

## A Vow is Upon Us

The pen of inspiration tells us that Jesus was brought up in Nazareth: “that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.” Matthew 2: 23. However, if one search the Scriptures, beginning at Moses and all the Old Testament prophets one will fail to find any record of such prophecy. Then what is Matthew alluding to, when he wrote that Jesus shall be called a Nazarene, or NTSR in the Hebrew tongue?

The Old Testament Scriptures Matthew read from were written mainly in the Hebrew tongue and it had no vowels. The word from which Nazarene derived looked like this, NTSR. The vowels were added by the Greeks when the Tanakh was being transliterated from Hebrew to the Greek tongue. Thus, we end up with Ναζωραῖος (Nazoraios) in the Greek tongue, and Nazarene in the KJV translation.

Take careful note of Matthew's word that, he said, prophets and not prophet, and you will gather here a little, there a little what is implied by the term a Nazarene.

A man or a woman who vow a vow of a Nazarite is called a " נַאֲסִיר " (Natsir or Nazir) in the Hebrew tongue. Nazir is the noun form of the Hebrew verb " נִאֲזַר " (Nazar) which means to keep, preserve, preserver, to heed, to watch, watchman, to besiege, to guard, hidden things, monument, branch, and to separate. Therefore, the noun Nazir can be used to refer to a place, a thing, character, or even the actions of an individual who has consecrated himself or herself to God.

Here are a few passages of scripture in the Hebrew tongue that verify what is cited above. Isaiah 11: 1. “ve-yatsa' choter migeza' yisay ve-natsar mish-sharashayv yiphrach.” Natsar or Nazar is translated BRANCH in the authorised King James Version. Isaiah 48: 6. “shama'ta chazeh kulah ve-atem ha-lo' tagiydu. hishma'atiyka chadashoth u-

netsaroth ve-lo' yeda'tam.” The word netsaroth is the same as Nazareth. In this passage, netsaroth is rendered “hidden things.” Isaiah 49: 6. “vayo'amer naqal mihayothka liy 'eved le-haqiyim 'eth shivtey Ya'aqov u-netsurey yisrael, u-nethatiyka le'or goyim le-hayoth yeshu'a-tiy 'ad qetsah ha-'arets.” I do not read Hebrew, but I am affected with wonder; for I know what this passage says in the KJV. “Netsurey Yisrael” is the “preserved of Israel.”

However, that is not why I am filled with awe. I am astounded because when you look at the Scriptures through the eyes of an Hebrew it is surprisingly great how much one can understand. Take, for instance, the word yeshu'a-tiy, it means my Salvation which is who Jesus is. For it is written thou shall call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. The name Jesus is the English Germanic translation of the Greek word Iesous which was transliterated from the original Hebrew name Yesu'ah which means Salvation. Yesu'ah, Jeshua, Joshua, Iesous, and Jesus are one and the same name.

Like the type, Joshua the high priest, we are called and set apart for a holy purpose by the anti-type, Jesus our High Priest, the main-load bearing BRANCH (Nazar) or Nazarene (Zechariah 3: 8) who “shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple (Kingdom) of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Jesus and the Father).” Zechariah 6: 12, 13.

The Nazarite vow was not established until the sanctuary and the priestly ministry was established. God deliberately did this so that all who wanted to take part in the sanctuary service could, even if they could not actually enter the sanctuary proper; for as the high priest was holy unto the Lord, so was the man or woman that separated themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite. This was also a foreshadow of better things to come: when either man or woman who wanted to separate themselves unto to

the Lord could; for there is no more veil except for the body of Christ. Hence we can now go boldly before the Mercy seat.

Christianity is not an offshoot of Judaism? It was foretold that the Gentles shall look to the BRANCH. Jesus of Nazareth is the Nazar, the BRANCH or Nazarene that came out of the stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11: 1), and stood as an ensign to the people, to the Jews first, then to us (verse 10).

Jesus is the Nazara: “the Truth,” and the righteous BRANCH that shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jeremiah 23: 5). And we must be sanctified by the Truth, the BRANCH of righteousness that grew up out of David, that the LORD our righteousness may save us: and we shall be safely kept (Jeremiah 33: 15, 16).

By diligent study of the Old Testament prophecies Matthew realised that to be called a Nazarene has little or no connection at all to the fact that Jesus lived in Nazareth. For Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were all Nazarites, but neither of them lived in Nazareth. Furthermore, He recognised that it is not a name, but a title of high honour given to Jesus, and to His followers by virtue of their close connection to Him through the service of the priesthood. If you read Acts 24: 1-9, you will see that Ananias the high priest and some of the elders accused Paul of being the ring leader of the sect of Nazarenes, men and women who believed that Jesus is the Messiah.

The principles of true Christianity are the same as the principles of the Nazarite vow, and the principles of the Nazarite vow is linked to the priesthood. This is made evident by the fact that the laws of the Nazarite are taken from the laws of the priesthood. Compare Exodus 29; Leviticus 10: 8-11; 21: 1-12 with Numbers 6.

Moreover, a Nazarite is a watchman, one who speaks for the Lord. Therefore, a Nazarite is also a messenger of the Lord. It is written of John the Baptist, as a Nazarite, “he shall be great in the sight of the

Lord, and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.” And as a messenger, “many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit 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 for the Lord.” Luke 1: 15-17.

Among them that are born of women there has not risen any that had a greater responsibility than that of John the Baptist. Nevertheless, “from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violence take it by force.” Matthew 11: 12.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!” Habakkuk 1: 2. Thus saith the Lord, if you will receive it; He will put the spirit of Elijah, which was upon John the Baptist on you that you may carry on the work of preparing the way before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Malachi 4: 5, 6), whom ye seek, “even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.” Malachi 3: 1.

To accomplish the end time gospel commission, Christians need to be holy in all sphere of life. Our body is to be the temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. Therefore, like John the Baptist, who was a Nazarite, it is necessary that we separate ourselves to God so He may teach us to reconstitute our physical constitution, and strengthen our mental faculty and spiritual powers. And as we gain the ascendancy over our lustful appetites and passions, through the indwelling power of the holy Spirit, we will become like Elijah the Tishbite who stood up against the prophets of Baal on mount Carmel. We will be among men as a peculiar people, a people unmoved by Satan's beguiling taradiddles of lasting wealth and prosperity in this life; his crafty deceptions and seductions, which he uses to lead souls to perdition.

As the priest is separated unto the Lord to be a watchman unto the house of Israel, so is the Nazarite, and so is the Christian. They all have one

thing in common; the Lord has made them an avower of the truth: the word of His mouth, that they may be bold, and warn the people for Him. Read Ezekiel 33: 7.

However, the people of Christendom that shall be righteous, that shall inherit the land for ever, and be the “BRANCH” or Nazarene of God's planting, the work of His hands, that He may be glorified (Isaiah 60: 21), are those that have not defiled the vow of their separation by touching the dead and ominous things in this world. For thus saith the Lord, “all the days that he have separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body.” Numbers 6: 6

The law of the Nazarite shall not be defunct until he or she has fulfilled their separation. For in the moment that the law is defunct, he has removed the consecration of his God that is upon his head. Therefore, the days of his separation that were before shall be lost, and he must start all over again his vow. Read Numbers 6: 12. That is the principle of separation unto the Lord for everyone in all generations. This says our Lord, “when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespasses, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” Ezekiel 18: 24. (Yet we say that God is not Just.)

You might ask, how can Jesus be called a Nazarite when he had contact with the dead, and even drunk wine? This is why I am certain that when Matthew wrote that Jesus “came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene,” he was also alluding to the fact that the law of the Nazarite, which strictly forbid the drinking of wine and strong drink; and forbids the Nazarite to touch or even to come near a dead body was also an object lesson, like all the other rites of the priesthood, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Christ Jesus. Read Deuteronomy 29: 6; Luke 24: 27, 44.

The restriction on touching the dead symbolise the fact that God does not want us to defile ourselves with sin. And the strict restriction on drinking wine, strong drink or liqueur points to the fact that one must never pervert judgment, but always execute righteous judgment. Wine also symbolise pleasure, so the restriction also served as a reminder that the vineyard of this world was transitory. Therefore, the man or the woman who has surrendered their life to God, like a Nazarite, is actually saying, I will not drink of the vineyard of this world until it is made new.

A Nazarite was willing to forsake the pleasures that come from the vineyard in this life. Thus, he vowed to live a life of strict temperance; for He looked for a better vineyard which the Lord planted and not man. John was a Nazarite and as a Nazarite he was a representative of the Christians living in the last days. So the same principles of temperance which he practised should be practised by us who in our day ought to separate ourselves unto God and prepare the way for the Lord second coming as John did in his day.

Thus, it hurts me to hear some ministers teach that it is OK to drink wine just as long as you do not get drunk; and they have the audacity to use the word of God to give credence to their unmitigated effrontery, which cause the unlearned and unstable to err in vision and stumble in judgment. These ministers are swallowed up of wine themselves; they are gone out of the way of the Lord because they take the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek word for wine in the Bible out of context.

The difficulty arises because as we read the Old Testament scriptures, which were written mainly in Hebrew and the New Testament scriptures, which were written in Greek, we discover many inferences to wine as used in Scripture, some permitting its use and some prohibiting its use.

There are three reasons some ministers lead people down the path of sure demise. The first reason is that they are consciously misleading the people, teaching lies in order to benefit themselves and their masters.

The second reason is that they are lascivious and unclean; for they are motivated by the sexual opportunities that come as they put the bottle to their neighbor's lips and the alcohol break down their inhibitions. The third and final reason is that they may be sincere, but self-deceived because they failed to take in to consideration the study of the sources and development of the English word wine from Hebrew to Greek to Latin.

The word of God is not contradictory, so if we believe the Bible uses words or propositions so related to prohibit and permit the use of wine, we need to look at the archaic use of the Hebrew, Greek, and the Latin word VINUM from which the English word WINE derives; for it is the discourse that surrounds the language use that will help us to determine the proper interpretation of a passage of scripture, whether intoxicating or non-intoxicating wine is in view.

### **Hebrew and Greek words for wine**

Take, for example, these three Hebrew words YAYIN, TIYROWSH, and SHEKAR. Yayin means "what is pressed out," and according to the Jewish Encyclopaedia and the Encyclopaedia Judaica it is used to refer to various season's yield of wine from a vineyard be it fermented or unfermented. Yayin mi-gat means wine from the vat, which refers to the current vintage or newly pressed wine before it is fermented; Yayin yashan means old wine, and refers to the vintage of the previous season yield; Yayin meyushshan means very old wine. In Job 32:19, Yayin is rendered as Gleukos, which is sweet wine, and Isaiah 16: 10, Isaiah clearly refer to the fresh grape juice in the press as wine when he wrote "the treaders shall tread out no wine (Yayin) in their presses; I have made their *vintage* shouting to cease." Thus, the word Yayin is not restricted to mean wine that is fermented; instead it is the generic term for the juice that is pressed out of the grape.

Tiyrowsh or Tiyrosh, means "must or freshly squeezed grape juice." when used, this word always make reference to the pure juice that comes

from the grape, and has nothing to do with alcoholic beverage. In the Bible it is rendered as new wine, which is another way of saying fresh unfermented grape juice. Shekar means “strong drink.” this word denotes an intoxicant, like an intensely alcoholic liquor or strong wine.

Then you have these Greek words, OINOS, SIKERA and METHUSMA. Like Yayin, Oinos can refer to fermented and unfermented wine. In the Septuagint, the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Old testament, Tirosh has been rendered so many times as Oinos. Take, for example, Genesis 27:28, “therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. The Hebrew word used here for wine is Tirosh, which means pure grape juice; but in the Septuagint it is rendered as Oinou (Oinos). “Kai dwh soi o qeov apo thv drosou tou ouranou kai apo thv piothtov thv ghv kai plhqov sitou kai *Oinou*.” Thus, showing that Oinos, like Yayin, is a generic term used to describe ferment and unfermented wine, except for strong drink.

The Greek word for strong drink is Sikera or Methusma. Like the priesthood, the Nazarite vow stood for complete separation of the individual unto the Lord.

The Nazarite, after the hair of his separation was shaved could not drink any wine or eat anything of the vine, neither was he allowed to pass a barber's razor upon his head or beard until the days of his separation were fulfilled, and he offered the specified offering. “One he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their drink offerings” (Numbers 6: 13-15), which was approximated to the offerings used in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, as well as their induction into the ministry.

All the days of his separation unto the Lord, the Nazarite was to let the locks of the hair of his head grow. The growing of the hair of the priest

and the Nazarite was symbolic; it represented “the consecration of his God” (Numbers 6: 7) upon his head: “the crown of the anointing oil of his God” (Leviticus 21: 12) upon him. Therefore, it was a fearful thing for either the priest or the individual that vowed, a vow of separation unto the Lord, to uncover their head. Read Leviticus 10: 6.

The practice of investing things with symbolic meaning can be seen throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament; like the uncovering of Samson's hair by Delila his Philistine mistress, which deprived him of his strength. Not that his strength was in his hair; it was just an object lesson intended to teach the Israelites that the anointing holy Spirit is their strength. This truth is also illustrated in the injunction of God to Ezekiel the priest when the glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem, and the people were either burned with fire in the Babylonian siege, or killed with the sword, or scattered abroad, or left in the city to face the divine retributive justice if they refuse to be corrected.

Thus saith the Lord, “and thou son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair. Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.” Ezekiel 5: 1-4.

Therefore, as Christians, we ought not to venture into this dangerously seductive world without the consecration of our God upon our head, for it could cause us our soul salvation as it nearly did Samson because he went down to Timnath. Nevertheless, he was nobler than the remnant in Jerusalem during the days of Jeremiah, in that he renewed his vow and separated himself unto the Lord.

I make reference to the remnant in Jerusalem that begged Jeremiah the prophet to pray for them unto the Lord, that the Lord may show them the way wherein they should walk, whether they should go into Egypt or remain in the city subservient to whomever the king of Babylon made governor in the land. These renewed not their loyalty to God, but disobeyed His instructions and removed themselves from the city because they feared the Chaldeans. Read Jeremiah chapter 41 and 42.

Thus saith my God, if you will abide in Him the city of refuge, then He will build you, and not pull you down, and He will plant you, and not pluck you up, and He will show mercies unto you, that goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life as long as you remove not the anointing consecration of the Lord from of your head.

### **JESUS THE TRUE NAZARITE**

The object lesson illustrated by the Nazarite vow was indeed fulfilled in the life of Jesus the Nazarene, whose birth is parallel to the creation of Adam, in that a body was prepared for Him: that is, He did not come into this world through the fertilization of an ovum by a man's spermatozoon, but was conceived by the holy Spirit. Hence He is referred to in scripture as the second Adam (2Corinthians 15: 45-47). Moreover, He was temperate in all things. Who can convict our Lord of sin? Jesus of Nazareth lived a sinless life.

So, like the sanctuary and its service, the sacrificial lamb, the high priest and his ministry, can you now see that the Nazarite vow taken by Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist was also part of the oracles given by God to help the Israelites perceive and identify the Messiah, the Anointed One? As Samson the Nazarite was appointed the judge in Israel. In like manner Jesus the truth is appointed the judge of all creatures by God the Father. As Samuel was the high priest of Israel, and a Nazarite, Jesus is the real high priest of God, “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.” Hebrews 8: 2.

Furthermore, as John the Baptist fulfilled his role as Jesus' forerunner, going about announcing the coming of the Messiah. In like manner, Jesus is our forerunner (Hebrews 6: 20.) and was the forerunner of the Father, going about announcing the coming of the Kingdom of God. Believe me, Jesus our Lord is the true Nazarite.

However, to answer your unasked question, yes in the literal sense Jesus did defunct His vow during His ministry by eating and drinking things "made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk," and by touching the dead. All this He did; for it pleased the Father to place on Him all our griefs that He might carry our sorrows. Nevertheless, at the last supper when Jesus vowed, "for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." Luke 22: 15-18. He gave us a coded message that signalled two things.

The first thing that Jesus is saying is that victory is ours as long as we abide in His love; for "verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." John 6: 53. The literal flesh and the blood of Jesus can profit no man. Therefore, it is His words in the Scriptures that He refers to as His flesh and blood; for through the power of the Holy Spirit His words become active in the soul, and effectuate change in us.

You may make what you will of Luke 22: 15-18, but after looking at the facts connected to the law of the Nazarite, I find it reasonably easy to believe that the second thing that Jesus alluded to bring us back to the Nazarite vow. Do you not know that a vow is a promise? Therefore, the moment that Jesus said to the disciples, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come," He took a vow, the Nazarite vow, which is a vow the High priest had to take before he could begin his priestly ministry.

After I had carefully examined Leviticus 21: 1-12, I saw that the charge that was committed to the High Priest was the exact charge committed to the Nazarite, but it was not so for the assistant priests, the sons of Aaron. This tell me in no uncertain tones that Jesus' ascension to the right hand of God to fulfil the days of His separation to God as our High Priest signified also His renewed Nazarene vow that was defunct for us. That He who had no sin, but became sin for us might also be our worthy High priest to make intercession for us, to keep us as He is: a Nazarene of God's planting, holy and righteous, that is what it says.

Jesus fulfilled the spirituality of the law of the Nazarite: all the days that He separated Himself unto the Lord, the anointing oil of His God remained upon His head; for He never committed a sin himself, however, He took our sins on Himself. Think about it, if Jesus did not defunct the Nazarite law by touching death, who would deliver us from the body of this death? Therefore, let us thank God through Jesus Christ the Nazarene, that He has quickened us by His Spirit that we may follow the principles of the Nazarite vow with our mind.

For Christ is the true Vine: the righteous Nazarite or BRANCH that grew up unto David and every Nazarite or *branch* in Him that bear fruit, the Father trim it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Read John 15.