

October 18, 2020

## Samuel

The reading this morning is one that has got me thinking. The story of Samuel sounds slightly familiar with other stories in our scripture. I am recalling to mind the stories of Sampson, Samuel, John the Baptist and even Our Lord. All four individuals were set aside while in their mother's womb. They were set aside before birth to play an important role in God's plan for humanity. Sampson, Samuel and John were all called forth from barren wombs.

These individuals were set aside for a Godly purpose. With regards to John, Luke tells us, "as the angels announce that he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine or strong drink and shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." Luke 1;15. The birth announcements sound similar for Our Lord. Luke 1:31-33, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Two very strange events that are announced by angels that pertain to unborn children. John's birth announcement is the strangest of the two. It holds the secret to the connection between these four individuals. Which is the angels words about wine and strong drink. There was a group of very serious Jews who refrained from wine and strong drink. They were the Nazirites. It has been strongly suggested that John, Sampson and Samuel were Nazirites. There is also some evidence in scripture to possibly suggest that Our Lord sympathized or

identified with this group. The fact that Jesus starts off His public ministry by being baptized by John could give the assumption to those watching.

The Nazirite theory gives us a new lens to view scripture with. It may help to explain somethings and may also confuse other things. I look at it as an academic adventure. In the end it does not change things. Jesus will still be the Son of God who rose from the dead and brought salvation to humanity.

The Nazirites were a well established group in Judaism. Their vows are described in Numbers 6:1-21. Nazirite in Hebrew means to be consecrated or separated. Reading the stories of Sampson, Samuel, John and Jesus they certainly were. The vows taken by the Nazirites requires the person during that time to abstain from all wines and anything made from grapes. They are also to refrain from cutting the hair on their heads. So then they would have lone hair and beards and moustaches. They were also required to stay away from any dead corpse. That included humans and animal corpses. There were two types of vows. One that had a defined period of time and the other was permanent.

Some scholars have suggested that the words at the Last Supper may have been a temporary Nazirite vow. In Mark 14:22-25 when Jesus said, "Verily, I say to you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it a new in the Kingdom of God." Is this a Nazirite vow? I don't believe so. Our Lord tasted the bitter wine of the Roman soldiers while being crucified. There are many such contradictions in scripture. Jesus was considered a drunkard. Not a Nazirite quality. The Nazirite theory gives a new way to view and understand the times

of Our Lord's ministry amongst us. It is just another tool to help us put the puzzle pieces together.

Many of the Nazirite qualities and concepts would continue on. They would get absorbed into early Christianity. Especially in the early forms of monasticism. Some have said that the Nazirites were the hard core practitioners of Judaism. The early monastics were the serious and hard-core Christians. Both groups of people were set aside from the mainstream societies. We are reminded as they were, to be in the world but not of it.

As everyday Christians we are also called and set aside to be a holy people of Our Lord. We are to be in the world and not of it. That we are only pilgrims on a journey in this world. Our destination is in the next world with Our Lord.

Pastor D