

The Nazarite Remnant

by Keith Malcomson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a Remnant, living a life of consecration, and restoring God's purpose, character, and Word in the midst of great apostasy and corruption.

Scripture: Numbers 6:1, Judges 13:5, Malachi 3:3, Matthew 3:11, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 5:18, Hebrews 9:14

Topics: "Consecration", "Revival"

Description

Keith Malcomson preaches about the significance of The Remnant in Scripture, highlighting those who remained steadfast in times of apostasy and judgment, serving as a testimony of faithfulness amidst corruption and destruction. He also delves into the role of the Nazarites in ancient Israel, emphasizing their consecration and separation unto God, symbolizing a life free from worldly influences and dedicated to God's holiness. Through the stories of Joseph, Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, he illustrates how these Nazarites were raised up by God to restore His purpose, work, character, and Word in times of spiritual decline and darkness, calling for a revival of consecration and a return to the true testimony of God.

Transcript

"For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

Jdg.13:5

The Remnant

The term Remnant is found constantly in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament but also in the New. It means to be left over, remain, leave, be left behind, and the remainder.

Those who survived great tragedies of God's judgment in Israel were called The Remnant. When terrible apostasy - a falling away from Truth - swept through Israel and they turned to other gods, or changed the character of the true God into something false, those that resisted such apostasy and remained steadfast were called The Remnant.

Again when God allowed an invading army such as Assyria to invade Israel and to take the city of Jerusalem into captivity and to carry off the people as slaves and servants into a foreign land, those that

were left, as well as those in captivity were called a Remnant.

If you go to a tailor's shop you would find many remnants of material. These are the leftovers of the original garments. There may have once been a beautiful dress in that shop, but it is gone and all that is left is a strip of material. It might certainly be the same colour and kind of material as the finished garment but it does not have the beauty, shape and glory of the full garment. Very often this is how Israel was left.

Comparing the glory and size of the kingdom under the reign of David or Solomon to later times when the enemy had overrun the land, breached the walls of Jerusalem and carried away most of the people, makes a very sad comparison.

When we look at the glory of that early church in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts as well as how the church has come to look like at certain times in church history and compare it to most of what we have today, especially in the western world, we clearly see that all we presently have is a remnant - the leftovers of the real.

At points in time there have been many Remnants--Enoch, David (in the midst of Saul's Army), Gideon, Esther, Nehemiah, Moses (calling for the deliverance of the people), Joshua and Caleb, Jeremiah, Daniel etc. Although this shows a general failure amongst God's people these Remnants shone forth as glorious in their age and generation.

The Nazarites

In ancient Israel there were various revival movements which were God's reaction against apostasy and his answer to the situation in returning to Him. God raised up such movements like the Prophets, the Levites and the Nazarites for such a task. In this article we want to deal with these Nazarites. Who were the Nazarites?

In Numbers Chapter 6 we are given the Law or Vow of a Nazarite which is three-fold:

"He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink..." (v3)

The symbolism of drink, alcohol, of wine and strong drink and of all fruit of the vine speaks of influence. When it says that the Nazarite took a vow upon him to separate himself unto God he was saying 'I am not going to allow any influence but that of the Holy Ghost upon my life.' It says in Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit." On the day of Pentecost it says that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and a little later that some of the people began to mock them saying they were filled with new wine; in other words they were under a strong influence.

All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head...in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." (v5)

In Scripture it was a mark of shame and reproach for a man to grow long hair. Do you know what we have lost in the church in this hour? We have lost that reproach for being different by separation unto God through the cross. This open shame was a public testimony of consecration to all.

All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body." (v6)

The third thing is that he is to touch no dead thing throughout the time of his consecration. Even if a family member died he was not to go or he would become unclean. What a sacrifice, what a setting aside unto God. God was saying that anything dead will pollute. We as the church ought not to touch those things that bring death to our walk with God.

Things of this world will bring death to your soul; will breed death in your prayer life and death to your consecration. Things which you watch, you speak, you hear; you know what things bring death to your spiritual life but the Nazarite remnant says "We shall not touch any dead thing. No death is going to touch us. I have been born for a life of consecration. I am going to walk in the life of God. I want a flowing of the River of the life of God within me." Consecration is the place of True Life.

These three principles governed the life of the Nazarites. Why did people take this vow? In v1 we are told that it was in order to "separate themselves unto the LORD:" It was for those hungry for God, those who desired His presence, fellowship, communion and blessing.

Nazarites always dealt with recovery, restoration and revival. For those who desired these, the call to consecration was the means.

Joseph- Restoration of God's purpose

If we study carefully we will find that this vow of the Nazarite began back in the life of Joseph. He was the first Nazarite. In his life we see the recovery of God's purpose. Interestingly, we will find in this study that each mother of a Nazarite son was originally barren in womb.

The response of Rachel, Jacob's wife, to her barrenness was to cry out, first to her husband then unto God, "Give me children else I die." She started to cry unto God, 'Give me children or I die. I must have a man child I must bring forth the life of God; I want to fulfil the purpose of God for my life.'

Rachel, as with all the mothers of Nazarites, is a picture of the Church. Somebody will always have to 'pray' a price and 'pay' a price. God heard and answered Rachel's prayers and opened her womb miraculously and so Joseph was born. She conceived a second time and bore Benjamin but as a result of his birth she died. Rachel paid the ultimate price for answered prayer. In his birth she died. It cost her something in the bringing forth of the answer to that prayer. Likewise with us, it is going to cut deep into our hearts and cost us even our very life.

Joseph was a Nazarite. We are told twice in the Old Testament that Joseph was "separate from his brethren." This word "separate" spoken of him is the same word used which is always used for Nazarite in the Hebrew language. It says that he was nazar or Nazarite or separated from his brethren. This is the first mention of a Nazarite in the whole Bible and it refers to Joseph. God is going to use him to recover the purpose of God. That is the whole testimony of this first Nazarite.

I believe that Joseph's separation, consecration and holiness so impacted God's people that he started a trend for all those following who desired God and hated evil amongst God's people. Moses later lifted his pen to inscribe the vow of a Nazarite, not as a new invention or revelation but simply to regulate the practice which was in operation from the days of Joseph. If any man wanted to separate himself unto the living God this is how he would do it.

Amidst his backslidden brethren filled with jealousy, hatred, anger and all the manifestations of the flesh he was set apart to restore God's purpose. What is to happen to a man who longs for a recovery of God's

purpose in the earth? This Nazarite must be proved. His dreams, his desires, his motives, his character must all be tried by fire.

And so we read of his Brother's hatred towards him which increased daily. This began because of his consecration and separation not because of his dream; his dream only made them hate him more. His brethren envied him, conspired against him, cast him into a pit and sold him into slavery.

We know well that Joseph went through years of trial and troubles until iron entered his soul in order to see a recovery of God's purpose. When he came out the other end he was ready and prepared to feed the nations and to see the purpose of God fulfilled. He was sent ahead by God to see them all recovered.

At the point of almost total loss, ruin and destruction of God's people, the purpose of God is revealed. Only then do they see that all things had been working together for good all along. When old Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph sent we are told that "the spirit of Jacob their father revived:" He brought revival to God's Remnant people.

In old age before Joseph died in Egypt he left a promise for the people of God. "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." They would have to suffer terrible oppression in the land of captivity (like Joseph did) but God would send a revival to them, deliver them and restore His purpose amongst them.

Samson- Restoration of the work of God

The next Nazarite we read of mentioned by name is Samson. His life speaks of a restoration of the work of God in Israel in a dark hour. The work of God was at low ebb, it had come to a standstill. There was no revival. There had been no moving of the Spirit of God for 40 years. No deliverance or deliverer. At such a time God raised up a Nazarite.

Again we see that Samson's mother was barren. We do not even know her name. She is just revealed to us as Manoah's wife. There is little or nothing of any worth mentioned about her, but what was special was that the Lord visited her and she conceived. The Angel of the Lord came to her and called her to separation and consecration to the bringing forth of a Nazarite who would restore God's work by delivering His people from the Philistines. This was a sovereign visitation of God; He chose her and He visited her. Revivals are sovereign.

Samson took upon himself the reproach, he did not touch wine, and he started to serve the living God. As he grew the Spirit of God moved upon him as the only influence and began to move him mightily in restoring God's work. Samson did smite the enemy in the land.

At first he demonstrated his consecration but sadly he then played with his consecration. He broke his vow and lost his consecration, his vision and his strength. He became weak like other men. Every time the church breaks free from her consecration and begins to do what other men do then she becomes like them. The church first loses her consecration before becoming like the world.

But there was a recovery; there was a coming back by the mercy and the grace of God. You may have lost your consecration or you may have blemished it by whatever means. Things may have flooded in upon you and gripped you and held you. Even now they may seem to bind you, but there is a way back.

Provision was made in the vow of a Nazarite for anyone who polluted themselves to return to a place of consecration. Just consecrate yourself afresh; begin to grow that hair anew. Through the blood of the Lamb all sin is washed away.

This is one of the greatest revelations and foundations of a Christian's life. You can get up tomorrow morning and afresh repent of every sin. You can come to the blood of Jesus Christ, to the blood of sprinkling and say 'Oh God, wash me afresh.' None of your transgressions will be remembered; all of your sins will be blotted out. Not just covered, not covered temporarily, every sin nailed to the cross, every sin removed, every blemish upon my conscience, every blemish upon my walk removed. I can stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ redeemed by the precious blood, ready to give myself afresh, ready to walk with him afresh.

Hear me now, if you have blemished your conscience, if you have blemished your consecration, meet with Him afresh right now. Do not leave this day with a stain upon your conscience, a stain upon your mind. Do not give the devil room. Come to the blood of sprinkling. There is a fount that has been opened in the house of God that is still flowing.

This is the very foundation of consecration.

Finally Samson's consecration was restored and revived when he began to pray earnestly - this meant trouble for the Philistines. In his death more Philistines were killed than in all his life - three thousand in number. It was another Pentecost. In Samson's death God's work was restored. Let the Church begin to pray and be willing to die to self one more time and the Lord will do more through that death than can ever be imagined.

Samuel - Restoration of the character of God

We are told clearly that it was the Lord that closed Hannah's womb; another barren wife. The Lord closed her womb so that she could have no children. It is normal for a woman to bare children in a marriage but here was a barren womb, her womb was closed up.

Do you know that this affliction birthed forth a cry from Hannah which profoundly affected a nation? She was a little unknown woman but because of her praying and travailing before God a nation was affected. God raised up a Nazarite; a prophet in the nation.

Do not think that God will spare you in the bringing forth of his purpose. Do not think that the Lord will spare you suffering grief of heart, sorrow or anguish in the things that you see or hear.

Hannah could have said to herself 'be content and satisfied there is no visitation of God. There is no coming of God to answer my prayer.'

She enters into the House of God in this state and starts praying and travailing in such a way that words did not even come out of her mouth. She was so burdened in longing for life and reality. In her prayer she promised that if she be given her request she would raise him as a Nazarite. In all this there was an influence of the Holy Ghost upon her.

Old Eli thought she was drunk. Eli was a good man but not walking with the Lord as he ought to have been. A good man but affected and influenced by his children. A good man but affected by the desires and longings of his old age. A good man but he didn't rectify the errant ministry or restore righteousness to the

pulpit again. A good man but he did not show them a way back to recovery.

He kept himself but he did not keep his family. He kept himself but he did not keep the house of God. He preserved himself from sin yet he let sin engulf his home and God's House. We must be much more than that saints of God if we are to really see a true recovery.

When Hannah went into God's house to travail and pray there was a reproach upon her, she was mocked and scorned but she was determined to touch God no matter what. No one was going to deter her from seeking the face of God.

In due course Samuel was born and as a Nazarite God's plan was to restore the character of God through him. His mother, as promised, gave the boy to serve in the house of God. While young he saw corruption in the House of God, he saw the compromise in Eli, he saw the wickedness of his sons and his young heart burned within him. Even though corruption surrounded him, he was the one who was going to point the way back again. He would say to them there is a righteous walk with God, there is a way of holiness and righteousness.

At the end of his long years of ministry he stood before all of Israel and asked 'Can anyone condemn me, can anyone accuse me that I served Israel for money or that I had any wrong motives or that I stole from you or that I lied to any man?'

In our nations and in the church, character needs to be restored. We need people who are faithful, people who are praying, people who are holy, a people who are true.

Many Christians within the church do not know how to even believe or trust any more. They've been so abused, they have been told so many lies, they have seen such a twisting and a corrupting of ministry and of the church that they no longer can trust. Leadership has cut them, hurt them, abused them and used them.

Straight across the body of Christ this has happened. It is a disease, a disaster. Most sheep are not looking for the spectacular; they are just looking for reality.

Today are you honest? Are you upright? Are you faithful? Are you fit to restore the character of God and for God to use you to say there is still Christ-likeness in the body?

True ministers of the Gospel in this hour can say, 'We are not after any man's gold, we are not after the fame of man, we are not after the exalting of our name, we are just seeking the glory and the honour and the righteousness of God.'

It is an hour in which we must recover the character of God. The enemy has worked and man's hand has worked in the greatest of churches, but it is now the time for the testimony of God's character to be recovered.

John the Baptist-Restoration of the Word of God

In Luke chapter 1 we read that Zacharias was serving in the priesthood in the Temple. He was offering up the fragrance which is a picture of prayer. He was praying and we know what he was beseeching God for this angel came forth to answer his prayer, and to tell him that his prayers were answered.

By tradition there was a certain set reading for each day of the Scripture in the Temple and Synagogues. Each day of the year the priest would go in and open up the Word of God and read it. On this specific day according to custom, Numbers chapter 6 the vow of the Nazarite and Judges 13 concerning the birth of Samson, were read.

Can you just see old Zacharias reading and hearing the Word of God and saying 'Oh God, give us a Nazarite in the streets of Jerusalem again. Jerusalem has become barren and dark and corrupt. They have taken the Word of God and have made it something else. They have twisted it, they have hid it, and they have taken away the key of life and cast it aside. They have made the way unto you hard to find, the reality and the glory is gone it's gone.'

I am sure he started to pray like this: 'Give us a Nazarite Remnant again that will rise up and dedicate themselves wholly onto you. And restore and recover the testimony of God again. Give us a remnant that will bring back the Word of God to the people.'

Do you know what God did when God heard his prayer? He sent an angel to bring the answer "...thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John...For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And so John was born. Remember that he was born to an old couple. This was impossible. Elisabeth was barren, so was Zacharias. But the key was that they were a devout couple who desired God's Word to go forth again in the land in power. We need this testimony in our homes again if we are to raise up a prophet in the land.

John the Baptist was born to recover and restore the testimony of God's Word, its message, its purity and its power.

In those days the Sadducees and the Pharisees prospered. The Sadducees disbelieved the Word of God. They poured utter disbelief upon the Word. They changed it and said it does not mean what it says. The Pharisees argued and debated over it. They came forth with their long gowns, their long prayers, their eloquent sermons, their long titles, but the hypocrisy, the blemish that had spread across Israel and Jerusalem was terrible.

So many priests read the Word of God in the synagogue every week and so many people heard but without effect because of manmade traditions. They were 400 years without a prophet.

Where was the Word of God? Who had a word from the throne of God? Who was burning with the truth of God? Who had fire shut up in his bones? The righteous must have asked this. They must have said 'Give us someone burning on fire again. They might lack many things but give us a Nazarite Remnant.'

You know what God did with this young John? He took him out of the synagogue into the wilderness in order that he might grow into a prepared vessel. We read often of his growth. The wilderness for him meant years of growing into maturity and strength. It meant preparation and deep heart dealings in order to be made ready. A testimony does not come in one year. A ministry does not come in one year. It means years of isolation. It was in this wilderness that the Word of the Lord also came to him.

And so that man, John the Baptist, stood on the banks of Jordan and started to preach and proclaim "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He said "behold he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire." We are taught that his ministry was to make ready a people, to prepare the people and make them ready for the coming of the Lord.

That pure unadulterated, fiery, Holy Ghost anointed message caused him to lose his head and life, but praise God, a people were quickly prepared after centuries of waiting.

Finally

The Nazarites are God's emergency people whom He raises up to recover His testimony, His purpose, His character and His Word.

May God hear our cry in this hour and give us a Nazarite Remnant before the Lord's coming. He is coming suddenly to judge the nations of this world and He will pour out his wrath. There is great tragedy coming on the nations of the world and judgements that we cannot even fathom. There will be a generation that sees the fullness of the judgement of God. The cup of iniquity is almost full and the day of the mercy of God is coming to an end. The day of God's salvation and the preaching of this gospel shall suddenly come to an end. While we are yet here, while it is yet day, we are to Labour. I do believe it is time for a Nazarite Remnant under no influence but the Holy Ghost, to preach the Word of God again.

Separate yourselves, consecrate yourselves that the living God might do wonders and miracles amongst you; wonders that would amaze your eyes; wonders that would cause you to stand in awe of the salvation of your God, of the power of that blood. Our God has not finished until we are out of here, let's reach out and touch him, let there be a witness in the land again, the testimony of a people given over to Him. Let the nations have a Nazarite again that will walk the streets of the cities saying that there is a way back, there is a message to recover, and there is a character of the living God to restore. Let the Spirit of God work within you in this hour.

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