

Christ in All The Scriptures

Numbers - Further Considerations

Introduction

When an individual begins to read Numbers it is easy to get “bogged” down with the genealogies and data about where the Israelites were to camp, etc. Consequently, it can be read and an individual fail to expect to find little of Christ in the book. Yet it is a book with many almost “hidden” pointers to the Lord. Some of which are, the heads were men of pure pedigree, men of war, there was a high priest, they were in the place of God’s choosing. *(Unlike our Lord, while He chose the forty-two places for their encampments, thirty-eight years were spent on journeying due to their sin).* This never happened to the Lord for every journey He took was God directed, and there was never any failure.

Andrew Jukes, in his book on the types, makes the rich observation that there is a distinction between how the types are presented in the first three books of the Pentateuch, and Numbers is no exception.

- a) The types of Genesis foreshadow God’s great dispensational purposes respecting man’s development.
- b) The types of Exodus mainly foreshadow redemption, deliverance, and redemption.
- c) Leviticus again differs from each of these, dealing in types connected with access to God.
- d) Numbers has types which are mainly connected with our pilgrimage as in the wilderness.

There are at least sixteen types of the Lord in the book of Numbers. Some are easy to develop on ones own. Those I am aware of are:

- a) The firstborn (ch. 3:13)
- b) A Nazarite (ch. 6:2)
- c) A Candlestick (ch. 8:4) (the only piece of furniture told how it was made again, Ex. 25:31)
- d) Manna (ch. 11:7)
- e) Moses the intercessor (ch. 11:2; 21:7)
- f) The cloud which covered and the Fire (ch. 9:15-16)
 - i) The overshadowed Christ (Matt. 17:5)
- g) The cloud which guided the children of Israel (ch. 9:17-22)
- h) The Tabernacle in its journeys
 - i) The repeated clause, “Set forward”, indicative of the journeys of the Lord, which were part of His work (ch. 2:17, 34; 4:15; 10:17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 28, 35; 21:10; 22:1)
- i) Aaron's rod that budded (ch. 16:1-31; 17:1-8)
- j) Eleazar (ch. 16:37-39)
- k) The Red Heifer (ch. 19:1-22)
- l) The Rock (ch. 20:8) (Moses instead of speaking to the rock, smote it twice)
- m) The uplifted serpent of brass (ch. 21:8)
- n) Star and Scepter (ch. 24:17)
- o) Shekel (ch. 18:16)
- p) The cities of Refuge (ch. 35)

The Nazarite

There are two descriptive terms used of the Lord which are often confused. They are “Nazarite” (Num. 6:2-3) and “Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23). A Nazarite was an individual who, for a time separated themselves to God, which while the Lord was this in heart, He never took the Nazarite vow, for He lived the Nazarite life. Being a “Nazarene” indicated the geographical place from where our Lord came, a place of rejection, as evidenced by Nathaniel (Jn. 1:46).

- a) The word “Nazarite” comes from the Hebrew “nazīr”, which means “to separate or be devoted”. It is used in the sense of being separate regarding Joseph (Gen. 49:26; Deut. 33:16).

This individual was to make a vow, but it was never for self glorifying for eight times it says, “unto the LORD” (Num. 6:2, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 17, 21), some regarding Him personally and some regarding His offering.

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Furthermore, taking the Nazarite vow was completely voluntary, the result of personal exercise. No where was an individual put under any compulsion to take this vow, and in this avenue of thought we are reminded of the willingness of the Lord, having the only “driving” forces of love to the Father and the church, and the fulfilling of the will of God in its various ways.

Biblical Persons Who Were Nazarites

There are a number of men in the scriptures who took a Nazarite vow or were such, for instance, Samson (Jud. 13:7). What a sorry individual he was. When he was born the children of Israel were subject to the Philistines, and when He died they were still subject to them. Samson never delivered the people of God, partly because he loved the Philistines, and having joined in their idol worship was associated spiritually with death. Paul also was a Nazarite (Acts 18:10, 18), and while we never read of John Baptist taking the Nazarite vow, he did abstain from that which was forbidden under it (Lk. 1:15) and Paul (Acts 18:10, 18).

The Contrasts Between Any Mere Human Nazarite and the Lord

- 1) This individual took this vow on themselves for a period of time. With the Lord, separation to God was a way of life from His birth. He alone could say:
 - a) “Thou art my God from my mother’s belly” (Psa. 22:10)
 - b) “Lo, I come to do Thy will” (Heb. 10:9)
 - c) “I do always those things that please Him” (Jn. 8:29)
 - d) “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (Jn. 4:34)
- 2) The Nazarite who deliberately or was contaminated through circumstances beyond their control (i.e. a sudden death), had to offer a sin and burnt sacrifice. Added to this was the fact that the days they had spent in separation were not counted, and they had to begin the vow again. Due to the perfections of the Lord, He never had to begin again.
- 3) The Lord never had to offer a sacrifice for sin after having touched a dead body, something He did when He took Jairus’ daughter “by the hand” (Mk. 1:31). No defilement or disease was ever transmitted to him and there was no contamination in Him to defile others.

The Decisions To Be Made

Before making a Nazarite vow there were decisions to make, decisions which fall into two categories. There were those made before the action is taken, and those taken when the decision is reached.

- a) Those made before the action is taken:
 - i) What will I be separating myself from?
 - ii) Will it be worth the self denial and restraints?
 - iii) How shall I show I am sincere?
 - iv) How long shall I make the vow for? (It could not be for just a couple of days for the hair had to grow)
- b) Those to be taken when the decision is reached:
 - i) When shall it begin?
 1. That was a decision the individual had to make but with the Lord there was a time when “the fulness of the time was come” (Gal. 4:4) and “she (Mary) brought forth her firstborn son” (Lk. 2:7). The Lord came into this world, and in this context, to demonstrate to the world a man who loved the Father and sought only His glory (Jn. 14:31; 17:4).

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ii) Why am I doing this?

1. This was a very important question and required great honesty. Ideally it was to be done “unto the Lord”, that is as an act of worship and devotion to Him. Unlike the “devotion” of the Pharisees who liked to be seen praying in the corner of the streets (Matt. 6:5); in the uppermost seats and public acknowledgments (Lk. 11:43). Their devotedness was not unto God but for self glorification. The Nazarite vow must never be taken for such a reason. Christ did not cause His voice to be lifted up in the street (Matt. 12:19), that is, in the sense of politicking for self glorification, to start a movement, etc., but rather it was God who highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:5-8; 5:10).

iii) How will I show I have taken such a vow?

1. It will be shown by the individual separating themselves from luxurious indulgences that feed the appetite, worldly conformity by letting the hair grow, and by non contamination via death.

The Lord The True Nazarite

Of the many truths of similarity and contrast between the shadow and the Lord, the three foremost ones are, the individual was not to have any wine nor partaking of anything related to the vine, no cutting the hair, and no contact with the dead.

- a) There was to be zero partaking of any wine, strong drink, vinegar, grapes or dried grapes, namely raisins. The truth being, he was not to take into his body anything which dulled the senses, could have made the individual careless in what he was doing, or give any euphoria from that which is natural. The disciples felt a euphoria when they returned to the Lord and said, “Even the devils are subject to us” (Lk. 10:17).
- b) The Holy Spirit in the New Testament instructs believers that for a man to have long hair it is a shame, but to a woman, it is her glory (1 Cor. 11:14). The Nazarite bore in his body the evidence of shame. The Hebrew writer informs us concerning the Lord, “despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). Alford’s Greek Testament points out that this is not to be restricted to His being crucified, but the shame He bore throughout life, coming from Galilee (Jn. 7:52) and Nazareth (Jn. 1:46); mockery as King (Matt. 27:29) and the truth of who He was (Lk. 23:35); mockery by the soldiers (Lk. 23:11) (*interestingly, the expression “Set Him at” is only found twice in the scriptures, once regarding the soldiers setting Him at nought, and the other of God when He set Him at His own right hand (Eph. 1:20); and being the child of an unwed mother (Jn. 8:41).*
- c) Not being associated with death indicates the one hundred percent advancement of life, not allowing anything of death to hinder, defile, nor interfere with the fulfilling of the vow, and is in fellowship with the Father. The death of a friend did not cause him to move in what would have been a “natural way” for He stayed two more days where He was (Jn. 11:6). Natural affection and human sympathy did not override devotion to God, neither did earthly relationships for, when Mary intimated to Him that they needed wine, the relationship of motherhood and to save any embarrassment to the bridegroom did not cause Him to act immediately on her intimation (Jn. 2:4).
 - i) When the Lord was going to raise the dead, He spoke to the widow of Nain’s son and simply touched the bier/coffin (Lk. 7:14); when it was Lazarus who was dead He called, “Lazarus, come forth” (Jn. 11:43); but when it was the little girl, “He took her by the hand” (Lk. 8:54). The hand of life took the hand of death and before He ever rose from the dead, He raised her, yet no contamination passed to Him and there was never the need of a sacrifice for cleansing.

Because the Lord was wholly devoted to God, He lived a life of separation but not isolation. There are several references to the Lord “sitting down” and notice must be taken with whom he sat down. He sat down with the disciples (Matt. 26:20); in the synagogue (Lk. 4:20); and in the home of Levi (Lk. 5:29). The point is, while

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“many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him” (Matt. 9:10), we never read of Him coming and sitting down with them!

The Impossibility

It is my belief that we will never, not even in eternity, be able to enter into the fulness of the Lord’s devotion to God. On a similar train of thought, neither will we ever be able to fully appreciate the glories which accrue to Him because of His devotion to God.

The Outflow Due To The Lord Being Wholly Devoted To God

Being wholly devoted to God and the will of God His Father, it follows that He displayed the character and attributes of God as no other every could.

How superlatively unique He is for only in Him was the deepest delights of God and the Father found. In Him every virtue was par excellence, and every victory was resoundingly complete.

- a) The Lord lived one hundred percent for the glory of God, and God in turn now lives one hundred percent for the glory of Christ. This is not only for now but for all eternity.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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