

True Nazariteship

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of humility, separation from sin and the world, and devotion to God, as exemplified by the Nazarite character of Christ.

Scripture: Numbers 6:1, Luke 22:18, Romans 1:4, Hebrews 7:26

Topics: "Separation from the World", "Nazariteship"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the concept of true Nazariteship, illustrating that greatness in the Christian life is found in servanthood and humility, contrasting it with worldly values. He explains that the cross represents grace and that true separation from sin is essential for Christians, who are called to live a life distinct from the world. Darby highlights that while Jesus was a friend to sinners on earth, He now occupies a position of holiness at God's right hand, and Christians are to reflect this separation. The Lord's Supper serves as a reminder of Christ's love and the new life believers receive, which is characterized by a divine nature that is separate from worldly influences. Ultimately, Darby calls Christians to embrace their identity as Nazarites, living in joy and hope while remaining distinct from the world that rejected Christ.

Transcript

{Christian Friend 1888, pages 281-4.}

At the table, where the Lord in the institution of the supper was speaking to the disciples of His humiliation even unto death, they were disputing amongst themselves as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. They did not understand that the principle of the child of God, of the disciple, is to be a servant - servant of all by the power of the love of God acting in him. To be great down here is the opposite of Christian principle. In the world one erects monuments in memory of human benefactors; the only monument which the world ever raised to Christ was the cross. But in the cross I see grace. Grace blossoms in the valley of humility; it is not on mountain summits, but in valleys, that prosperity abounds.

The flesh always exalts itself; but, more than this, it is never able to meet a difficulty. It knows, as in the case of Peter, how to lead us into the thick of danger, but never how to extricate us. It makes us fall before obstacles, or else go to sleep. And yet of these very disciples Jesus says that they have continue with Him in His temptations.

As long as He is down here, the Lord shows Himself as a Jew and Messiah to the Jews; but, ascended to God's right hand, everything changes. It is important to understand that we have to do with Christ in glory,

not Christ on earth. Even if Paul had know Him after the flesh, he would not afterwards have known Him so. To confound these two things is to apply Jewish principles to the present economy. Riches, which for the Jews were a blessing, are a snare to the Christian. Ours being a heavenly vocation, the less we are tied to earth the freer we are. Glory, honour, and riches are only chains which, binding us to earth, weaken our true link with heaven.

When Christ the Creator was put on the cross, all the foundations were overthrown. This side of the cross, man is henceforth ruined and lost; salvation is his in the cross. But we must go beyond the cross. What the Jews possessed was external and earthly; rudiments of the world. Christ gave Himself for us to deliver us from this present evil age. Thus the world is judged by the cross of Christ. The world condemned itself in condemning Christ, and everything is broken between it and God. Henceforth grace alone is the principle on which God can act.

In the Lord's supper, Jesus gives a token of love to His disciples; but previously, having enjoyed with them for the last time the memorial of Jewish deliverance, He takes another character. He receives a cup, not that of the supper, and He distributes it to the disciples without Himself drinking of it, adding: "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (v. 18.) He takes henceforth openly the Nazarite character - that of separation from sinners. Himself without sin, He had come amongst sinners, seeking them. Now He takes the position of separation, of holiness, to sit at God's right hand. It is in resurrection that Jesus has been declared Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. This resurrection is a public proof of the power of the life of God, and of the holiness of Christ. (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 7:26.) Christ is now openly separated from sinners. When He returns, He will appear "without sin" for His own, and will drive out sin from His presence; whereas on earth He was the Friend of publicans and sinners.

Numbers 6 depicts the character of the Nazarite. Wine is a sign of union and fellowship amongst guests. That is why it says, "Wine which cheereth God and man" (Judges 9:13); but the Nazarite did not drink it. The Christian should love sinners, but be separate from sin; he is, like Jesus, a Nazarite. His holiness corresponds with the place the Lord now occupies, with Him who says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." It is by death and resurrection that Jesus has taken this place of separation with regard to the world and sinners. When the kingdom of God shall have come, we shall be all together in the joy of the Lord with Him. To be sure the Christian is joyful now, but afflicted. He cannot be joyful down here with the world which has killed his Saviour. A great deal of time has since elapsed, but time does not alter it. The character of the world remains the same. One must be converted not to belong to it. If our hearts belong to Jesus, it is impossible to be otherwise than sorrowful in the world. The world amuses itself; it dances on the tomb of our Saviour.

But on the other hand the Christian rejoices in the Lord, and in his heavenly portion of which the world is in ignorance. The joy of the Christian is a hope full of glory; but down here he is always a Nazarite, and cannot share in the glory of this world. He invites and beseeches sinners to be converted, but he cannot have communion with them. Jesus has been rejected by the world, and received in heaven; this is also the Christian's place. Our High Priest has been made higher than the heavens. He has left us a token of His love in the breaking of bread. If He is no longer present with us on earth, it is because He gave Himself for us. His absence does not betoken indifference; for the Lord's Supper is the memorial of His perfect love to us.

Christ brings us into the heavenly kingdom by a totally new life. We are not transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love without possessing His life - that of the last Adam, who is a quickening Spirit. We are made partakers of the divine nature. Conversion is not only a change, but the communication of a life unknown to us before - a life hidden in Christ, separate from sinners, separate from the world.

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