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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.
—Psalm 27:5*

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MEDITATION

Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.

—Exodus 29:7 (See also 40:13, 15.)

Anointed

Aaron's anointing was splendid. It was simply magnificent! Let us look in on it and wonder.

Aaron's anointing was the third of the consecration ceremonies and would take place on the same day that the tabernacle would be reared. As the children of Israel looked on, Moses would put the ten commandments into the ark of the covenant and cover the ark with the mercy seat. What an awesome sight to look upon that ark and to know that it was the throne of God. What a thrilling and sobering thought to know that Jehovah himself would dwell between the cherubim. But that was the last they would see of it. Moses would take the ark into the most holy place and hang up the vail. Then he would hang up another vail to the sanctuary. Finally, he would hang up another vail to the courtyard. How deeply the ark would be buried in the tabernacle behind door after door! How could the people ever come before Jehovah? Someone must take them to him. But who could do it?

Then Moses would bring Aaron and the other priests! It was the thing that Jehovah had commanded to be done. Having washed them with water, Moses girded them with their priestly vestments. Here was Aaron, the high priest, and his sons, also priests! Aaron had the right from God to go through the vails into the house of God and take Israel to Jehovah. But could he do it?

Then Moses would take the anointing oil, which was very precious. "And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him" (Lev. 8:12). It was a rippling cascade of golden oil! It ran from Aaron's head down through his beard, down, down over

breastplate and ephod and robe and coat, all the way down to the skirts of his garments (Ps. 133:2). It was splendid to behold! So much so that they still talked about it hundreds of years later, when David sat down to write his psalm about brethren dwelling together in unity. How good and how pleasant is it for brethren to dwell together in unity? As good and pleasant as the precious ointment of Aaron's anointing (Ps. 133).

Aaron's anointing was splendid because it was God's sign that Aaron, as the high priest, was able to carry the people into the presence of God. The anointing oil was a picture of the Holy Spirit, who qualifies and equips the officebearer for his work (I Sam. 16:13). How splendid was Aaron's anointing!

Except that the tabernacle was just a tent, and Aaron was just a man, and the oil was just oil. Oh, yes, as types of the spiritual, they had glory; but their glory was so dim! Their glory was the glory of the shadow.

But the reality! Oh, how splendid is the reality! The reality of Aaron's anointing is the anointing of Jesus Christ as the great high priest. Let us look in on it and wonder. There, at the Jordan, the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted upon him (Matt. 3:16). It was his anointing, equipping him to be our high priest and our mediator, for God gave him the full measure of the infinite Spirit (John 3:34). He is the Christ, that is, the anointed! This high priest, by his own blood, enters into God's presence, taking us with him. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). How splendid is our high priest!

—AL

Article CXLVII: The New King and His Kingdom: The Nazarite as a Prophetic Appearance

“Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire.”
—Lam. 4:7

We attempted to show last week that there is an intimate relation, an organic connection between sacred history and prophecy among Israel, as well as in the new dispensation.

On the one hand it is evident that sacred history itself is prophetic of the future. Essentially the kingdom and covenant of God are always in the world all through history. But their development follows organic lines. Their aspect, their manifestation in the world is not always the same. There is a continual approach, an ever advancing development toward their culmination. One dispensation is typical, is prophetic of another. Jerusalem, the literal city of the old dispensation, the earthly city, made with hands, constitutes a type of the spiritual city of God of the new dispensation, and of the ultimate realization of the Holy City that is to come down out of heaven from God. Israel as a nation being the people of God in the old dispensation points forward to Israel in the spiritual sense of the new dispensation, and also to Israel as it shall once be made manifest in the eternal kingdom. And what is true of Israel and Jerusalem is also true of the surrounding nations. Failure to recognize this fact leads to the most fantastic, literalistic interpretations of prophecy conceivable. Babylon of the old dispensation is prophetic and typical of Babylon in the new dispensation and of the culmination of Babylon in the end, as well as Jerusalem is a type of the spiritual and of the New Jerusalem. Even as Jerusalem became spiritual, and is found among

all nations in the days of the New Testament, so also Babylon. It is no more a literal city, neither will it ever again appear as such. This may safely be said, even apart from the open question whether the power of antichristendom will not ultimately concentrate itself, have a world center, in one great city. And the same is true of Gog and Magog and the nations that surround and harass Israel as their enemies. In one word, sacred history is impregnated with the idea of prophecy. And it is because of this fact that the prophets of the old dispensation speak of the future, of a dispensation to come, in terms derived from those forms and manifestations of the Kingdom of God and his covenant that existed in their own time. Essentially the Kingdom of God and his covenant are always in the world and are always the same, but their historical forms change and develop.

On the other hand, it also became evident that prophecy extended beyond the forms of the Kingdom and covenant of God existing at a certain age and pointed the people of God forward to a better future. And, as we showed, the light of prophecy in its predictive sense becomes clearer according as history grows darker. As the time approaches that a certain dispensation shall come to an end to be replaced by another and better, and as, therefore, existing institutions and forms of the Kingdom fall into decay and threaten to crumble into ruins; and as for that very reason the people of God living under such forms of the Kingdom are inclined to identify these forms with the Kingdom of God itself, so that when the former decay it seems to them that the cause of the Kingdom is hopelessly lost—when these conditions develop, God sends

his prophets especially with the purpose to comfort them and fill their hearts with the hope of a brighter future that is approaching. And thus it comes about that there is a certain contrast in sacred history between its actual course and the line of prophecy. As the former descends the latter ascends. As the former grows darker the latter becomes clearer and more distinct. And thus it also became plain that prophecy in the sense of prediction is the necessary concomitant of sacred history.

It is in this connection that we wish to call attention to the peculiar institution of Nazaritism among Israel, because the Nazarite is a prophetic appearance. Not as if the Nazarite as such was a prophet only. Surely, as in the case of Samuel and John the Baptist, they also served as prophets and actually prophesied. But the character of the Nazarite as such in his separation and consecration resembled much more that of the priest. Nazaritism bore a semi-sacerdotal character. For that reason there was a resemblance between the consecration of the Nazarite and that of the priest. Nazaritism as such provided the way for the individual Israelite to perform service of a semi-priestly nature. Like the Nazarite the priest was not to come into contact with the dead, and like the former the latter was not to touch wine during the period of service. And, therefore, the Nazarite was not only a prophet; he was also closely related to the priestly class among Israel. But his appearance among Israel was, nevertheless, prophetic. Whether he actually prophesied as Samuel and John the Baptist and by his message called the people to repentance and consecration unto Jehovah, or whether he merely acted on the stage of Israel's history as Samson and other Nazarites whose vow was only temporal, the fact remains that the Nazarite in his very appearance, in his separation and consecration, carried a very significant prophetic character of their entire appearance that also accounts for the fact that they generally appeared and were raised up by Jehovah in times of national upheaval and confusion and of religious decadence and apostasy.

The law of the Nazarite is found in Num. 6. There we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled 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. All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because the consecration of his God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord" (Vss. 1-8).

Now, from this passage it is plain that the calling and purpose of the Nazarite was to bring to light the priestly character of the covenant people of Israel in a peculiar form. To vow the vow of a Nazarite in the first place was a matter of free choice for any man or woman in Israel. The name Nazarite denotes the idea of consecration by means of special separation. The Nazarite was a separate one who in his separation was consecrated to the Lord, and the purpose of whose separation was exactly to further and make possible his consecration. At first the Nazarite vow was taken only for a limited time. But we know from the Word of God that in later times, and particularly in times of great significance, the Lord raised up Nazarites that were separated and consecrated unto the Lord from their birth. This was the case with Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, who were separated and dedicated unto Jehovah even before they were born.

As far as the contents of the vow of the Nazarite is concerned, it implied three elements. In the first place, he might not touch anything of the vine.

He was to abstain from wine and from any intoxicating drink in the first place. But this was not all. He might not drink anything that was prepared of the fruit of the vine, he might not touch the vinegar of wine, nor the vinegar of any strong drink. He was not even to eat fresh grapes or raisins of grapes. And finally, still more absolute the command becomes when we read that during the period he vowed to be a Nazarite the Israelite was not allowed to eat anything at all prepared from the vine, from the kernels even to the husk. It is evident from this that the design of this precept was not merely that the Nazarite by abstaining from intoxicating drink should preserve temperance and clearness of mind, so that he might thereby be all the better enabled to consecrate himself unto the Lord. For he might not eat or drink anything at all that was prepared from the vine. He was called to abstain also from what was not intoxicating. Secondly, the Nazarite

was not allowed, during the entire period of his separation, to let a razor come upon his head. He was to let his hair grow freely. And, in the third place, the Nazarite, holy unto the Lord, was to touch no dead body. He was not even allowed to defile himself in case of the decease of a near relative, be it father or mother, brother or sister. And, in connection with this last requirement, he was to guard himself against other defilements. In case of Samson's mother we even read that she was not to eat anything unclean during the period of her pregnancy.

In these three elements, then, we must look for the significance of the Nazarite among Israel as a prophetic appearance.

And in these three we find the message the Nazarite bore to Israel, the twofold message of separation and consecration. But about this next week.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

