

# Rekindling the Fires of Our Zeal

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Num. 13:26 – 14:10

1. A short time after receiving the Law at Mount Sinai, Israel was commanded to go into the land of Canaan and possess it. Twelve spies were sent to view the land and report. Ten advised against entering and led most of Israel in fear. Two believed that with God's help, Israel would take the land. They had a great zeal for God.
2. Quite often, the difference between brethren who do and brethren who simply talk about doing is zeal.
3. "One person with a divine purpose, passion and power is better than 99 people who are merely interested. Passion is stronger than interest." (Israelmore Ayivor)
4. Why has the majority lost their zeal? What rekindles zeal for God?

## I. REMEMBER THAT GOD IS WITH US

A. Num. 13:28-33 - Numbers and size are irrelevant when God is involved

1. They looked at the size of their enemy and forgot the size of their God.
2. When we return our focus to the size of our God and stop worrying about the size of our obstacles, our zeal will be rekindled
3. We have formidable obstacles: error advocated by brethren, the size and influence of denominations, government's opposition to morality, and the number of unsaved persons we must teach

B. We must:

1. Remember the unstoppable power of God's word
  - a. Rom. 1:16; Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12-13
2. Remember that the King is with his subjects - Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5

## II. REMEMBER TO REVERE GOD (and not fear men)

A. Num. 14:1-3 - Israel forgot that what God did to Egypt, He could do to them or the Canaanites, depending on who they feared the most

1. Who are we afraid of: Parents, mates, children, friends, classmates, co-workers, neighboring religious groups, civil leaders

B. Who has earned our reverence?

1. Luke 12:4-5; Ecc. 12:13-14; 2Cor. 5:10-11

## III. REMEMBER GOD'S BLESSINGS

A. Num. 14:4 - Israel had forgotten how much and how often God blessed them

1. God remembered them in bondage, delivered them from Egypt, destroyed the Egyptians and their gods, saved and fed them, helped them to prevail against their enemies along the way.

B. What would help us to remember and rekindle our zeal?

1. A pleasant setting and peaceful group with which to worship. We are able to be here today because of the zeal of those who went before us.

- a. Edith Nuzum as a young woman entering this building for the first time: broken windows, wasp nests, papers and water soaked books everywhere; years' worth of work to fix it.
  - b. What did those who went before us sacrifice in their zeal that we can be here today? What have we done in our zeal in the past, to become a congregation that lives and loves together in peace?
2. A Bible in your hand: how many countless hours were spent copying, translating and preserving the scriptures? How many lives were lost from their zeal to get the word of God out of the hands of popes and into the hands of people in the pews?
3. How many of us in this room today are here because of the zeal of someone who opened their Bible, studied it, and care enough about you to teach it to you?
4. The zeal of the Lord - John 2:13-17. What price did the zeal of the Lord extract on our behalf?
5. The zeal of gospel preachers - Acts 14:14-15, 19. What price did their zeal extract from them that we might have the Gospel.

#### **IV. FORGET WORLDLY COMFORTS**

##### **A. Num. 11:4-6**

1. At the edge of the Jordan River, the children of Israel suddenly felt they would be safer in Egypt.
2. They forgot about their enslavement, the taskmasters' whips, and the cities many of them died while building

##### **B. Sometimes the saved remember:**

1. Worldly fun, drinking, dancing, obscene humor, provocative fashions
2. Worldly friends, partying, living without restraints and regrets
3. Sleeping in on Sundays, fewer obligations and sacrifices, more spending money
4. Less embarrassment, no set convictions, fitting in with the crowd

##### **C. Sometimes the saved forget:**

1. The guilt of sin that all of the distractions of Satan could not divert
2. The dread of aging and the fear of death
3. The discomfort of the awareness of a selfish and pointless existence
4. The fear of facing God in judgment bound by sins - 1Cor. 6:9-11

#### **V. REMEMBER THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE**

##### **A. Num. 14:6-9 - Joshua reminded them of the Promised Land and that the Lord would be with them**

1. Unfortunately, they did not remember, and the fires of their zeal died out

##### **B. Those who remember the blessings of obedience rekindle their zeal**

1. Rev. 2:10; 2Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 3:13-14

Conclusion:

A. "A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, and fervent in spirit. He sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed-up in one thing — and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives — or whether he dies; whether he has health — or whether he has sickness; whether he is rich — or whether he is poor; whether he pleases man — or whether he gives offence; whether he is thought wise — or whether he is thought foolish; whether he gets blame — or whether he gets praise; whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame — for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing — and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning — he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning — he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money — he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes, if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness — he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua — then he will do the prayer-work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. If he is cut off from working himself — he will give the Lord no rest until help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is "zeal" in religion." (J.C. Ryle)