The offering, in this instance, is a ram, given as a heave offering (Ex. 29:28). Such offerings were not burned upon the altar, but were "presented", after which they became the

property of the Lord, and were passed to the priests.

Three steps are involved, then, in the process of righting a wrong: the guilty must acknowledge his sin, he must make full restitution, and, by some process, there must be an atonement. Under the Law, the atonement involved his heave offering; under the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God effects our pardon.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

100. What was a thief required to do if he was caught with stolen goods, and the victim was still alive? (See Lev. 6:1-7).
101. How is it justifiable for the priest to receive the ram brought him as an offering for any sin?
102. Explain how all sins are essentially against God.
103. What three steps have always been required by God in order that any man's sins may be forgiven?
104. What great difference is there between the method of atonement in the Old Covenant, and in the New?
105. Discuss whether or not you think stealing and similar crimes might be discouraged today if our laws required that thieves repay what was stolen with a substantial increase, as the Law required.

### C. THE ORDEAL OF JEALOUSY vv. 11-31

#### TEXT

Chapter 5:11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 12. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13. And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she is defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14. And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15. Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord: 17. And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18. And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thine husband: 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22. And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. 23. And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: 24. And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse; and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar: 26. And the priest shall take a handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27. And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the

curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29. This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30. Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31. Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:11. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 12. "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'If any man's wife go aside, and commit a sin against him, and a man have intercourse with her, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected, she is defiled, although there is no witness against her and she has not been taken in the act, 14. if a spirit of jealousy come upon him and he be jealous of his wife when she is defiled; or if a spirit of jealousy come upon him and he be jealous of his wife when she is not defiled, 15. then shall the man bring his wife to the priest, and he shall bring an offering for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense on it, for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16. Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the Lord; 17. and the priest shall take holy water in a clay pot, and he shall take of the dust which is on the floor of the tabernacle, and shall put it in the water. 18. The priest shall then have the woman stand before the Lord, and loosen the hair of her head, and put the memorial offering in her hands—that is, the grain offering of jealousy; and the priest shall have in his hand the water of bitterness which causes a curse. 19. And the priest shall have her take an oath, saying unto the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone aside to uncleanness with someone other than your husband, be immune to this bitter water which causes the curse;

20. however, if you have gone aside to someone other than your husband, and if you are defiled and some man other than your husband has lain with you," 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of the curse, and shall say to the woman, "The Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people when He causes your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell; 22. and this water which causes the curse shall enter your bowels and make your abdomen to swell and your thigh to waste away." And the woman shall say, "Let it be so; let it be so." 23. "Then the priest shall write these curses on a scroll and wash them off with the bitter water; 24. and he shall make the woman drink the bitter water which causes the curse, so that the water which causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. 25. Then the priest shall take the meal offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and wave the offering before the Lord and offer it upon the altar; 26. and a priest shall take a handful of the offering, of the memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, and later shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27. And when he has caused her to drink the water, it shall happen that if she is defiled, and has sinned against her husband, the water which causes a curse shall enter into her and become bitter, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away and she will become a curse among her people. 28. But if the woman is not defiled, and is clean, then she shall be free and conceive children. 29. This is the Law of Jealousies: when a wife goes aside to someone other than her husband, and is defiled; 30. or when the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he becomes jealous of his wife, he shall bring the woman before the Lord and the priest shall apply all this law unto her. 31. The man shall be without guilt of sin, but his wife shall bear her guilt."

### COMMENTARY

Among all the sins which men commit, few or none are viewed with such loathing as that of adultery. Its consequences may spread in an ever-widening sphere, beginning with the offender and the offended, and including the immediate family,



the close and more remote circle of friends, neighbors, and an almost infinite combination of possibilities of social, business, religious and community factors. No other single wrong is so disruptive of the basic unit of God's ordained social structure, the home.

Even when there is reasonable ground for suspicion of marital infidelity, the consequences may be profound. The case is well presented in *KD*, pp. 29, 30: "As any suspicion cherished by a man against his wife, that she either is or has been guilty of adultery, whether well-founded or not, is sufficient to shake the marriage connection to its very roots, and to undermine, along with marriage, the foundation of the civil commonwealth, it was of the greatest importance to guard against this moral evil, which was so utterly irreconcilable with the holiness of the people of God, by appointing a process in harmony with the spirit of the theocratical law, and adapted to bring to light the guilt or innocence of any wife who had fallen into such suspicion, and at the same time to warn fickle wives against unfaithfulness."

The ordeal prescribed in this section was to be undergone where adultery was suspected, but could not be proved, for lack of witnesses. The penalty for demonstrable adultery was set (Lev. 20:10). It is in no way directly related to this test. The wife is to come with her husband, bringing an offering of barley meal to the priest. She is then to be brought before the Lord as she subscribes to an oath, setting forth the conditions that if she is innocent no harm will come of the test; but if there is guilt upon her soul, she will suffer the extraordinary consequences of having her body swell and her thigh "fall away". Josephus has suggested this is a form of dropsy. Michaelis proposes it to be dropsy of the ovary, in which a huge tumor may form in place of the ovarium, and swell to almost unbelievable size, causing dreadful emaciation. *KD* notes that "The punishment was to answer exactly to the crime, and to fall upon those bodily organs which had been the instruments of the woman's sin, viz. the organs of child-bearing.

No little symbolistic value has been found in the ingredients

of the test. *KD* has the holy water representing the righteousness and justice of God; the dust, taken from the sanctuary floor, signifies the curse of sin since dust was to be eaten by the serpent (Gen. 3:14); the earthen vessel is used rather than one of copper because it is virtually worthless; loosening the woman's hair suggests the loss of "the proper ornament of female morality and conjugal fidelity"; she stands with the offering in her own hands, as a symbol of her conduct before God, while the priests, holding the trial water, represents God and divine judgment, pp. 31, 32. Such hypothetical speculation is interesting and, to some degree logical; but the Bible makes no such associations.

After the charges against the woman had been inscribed on a roll, the writing itself was washed off into the bitter water, to become the water of trial. Much is made of this in *ICC* and *PC*, since antecedents and similarities may be found in numerous ancient, pagan societies, and contemporarily in parts of Africa among semi-barbarous people. Indeed, among some Mohammedans, those who are ill swallow portions of the Koran in hopes of a cure. *PC* cites an incident in the middle ages when Archbishop Edmund Rich, later canonized, washed a crucifix in water, drank it, and cited the thought, "Ye shall drink from the wells of salvation," p. 33. If one reckons without the power of a personal, righteous God, there is no difference between the superstitious practices of the pagan and the obedient response of believers in such a God. The Hebrews did not question either the method or the divine power behind the method of enforcing this test. In her response, "Amen, amen," the wife placed herself under the strictures of the test. If guilty, she awaited a horrible consequence; if innocent, a welcome acquittal, and the ability to produce children, v. 28.

The concluding verses, 29-31, free the husband of any guilt in subjecting his wife to the law's ordeal. It is generally believed that the consequences of the ordeal, if negative, would be apparent within a brief time. Josephus makes it a maximum of ten months. If, in the meanwhile, she should bear a son, the fact is considered an exoneration. *PC* says it is unlikely the ordeal

was ever actually used, since no guilty woman would dare subject herself to such a dreadful challenge, unless she had no fears of the actions of God. The same source asserts, with the Talmud as its authority, that the use of the law of jealousy ended forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, p. 41.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

106. Compare the process of this testing by the Law of Jealousy with the law covering demonstrable adultery.
107. The test of infidelity here has been called "almost inhuman" by today's standards. Discuss the point, showing problems which arise in a marriage afflicted by jealousy.
108. List the possible symbolisms in the steps followed in the test.
109. Could there be any danger in the wife's undergoing her ordeal if she is innocent of any wrongdoing?
110. The test of jealousy has been compared to numerous paganistic rituals. What essential differences do you find between the two?
111. What was the composition of "holy water", and for what various purposes, other than this test, was it used?  
Show the role of God throughout such a testing period.

### D. THE VOW OF THE NAZIRITE 6:1-21

#### TEXT

Chapter 6:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord; 3. He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he

separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6. All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. 8. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord. 9. 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. 10. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 11. And the priest shall offer for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. 12. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13. And this is the law of the Nazarite: when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 14. And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, 15. And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. 16. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: 17. And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. 18. 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. 19. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the

basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: 20. And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. 21. This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the Lord for his separation, besides that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 6:1. Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Speak to the children of Israel and tell them, 'When either a man or a woman takes the special vow of a Nazirite to separate himself to the Lord, 3. he shall abstain from wine and strong drink, and shall drink neither fermented wine, nor other fermented drink, nor any liquid from grapes, nor eat fresh or dried grapes. 4. All the days of his abstinence he shall eat nothing which comes from the grape vine, from the seeds to the skin. 5. All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall touch his head. Until the days are completed during which he separates himself to the Lord, he shall be holy unto the Lord; and he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long. 6. All the days of his separation unto the Lord he shall not approach a dead person. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister when they die, because the sign of God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord. 9. "And if any man dies very suddenly near him, and his head of consecration has been defiled, then he shall shave his head on the day he becomes clean, that is, on the seventh day. 10. Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the door of the Tent of Meeting. 11. The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering and make atonement for him, because he was defiled by the dead; and he shall consecrate his head on that same day, 12. and dedicate to the Lord the days of his abstinence, and

bring a year-old male lamb for a guilt offering: and the previous days shall be void because his separation was defiled.

13. Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are completed: he shall be brought to the Tent of Meeting, 14. and he shall offer his offering to the Lord, one year-old male lamb without blemish for a sin offering, and one year-old ewe lamb without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for a peace offering, 15. and a basket of unleavened bread, loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offerings. 16. Then the priest shall present them unto the Lord, and shall offer with his sin offering and his burnt offering. 17. He shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer his meal offering and his drink offering. 18. Then the Nazirite shall shave his head of separation at the door of the Tent of Meeting and take the hair of his head of separation and put it in the fire beneath the sacrifice of peace offerings. 19. And the priest shall take the boiled ram's shoulder and one unleavened loaf from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after his hair of separation is shaved. 20. Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. This is holy for the priest, together with the waved breast and the lifted shoulder; and after that the Nazirite may drink wine. 21. This is the law of the Nazirite who has vowed, and of his separation offering unto the Lord, in addition to whatever else he can afford; according to the vow he has taken, so he must do according to the law of his separation.' ”

#### COMMENTARY

The name here has been misspelled consistently by those who have made a false association between a Nazirite and a Nazarene. Aside from the similarity in spelling, confusion is impossible. A Nazarene was simply one from Nazareth, a city unknown during the Old Testament period. The term 'Nazirite' is derived from the Hebrew root *nazir*, whose basis meaning

indicates 'separation', which is significant to the vow. The name of the city of Nazareth was derived from *netser*, meaning a "shoot" or "sprout".

The Nazirite pledged himself to one of two kinds of vows, either temporary or lifelong. Three individuals in the Bible are known to have been lifelong Nazirites: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist. Although women were privileged to subscribe to the vow, we have no record of any who so pledged themselves, on either condition.

When one became a Nazirite, it was for the purpose of separation unto a special service for Jehovah. The vow lasted until the special task was accomplished. Such vows of separation are not found in Israel's history alone, although there are distinguishing marks in the system: (1) neither wine, nor grapes, nor any portion of the products of the vine were to be consumed; (2) the hair was never to be cut nor trimmed at all; and, (3) the subject should never come into contact with a dead body, even of the near of kin. When the angel of the Lord listed the details of the vow to which Samson should be pledged, a fourth element was included: he should eat no unclean thing (Judges 13:7). Since this final provision was a law unto Israel, its inclusion should have been unnecessary; however, the state of affairs at the time may have dictated that the term be included. Both Samuel and Samson were given to be Nazirites before their birth, and it is inferred from Luke 1:15 that the same is true of John. *PBD* affirms that many, but perhaps not all, of the Qumran community at the time of John were Nazirites, p. 575. Acts 21:23ff. makes reference to Paul's support of the four men who were Nazirites, and some have believed the apostle himself subscribed in Acts 18:18. But the evidence is inconclusive. We do know that Herod Agrippa supported a number of Nazirites, according to Josephus, and that numerous Jews took the vow as a protest against Antiochus Epiphanes in the time of the Maccabees. Among the bitter denunciations of Amos is a strong condemnation of those who gave wine to the Nazirites, thus inducing them to break their vows. In the passage, (Amos 2:11, 12), the Nazirites apparently

are considered, along with the prophets, to be spiritual leaders of the people.

Upon completion of the term of his pledge, the Nazirite was released to ordinary life according to the schedule announced in vv. 13-20. The climax came when the hair of his head was shaved and burned. Thus the Nazirite acknowledged that he had been able to keep his vow by virtue of the strength God had given him. The "sodden shoulder" was the ram's left; the right already belonged to the priest. (Lev. 7:32). Since the offerer shared in this offering, the peace offering, it was appropriate that he should take the choice portion not assigned to the priest for the sacrificial meal for himself and his family as all celebrated the conclusion of the vow. Wine was allowed for the occasion (v. 20).

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

113. Distinguish between the Nazarene and the Nazirite, both as to meaning and derivation.
114. At what age might one take the vow of the Nazirite?
115. What is the purpose of this vow?
116. Give the restrictions placed upon the Nazirite, and tell why each one was prescribed.
117. What relationship might there be between the length of the Nazirite's hair and the validity of his vow?
118. Which of the Bible characters are known to have been Nazirites? What proof have we in each case?
119. How long did the Nazirite vow last?
120. Describe the ritual through which a Nazirite devotee must go in the event of his defilement.
121. List the steps associated with the completion of the vow of the Nazirite. What is the special symbolism of the shaving of the head? of the unleavened bread?
122. How was the termination of the vow celebrated? by whom?



## E. THE AARONIC BENEDICTION vv. 22-27

## TEXT

Chapter 6:22. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: 25. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26. the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 6:22. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 23. "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'In this way you shall bless the children of Israel, saying to them, 24. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; 25. The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you: 26. The Lord lift up His countenance unto you, And give you peace." 27. They shall put my name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them.' "

## COMMENTARY

Although Aaron and his sons had been established now as high priest and family, God delivers a special formula of blessing to Moses, and, through him, the people. The method underscored once more the esteem in which Moses is held. According to the Mishnah, this blessing was given daily in Jerusalem at the temple, and the proper name for Jehovah was used rather than the altered form, "Adonai," which suggests the solemnity of its pronouncement. The same source reports use of the blessing in the synagogues, but with the substitute name. Aaron was appointed to bless the people (Deut. 21:5, cf. I Chron. 23:13), and Lev. 9:22 gives an example of this action. In this sequence of thoughts we readily see the divine name being committed exclusively to the high priestly line.

The structure of the benediction is elementary, consisting of three sections, each of which begins with "The Lord," followed

by two parts. Each of the two parts is directed to the hearer. It might be analyzed as follows:

The Lord	bless thee,	and keep thee:
The Lord	make his face shine upon thee	and be gracious unto thee:
The Lord	lift up his countenance upon thee	and give thee peace.

Analysis by ICC yields a fruitful harvest of thought. "The Lord bless thee" is tied to the promises of Deut. 28:2-14—that plenteous harvests and success in all undertakings. "And guard thee" gives the reverse of this wish—that God should guard against such things as drought and hostile invasions. The shining face of the Lord is related to many references, such as Ps. 31:17; Dan. 9:17; Ps. 80:4, 8, 20, and many others. The significance is that of inward pleasure or, when turned upon another, a favorable disposition. It suggests also, as in Ex. 34:29ff., the radiant glory of the divine presence. God's graciousness hardly needs comment. It is obvious in all ages through His supreme mercy and providence. That God should "lift up his countenance" suggests favorable regard, just as hiding the face would indicate imminent trouble for His creatures. God's smile shines as the sun upon those who love Him. The peace, *shalom*, which only God can bestow, is much more than a negative circumstance—the absence of war, or disruptive circumstance—it is the stability, calmness and utter tranquility captured in beautiful thought by Isaiah (26:3): "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." With this thought, the benediction is most appropriately closed.

The "name" which was to be put upon the people has now been irrecoverably lost by those into whose custody it was most carefully entrusted. For fear of profaning the original form of the name of Jehovah, its use was gradually abandoned and ultimately forfeited entirely. The various names we use today are either speculation and guesswork, or substitutes. In its original form, the name pointed to the timeless and eternal nature of God—without beginning and without end; existing at all times and at any time, before time was ordained for man, and after time shall end. In His eternal Person is grounded any

and every blessing man may seek.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

123. Why was this benediction, to be used by Aaron and his descendants, first delivered through Moses?
124. Arrange the benediction into its poetic components, showing the finely balanced thoughts.
125. What special kinds of blessings are suggested here?
126. How had God promised to "guard" or "keep" Israel?
127. What is the significance of the phrases "make His face shine upon you" and "lift up His countenance unto you"?
128. Cite some examples of the appearance of God's radiance to men in both the Old and the New Testaments. What was the common reaction? Is the expression here any different, and if so, in what way?
129. What paradox do you find in God's promise of "peace" unto the Israelites as you think of their later history?
130. Why are we unable to say exactly what the original form of God's name might have been? How was it lost, and by whom?

## VIII. PRINCES' OFFERINGS AT THE DEDICATION

(7:1-89)

### TEXT

Chapter 7:1. And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them: 2. that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: 3. And they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle. 4. And the Lord spake