

THE



HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

MAY 1996

No. 125

BE ZEALOUS

Can you remember the day you were baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38)? How did you feel coming up out of the watery grave? Some said they felt immediate peace and joy and comfort in their soul. Others felt like jumping into the Lord's work and conquering the world. In most instances, we exhibited zeal and excitement. But brethren, that was many years ago, for most of us. Where is that zeal now? Unfortunately for many of us, it appears to be gone! Perhaps we should find it again.

Zeal, as defined in the Webster Dictionary, is an emotion which can be described as: enthusiastic

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and diligent devotion in pursuit of a CAUSE, IDEAL, or GOAL. In Bible terms, a person has zeal when he has enthusiasm and a strong desire and a willingness to pursue the CAUSE of Christ, the IDEAL condition of living a perfect (i.e., complete) life, and the GOAL of eternal salvation. How many of us can say we truly have zeal?

When it comes to worldly affairs, some people have the most zeal I have ever seen. A good example is sports. Some people will do just about anything to support "their" team. They will attend every home game possible and read every publication and statistic available concerning their team. I am sure we know of others who display the same amount of zeal in their jobs, in their cars, in their garden, in their houses, or in their hobbies. There is nothing wrong with all this to a certain extent, but why not put forth the same amount of zeal (or maybe even more) into our spiritual lives!

There are various things that a Christian should be zealous for. We are to be zealous for God. That means we should develop a strong desire to do the will of God at all times. From the days of the Patriarchs this has been true as witnessed by the lives of men like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. In the OT we find an instance where the zeal of one man for God saved all the children of Israel from total destruction simply because he had such a strong desire to obey God's command. Read about Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, in Numbers 25:1-13 and see how the zeal of ONE person made a difference! *"He was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."*

We are to be zealous for the salvation of others. In other words, we should be enthused and willing

to help others to obey the Gospel of Christ. Sometimes prejudice and bigotry can hinder our zeal in this respect. Sometimes we snub our noses at certain people and refuse to preach the Truth. "Oh no, I wouldn't do anything like that!" But let's be honest with ourselves. Do we really give everyone we come in contact with a fair chance to become a Christian? Are we zealous about preaching Christ and Him crucified to even the most ardent enemy of Christ? The apostle Paul had such zeal that he even desired Israel (the very ones who rejected our Lord) to be saved (Rom. 10:1-4)!

We are to be zealous of good works, too (Tit. 2:14). One of the characteristics of Christians is that they are eager and willing to do good works, not just once in a while when we feel like it or when we think somebody is watching us. We should always be zealous in doing good things. Evidently the people in the area of Galatia were in the habit of zealously doing good deeds only when Paul was around to witness it. He explained that sincere and genuine zeal will always abound and not be limited to eye-service. *"But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."* (Gal. 4:18)

How great is our zeal? If we were to measure our zeal on a scale, how much would it weigh? Is it enough to provoke other people unto God, like the Corinthians had? *"For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many."* (2 Cor. 9:1-2) The brethren at Corinth had such eagerness (forwardness) that Paul even bragged about it! Is our zeal great enough that people would boast about it, too?

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Lk. 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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We say we are Christians and we say we do God's commandments but like the rich young ruler, something is still lacking for most of us: ZEAL. In the Revelation letter, we find that zeal was also lacking for the church at Laodicea. Christ said, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."* (Rev. 3:19)

If we truly had zeal, we would be living excited and highly-charged lives! Instead, we all appear to be waiting to die. Our congregations seem to be in hibernation. Is there nothing else for us to do but to watch time slowly pass by? No wonder, then, that the benches are getting empty and our congregations sleep. Essentially we have stopped spiritually growing because we have lost the zeal we once had.

It only takes one spark to set the woods on fire. Some of the longest ripples come from that one small pebble thrown into the pond. Likewise, it usually takes one zealous member to get the congregation moving again. It may be a man or a woman, an old person or a young one. It may be YOU! Be zealous and let it spread!

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. How tall was Goliath?
2. About what building did Jesus say not one stone would be left on another?
3. When did God set Paul apart to preach to the Gentiles, according to Galatians?
4. Because the wicked man flatters himself too much, what can't he detect or hate?
5. What did Joseph command his servants to do with Jacob's body?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?
ONE HUNDRED YEARS (Gen. 21:5)
2. After sending out seventy workers, Christ gives special warning to three towns concerning repentance. Name one of them? CHORAZIN, BETHSAIDA, OR CAPERNAUM (Luke 10:13-15)
3. If a brother or sister needs clothing or food, what should a believer do? GIVE IT TO THEM (Jas. 2:15-16)
4. According to Proverbs, a man plans his course in his heart, but the Lord determines his what? STEPS (Prov. 16:9)
5. What was Hezekiah's first act as King? HE OPENED THE DOOR OF THE TEMPLE (2 Chr. 29:3)

<p>Sometimes those credited with superior patience just don't know what to do next.</p>

"THEN SHALL I KNOW . . ."

1 Cor. 13:12, *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*

Under consideration in preceeding verses of this chapter has been the presence and use of miraculous powers given by God to certain disciples during the first, formative years of the Lord's church. Verses 8 - 12, however, inform us that these gifts were temporary in nature and were to be followed by a state of perfection or completeness in which spiritual gifts would cease.

Paul describes gifts such as inspired prophecies, tongues, and knowledge as being *"in part"* (vs. 8-9). In verse 10 he stated that something perfect or complete was to come, at which time that which was in part would be done away. He makes a contrast between conditions that were then present and that which would exist at a future time. *"But when that which is perfect (perfected) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"* (v. 10).

Then Paul illustrates by using two examples. In the first he pictures a child becoming a man. Upon reaching maturity the man puts aside those child-like traits which he had outgrown. In the next example Paul compares the passing of spiritual gifts to a person looking through a glass, where the view is somewhat limited, and then his viewing without any obstruction whatsoever.

His conclusion is that when God's revelation is completed and the Lord's church is established in its fullness, then that which was necessary in

bringing about this condition would cease. Consider the fact that the Scriptures, in which God was to reveal His will for the Christian age, had not been completely written. That would take some few years after the letter to the Corinthians -- in fact until the end of the First Century. Consider also that the church had several incomplete factors about it which needed perfecting; the position of elder and deacon, for which Paul laid out the requirements (1 Tim. 3 & Tit. 1); instructions for the contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-3); and arrangement for the care of widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:5-10), among other things. Paul even wrote of such matters: *"And the rest will I set in order when I come"* (1 Cor. 11:34); *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"* (Tit. 1:5).

Having so well explained the situation which existed regarding spiritual gifts, Paul then applied the same principle to himself, *"Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"* (v. 12b). Paul seems to be saying that even his understanding was not complete. But when God's will would be completely revealed, then he would know God's will as God, even then, knew him.

Although in this letter, Paul did numerous times allude to the end of time and the Lord's return (1:1-8; 4:5; 5:5; 11:26; 15:24; et al.), meaning of a passage must be determined by its context (or setting). In this passage the subject of discussion had been the presence of miraculous powers (the "now" of v. 12) as opposed to the time when they would cease (the "then" of v. 12). The end of time and the Lord's return were not under consideration.

HARRY COBB

Wedowee, AL 36278

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
May 3 - 5	Rainsville, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 3 - 5	Camellia City, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 13 - 17	Chestnut Grove Church Parksville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 17 - 19	Fairview Church Oxford, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 24 - 26	Lake City, GA 7:30pm E.S.T.	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 2 - 7	Taylor's Crossroads Roanoke, AL	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)

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WHAT CAN I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. I must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ
(John 8:24; Acts 16:32)
2. I must repent of my sins
(Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19)
3. I must confess the name of Christ
(Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10)
4. I must be baptized into Christ
(Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Mk. 16:16; Acts 22:16)

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Starting this month the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Allgood, TN is changing the time of their morning service from 11:00am to 10:00am C.S.T. Please note.