

## The Zeal of God

### Do You Love His Appearing?

Most of us would say that we love the Lord, but probably haven't given much thought to whether or not we *love* His appearing. Once the question is raised, I suspect that most of us would acknowledge that we *should* love His appearing. After all Jesus taught us to pray for His Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. We also see that Paul loved and looked forward to the Lord's appearing.

#### **2 Timothy 4:8 (KJV)**

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Next we are likely to consult our emotions and see how we feel about it. But we shouldn't gauge our love for His appearing simply on how we feel about it. Love for His appearing is not only an emotional issue. The word "love" in the passage above is *agapao*, the verb form of *agape*. It is the form of love that could be described as commitment-based rather than emotion-based. It is often called unconditional love precisely because it is *not* based on how we feel, which is a condition. The commitment kind of love doesn't quit just because the going gets tough, have a bad day, or happen to be in a bad mood. [1] Therefore, instead of asking if we love His appearing, it might be more accurate to ask if we are *committed* to the appearing of the King.[2] How much do we think about it? Do we see it as a goal? Do we build our ministry strategy around it. Do we pray for His appearing?

The closing words of the Bible express the intense desire of the writer to see the Lord return and communicates to us that we, as the bride in agreement with the Holy Spirit, should be saying, "Come Lord Jesus!"

#### **Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)**

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"...

#### **Revelation 22:20 (NKJV)**

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

If there is a lack of love and focus for Christ's appearing, maybe it is because we have not seen His coming as a practical goal and have not invested in a strategy to see it realized. [3] This points to the need for a new paradigm and thus the purpose of this book.

### The Zeal of God

Perhaps the measure of our love for or commitment to Christ's appearing is the zeal with which we pursue it. [4] Webster defined zeal as: "*Passionate ardor in the pursuit of any thing. In*

*general, zeal is an eagerness of desire to accomplish or obtain some object... ”* When our unconditional commitment is combined with passionate feelings, which produce action, we have zeal. [5] The *Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionary* likens’ zeal to jealousy, as a husband is jealous over a wife. Webster also described zeal as: “...*the blind conductor of the will.*” The mind (or soul) is composed of the intellect, the emotions, and the will, the will being the decision making part of the mind. Decisions are generally made based on an intellectual and emotional evaluation, but zeal creates a direct connection to decision and action. Zeal says, “This issue is already settled; it is time to act.

What was Jesus’ first public act after being baptized and beginning His ministry? The first recorded miracle that Jesus did was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee where he turned water into wine. But even though this happened in a public setting, the miracle itself was done somewhat covertly because the ruler of the feast did not know what had happened but thought they had saved the good wine till last (John 2:9-10). What may have been Jesus’ first openly public act was a few days later and it was an act of zeal.

#### **John 2:13-17 (KJV)**

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,  
14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:  
15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;  
16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.  
17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.[6]

What a way to introduce your ministry! We see in verse 17 that this act, which would be described today as an act of violence, was the result of zeal, the zeal that Jesus had for God’s house. Jealous indignation rose up in Him. “For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 4:24 KJV). How dare they use God’s House in such a way! There was no evaluation of possible responses. There was no debate or risk assessment. Such a process was bypassed and by an automated decision making mechanism called zeal. It seems the purpose of zeal is to provide for a rapid response function in the church and to cut through the delays of over analysis.

#### **Zeal According To Knowledge**

The automated response mechanism that is often the result of zeal can be dangerous and that is why our zeal must be “according to knowledge.” Paul spoke of the mis-guided zeal of his countrymen who did not know Christ.

#### **Romans 10:1-2 (KJV)**

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.  
2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

There is a phrase that became popular among Christians a few years ago: “What Would Jesus Do?” It was common to see people wearing bracelets with the letters WWJD on them. The

purpose is to be reminded to act in a Christ-like way in every situation. That is a good thing but: We can only do what Jesus would do if we know what Jesus would do. [7]

Zeal according to proper knowledge is what gets things done, I am not suggesting we start turning over tables when we see people dishonoring the House of God; we need a plan inspired by the knowledge of God's purpose. Even though Jesus acted in zeal when He drove out the money changers, it was not thoughtless rage. Notice that He first went and constructed a whip. His zeal was governed by self-control and thoughtful purposed.

However, like Jesus, a primary place where we should apply this zeal is the House of God. We have already seen that the New Jerusalem is the church, the house of the living God., being built from living stones. Like Jesus, our zeal should be directed toward establishing justice and judgment in the church. [8] We should be angry where the church has compromised and where truth, repentance, holiness, discipleship and prayer has been replaced with carefully crafted humanistic programs designed to offend no one. Judgment begins in the house of God.

#### **1 Corinthians 11:31-32 (KJV)**

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

#### **1 Peter 4:17 (KJV)**

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

If we will put our own house in order, then we will be effective in reaching those outside the house of God, influence civil government, etc. Paul wrote to Timothy regarding order and conduct in the Church.

#### **1 Timothy 3:14-15 (KJV)**

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The Church, God's house is the pillar and support of truth in the culture.[9] If the moral structure of our nations is crumbling, it is because the pillars of truth have given way. It is because those in the house of God have forgotten His words and have not provided leadership nor been salty enough to prevent moral decay in the culture. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, what good is it (see Luke 14:34-35)?

Jesus rebuked the Laodicean Church for their lukewarm condition and their self-sufficiency and challenged them to repent. Notice *how* He told them to repent.

#### **Revelation 3:19 (KJV-Emphasis added)**

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. [10]

Therefore let us examine ourselves receive the Lord's rebuke and repent with zeal

according to the knowledge, a zeal for the House of God. Those who are zealous will love, prepare for, hasten, preach, and pray for the appearing of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. [11] Those who are zealous and repent will overcome and sit with Him on His throne when He returns (Rev 3:21). I am reminded of Daniel 11:32:

#### **Daniel 11:32 (NKJV)**

32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who **know** their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

Another version says: "... the people who know their God will display strength and take action" (NASB). 1 Peter 1:13 also links the word *action* to knowledge in regard to the coming of the Lord when it says "gird your minds" (knowledge) "for action."

#### **1 Peter 1:13 (NASB)**

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

### **Upgrading our Zeal**

We have all seen people who's unbridled zeal seems to do more harm than good. But as we consider the zeal demonstrated by Jesus, we should also keep an open mind to the possibility that we need to increase our own level of zeal. Godly zeal will not be accepted by all and will offend some. We must guard our hearts against the fear of confrontation and be willing to rock the boat when it is needed. Isaiah spoke of a time when speaking truth and simply departing from evil would make a person "prey" or a hunted.

#### **Isaiah 59:14-15 (KJV)**

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

This describes what we are seeing today when our government lies about its actions and targets individuals and groups who are standing for God, truth, the Constitution, and freedom. As we continue to read the passage from Isaiah, notice God's response.

#### **Isaiah 59:14-18 (KJV)**

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense.

19 So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

In response to the perversion of truth and justice, God raised His arm to bring salvation and among other things, **put on** zeal as a cloak. Ephesians speaks of **putting on** "...the new man

which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24). As we have seen demonstrated by Jesus driving the moneychangers from the temple, zeal is part of that new man. The point is this: the new, man including the zeal component, can be put on. We also see that zeal is a proper response when evil is prevailing and there is no justice. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard against him.

Zeal is as natural as breathing to the person who has conviction regarding right and wrong. We are designed to be passionate and zealous. Jeremiah experienced frustration when it seemed that no one responded with proper zeal to the word of the Lord that he was delivering, even to the point of throwing up his hands and vowing not to speak any more. But he could not. The zeal for God's word was like a fire shut up in his bones and it had to come out!

#### **Jeremiah 20:9 (NKJV)**

9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not.

Jeremiah loved the word of God, saying, "Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart..." (Jer 15:16). We should love God's word because God's word defines the cause. The more we understand the cause, the deeper established the kingdom paradigm is in our hearts and minds, the hotter zeal burns inside us and we become unable to hold it in. [12]

#### **Zeal Will Accomplish the Cause**

Isaiah prophesied regarding Jesus sitting on the throne of David and His government establishing, order, judgment and justice forever. Then he told us how this would be accomplished.

#### **(Isaiah 9:7 NASB)**

7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:7 can be reduced to a good and concise description of the cause, *Jesus on the throne, ruling the earth with justice and righteousness*. The zeal of the Lord will accomplish this. [13]

Those who are consumed by or eaten up with the zeal for God's house will take action. They will build the house and prepare the way for the King to establish His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Zeal is like "spiritual adrenalin" that transforms us from mild mannered ministers of grace to super heros who accomplish mighty deeds.

Today and every day we must ask ourselves if the zeal of God is burning in our hearts. Will embrace the work of building His house and engage the battle to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God? I say yes. What about you?

When the LORD shall build up Zion,  
he shall appear in his glory.  
— Psalms 102:16

### **Paradigm Builder**

Love and zeal for God's house will prepare the way for the Kingdom of God on earth.

Before reading this chapter, how would you describe your position regarding this concept?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

How would you describe your position regarding this concept after reading this chapter?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree