

#35 Naso Numbers 4:21-7:89

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Growing in God and His light can cover the hardness of sin in our lives.
- * We are to be a people who settle our hearts on truth.
- * We should understand how the Bible fits together.
- * God can sustain our walk, even in difficult times.

Naso means, "to lift up." Naso begins with God instructing Moshe to take a census of the L'vi'im (Levites), the families of Gershon, M'rari, and K'hat, from 30 to 50 years of age. The Levites were camped closest to the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting, Tabernacle in the desert). They were given that status because they didn't commit the sin of the golden calf. It is an object lesson; we see God using object lessons in the Bible. Those who are pure are closest to God, so we also should seek to be pure. The Levites were to do various acts of service for the Mishkan while Israel was in the wilderness. Anyone who had a discharge, tzara'at (affliction of skin, clothes, or house), or touched the dead were to go outside the camp. Restitution includes an extra 20 percent, a woman whose husband was jealous would go through a test, and a person making a nazir vow is described.

Making amends for damages is a commandment of God. Our country has incorporated this law into practice in our country as well as many other biblical commands. We have insurance to help us make proper amends for damages and determine what is just. Yeshua taught that we are to make satisfactory restitution in Matthew 5:40.

The person making the nazir vow was to eat or drink **no** grape products and that included raisins. Drinking fermented beverages is permitted (just no grape wine). They are to make offerings at the end of the vow and the vow lasted 30 days. The nazir vow was often made to obtain something like a baby or a healing. It could be made for almost any reason including just to be pious. At the end of the vow, the person was to shave their head and burn their hair. Any type of fast for the purpose of healing or just to be closer to God is a good thing.

I sometimes fast things like TV and video games, and food. I have to be careful with fasting food and people who could have physical issues from fasting food should be careful. The Torah teaches us to protect life (and to protect the lives of others) and taking care of ourselves is a commandment of God. For example, if we are supposed to be taking medication, we should take it unless we are healed. A medical professional can determine if we are healed.

Matthew 2:23 does not refer to Yeshua being a Nazir; that is a misunderstanding of the text. He grew up as a netzer of the line of David. Those in the line of David left Bethlehem to protect themselves against King Herod, the murderous Roman appointed king.¹ A netzer is an underground shoot from a plant that begins growing in another place; in this case it refers to those in the line of David who had moved away from Bethlehem to protect themselves. Matthew 2:23 is referring to a branch, a netzer coming from the line of David. Netzer is the word used for branch in Isaiah 11:1 that refers to the future Messiah who would come some 600 years later. "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots;" Isaiah 11:1 NKJV. Yeshua the Messiah was a netzer (not a nazir) from the

¹ The **Roman appointed leadership** including the **Roman appointed chief priest** are the ones that put Yeshua to death. Those crying out for His death were sent to do that by the Roman leadership (Matthew 27:20). Yeshua said that the Roman leadership and the Gentiles would put Him to death (Matthew 20:18-19) and that is exactly what happened. The Romans turned it around on the Jews and blamed the Jews, but it was the Romans who put Him to death. The curse they proclaimed fell on them when they made up their pagan Roman/Greek religion. "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God;" 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV.

line of David who grew up not in the typical Davidic town of Bethlehem, but ironically (or not ironically) in Nazareth.

The Aaronic Benediction is given in Numbers 6:24-27. It says we are to put God's name on Israel, those who believe in the true God. We are to still do this blessing over believers. The people of Israel were believers; believers in the Messiah Yeshua are believers. According to Exodus 3:15, God's name is Yĕ-hō-váh. God's real name has been found in over 2,363 manuscripts pointed as Yĕ-hō-váh, **never** as Yahwah, and once as Yehoveh.² Exodus 3:15 NKJV says, "Moreover God said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: The Lord (יהוה, yud-hey-vav-hey, Yĕhōváh) God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'" The articles of the Mishkan are consecrated, offerings that were to be made were described, and the portion ends with God speaking to Moshe from above the ark between the two K'ruvim (Cherubs).

The Tanakh often refers to those who worship idols as having committed adultery. Spiritual adultery is loving something more than God or worshipping idols. The believers in Yeshua are the bride of Messiah (see 2 Cor. 11:2); those who believe in the Messiah Yeshua should not worship any idols or believe in a different Messiah. Also, the nazir vow teaches us to pursue God deeply to receive special blessings and to seek purity. In this portion, God defines how the priest is to bless the people. It is important for us to understand that God wants to bless us when we do things His way including how we pronounce blessings on the people. Also, just as God chose how we were to bless people, God chose speaking in tongues as a way to pray in this Messianic age; Shaul said that he wished all believers spoke in tongues and he said the things he was sharing in 1 Corinthians 12-14 are commandments of the Lord. You can make all the excuses you want; they are commandments of God. Shaul said believers are to seek the spiritual gifts, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts;" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV.

The Haftarah for Naso is Judges 13:2-25. The Haftarah portion is about an angel of the Lord coming to tell the wife of Manoach who was barren that she would have a child who was to be a lifetime nazir and gave her specific instructions to her for while she was pregnant. Since being childless was a big deal in her time, she could have been deeply seeking the Lord for a child and even did a nazir vow herself. Her pregnancy involved not eating any grape products like in a nazir vow. Her son, Samson, would begin to rescue Israel from the power of the Philistines. Samson was empowered by God for his entire life with herculean strength; believers in the Messiah Yeshua are empowered by God through the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:26).

Growing in our spiritual life and forming an understanding of how to apply the scriptures can make us into a new people; a people of light. We become a people who are sensitive to what is right and wrong. Our behaviors are no longer opposed to God, but we have dropped all that opposes God and do things His way.

Hebrews says that those who sin have an evil heart; they are not following God. We are not to be deceived and begin to sin; we are to be "steadfast to the end." Hebrews 3:12-14 NKJV says, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."

² Nehemiah Gordon, a Jewish Dead Sea scholar has been studying this and sharing this information since the early 2,000s.

I wonder how many of us have realized that when we accept sin in our lives, we have an evil heart. That's what it says. Not only that, we are not believing in God. It makes sense; when we do what God says, we are believing in Him and when we don't do what God says, we are not believing in Him. Also, we need encouragement so we can stay on the right path. Shaul (Paul) said to Timothy to stay away from sinful desires (lusts) and to do what is right (righteousness). He says that those who don't know truth have fallen into the traps of the devil who keeps them captive.

2 Timothy 2:22-26 NKJV:

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

These are great scriptures. What kinds of sinful desires do you suppose Shaul is talking about? Of course, it's what the Old Testament tells us is a sinful desire. Again, there was no New Testament; early believers kept the Old Testament laws. It was in the 300s that our faith became infected with pagan doctrine; the Roman Empire made it illegal to keep God's feasts, enforced their false religion filled with paganism, and produced a Greek text filled with anti-Jewish sentiment to replace the Hebrew New Testament. The Hebrew New Testament was put together around 150 AD. They took over a Jewish movement where God was King of humanity and made it into a pagan Roman/Greek movement. That's what we've inherited and that's why we need to get back to our Jewish roots. Not the Jewish roots of extra unbiblical applications of the Bible.

Our understanding has mostly come from a complete lack of biblical context. While the Complete Jewish Bible uses Hebrew names which places the Bible in a better context (I like this version), **it still has to be understood within the context it was written** whether Israeli, Jewish, or Roman contexts (Roman because the Jews were under Roman rule.). The King James or New King James uses a word for word translation and that provides a way to examine what the context was talking about. That's why I use the New King James Version in my studies.

Newer versions of the Bible interpret what the Bible is saying; this doesn't allow us to look for biblical and cultural ways of understanding the Bible properly. **The Bible cannot be understood properly by just plainly reading it;** if that's what you are doing, then you are reading your own context into it. If you don't understand the Bible properly, **you don't have God's word.**

Shaul said that people who sin are taken captive by the devil. People who think they are exercising their rights to sin or think they are okay with God by just saying a prayer and still sinning are in fact making themselves slaves. Is that what you want to be? Yeshua said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." John 8:34 NKJV. I don't want to be a slave and those who are living in sin are slaves to the devil and to the sins they are committing.

We need to understand the Bible properly and within the biblical culture of that time. Kill the Canaanites applied to the pagan child killers that Israel was to replace when they entered the land of Canaan. That was a command for Israel back when they entered the land. We need to understand context. We are to be a people who want truth and who settle our hearts on truth. If we accept all the bad doctrine passed down to us, we will still be pagan Roman/Greeks and Shaul said no idol worshipper and no sexual sinner will be in God's future kingdom.

In Acts it says that those who heard about the Messiah Yeshua read the Old Testament to see if what they were being told is true. Acts 17:11-12 NKJV says, "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men." If the Old Testament is done away with as some say, then why did they bother going to the Old Testament to find truth?

Some say we don't have to follow God's commandments in the Old Testament. Fair weights and measures are commands in the Old Testament. Is that done away with? Some say we are just to love God and others. They then interpret for themselves how to live; the Bible says that is wrong. I know of someone who thought loving someone else was to commit homosexual sin.

God is big enough to define who He is and what is right and wrong. Proverbs 21:2 NKJV, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts." God examines our hearts to see if we are keeping His commandments or just making up our own. Keep God's commands or end up in the lake of fire. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone;" Revelation 21:8 NKJV. Understanding the Bible properly is important.

We should understand how the Bible fits together. Yeshua (Jesus) quotes from the Old Testament and so does Shaul. If it was done away with, why did they bother substantiating what is true by using the Old Testament? Early believers followed Yeshua's teachings. Yeshua quotes Isaiah 29:13 and said, "In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men;" Matthew 15:9 NKJV. Man-made doctrines are only going to lead us in the wrong direction. We have to understand Shaul's writings based on what Yeshua taught. Shaul taught don't keep misapplied laws; he didn't say to not keep the Old Testament. Romans 3:31 NKJV says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." Those who say the Old Testament is done away with are lying.

Kefa (Peter) said about Shaul, "Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures;" 2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV. They don't understand the Jewish issues so they twist the Bible to mean whatever they want to "their own destruction" (think, lake of fire). Don't believe them or you'll end up with them.

Romans 14 is about believers who lived in pagan Rome where some of the meat came from pagan temples. Some just ate vegetables so they wouldn't take the chance of eating this meat. A pastor quoted Romans 14:22 NKJV, "Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves." He said that if he commits adultery or steals, he doesn't condemn himself. It doesn't have anything to do with that! It said in Revelation 21:8 NKJV, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." It's very sad isn't it; unfortunately, we know where he is going. It's all about understanding context. God gave us brains and He expects us to use it. They were not eating meat because some of it came from pagan temples. That's the context; it has nothing to do with not keeping God's commandments.

God can sustain our walk, even in difficult times. Our spiritual life is not perfect and we face difficulties at times. I remember when I first got out of school. I lived in the outskirts of New York City (the outskirts is still city) and it is one of the most expensive places to live. God provided for me; I think it was a miracle. I was faithful to God and He helped me. My black and white TV came from who knows what era, but I had everything I needed. Whatever we are going through, repent and stay strong. Yochanan

(John) said we all sin, but when we sin, we need to repent and stop sinning. Through Yeshua we can be forgiven because He is the final sacrifice for sin and not just for Israel, but for everyone including believers from the Old Testament times. Adam expected a Messiah and everyone after him expected a Messiah to come so we could be forgiven of our sin (shortcomings).

1 John 1:8-2:2 NKJV:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

It's great news isn't it! We confess our sins to God, repent and decide not to do it again, and God forgives us. He is God for the whole world. Read the Bible; God is an amazing and wonderful God of the universe. He wants us to believe in Him; we don't have to put all our trust in political parties, not in nations or nationalities, not in things made of wood or stone, not false demonic ideologies, or not in religions that impose autocratic rule. God is worthy of our trust; He is the creator of the universe; anyone can believe in Him. Talk to God; He is a forgiving and good God. Isaiah 1:16-18 NKJV, "Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. 'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.'"

Our lives are not perfect, but keep moving forward and **don't give up**. Yeshua said, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels;" Revelation 3:5 NKJV. Yochanan (John) says we have victory and can overcome sin through Yeshua, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God;" 1 John 4:4-6 NKJV. We are of God and we can overcome the world. Shaul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me;" Philippians 4:13 NKJV. We can do all through the Messiah. You can do it. If you sin, talk to God and ask for forgiveness; tell God you will not do it again and be sincere. He will "cleanse" us from all sin Yochanan said.

Perhaps God doing a census shows us that God values us. Samson was a real life super hero because God empowered him. We too are empowered by God for growing spiritually through the work of the Holy Spirit. Have faith in God and live right. Understand the context of the Bible; want truth and not made up doctrine. The New Testament gets its understanding from the Old Testament. Both Yeshua (Jesus) and Shaul (Paul) quote the Old Testament portion. God wants us to do what is right and will forgive us when we repent and turn back to Him. He wants us to succeed and He will help us.