

The True Nazarite

Last week we considered Heb. 10:5-7 which says, **“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the book of the scroll.’”** The author of Hebrews is quoting from Psalm 40 to show that Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of obedience. Before the foundations of the world, the Son said to the Father, *“I will go. I will accomplish your will.”* For the blood of bulls and goats could never accomplish the will of God to save his people. There must be ONE who would not only lay down his life as a sacrifice, but also be obedient in his heart and all his actions. There MUST be ONE who is totally and completely separated and holy to God for this purpose. And this is why we are here today! We worship God . . . in the name of Jesus . . . because Jesus came to do the will of God. Look at v. 10 **“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”**

With this in mind, I want to veer from Hebrews and consider the OT concept of a “Nazarite.” Have you heard this term before? Do you know what it means? It means to “set apart” or “dedicate” to the Lord. We first see the term in Num. 6 as God says, **“When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink . . . No razor shall touch his head . . . And, he shall not go near a dead body . . . etc.** As recorded here, a man or a woman can devote himself/herself to the Lord and become a Nazarite. You may remember Hannah who dedicated her son, Samuel to the Lord, saying, *“no razor shall touch his head”* (1 Sam. 1). Let me ask, when you think of a Nazarite, who comes to mind? For me, it is Samson, one of the judges of Israel. In fact, he is the first recorded Nazarite in the Bible (Judg. 13-16). And, as a Nazarite, he pictures the true “Nazarite,” Jesus, as the ONE spoken of in Heb. 10:4-7.

Today, I want to walk through the story of Samson and show how He is a type of Christ. I have 8 ways.

1. An angel announced to his mother her conception. In Judg. 13 we read in v. 1 that **“the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.”** Here we see the punishments for breaking his covenant, as Israel does over and over again. These times are often called the “dark ages” for Israel. But through those times of disobedience, God graciously keeps his people and raises up “judges” or “leaders.” And 13:2 tells us of a husband and a wife (Zorah and Manoah) who had no children. Manoah was “barren” (v. 2). She could not have children for some reason. And then the angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, **“Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son . . . behold, no razor shall come upon his head, for the child will be a Nazarite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”**

Does this sound familiar? In Luke we read these words: **“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’”** But she was

greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, **“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.”**

2. The prophecy of the angel is recorded. I am sure angels appeared many times on other occasions with God’s people throughout history. Even as Heb. 13:2 says, **“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”** But, this time the prophecy of this “Angel” is recorded for us to read about and remember. Do you remember Heb. 10:7? The author is quoting Ps. 40 saying, **“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’** In the same way, we have the message of Gabriel to Mary recorded in the Book of Luke.

3. He was sent to a woman utterly barren, to show her conception was extraordinary. It is clear from the text that Manoah could not have children. To have a child would be a miracle. It was like Sarah in her old age, impossible for her body to conceive and give birth. Now, with Mary, she was not “barren” as she was young and had other children after Jesus. But, the point is that the conception of Jesus was miraculous. In Luke 1:34, Mary questions the angel. She says **“How will this be, since I am a virgin.”** You see, Mary was only betrothed to Joseph (like our engagement), she was not married yet. (To have such relations before marriage was/is sinful.) And the angel says to her, **“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you”** . . . And the angel also says, **“For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’** (vv. 34-38).

Go back to the words of Heb. 10:5: **“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me.”** As Samson’s birth was miraculous, so we have the miraculous birth of the Son of God. This is the incarnation . . . a “body” have you prepared for me.

4. Her son was to be a Nazarite, that is “holy to the Lord.” Nazarite is set apart as holy to the Lord. Num. 6:8 says: **“All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.”** As we consider the life of Samson, at least in my estimation, he wasn’t very godly. From one perspective, he went against the wishes of his parents to marry an Israelite as he insisted on a Philistine woman (two marriages). He was, at the least mischievous and, at worst deceitful, as he loved foreign women and then used his relationships to provoke the Philistines who were ruling over Israel.

And as we will see in a moment, Samson was not very “holy” in his life. He wasn’t a picture of godliness. But, he was set apart, designated by God, with a special place in Israel’s history. And, I must say if I were preaching this passage on its own, one of the main truths I see is the great providence of God to use such a sinful man to lead Israel, to protect them, and then to humble and defeat the Philistines at that time in history. In spite of his great sins, at the end of his life, he is very humble. And later in the Book of Hebrews he is listed in the “Hall of faith.” Particularly at the end of his life, he is an example of faith. We see that God works all things for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose. We see that God preserves his people. We see that God raises up leaders in different times for this reason. (We see other truths as well.) But, for our purpose today, Samson was a type of Christ, the true “HOLY ONE.” There

is ONLY ONE who is holy. It is God. Is. 43:3: “**For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior . . .**” Is. 43:14: “**Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**” Jesus tells the rich young ruler: “**Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good**” (Matt. 19:17). Yet, Mark tells us right from the beginning of his Gospel that Jesus is also called the “holy one.” In 1:24 it is first the demons who say to Jesus: “**What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.**” It is so interesting that Jesus is from “NAZARETH.” He is both a “Nazarene” and a “Nazarite.” In the Apostle Paul’s very first sermon he quotes Psalm 16:10 saying, “**You will not let your Holy One see corruption.**” (Acts 13:35) Here, he speaks of the resurrection. But he calls Jesus, what ONLY God can be called. He is the “Holy One.” He is the true Nazarite to which Samson points.

5. Her son was to be a “Nazarite unto God from the womb”. In Judg. 13:5 we read of Samson, “**He shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb.**” Samson was set apart from his very conception, even while he was in his mother’s womb. (Let me just say on a side note that the Bible teaches clearly that we are persons at conception. This is mysterious, but nonetheless true! This is why we so oppose abortion. And it is not something we can ever agree to disagree on. We must preach the dignity of the person from the womb.) From before Samson was born, he was set apart to God to be a Nazirite.

In the same way, Jesus was “set apart from the womb.” In Luke 1:31-32 the Angel says to Mary: “**Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High.**”

6. It was declared that her son should be a deliverer of Israel. Again in 13:5, the Angel says to Manoah: “**for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.**” You see, at the very dark time in Israel’s history, they were being ruled by the Philistines. Because of their great rebellion to God’s covenant, 13: 1 says, “**the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years.**” When Samson became a man, God used him to subdue and defeat the Philistines. Judg. 14 begins with Samson as a grown man. And, as he saw one of the “beautiful” Philistine girls, he wanted to take her as his wife. His parents tried to persuade him unsuccessfully. And 14:4 tells us, “**His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines.**” And throughout his young life, Samson often defeats the Philistines. It seems that He is always with them, throwing parties, giving riddles, etc. One time he kills a lion with his bear hands. And then, bees take up residence in the carcass of this lion and they make honey, of which Samson eats. And during his betrothal with his first wife, he makes a riddle and a bet, wagering 30 pieces of clothing to the one who can guess his riddle. And his betrothed wife entices him for the answer, and she betrays him and tells the Philistines. They win the bet. And Samson is outraged. So, he kills 30 Philistine men and takes their clothes to pay the debt. Soon after, obviously trying to provoke the Philistines because his wife is given to another man, he miraculously catches 300 foxes, ties their tails together, ties a torch between each one and lets them loose in the grain fields (I imagine there is much damage and money lost). After this, they are so mad they kill his first wife and her father. We are told Samson “**struck them hip and thigh with a great blow.**” After this they come up and raid Israel, looking for Samson. So, 3000

Israelites bind Samson (willingly), and hand him over to the Philistines. Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he breaks the ropes like they are water and kills 1000 men with the jawbone of a donkey and gives Israel a great victory.

Sometime passes and Samson enters a Philistine city and finds a prostitute. The people of the city find out and wait for morning to kill him. He leaves early and with his great strength, rips the gates of the city from their place and carries them away. (He literally “*possesses the gates of his enemies.*”) Then, he falls in love with another Philistine woman named Delilah. And she gives away his secret. While he is sleeping, she has his hair cut. His great strength departs and he is captured. They gouge out his eyes and make him a slave. And for some time, their great enemy is defeated. And one day, they are having a great sacrifice to their god. And they worship him as the one who has defeated Israel. And thousands gather for the festival. They decide to bring Samson to entertain them as they make fun of him, Israel, and their God. And as the thousands look on, Samson prays to God and his strength returns. And he puts his hands between the two structural columns of their building and brings down the entire structure and all the people in the building are killed (including Samson). And here, he kills more at one moment than he did in his entire life (16:30). And he delivered Israel from their enemies as they have rest for at least 20 more years.

Do you remember the words of the angel to Mary recorded in Matt. 1:21? “**You shall call his name Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins.**” Samson’s purpose for that time was to deliver Israel from their enemies. In the same kind of way, Jesus is the ONE who delivers his people from their sins. Today, Jesus is our deliverer. Today, we have “rest” from our enemies, from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and one day the very presence of sin.

Let me briefly mention two more truths as I try and conclude this morning.

7. Israel was then subject to the Gentiles (the Philistines), as the Jews were to the Romans when Christ was born. During the time of Jesus, Israel was under the bondage of the Romans. They did not enjoy their own sovereign rule, but instead, were ruled by an ungodly nation. The same was true during the time of Samson. But, the Philistines, and any other kingdom of this world, comes and goes at the sovereign will of God. And after Samson, Israel will be ruled by many nations. They come and go. But, not so with Jesus. He is sitting at the right hand of the father, after making purification for our sins, he is waiting until all his enemies are made his footstool. The only thing we await is his 2nd coming, and the consummation of all things.

Finally . . .

8. It was in his death that he wrought his mightiest victory. With Samson, he laid down his life (we can say). And in his death, more Philistines were killed than during his entire life. And apparently, Israel had peace for a time. As God’s TRUE Nazarite, the “Holy One of Israel,” Jesus laid down his life as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Samson laid down his own life in that “final” sacrifice. And in his death, many of God’s enemies were destroyed. Israel was delivered “for a time.” And that great sacrifice of Samson was only picture of Jesus’ death and his PERFECT, HOLY, sacrifice to deliver sinners, not merely from the hand of Satan, but also from the wrath of God that NO sinner could do.

Today, what picture we have in Samson the Nazarite! And his place in Scripture is not given that we may simply take lessons from his life, but instead, this story is given to us that He is a type, a picture, of the true Nazarite, the Lord Jesus. Let me finish with the words of Heb. 1:1-4: **“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”**