

GETTING A DRINK

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Have you ever been thirsty? Really thirsty? We all remember how that on one occasion the Lord came to Jacob's well near Sychar in Samaria. He was, we are told, "wearied with his journey" (Jno. 4:6). He sat down by the well and waited. When a certain Samaritan woman came to draw water, he asked her for a drink (vs. 6, 7). In the developing conversation, he told her that if she knew "the gift of God" and if she realized who he actually was that she would be asking a drink from him and that he would give her living water (v. 10).

The Nazarite. In Numbers 6 Moses records the law of the Nazarite. The Nazarite vow was a voluntary pledge, but if and when a man took that vow, he was to let his hair grow long, and he was to avoid the grape and its juice. "All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk" (v. 4). Too, he could not defile himself with the dead. He was not allowed to become defiled by close up kin who passed away (v. 7). All the days of his separation were to be holy unto the Lord (v. 8), and if he becomes accidentally defiled before the separation period has been concluded, things must be done to put him back into right relationship with God (vs. 9-12). And when the separation period is over, sacrifices must be made, his hair must be cut, and then burned in the fire beneath the peace offerings (vs. 13-21). One of the accusations that the prophet Amos made against God's people in his day involved the Nazarites. God through Amos declared, "And I raised up your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not" (Amos 2:11, 12).

A little one. Jesus explained that whoever received the apostles were, in effect, receiving Jesus. And whoever received Jesus was receiving the One who sent Jesus (Matt. 10:40). He further explained that whoever would receive a prophet in the name of or into the benefits of a prophet would himself receive the reward of a prophet. Furthermore, whoever would receive a righteous man in the name of or into the benefits of a righteous man would receive the same reward that that righteous man would receive (v. 41). Then he said, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward" (v. 42). The "little ones" in this context are his "twelve disciples" (Matt. 10:1; Matt. 11:1) also known as his "twelve apostles" (Matt. 10:2). Therefore, those among whom they were being sent (their fellow Jews) who would give them a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple or into the benefits of a disciple would, in fact, not lose their own reward. Giving a disciple a cup of cold water could be a very, very significant thing though, in one sense, a very small deed. We should remember that the significance of something is not always proportionate to its size. Just a cup of cold water! It may not seem like much, but it could be extremely consequential.

Jesus. When the Lord arrived at Golgotha, he was offered "wine to drink mingled with gall (Matt. 27:33, 34). He tasted it but then would not drink it. This was before his crucifixion, and evidently the drink was offered to him to lessen the pain that he would otherwise feel. He, however, turned down the numbing effect that the drink would provide, choosing to fully face

the pain. Much later, however, after hanging on the cross for almost six hours, Jesus knew that the time was about over. In order that a certain prophecy might be fulfilled, he said, "I thirst" (Jno. 19:28). "There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit" (vs. 29, 30). Thus, while Jesus refused to drink before the cross that which would give anyone any remote reason to claim that Jesus had not courageously faced the cross, he was willing finally, however, to accept refreshment just before he passed away. Someone gave him a welcomed drink.

Christians. We are called by the gospel to drink (Jno. 7:37). The Holy Spirit himself becomes within the Christian rivers of living water (Jno. 7:37-39). Those who become Christians are "all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). And as John on Patmos Isle was winding up the New Testament, he sends out the gospel invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).