

thelawofgod.org

Appendix 8g: Nazirite and Vow Laws - Why They Cannot Be Kept Today

This page is part of a series exploring the laws of God that could be obeyed only when the Temple was present in Jerusalem.

- Appendix 8a: The Laws of God That Require the Temple
- Appendix 8b: The Sacrifices — Why They Cannot Be Kept Today
- Appendix 8c: The Biblical Festivals — Why None of Them Can Be Kept Today
- Appendix 8d: The Purification Laws — Why They Cannot Be Kept Without the Temple
- Appendix 8e: Tithes and Firstfruits — Why They Cannot Be Kept Today
- Appendix 8f: The Communion Service — The Last Supper of Jesus Was Passover
- Appendix 8g: Nazirite and Vow Laws — Why They Cannot Be Kept Today (This page).
- Appendix 8h: Partial and Symbolic Obedience Related to the Temple
- Appendix 8i: The Cross and the Temple

The laws of vows, including the Nazirite vow, show how deeply certain commandments of the Torah depend on the Temple system established by God. Since the Temple, the altar, and the Levitical priesthood have been removed, these vows cannot be completed today. The modern attempts to imitate or "spiritualize" these vows—especially the Nazirite vow—are not obedience but inventions. The Law defines what these vows are,

how they begin, how they end, and how they must be completed before God. Without the Temple, no vow of the Torah can be fulfilled as God commanded.

What the Law commanded about vows

The Law takes vows with absolute seriousness. When a person made a vow to God, the vow became a binding obligation that had to be fulfilled exactly as promised (Numbers 30:1-2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23). God warned that delaying or failing to fulfill a vow was sin. But the fulfillment of a vow was not merely inward or symbolic—it required action, offerings, and the involvement of God's sanctuary.

Many vows included sacrifices of thanksgiving or freewill offerings, meaning that the vow had to be fulfilled at the altar of God in the place He chose (Deuteronomy 12:5-7; 12:11). Without the altar, no vow could be brought to completion.

The Nazirite vow: a Temple-dependent law

The Nazirite vow is the clearest example of a commandment that cannot be fulfilled today, even though several outward behaviors associated with it can still be imitated. Numbers 6 describes the Nazirite vow in detail, and the chapter makes a clear distinction between the outward signs of separation and the requirements that make the vow valid before God.

The outward signs include:

- Separating from wine and all grape products (Numbers 6:3-4)
- Allowing the hair to grow with no razor upon the head (Numbers 6:5)
- Not becoming contaminated by corpses (Numbers 6:6-7)

But none of these behaviors create or complete a Nazirite vow. According to the Law, the vow only becomes complete—and only becomes acceptable before God—when the person goes to the sanctuary and presents the required offerings:

- The burnt offering

- The sin offering
- The fellowship offering
- The grain and drink offerings

These sacrifices were commanded as the essential conclusion of the vow (Numbers 6:13-20). Without them, the vow remains unfinished and invalid. God also required additional offerings if accidental impurity occurred, meaning the vow cannot continue or restart without the Temple system (Numbers 6:9-12).

This is why the Nazirite vow cannot exist today. A person may imitate certain outward actions, but he cannot enter, continue, or complete the vow that God defined. Without the altar, the priesthood, and the sanctuary, there is no Nazirite vow—only human imitation.

How Israel obeyed

Faithful Israelites who took a Nazirite vow obeyed the Law from beginning to end. They separated themselves during the days of the vow, avoided impurity, and then went up to the sanctuary to complete the vow with the offerings God required. Even accidental impurity required specific offerings to “reset” the vow (Numbers 6:9-12).

No Israelite ever completed a Nazirite vow in a village synagogue, a private home, or symbolic ceremony. It had to be done at the sanctuary God chose.

The same is true of other vows. Fulfillment required sacrifices, and sacrifices required the Temple.

Why these vows cannot be obeyed today

The Nazirite vow—and every vow in the Torah that requires offerings—cannot be completed today because the altar of God no longer exists. The Temple is gone. The priesthood is not serving. The sanctuary is absent. And without these, the final and essential act of the vow cannot occur.

The Torah does not permit a Nazirite vow to be “ended spiritually” with no offerings. It does not allow modern teachers to create symbolic endings, alternative ceremonies, or private interpretations. God defined how the vow must end, and He removed the means of obedience.

For this reason:

- No one today can take a Nazirite vow according to the Torah.
- No vow involving offerings can be fulfilled today.
- Any symbolic attempt to imitate these vows is not obedience.

These laws remain eternal, but obedience is impossible until God restores the Temple.

Jesus did not cancel these laws

Jesus never abolished the laws of vows. He warned people not to make careless vows because of their binding nature (Matthew 5:33-37), but He never removed a single requirement written in Numbers or Deuteronomy. He never told His disciples that the Nazirite vow was outdated or that vows no longer required the sanctuary.

Paul shaving his head (Acts 18:18) and participating in purification expenses in Jerusalem (Acts 21:23-24) confirm that Jesus never abolished the laws of vows and that, before the destruction of the Temple, Israelites continued to fulfill their vows exactly as the Torah required. Paul did not complete anything in private or in a synagogue; he went to Jerusalem, to the Temple, and to the altar, because the Law defined where a vow must be brought to its conclusion. The Torah defines what a Nazirite vow is, and according to the Torah, no vow can be fulfilled without the offerings at God’s sanctuary.

Symbolic obedience is disobedience

As with sacrifices, festivals, tithes, and purification laws, the removal of the Temple forces us to honor these laws—not by inventing replacements, but by refusing to claim obedience where obedience is impossible.

To imitate a Nazirite vow today by growing one's hair, abstaining from wine, or avoiding funerals is not obedience. It is a symbolic action disconnected from the commandments that God actually gave. Without the offerings at the sanctuary, the vow is invalid from the start.

God does not accept symbolic obedience. The worshipper who fears God does not invent replacements for the Temple or for the altar. He honors the Law by recognizing the limits God Himself has placed.

We obey what can be obeyed, and we honor what cannot

The Nazirite vow is holy. Vows in general are holy. None of these laws were abolished, and nothing in the Torah suggests that they would one day be replaced by symbolic practices or internal intentions.

But God removed the Temple. Therefore:

- We cannot complete the Nazirite vow.
- We cannot complete vows that require offerings.
- We honor these laws by not pretending to fulfill them symbolically.

Obedience today means keeping the commandments that can still be kept and honoring the others until God restores the sanctuary. The Nazirite vow remains written in the Law, but it cannot be obeyed until the altar stands again.