

b. The penalty for involuntarily breaking the oath (6:9-12)

No remedy is given if the Nazarite uses a product of the vine, or if he cuts his hair. These are voluntary acts which he is obliged to avoid. The same is true if he voluntarily touches a dead body. However, there is the possibility that someone may suddenly die beside him so that he becomes ceremonially unclean, without any intentional breaking of the rule of the Nazarite. For this case, a special remedy is given. First, he must perform the same cleansing duties as anyone else who has become unclean through touching a dead body (cf. Num. 19). Then he must shave his head on the seventh day, a procedure otherwise strictly forbidden during the period of Nazariteship. In addition to the turtle doves or pigeons which are the regular requirements for ending of uncleanness (cf. Lev. 15:14), he must bring a lamb for a trespass offering. Worst of all, all the days of his separation previous to this time are lost. This requirement seems very severe for one who has become unclean through no fault of his own. It indicates the very strict standards of holiness which God requires of those who are set apart for special service to Himself. One who is consecrated to the Lord for special service must be particularly careful that he does not even unintentionally give an impression of wrong. When placed in a false light it is particularly important that he be cleansed in the fullest manner, in order that no taint or reproach shall come upon the work of the Lord.

c. Termination of the Nazariteship (6:13-21)

Verse 13 makes very clear the fact that Nazariteship normally is for a limited time. An extensive public ceremony is prescribed at its conclusion so that people can know very definitely whether one is a Nazarite or not. For this ceremony, the Nazarite must come to the door of the tent of meeting, bringing with him a number of special offerings,