

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Nazarite Vow

Particulars of the Nazarite vow are found in Numbers chapter six. This vow was taken voluntarily, either man or woman, in respect to their faith and devotion to Jehovah. For the period of their vow the Nazarite would (1) abstain from wine or any product of the vine, even down to seeds or leaves, (2) let his hair grow uncut, (3) avoid contact with dead bodies (Numbers 6:1-8). The vow is also mentioned in Lamentations 4:7 and Amos 2:11. Both texts suggest a goodly number of persons took this vow from time to time, so that it continued a common part of Jewish culture even when the nation wandered from God. Probably it was this vow that Paul observed (Acts 18:18), and four other Jewish Christian men in his time (Acts 21:23).

The Nazarite vow represents the vow of consecration we make to God as we enter into his fold. Abstaining from wine shows that we abstain from the intoxicating spirit of this world and all of its influences, so that we would wish not to imbibe so much as a "seed" or "leaf" of sin if possible. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). The uncut hair is a symbol of faithfulness to our vows, and the flowing locks of hair "as a flock of goats" elsewhere symbolize a feature of great beauty in the Bride of Christ (Song of Solomon 4:1). Avoiding contact with dead ones represents that we, as justified members of the body of Christ, wish to remain cleansed from Adamic sin as far as possible.

IN CASE OF DEFILEMENT

Numbers 6:9-12 describes how to cleanse a Nazarite from unintentional contact with death. He was to shave his head on the seventh day of a purifying period, and on the eighth day bring two birds for his cleansing and a lamb for a trespass offering. This is very similar to the procedure for cleansing lepers in Leviticus 14 — the leper brings two birds for his cleansing, shaves his head on the seventh day, and on the eighth day brings animals for sacrifice which include a lamb for a trespass offering (verses 1-12). The cleansing of lepers represents the cleansing of mankind from the leprosy of Adamic sin. Thus the similarity of the offerings for both lepers and the unintentionally defiled Nazarites.

CONCLUSION OF THE VOW

Numbers 6:13-21 describes the conclusion of the period of one's vow, representing the time when our consecration

unto death is complete. The particulars described bear a marked similarity to the offerings described in Leviticus chapter eight concerning the consecration of the priesthood. But there are some noticeable differences. These differences symbolically distinguish the completion of our vows, collectively at the end of the Gospel Age, from the sacrificing and laboring of the Church during the Gospel Age. Here are some specifics.

(1) Both accounts include a ram for a peace offering, parts of which were waved before the Lord. In Leviticus 8:22-30 this ram of consecration was waved with three items from a basket of unleavened bread: (a) one unleavened cake, (b) one cake of oiled bread, and (c) one wafer. These represent justification, sanctification, and the hope of glorification (*Tabernacle Shadows*, page 46). But in Numbers 6:15 the basket of unleavened bread contained only two kinds, "cakes ... mingled with oil, and wafers." Why the missing element, the simple unleavened cake not mingled with oil? Because that represents the justification of our flesh, and at the end of the narrow way we no longer require our flesh. We still retain the influence of the holy spirit (oil), and realize the promised glorification (wafer), so these are present.

(2) In both passages the right shoulder of the ram is waved, representing the fullness of our service to the divine cause (Leviticus 8:25, Numbers 6:19). But in Leviticus 8 the right shoulder was burnt on the altar, whereas in Numbers 6 it was

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not (Leviticus 8:28, Numbers 6:20). Why this missing element? Because during the Gospel Age our labors are expended in sacrifice, but in glory above our service, still joyfully rendered by us and accepted by God, will not be spent in sacrifice.

(3) In Leviticus 8:25 the fat, liver and kidneys were waved and then consumed. In Numbers 6 these items are omitted. Why? Because the liver and kidneys, purifying organs, no longer pertain when our fleshly sacrifice is complete, and our zeal and devotion is no longer consumed in sacrifice.

(4) In Leviticus 8:23, 24, ram's blood is applied to the right ear, thumb and big toe of the priests. In Numbers 6 the blood is nowhere mentioned. Why? Because there is no need of redemption when the saints finish their earthly course.

(5) In Leviticus 8:27 the priests being consecrated wave the offering, showing how we now wave our offering during the days of our consecration until it is removed from our hands. In Numbers 6:20 the offering is waved on behalf of the Nazarite. Why this difference? Because when our service here is complete we no longer "wave" our offering. It is presented on our behalf, and God accepts it, but our labors will have ended.

At the end of the sacrificing of the Gospel Age Jesus will bless the people, represented by Aaron blessing the people in Leviticus 9:22. What blessing did Aaron speak to the people? He used the words given in Numbers 6:24-26, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." That is the blessing which will come to the world when the Nazarites of the Gospel Age have completed their vows. Thus the location of these words following a description of the Nazarite Vow is appropriate.

OLD TESTAMENT NAZARITES

Only two Nazarites in the Old Testament are recorded by name, and the record concerning each of them is remarkable. They were Samson and Samuel. Both were Nazarites from the womb, destined in advance for their life of devotion and service. Both were children of promise. Samson was promised by the angel to Manoa and his wife (Judges 13:6-21). Samuel was promised by Eli in response to Hannah's desperate prayer (1 Samuel 1:9-20).

Even more striking, both men were contemporaries and employed by God to accomplish the same work, namely the deliverance of Israel from the Philistine bondage which would endure forty long years. Samson was born during that oppression and died just before it was completed. He was destined to "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:1, 5). Under Samuel, God would complete the victory so triumphantly that "the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel" (1 Samuel 7:13).

The connection between these men is obscured to the casual reader because three narratives intervene between the two accounts. (1) Judges 17, 18 describe how the tribe of

Dan went into continued idolatry. (2) Judges 19, 20 describe how the tribe of Benjamin was nearly exterminated. (3) The Book of Ruth describes the ancestral parentage of King David. These three narratives were deferred by the compiler of Judges because they do not pertain to any particular judge. But having occurred during the period of Judges, they had to be included before moving onto the period of Kings which is introduced through the career of Samuel.

These episodes actually occurred much earlier, in the generation following the conquest under Joshua. (See Judges 18:30 in the NASB or NIV, Judges 20:28, and Ruth 4:21.) Without this intrusion, the story of Samson would be immediately followed with the story of Samuel, his younger contemporary. The engagement of both of these men in the same deliverance, one a precursor the other a finisher, begins a pattern (and a picture) continued in another pair of Nazarites which appear much later in the sacred record: John the Baptist and Jesus.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

That John the Baptist was a Nazarite from the womb is implied in Luke 1:15, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." Jesus, of course, was not literally a Nazarite, for he drank wine frequently. But he was the fulfillment of the Nazarite, the antitype of what the Nazarite vow was all about.

Jesus was raised in the city of Nazareth and thus "fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23). The similarity of the words "Nazarite" and "Nazarene" are probably not coincidental. The prophecies said that Jesus would be a "branch" or shoot, and the name of the city Nazareth evidently comes from the Hebrew word *netzer*, "branch" (Isaiah 11:1), which describes a shoot separated from the main stem. The word "Nazarite" means "separated."

John and Jesus were contemporaries, John about six months the elder. As Samson completed his life before the deliverance of Israel was complete through Samuel, so John the Baptist completed his life before the deliverance through Christ was effected. Samson was a little older than Samuel; John was a little older than Jesus. Samson and Samuel had distinct ministries, but to the same end — delivering Israel. John and Jesus had distinct ministries, but to the same end — gathering the "Israelites indeed" to God. Samson and Samuel were both destined from the womb. John and Jesus were both destined from the womb.

BRO. MILLER AND BRO. RUSSELL

This tandem at the first advent has a parallel at the second advent in Bro. Miller (1781-1849) and Bro. Russell (1852-1916), two antitypical Nazarites. Bro. Russell, as the seventh star in the hand of our Lord Jesus (Revelation 1:20), represents our Lord in the harvest work at the second advent. John preceded our Lord's ministry; Bro. Miller preceded the Harvest movement. Men mused in their hearts whether John was Messiah (Luke 3:15); many mused

whether the Miller Movement would bring in Messiah. John's work was introductory; Miller's work was introductory.

John, though thoroughly devoted, consecrated and faithful, was nevertheless not of the new movement brought in by Christ. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29). Bro. Miller, though thoroughly devoted, consecrated and faithful, did not embrace the clearer views respecting trinity, immortal soul, and greater hope for the world, which began to circulate within the Adventist movement. He was a precursor to the Truth Movement, as John was a precursor to the Gospel Movement. Had Bro. Miller embraced the clearer views, and been vocal concerning them, it probably would have diminished the breadth of his service as herald to the Christian world to rouse them for the second advent.

APOSTLE PAUL AND BRO. RUSSELL

After Jesus died, rose and ascended, his work continued through the apostles. Added to them was the newly converted Paul, a "chosen vessel" to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles. Peter was granted the honor of using the "keys of heaven" to introduce faith in Christ to the Gentile Cornelius, which assisted other Jewish Christians to recognize God was broadening the blessed call beyond only Israelites. But Paul, more than any other, grasped from the Old Testament types and prophecies the magnitude of the dispensational change. Evidently Paul was the first messenger to the church.

Thus the work of Jesus extended through the first messenger, Paul, following the first advent. Similarly the work of Jesus at his return proceeded through the seventh messenger, Bro. Russell; in neither case exclusively, but in both cases grandly.

FROM THE WOMB?

Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist and Jesus were destined for their service from the womb. Was it so with these two also? Paul writes of himself, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me" (Galatians 1:15, 16). Perhaps Paul was speaking on a spiritual level of the Law as his "mother's womb." But this still gives us a connection in symbol with the Old Testament Nazarites who were also called from the womb. Even literally, it is apparent that God was preparing Paul for his position from his early years as a student of Gamaliel, one of the finest teachers of the Law.

How about with Bro. Russell? Probably with him and all of the messengers to the Church, there was a foreknowledge and preparation of affairs from years before, possibly from the womb. How much of such divine foresight may apply to others of the New Creation, who can tell? Cannot many of the dear friends testify of experiences in their childhood, in which they can later trace the leadings of providence?

Respecting the seventh messenger in particular, a hint may be gleaned from the book of Daniel. Chapter 5 records the cryptic handwriting on the wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel,



The Conversion of Saul

Upharsin" (verse 25). Literally this means "numbered, numbered, weighed, divided." Some commentators and brethren note that this phrase is very close to expressing units of monetary value, "mena, mena, shekel, division." The Babylonian mena was 50 shekels, and a shekel is 20 gerahs (Exodus 30:13). Thus "mena, mena, shekel, division" suggests the amounts of 1000, 1000, 20 and 500 gerahs respectively. These sum to 2520, the same number as the years of Gentile dominion commencing with Babylon. Thus this judgment on ancient Babylon points to the judgment concluding the 2520 years, which brings us to 1914.

Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom at the age of 62 years (Daniel 5:30, 31). Who is this Darius? Some scholars who support the integrity of the scriptural record hold that Darius the Mede was the same person as Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus blended both kingdoms into one, his mother being Median and his father Persian. Daniel 6:28 appears to affirm this, if the word "and" is translated "even." (See 1 Chronicles 5:26, NASB or NIV, where the same construction equates Pul with Tilgath-pilneser — two names for the same person.) If Darius is Cyrus, then Darius is a picture of Christ (Isaiah 45:1, 2).

Now to the point. Darius was 62 years old — prophetically, Christ in 1914 would be 62 years old. Does this make any sense? It may, if we recognize that Christ was represented at his return by the seventh of those seven stars in his right hand. In 1914, Bro. Russell was in fact 62 years old. If this age was foreknown, then his birth year was foreknown; he was called from the womb.

THE JEREMIAH CONNECTION

Thinking of these consecrated servants being called from the womb, we note a prophet in the Old Testament who was also destined from the outset. God said to Jeremiah, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

Jeremiah represented our Lord. Jeremiah was anointed a prophet 40 years before the Babylonians burned the temple; Jesus was anointed at Jordan 40 years before the Romans burned the temple. Jeremiah was beset by the rulers, priests

and people, but God promised he would be finally victorious (Jeremiah 1:18). Jesus was beset by the rulers, priests and people, but was finally victorious. Jeremiah was put into a pit but raised out of it; Jesus was put into a tomb but raised out of it. A link between the two is also made in Matthew 16:14, “some say thou art ... Jeremias.”

Since Jesus is represented by the first and seventh messengers following the two advents, it is noteworthy that four dates prominent during Jeremiah’s ministry are paralleled by prominent dates following each of the two advents of Christ — first carried through Paul, later through Bro. Russell. Here, in chart form, is the comparison.

Jeremiah	13 Josiah	18 Josiah	4 Jeh’kim	11 Zedek.
Paul	29	34	51	69
Russell	1874	1879	1896	1914

Jeremiah entered his prophetic office in the 13th year of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:2) and continued forty years “unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month” of the 11th year of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 1:3). Five years after his call began a great religious reformation in the 18th year of Josiah, sparked by finding the book of the Law in the Temple (2 Kings 22:3, 8; 2 Chronicles 34:8, 14). Seventeen years later the first of the predicted judgments fell upon Judah with an invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6; Jeremiah 46:2, 25:1; Daniel 1:1 accession year reckoning). Eighteen years later Zedekiah’s kingdom fell (Jeremiah 1:3).

The anointing of Jeremiah parallels the anointing of Jesus in 29 AD. Five years later Paul was converted in 34 AD. Through him a great religious reformation was initiated. Seventeen years later in 51 AD the disciples convened a council at Jerusalem to resolve the Jewish question, namely, to what extent the Gentiles coming to Christ should be obliged to the Law. Eighteen years later the 40 years of probation expired in 69 AD, the last year the atonement offerings could be observed before the temple was destroyed the following spring.

The corresponding dates at the second advent would be 1874, 1879, 1896, 1914. In 1874 Christ returned, and Bro. Russell’s ministry as a messenger to the Church of Laodicea commenced. (According to a testimony of Bro. Russell’s sister, Sr. Margaret Land, in the Convention Reports from 1907, this may also have been the year of Bro. Russell’s immersion.) In 1879 the first edition of the Watchtower was published, beginning a great religious reformation. In 1896 the Jewish question came to the fore with the publication of “The Jewish State” by Theodore Herzl, beginning the Zionist movement. In 1914, 40 years of probation for Christendom expired, leading to World War I.

Each date focuses on a different aspect of the Harvest work. Jeremiah had a message for three distinct classes — the faithful who would heed his words, the nation which would receive the punishments predicted, and also “the nations”

(Jeremiah 1:10). After the beginning of the harvest in 1874, the three dates following, namely 1879, 1896, 1914, highlight a work for each of these classes. (1) The faith class received the truth through the Watchtower begun in 1879. (2) Israel responded to the Zionist movement begun in 1896. (3) The nations fell to the war opening in 1914.

DATES OF PAUL’S MINISTRY

When the parallels presented above began to take form, we were uncertain of the dates of Paul’s ministry. The following are helpful facts relative to two rulers who intersect with Paul’s experiences. (1) Aretas was king over Damascus when Paul escaped the city by being lowered over the wall in a basket. This was three years after Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:19-28, 2 Corinthians 11:32, Galatians 1:15-18).

(2) Gallio was proconsul of Achaia when Paul appeared before him during his second missionary journey. This was about two years after the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15), allowing six months for various journeys (Acts 16 through 18:10) and 18 months at Corinth (Acts 18:11) until his appearance before Gallio (Acts 18:12). The Jerusalem council was 14 years after Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem at his escape from Damascus (Galatians 2:1). Thus between Paul’s escape from Aretas and his appearance before Gallio were 16 years.

Current historical information suggests the earliest date feasible for Aretas’ control of Damascus is 37 AD. The latest date feasible for Gallio as deputy (“proconsul” in NASB) of Achaia is 53 AD. The span between these dates is 16 years, which matches the 16 years between these episodes from scripture. Thus these 16 years cannot begin earlier, or end later, than 37 AD and 53 AD respectively.

Therefore Paul’s conversion was in 34 AD, three years before his escape from Damascus in 37 AD. The council at Jerusalem was in 51 AD, 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem.

SUMMARY

The Nazarite Vow represents the consecration vows of our Lord Jesus and his saints. The two named Nazarites of the Old Testament, Samson and Samuel, were chosen for their service from the womb, and engaged in two phases of the same work. Their work finds a parallel in the spiritual work of two New Testament Nazarites, John the Baptist and Jesus (an antitypical Nazarite). They were chosen for their service from the womb and engaged in two phases of the same work. Centuries later another tandem emerged. Bro. Miller and Bro. Russell, two antitypical Nazarites, engaged in two phases of the latter day gathering of the saints.

Jeremiah, also chosen from the womb for his service, represents our Lord Jesus, whose ministry after both advents was carried on largely through the first and seventh messengers to the Church, Bro. Paul and Bro. Russell. Four prominent dates in Jeremiah’s ministry are paralleled in four prominent dates respecting the ministry of Paul, and four others respecting the ministry of Bro. Russell.

— Bro. David Rice

The Lord's Jewels

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:16, 17).

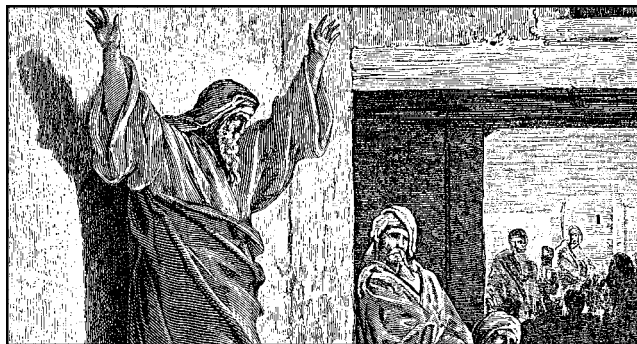
The topic “The Lord’s Jewels” is more specifically “The Gathering of the Lord’s Jewels.” During the present Christian or Gospel Age, God has been selecting saints who will ultimately comprise His royal family. At the end of this age, soon to come, God’s crown jewels will be mounted in the royal diadem.

Two questions naturally arise: What characteristics is the Lord looking for in His people? What constitutes their beauty? We are told, “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD [God] looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). We can glean answers to the two questions by piecing together clues from various Scriptures. Psalm 45:10, 11 is one such text: “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.”

Beauty, in God’s sight, is our friendship for Him based on our love for Him and for the principles of divine government. Jesus told his disciples that he would in no wise cast out any who came to him, for the Father Himself had drawn them (John 6:37, 44). The Heavenly Father’s appraisal of and affection for Jesus (and inferentially for us also) are based upon the statement in Hebrews 1:9, “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” On a particular occasion, the Master said to those who were listening to one of his sermons: “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ... whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matthew 12:48, 50).

The value of gemstones consists in several factors, one of which is their scarcity or rarity. The third chapter of the Book of Malachi contrasts the jewel class with the proud and the wicked. The jewel class are those individuals who reverentially fear Jehovah; they think upon His name and assemble for that purpose. They indeed are a “little flock,” dearly beloved (Luke 12:32).

Hardness is another factor to consider. In some respects jewels are like flowers, yet unlike the flowers of the botanical realm, they do not fade and wither but have a lasting or permanent value. And so the jewel class, when mounted in divine glory, will endure forever. Hardness prevents jewels from being scratched or marred, and hardness and endurance are characteristics God is looking for in His people



Malachi the Prophet

(1 Peter 2:19, Matthew 10:22, James 1:12). Figuratively, the hardness of jewels represents durability and firmness of character — intent and purpose. The jewel class set their faces as flint in their determination to do God’s will.

Another value of gemstones is in the form of crystallization peculiar to each kind. Not only does crystallization represent the individual’s willingness and obedience toward truth and righteousness, but also it implies being fixed and settled in righteousness — enduring hardness as good soldiers of the Cross (2 Timothy 2:3). The form of crystallization also signifies, to a certain degree, individuality of character.

Another quality to look for in a jewel is transparency or clearness, particularly in its interior. Transparency represents the honesty and openness that God is looking for in His people, the purity of their intentions and, consequently, moral purity and relative flawlessness. God’s people are not faultless, but they are blameless in His sight because He sees the purity of their intentions. As the Apostle John said, if we say we do not sin, we deceive ourselves, and “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 1:8-10, 2:1).

The luster or sheen of a jewel, which also determines its value, illustrates the zeal, animation, and enthusiasm of the Christian in his service toward God and truth. The transparency or clearness of the stone pictures an interior quality, whereas the luster or sheen represents an exterior quality.

A polished diamond has a peculiar luster that is sometimes referred to as adamantine; that is, it looks like polished iron. In Scripture, iron represents law and discipline. Therefore, the luster of the diamond, or adamantine, represents the obvious beauty and grace of the mature, polished Christian, whose well-ordered and disciplined life in the school of Christ becomes increasingly apparent to other spiritually minded Christians. This maturity can prove to be a stimulating factor, an incentive, a help, to others in their development and growth.

Another value of precious stones is their color. This value will be demonstrated more fully in the future resurrection glory, beauty, and personal honor of office to be bestowed on those of the Bride class by the Heavenly Father. In the present life, the color of gems signifies the particular area or development in a field of endeavor in which a Christian excels. That development is obvious to fellow Christians.

To illustrate some of the characteristics of gemstones, we will consider the diamond. Where is the diamond found? Approximately 75 percent of diamonds that are mined come from southern Africa, which is sometimes styled “the Dark Continent.” God’s crown jewels are found in this sin-benighted earth, being dug from the mire or pit of sin. The soil in which diamonds are found, called kimberlite, is a blue-black ground. It represents the soil of faith (blue) and humility (black). Diamonds are also found in volcanic “pipes” or “chimneys.” Accordingly, the Lord’s people are found in divinely appointed channels.

Another peculiarity of the diamond is that it is separated out or extracted by the use of cart grease. The stones are flushed over the grease. The cart is a burden-bearing conveyance, and just as lubricating the wheel greatly assists in the pulling ability of such a device, especially when carrying a heavy load, so the Christian, formerly heavily laden and burdened by the weight of the consciousness of his or her sin, is attracted by the gospel message of Christ and the consolation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus enjoins those who are being drawn: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ... unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28, 29).

Diamonds are formed from black coal under great pressure and heat. Under those conditions, a miraculous transformation takes place, the result being the clear, transparent diamond. As soft carbon, coal is greasy, smeary, and soot-like, but under great pressure and heat, it becomes the hardest, clearest, and most beautifully transparent gemstone, the one at the top of the mineral kingdom.

How are diamonds appraised? Jewelers like to check a diamond for flaws by viewing it in northern light against a white background. In the Diamond District of lower Manhattan, jewelers used to go out into the street to view and appraise diamonds in the natural light. The carat, the standard unit of weight for valuing gems, might well represent the character of the Christian. The degree of character development determines the proportionate weight or influence one has in God’s estimation. A scale of specific gravity or relative weight is used to identify the various jewels; that is, the comparative weight is in relationship to a fixed standard of an equal volume of water. So God’s estimation of the Christian is based upon the relationship to His Holy Word — the degree to which one aspires to be influenced by the teachings of the Bible.

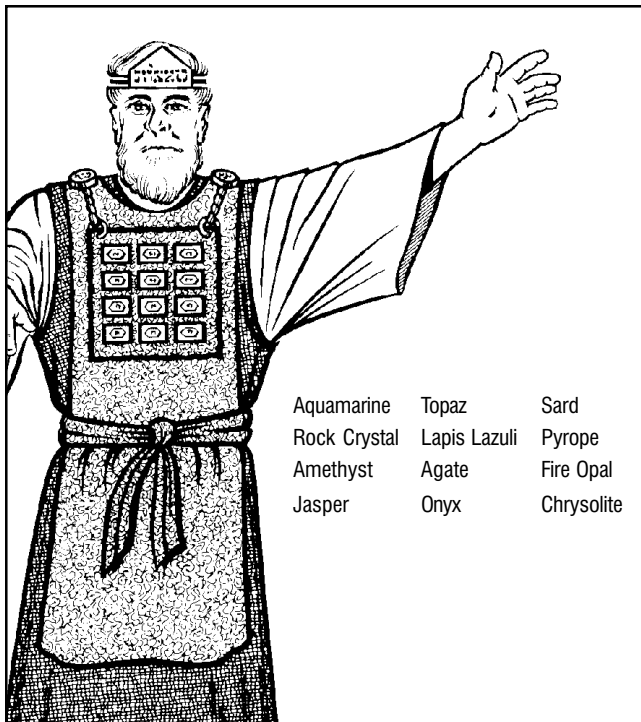
The diamond is also important from the standpoint of its reflective, refractive, and dispersal powers of light. Accordingly, God’s people have a duty not only to receive the truth in their hearts but also to share it with others — to preach the gospel and to show forth the glories of the coming Kingdom. Our theme text, Malachi 3:16, expresses this characteristic: “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” Christians love to meditate upon God, His character, and His plan, and the Heavenly Father informs us that a record is being kept of

their names in His “book of remembrance.” What an awesome and humbling fact about the Almighty One, who “tellethe the number of the stars ... [and] calleth them all by their names” (Psalm 147:4)! The Malachi text is trying to convey to us little beings the importance of the attention the Heavenly Father has for His people. He condescends to men of low estate by telling us that He will put the names of faithful Christians in a book of remembrance. He is giving assurance that He will not forget their labor of love on His behalf (Hebrews 6:10). The theme text continues, “They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

In the Old Testament, in connection with the Tabernacle of Moses in the Wilderness, the high priest ministered on behalf of the nation of Israel for the typical cancellation of sins. The high priest wore garments of glory and beauty, one of which was the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:2, 15-21). In this item of clothing, which was a span wide and a span long — that is, 9 inches square — were set twelve semiprecious stones in golden ouches or receptacles. On the face of the stones were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, one name on each stone: Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, etc. Each stone, such as the sard, the topaz, and the emerald, had its own characteristics, and the particular jewel was in relationship to the name that was inscribed upon it.

The twelve stones in the breastplate represent the twelve primary characteristics or personality traits that are to be found in God’s people. In their compliance with the instructions in His Word, God does not expect all of His people to be conformed to one stereotype or image. Although it is true that they are to be transformed into the likeness of His dear Son, He does not expect them to be cookie-cutter representations of that likeness (Romans 8:29). In other words, He does not destroy individual personality traits. In fact, just as the beauty of nature consists largely in the variety that exists — for example, we marvel at and appreciate flowers because of the variety of texture, color, and fragrance — so the variety of leading characteristics in God’s people is not expunged by conformity to His will but is enhanced in beauty by the power of the Holy Spirit, and all disparaging features are minimized. In resurrection glory, the Lord’s jewels will be perfect.

The New Testament shows that Jesus, in his ministry and association with the disciples, repeatedly favored three particular individuals: Peter, James, and John. For instance, in the raising of Jairus’ daughter, he allowed these three to accompany him into the room where he performed the miracle (Mark 5:37-42). The same three individuals went with Jesus to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, where they saw him transformed with glistening garments (Matthew 17:1, 2). In the Garden of Gethsemane, these three accompanied him farther than the other apostles (Matthew 26:36, 37). It is not that Jesus did not love the other apostles but that a principle operates; namely, he most appreciates those who love him the most.



Aquamarine	Topaz	Sard
Rock Crystal	Lapis Lazuli	Pyrope
Amethyst	Agate	Fire Opal
Jasper	Onyx	Chrysolite

High Priest with Jewels in Breastplate

We illustrate this principle by considering certain jewels in the breastplate. The twelve jewels were aligned in four vertical rows with three stones across horizontally in each row. The four primary stones were in the vertical row on the left side of the high priest, which would be on the right side as he was viewed (Hebrew reads from right to left). Therefore, from the standpoint of the beholder, the first or most important stone was in the upper right-hand corner. On this stone, which was the sard, was inscribed the tribal name “Judah,” meaning “praise.” The ancient sardius, a flesh-colored stone used in carving and for cameo engravings, is symbolic of love. In the Book of Revelation, the Heavenly Father is symbolically seated on a throne, and two stones are used to portray His character. “A throne was set in heaven, and one [God] sat on the throne. And he ... was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone” (Revelations 4:2,3). The “jasper” is not the jasper of today but, as shown in the Greek and as used in this context, is the green-tinted diamond. On the one hand, the diamond pictures God’s office and glory — honor due to Him. On the other hand, the sard represents the softer features of God’s character — His compassion, love, mercy, and pity — which blend perfectly with His justice, glory, power, and office. Thus the diamond and the sard represent the two primary essentials of His being.

In regard to this first stone, the sard, and the first tribe being Judah, we know that Jesus is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and that he most fitly represents God’s love (Revelation 5:5). However, of the twelve apostles, the one first in rank — and thus pictured by the sard — is the Apostle Paul.

The second most important jewel on the high priest’s breastplate, also to the far right but one row down, was the carbuncle or pyrope inscribed with the tribal name “Reuben.”

In prophecy, Reuben is said to be “unstable as water” (Genesis 49:3,4). Of the twelve apostles, Peter was known for the quality of impulsiveness. Accordingly, the carbuncle is a coal of living fire. Peter’s zeal, spontaneity, and impulsiveness were the very characteristics Jesus loved, but in the school of Christ, they needed to be developed and stabilized so that later Peter could feed the Lord’s sheep (John 21:15-17). Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a rock.

The next jewel in rank, the fire opal, is related to the Apostle John. In this apostle also there was zeal but in another way: emotionalism. The Lord is pleased with emotionalism when it is schooled in the right direction of love for him.

The fourth stone in rank was the chrysolite, representing the Apostle James of Zebedee and the tribe of Dan, the judge. Chrysolite is the stone of wisdom: “chrysos” (gold) and “lithos” (stone).

In summation, the twelve jewels of the breastplate represent the characteristics God is looking for in His people. Although we cannot hope to be an apostle, we can hope to be of the same class as one of the twelve apostles. While now, in the Gospel Age, we are being quarried, we trust that ultimately, after being refined and polished, we will be mounted as jewels in divine glory by God’s grace.

— Frank Shallieu

The Epistle of “Barnabas”

There have been several other chroniclers in history as well as those who have written about time prophecies. Pastor Russell comments on the “venerable tradition” in his second volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, *The Time is at Hand*.

“Here we furnish the evidence that from the creation of Adam to AD 1873 was six thousand years. And though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand will be the epoch of Christ’s reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation” (Page 39).

In the apocryphal epistle of Barnabas, the writer, clearly not the beloved disciple,¹ sheds light on the Jewish and early Christian tradition that the end of the 6000 years of time from the creation of Adam to our day would mark a momentous event in the history of the world. Below is the actual quote from the Epistle of Barnabas.

“Further, also, it is written concerning the Sabbath in the Decalogue which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, ‘And sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart.’ And He says in another place, ‘If my sons keep the Sabbath, then will I cause my mercy to rest upon them.’ The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning

of the creation [thus]: ‘And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.’ Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, ‘He finished in six days.’ This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, ‘Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.’ Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. ‘And He rested on the seventh day.’ This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day” (Chapter XV, The False and the True Sabbath).

“Among the Apostolic Fathers Barnabas is the first and the only one who expressly teaches a pre-millennial reign of Christ on earth. He considers the Mosaic history of the creation a type of six ages of labor for the world, each lasting a thousand years, and of a millennium of rest; since with God ‘one day is as a thousand years.’ The millennial Sabbath on earth will be followed by an eighth and eternal day in a new world, of which the Lord’s Day (called by Barnabas ‘the seventh day’) is the type” (*Schaff’s History of the Christian Church*).

— Jeff Mezera

(1) Editor’s note: McClintock and Strong’s article on Barnabas, Epistle, finds that scholars generally consider this epistle to be from early in the second century.

John Wycliff — On Democratic Elections in the Church

John Wycliff (1329-1384) has well been called the “Morning Star of the Reformation,” and he is best remembered as the first translator of the Bible into English. Because the Papacy was in such disarray during his lifetime, he was able to write and act with a freedom that would not be matched until the great Reformation. To assure that the English people would not remain in darkness of Catholics dogmas, between 1375 and 1382 Wycliff wrote twelve major treatises in Latin, condemning abuses of the church and calling for reform. The excerpt below is from a recent translation of the tenth of these treatises “On Simony” condemning the culture of his day in which every major church office was sold [McVeigh, T.A., translator, “John Wycliff — On Simony,” Fordham University Press, New York (1992) Section 35:18-36:22.] Since the church owned massive tracts of the most fertile land throughout Europe, and further, since it received annual rent from the tenant farmers, significant monies flowed through the hands of prominent church officials, the bishops and cardinals. This money was frequently diverted to their private use. The Papacy maintained that it had the right to

buy and sell the management of these massive estates to bishops and cardinals of its choosing. Wycliff contradicted this, and for good measure attacked transubstantiation. To him, the practice of the primitive church was clear, they held an election for who their bishops, or “overseers” would be:¹

“... Thus parochial churches are said to possess the essential right to the ground they are built on; and they pretend that all patronage looks to the pope as its source in accordance with the text at the beginning of the second book of the Decretals ... the final disposition, however, of such patronage ought to be dealt with by an ecclesiastical judge who should re-establish it as a spiritual patronage in conformity with Christ’s law. But if the judge himself should be corrupt and avaricious, the rest of the church should make a ruling about it in keeping with the ultimate will of the first patron, Christ, which is apparent in his Gospel ... But after worshippers of signs gained control, each kind of patronage became perverted: for laymen [*i.e.* church officials controlling the bishop’s office] invalidly buy and sell patronage like cattle for profit when, on the contrary, by the law of nature the people ought to choose a more suitable person, and bishops who are turned toward worldly affairs instead of toward the task of patronage despoil their subjects. This is a very deceptive kind of patronage just like the false claim that Christ in blessing of the bread in the sacrament of the altar completely destroys the bread itself. The saints in the primitive church did not think this way about election, but by the consent of the people who were obliged to assist, *an election took place, as is clear ...*”

Wycliff did more than write. An aged Oxford professor, Wycliff showed great energy late in life and founded a group of untrained preachers called Lollards, who preached his teaching all over England. The Roman Catholic Church curtailed their ministry in 1401, when it succeeded in persuading Parliament to enforce the capital punishment called for in the declaration “De Haeretico comburendo” (Burning the Heretics.) Nevertheless, they were never eliminated. The Lollards helped to prepare the way, even though unnoticed, to the great Reform in England. The Bohemians, who studied at Oxford University and absorbed Wycliff’s teachings, returned with them to their land, which influenced John Huss’ life and the Bohemian Reform.

— Richard Doctor

(1) The English word “bishop” is a corrupted pronunciation of the Greek word “Episcopos” or “overseer.”

Financial Report

2,758.42	Balance January 1, 2003
2,482.00	Donations
4.63	Interest
-2,773.00	Expenses

2,472.05	Balance December 31, 2003
572	Current Subscribers