

The Nazarite

by John Nelson Darby

The Nazarite principle is a call to separation from the world and being holy unto the Lord, achieved through the energy of the Spirit.

Scripture: Numbers 6:2

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Separation to God"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of the Nazarite vow as a representation of separation unto God, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers to live holy lives while navigating the challenges of the wilderness. He draws parallels between the Nazarite's commitment and the life of Jesus, who exemplified perfect devotion and separation from worldly ties. Darby explains that true holiness is not merely about innocence but involves a conscious choice to be set apart for God, despite the presence of sin and death in the world. He warns against the dangers of allowing natural affections to compromise one's spiritual strength, using the example of Samson to illustrate the consequences of losing one's Nazarite commitment. Ultimately, he encourages believers to rely on the energy of the Holy Spirit to maintain their devotion and holiness in their walk with God.

Transcript

In the book of Numbers is brought out the great principle of the energy of the Spirit of God in us while passing through the wilderness. Exodus shows us redemption and relationship; Leviticus, the way of a sinner's approach to God; Numbers, priesthood in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Up to Sinai all had been grace on the part of God with the people. Here is the intercourse of God with them in the tabernacle of the congregation in the wilderness of Sinai. (Num. 1:1.) The principle of the red heifer in Num. 19 is the ground on which all the sacrifices are taken in this book - the energy of the Spirit of God in giving comfort to the soul, taking the ashes of that long ago burnt, and applying it with present efficacy to the conscience that has contracted defilement in its walk through the wilderness.

In Num. 6 we have the positive separation to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost (v. 2) - "unto the Lord." So the Lord Jesus, particularly after His ascension, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," that we, by the energy of the Spirit in us, should be separate now in the wilderness, walking in white, keeping our garments unspotted by the flesh. Again, the Lord did separate Himself that He might be about His Father's business, and for this did He separate Himself from "His mother's children" (Ps. 69:8) - the flesh, which by sin was under the power of death. He still holds the Nazarite character, because all His disciples are not

yet gathered to Him; and now, in a certain sense, with us it is separation from joy - "the fruit of the vine;" we must not let the heart go. In glory it is the great spirit of rest; there will be no need to gird the heart then. Now the effect of the energy of the Spirit is to gird up the loins of our mind lest we get defiled; but in glory we shall let flow our garments, because we shall not fear defilement there. In the city of refuge the man was safe, but he could not go out or enjoy his possessions.

Verse 3: "Separate himself from wine;" that is, joy. The Lord came in character expecting to find joy among men, expecting a response to His love in the hearts of men, but found none, and so was a Nazarite from the first. To be a Nazarite is to be separated from every natural affection which can be touched by death - to be separated unto the Lord. No honey could be offered to the Lord, and now the Spirit is a new power come in detaching us from everything natural. The Lord filled with the Spirit for service said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" All nature by sin has come under the power of death, so the Nazarite "shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother," "because the consecration of his God is upon his head." (v. 7; see also Luke 14:26.) The Lord's tie in nature was with the Jews as Son of David; but all this He gave up as natural, for "when He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them." Natural affections come from God, and are therefore good in themselves; but they do not tend to God, being spent on the object. John was a Nazarite from the womb. Paul was a Nazarite and Jeremiah also. So we are Nazarites. Our own proper joy is beyond death; therefore all I give up here which savours of death is just giving up that which hinders a deepened apprehension of the joy and blessing of that life which is beyond the power of death. The Lord broke the link in the cross. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." (Isa. 38:16)

"All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord." (v. 8.) This is the great principle in the Nazarite - holy to God, and in however short a degree we may attain to that character, yet in Christ it is perfect. All this is a distinct thing from innocence. Adam was innocent, but not separated unto God. Separated unto God supposes a knowledge of good and evil, and yet separation from evil. Adam got the knowledge of good and evil by the fall; the Holy Ghost is come to take us out of that evil. The Spirit is a new power altogether, separating us unto Christ in glory now that evil and self-will have come in. It is a most trying thing to us to know good and evil; for by nature we are in the evil - loving the evil and hating the good. The Holy Ghost is now taking us out of the evil, and here is the pain - His energy in us keeping us from the evil while passing through a world of sin and death. We cannot be innocent now that sin has come in, but we are holy in Christ.

Verse 9: "If any man die very suddenly by him." Death came in on everything in nature as the sign of God's hatred of sin. The Spirit of real devotedness to God always was perfect in Christ; but it is failing in us. Wherever the old man works there is the principle of death; therefore we get into death for the time when the old man is working. Therefore the word to us is, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;" and again, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." All this is solemn. Not only have we peace, but while we are passing through this scene of sin we need to be kept holy and devoted to God by the energy of the Holy Ghost in us.

Verses 9, 12. If I go back from devotedness to God, it is true the hair may grow again; but the head must be shaved close, and the time lost. It is not a question of sin here, but of loss as to the energy of life. A tree that has been much mutilated and broken down will grow up again; it was not killed, but only injured, yet its stature will not be the same as an uninjured tree. It is letting Satan mar and hinder the work of the Spirit. Samson let his heart go into the weakness of nature, and when we let in nature our strength is gone. Samson, as a Nazarite, was a type of the energy of the Spirit of God; he let out the secret of his strength,

and it left him, and he became weak as other men. True, in due course his strength returned, and with mighty energy he lifted the foundations of the temple. If we are not careful and watchful to keep the secret of our strength in communion with God, and worldliness and sin come in, we may not be conscious of it ourselves, but the truth will appear when we rise to shake ourselves - it may be in service - and we find ourselves weak as other men, and when in our weakness, like Samson, the devil will put out our eyes. The Lord was the true Nazarite, and He never departed in the whole course of His walk from His Nazariteship. It was not a light thing for Him to tread the path of suffering; but He prayed. In the garden, "being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly" before the temptation came, and then we see He halted not, He could not. So should we first pass through the trial with God, then God will be with us in the trial. Peter slept and did not pray, and when the trial came he met it in the flesh, and drew his sword. Jesus had prayed that the cup might pass from Him; but when the chief priest and soldiers came, though Satan was in it all, yet He saw the hand of God, and could say, "The cup which my Father hath given me;" then it was no temptation at all, but an act of obedience.

Verse 9: "Die suddenly," a careless thought, and communion is lost for the moment.

The offerings to be offered. All that was in Christ is presented to God (v. 20); so we really come in the power of these sacrifices to God; but until the Church be gathered the Lord keeps His Nazarite character.*

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