

# THE NAZARITE VOW

(The burnt offering)

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*“Philippians 2 vs 5 – 8 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”*

## *Quotable quotes:*

*“We must be sons in the house, who understand what the father does, so that when it comes to the place of giving an offering, we will know that which is expected of us. We must be a people who have been nurtured and fed by the word of the Lord. We should be sufficiently committed and yielded to God to willingly surrender our desires in order to function effectively in our callings.*

*... Rexford Lawson.*

(Sunday 7th April, 2008)

# **THE NAZARITE VOW CONTD.**

## Introduction:

We have been dealing with what steps we can take to restore fellowship with God, when we have desecrated our Nazarite vow (i.e. when we have walked in disobedience). We recall that a “Nazarite” is one who has decided willingly to separate himself unto God and to live according to His dictates or commandments. Today we continue to deal with the steps towards restoration when he (the Nazarite) falls short of expectation or sins or does anything forbidden by the Lord; we have addressed the “sin offering” today we deal with the “burnt offering”.

## **What was involved in giving a burnt offering in the old testament times?**

Lev. 4 vs 10 – 12. The burnt offering was an offering offered unto God in which the entire animal was slaughtered and placed on the altar (after the blood has been taken and sprinkled by the priest) and completely burnt up. Unlike the sin offering, no portion of the meat was given out to the priest as is stipulated for other offerings. The whole animal was burnt to ashes; meat, hoofs, skin etc.

Burnt offerings were usually offered to God out of a heart condition of appreciation, thanksgiving or repentance. When Noah came out of the ark, he must have been overwhelmed at what God had done upon the face of the earth; how God had kept him. The Bible records in *Genesis 8 vs 20* that *“Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it”* (NIV).

Note God’s reaction *vs 21* *“The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart: Never again will I curse the ground because of men, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done (NIV)*. When we offer a burnt offering that is acceptable to God, it moves the hand of God; this is because a burnt offering is symbolic of offering up all, it means you are ready and willing to give up everything to God. This is a sacrifice that God will not despise. *“A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise”*. It really touches God when we submit our all.

## **What does giving a burnt offering entail in our time?**

**In the present day sacrificing bulls and goats on a physical altar is no longer relevant.** This is great deception. Beware of churches or groups that encourage you to come and offer up such sacrifices. It is demonic. God expects us to bring our burnt offering to him. The burnt offering that is required in our day is the sacrifice of your life (your ambitions, desires, achievements, your pride etc) God expects you to offer your entire personality to him.

The record in Genesis, of the demands God made on Abraham gives us a good illustration of what “burnt offerings” are in our day.

*Genesis 22 vs 1* *“And he said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”*.

God spoke to Abraham and made a specific demand on him. The instruction was to offer up his only son, whom he (Abraham) loved very much. This certainly was not a light matter. You would recall that this is the son that Abraham had waited for, for many years. It takes a man who is totally sold out to God to be able to respond to such an instruction. Note that Abraham was to offer not a ram but a human being, an individual: God has passed the stage of asking for bulls and goats. What God is demanding for is you!!

*Vs 4b* *“... Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*

Giving a burning offering is an act of worship. This is why it is no light matter for one to yield to the demands of traditional priest who ask for goats or other animals for sacrifice. If you partake in such or lend your money to such evil, even if you are not physically present you are culpable of worshipping whatever god the sacrifice is made to.

An offering must be brought willingly. If your offerings are not brought willingly, it will not be acceptable to God. God made a demand on Abraham, and though it was a painful thing Abraham brought the “precious” offering willingly as was demanded of him.

**Point of emphasis:** We must realize the import of Abraham's action. God made a demand on Abraham and because he had an obedient heart, he did not rebel against the instruction even though it was very painful. He was willing to give up that which was very precious to him.

**God is also laying a demand upon us as his people to give up those things, though precious to us, are contrary to His will or are impeding our progress in God.** As God makes His demands upon you and calls for your precious things (your fashion, your comfort, finances, time, your diet, emotions, choices such as choice of marriage partners, your choice of career, etc), what will your reaction be?. Will you give willingly, trusting like Abraham "... *That the Lord was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure*" (*Heb. 11 vs 19*) or like job and respond "*The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh blessed be the name of the Lord*" or will you be like the man who came to Jesus at night saying what must I do to be saved? And when he was told to give up the precious thing (his wealth) the bible records he went away (turned back) sorrowing. May God gives us grace to be sufficiently committed to him to be able to give up **All**. Gen. 22 vs 9.

### **Learn a lesson from Isaac.**

Isaac presented himself willingly to be a sacrificial lamb. We know that it would have been difficult for Abraham to bind Isaac up if he did not willingly submit to it. I believe the father must have explained to him the demand of God and he must have understood and submitted, just as he submitted when the father responded to his question *vs 86 "... And he said, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together"*.

Isaac had a good knowledge of God. He asked his father "*Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering*" *Lev. 22 vs 76*. From his question we can deduce that Isaac had an understanding of how burnt sacrifices were made else he would not have wondered about the lamb. He apparently understood the ways of God sufficiently to submit to his father even unto the death a lesson. Young Christians, do not be satisfied just to know God as the God of your father, but be encouraged to know and understand His ways and be willing to yield to the demands of God. Be diligent to study the bible to know who this God is.

It is better to submit our lives to God that we might have a better resurrection. The demand on Abraham was to offer something precious, the demands on Isaac was offer yourself. This is the call of the hour. *Romans 12 vs 1 "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable service"*.

### **What does it take to be an Isaac?**

What will it take for us to be Isaacs? Isaac willing submitted himself to Abraham to be slaughtered on the altar? There are attributes that qualify us to be the Isaac's of our time. If God is making a demand on us at this time, it will require obedience, submission, faith, humility, trust and commitment on our part. God is particular about you, you must be committed to the cause. This is the Isaac God is looking for. To be a choice son, like Isaac (the first fruit), there are attributes that must be worked out in us. Lets look at these attributes closely.

- 1) **Submission:** We must be submitted and completely yielded to the will of the father. Your heart condition should be that "Lord do with me as you will".
- 2) **Faith:** You must have faith i.e. you must believe and be convinced about who God is. When God is making a demand on us, we ourselves must be convinced that it is God demanding from us. A man does not pursue any and any course. No man will give himself to any and any thing. You must be convinced sufficiently that this God is a well able, to be able to surrender completely. Job said "even though he slays me, I know my redeemer liveth". It takes a man that is fully persuaded to walk in this realm. Submit yourselves to what God brings your way (i.e. yielding to God's dealings with you) so that you will understand Him better.
- 3) **Obedience:** Obedience is the overriding ingredient in being an "Isaac". If you do not obey, how can you talk about submission. Isaac was obedient, there was a willingness to obey the father's instruction to the letter.

- 4) **Humility**: Without this quality it would have been difficult for Isaac to submit willingly to the father's instruction. This quality was found in Jesus, who submitted himself even unto the death. The bible records this in Philippians 2 vs 5 – 9.  
Our attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had, *vs 6 "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation"*.
- 5) **Commitment**: You must be one who is sufficiently committed to the "cause". If Isaac was not committed enough to Abraham and the Lord's course he would not have submitted himself. You must be one who has counted God's matters your own matters like Isaac who must have said if God wanted this, then so be it. He deemed it worthwhile to please God.
- 6) **Trust**: Trust can be described as reliance on someone or something. It is similar to having faith.

**What does it take to make an Abraham? You must be:**

- ⇒ Dead to self (Philippians 2 vs 5)
- ⇒ You must be able to hear God clearly.
- ⇒ Faith, submission, commitment, trust are also required.

To be like Abraham doing the will of God, all these attributes must be found in us as much as it was found in Isaac.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

**Question 1:** When God is making a demand on you, how much time are you allowed to convince yourself that this is what God wants of you before you obey OR immediately you hear the word should you just run with it, even if it is not very clear? Is there a time frame that can be given?

Answer: There is no clear cut answer to this question. It actually depends on the word received and the situation you find yourself. There are some instructions that are very clear, in such cases, there is nothing to cross check or consider e.g. "Thou shall not steal" is a direct word, immediately you receive it, you just better not steal. You don't need any confirmation, "thou shalt not steal" is "thou shalt not steal".  
Sometimes God gives you a word that is not so clear cut. At such a time you may need to pause. There may be some dealings you may have to go through in the hand of God before you act on the word e.g. Moses received a word that he was to deliver Israel; it took 40 years and several dealings before the time came for the word to be acted on. Again when God gives you a word, he may just be introducing a matter to you. If you run ahead you might fail. What you do in this case is to go to God in prayer and move step by step and things will unfold.

The main issue here should be responding to God in prayer and moving step by step in faith. If you have a right heart or attitude towards God, as you take the first step, God will confirm and open up His ways to you, even if you make a mistake, God will step in and stop you.

**Point to Note**

Let us avoid the danger of hiding under the cloak of "I am waiting to be convinced" and using it as an excuse to walk in rebellion. May God deliver His children from using this excuse especially when it comes to the issue of Christian liberties e.g. you say that you are praying to be convinced not to marry an unbeliever, the bible gives a clear instruction about this. How you feel is totally irrelevant. You do not serve God by feelings. In the kingdom of God the word of the Lord, is the word of the Lord. You hear and you obey whether you feel like or not.

Also remember you must be familiar enough with God to be able to hear him speak. You know how God deals with you; so when a demand is made on you, the issue should not be waiting to be convinced, but rather did I hear right.

**Question 2:** My thought goes to Sarah. Where was Sarah when her husband was taking her only child away, without a sacrificial lamb? Did Abraham give her full details? What must have run through her mind? Did she confront Abraham or ask him if he was convinced of what he was doing? Or may be she was not told.

**Answer:** The bible is silent on this, so we cannot answer with all certainty. But we can use a little imagination.

I believe Sarah must have known. I believe just the way the son reacted to the father, so Sarah must have reacted to the husband in submission. I feel it would have been unnatural for a woman like Sarah not to have noticed that there was no lamb. I believe she must have asked. From the way Sarah revered her husband (she referred to him as “my lord”), we can safely suggest that even if she were told, she must have submitted to her husbands convictions. I believe for someone like Sarah the issue here was: faith in this God whom her husband worshipped.

When God makes a demand upon us we must be able to come to the position where we judge God faithful enough to obey him. The propelling force for Abraham was that he believed that God was able to raise him (Isaac) from the dead, so if he was in a position to tell the wife, he must have told her this and the wife being one who had known to judge God faithful, would also have believed that word. The important thing for us is; when God makes a demand, whether on a man, a child or a woman, a child of God must come to the position where

- 1) He submits to God
- 2) He has faith that God is faithful who has promised (God had promised

Abraham that through His seed he will have a multiplicity of children). Therefore Abraham must have reasoned; if God is taking him, then God was able to restore.

**Question 3:** What is the difference between obedience and submission?

**Answer:**

- ⇒ We get enlightenment from the parable Jesus told of the son who on receiving instruction from his father, agreed that he will carry out the instruction but never did; as opposed to the one who said he will not carry out the instruction but later went to do as his father said. The obedient child, we could say is the one that though he refused the instruction; later went on to do as he was told; the other son submitted initially to the father’s instruction but did not go on to obey.
- ⇒ One could say submission is a condition of the heart, the inward attitude “a willingness to do”; while obedience is the actual action or manifestation of that submission i.e. carrying out of the specific instruction. This story could illustrate the difference. A child was told to sit down by his father and he refused. Later on he sat down but told the father. “Dad I am sitting down as you instructed, but in my heart I am standing”. He was obedient to his father’s instruction but not submitted to his father.
- ⇒ Obedience and submission (yield) are somehow interrelated. You cannot obey except you yield. We could safely say that the two words are synonymous.

Dictionary definition:

**Submission:** Yielding or readiness to yield: a willingness to yield or surrender to somebody, or the act of doing something.

**Obedience:** The act of practice of following instructions, complying with rules or regulations, or submitting to somebody’s authority.

# IT PAYS TO REMEMBER ...

## READING THE BIBLE CONTD.

A person who is good at reading the Bible is surely a careful person before God. He cannot be sloppy or muddled. Many people are very careless. They listen to men's words carelessly and read God's word carelessly. They do not see what God's word emphasizes and are ignorant of the depths in His word. The first thing a person has to do is discover the facts. Afterwards, he has to memorize these facts and analyze, categorize, and compare them. In this way he will get the supply and also supply others. He will receive nourishment and also nourish others.

Here I will give a simple illustration. If we read the bible carefully, we will find the New Testament expressions in the Lord, in Christ, in Christ Jesus, etc. It never says in Jesus or In Jesus Christ. It only says in Christ Jesus, not in Jesus Christ. These are facts. We can memorize and jot down these facts one by one. Find where it says Christ and what the context is. Find yet another place where it says in Christ Jesus and what the context is. We can compare them. Why does it say in Christ in one instance instead of in Jesus? Why does one place say in Christ Jesus and not In Jesus Christ? Why does the Bible never say in Jesus or in Jesus Christ? What is the reason for this? When we analyze and compare the scriptures in this way, looking to God for enlightenment, we will see something.

Once the light comes, everything will become very clear, Jesus is the name given to the Lord while He was on earth. Christ is the name given to Him after His resurrection when God anointed Him. "God has made Him both Lord and Christ". Do you remember these words in Acts 2? Christ is the name given to Him in His resurrection. In reading Romans we find the words Christ Jesus, which mean that the Christ today is the very Jesus who was on earth before. His name before resurrection was Jesus Christ. This name implies that Jesus would one day be the Christ. Jesus was His name when He lived on earth as a man. These two expressions - Christ bring once Jesus, and Jesus eventually becoming Christ - mean two different things. Moreover, we can only be in Christ, not in Jesus Christ. When the Lord was on earth, we could not be Him. If we had been in Him when He was on earth, we should have taken part in His cross and His redemption. This is contrary to the truth. We have no part in His incarnation at Bethlehem. He was the only begotten Son of God, and we have no part in that.

How then can we be in Christ? First Corinthians 1:30 says, "But of Him [God] you are in Christ Jesus". It does not say in Jesus. After the Lord Jesus died and resurrected, we become joined to Him in His resurrection. Through His death and resurrection, God has made Him the Christ, and God has joined us to Him through the Spirit. We received His life at the time of His resurrection.

This is one way to read the Bible. This is an example of how we study the Bible. First, discover the facts. Then memorize, analyze, categorize, and compare these facts. After this pray to the Lord and wait on Him; He will enlighten you and give you understanding. ... Watchman Nee. (Reading the Bible, Nov. 1997)