

The Cloak of Zeal

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*“Of the increase of his government and of
Peace there will be no end, on the throne
Of David and over his kingdom, to establish
It and to uphold it with justice and with
Righteousness from this time forth and
Forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts
Will do this.” ■ Isaiah 9:7*

*“He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and
A helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments
Of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in
Zeal as a cloak.” ■ Isaiah 59:17*

The Bible has much to say about zeal, especially in the writings of the prophet Isaiah; however, we rarely hear a sermon preached today regarding zeal. Interestingly, it also has much to say about a person's cloak--it was often given as a pledge in the Old Testament yet it was such a needed article of clothing that if it was given as a pledge it "must be returned before the sun goes down." It was Elijah's cloak where the anointing of God was stored and then continued even unto Elisha's ministry as his successor. I also find it fascinating that Isaiah's prophetic reference to Jesus wrapping Himself "in zeal as a cloak" is quite similar to Paul's discussion in Ephesians 6 regarding the admonition for Christians to put on the "armor of God."

A careful study of both the Old and New Testaments will teach us something about zeal and, in particular, what a valuable force for good and the Kingdom of God it can be if it is accompanied by wisdom and knowledge. Remember, the Apostle Paul wrote of the zeal of the Jews: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for

God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2). No doubt Paul was an expert in this area because he himself had been guilty of this same error and thus he was qualified to understand it and write about it (cf. also Phil. 3:6).

So we understand that zeal—correctly channeled—is a tremendous positive force for the Kingdom of God. We often see this zeal in the Five-fold office of Evangelist. Yes, the anointing by the Spirit of a person for an evangelist is an anointing accompanied by zeal. This anointing consumes a person with the desire to see souls saved and people set free from the powers of darkness. It is much needed in the Church today. Evelyn is more qualified than I am to write about this because she was anointed as an evangelist back in the „80s and early „90s and with a few children was able to win about 25% of the town where they lived to the Lord.

I find it interesting that the prophecy of Jesus given in the Davidic Psalm 69, “zeal for your house has consumed me” is seen to have been fulfilled at both the beginning and end of Jesus’ ministry when He cleansed the Temple of the moneychangers and merchants (John 2:17). And this was not something new, both Nehemiah and Ezra dealt with this problem much earlier when the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem after the 70 year Babylonian captivity prophesied by Jeremiah. So we see the tendency for men to revert back to sinful and wicked behavior—making merchandise of the precious things and promises of God.

Yet we see the same thing in churches and ministries today as then—most of what goes on in the name of Christianity today is nothing more than business. We’ve had the Holy Spirit speak to us on several occasions in big churches—“It’s just business as usual.” One of the reasons this happens is that people lose the fear of God and even though Jesus plainly said: “Freely you have received, freely give” the nature of man is to “sell” the precious things that God freely gives. That’s one reason why many once-anointed men and women of God have lost that anointing—they sold it for a price. And make no mistake—the devil is after the anointing and whether you’re a Five-fold minister or are anointed for worship the devil will

gladly pay for your anointing to stop it from producing for the Kingdom of God.

Yet zeal is important to the Kingdom of God and, unfortunately, it is a spiritual force that's been sadly lacking throughout most of the last six church ages, particularly this Laodicean Seventh Church Age that we are now at the end of.

Contrast the zeal of the first church age with our own and you will see such a difference. Jesus was crucified during Passover on April 3, 33 A.D. (I researched and prayed about this years ago and this is the precise date). We know that it was approximately 8 (the number of "new beginnings") years after this, i.e., about 41 A.D. that the stoning of Stephen brought about the preaching of the Gospel outside of Judea. Remember, Jesus had told them the order—first Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria and then "the uttermost parts of the earth." Philip, one of the original seven deacons of Acts 7, "went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them." Philip was promoted to the office of Evangelist and there were many miracles, signs and wonders from his ministry.

It is a recorded fact—in the Book of Acts and in both Roman and Jewish history—that by 49 A.D., just 8 (again, the number of "new beginnings") years later, the zeal of the Christians in Rome had become so great and there was so much conflict between the Jews and the Christians over Jesus that the Emperor Claudius removed all the Jews from Rome! Remember that Latin was the language of Rome and the Roman historian Suetonius wrote specifically that it was conflict over Christos—the Latin word for Christ—that prompted Claudius to expel the Jews in 49 A.D. What zeal from the Roman churches! That's what we need today!

In Romans 12:11 Paul warns the Christian churches at Rome not "to be slothful in zeal" but "to be fervent in spirit" and "to serve the Lord." We demonstrate zeal when we are fervent and serve the Lord. But where is that zeal today? Isaiah wrote by the Spirit: "Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might?" (Is. 63:15) Yes, indeed, where are they if not in His Church. Please pray this prayer with me:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I confess that I have not had the zeal
That you desire for your Body—I’ve not been consumed
with zeal for you and the expansion of the Kingdom of God coming
to earth. Please help me with your precious Holy Spirit to “be
fervent in spirit” and not to be “slothful in zeal.” Open doors of
opportunity that I may be bold and zealous for the testimony of the
Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and that souls will be saved, people
will be healed, the dead will be raised and there will be signs
wonders and miracles just like the days of the Church in the Book
of Acts. And I thank you for helping me accomplish your zeal.
Amen.”