

Sermon #39 — Isaiah Series

Title: **“THE ZEAL OF THE LORD”**

Text: Isaiah 9:7

Subject: *Christ the King*

Date: Sunday Evening — December 17, 2017

Readings: *Mark Medley and Mark Henson*

Introduction:

If God will enable me to do so, I want to preach to you about “*The Zeal of the LORD.*” — **“THE ZEAL OF THE LORD”** — That is my subject. Three times in Holy Scripture, we see this phrase, “*The zeal of the LORD,*” used, just three times. In all three places, it is used in connection with the salvation of God’s elect (2 Kings 19:31; Isaiah 37:32; Isaiah 9:7).

(2 Kings 19:31) “For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.”

(Isaiah 37:32) “For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.”

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(Isaiah 9:7) “Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

CREATION

Creation was a great and glorious work of our God. **The Triune Jehovah, by the mere word of his power, created all things.** He made ten thousand thousand worlds and filled space with such ponderous orbs that their dimensions stagger human imagination.

It was no small work to make this world, with all its splendor and beauty, with all its magnificence and minute detail, with all its order and stability. The morning stars might well burst forth in singing as the light first shone upon this planet God called Earth.

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But I read nothing about “zeal of the LORD” in connection with creation. The Lord God did it all with the great ease of infinite wisdom and infinite omnipotence. In six days he finished it all.

- Here we see the wisdom of God, but not his zeal.
- Creation displays the power of our God, but not “zeal of the LORD.”

There is such boundless wisdom and power in God, that all that he created is but a drop of the bucket before him, and as the small dust in the balance when weighed in his scales.

Upholding all things requires the power of omnipotence. But I do not find in the Book of God any connection between “the zeal of the LORD” and the upholding of all things by the word of his power.

He who made all the stars of heaven and called each by the name he gave it is infinitely wise and infinitely great in power. **Arcturus, Mazzaroth,**

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Pleiades, and Orion were hung in space by the Almighty and are governed by him. But we find nothing in them that awakened “the zeal of the LORD.”

When the angels of God were created we are not told; but there is nothing said about “*the zeal of the LORD*” in connection with those pure and holy creatures of the Almighty.

Even when he created Adam and placed him in the Garden, even when he formed Eve out of Adam’s side and brought her to him to be his wife, we read nothing about “*the zeal of the LORD*” in connection with our first parents.

PROVIDENCE

And all the wonders of providence wrought upon the earth, how gently, how easily Jehovah performs them! Look at that splendid work at the **Red Sea** — a work which God himself seems to have selected as a masterpiece of his skill and of his

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power. Even in heaven they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb. — *“Sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”*

But how did he accomplish that stupendous work? — *“Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in her mighty waters.”* No enthusiasm, no stirring up of strength, no zeal, just the tender breath of his mouth, and it was all done, and Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the middle of the sea.

SALVATION

But, when we read in the Book of Holy Scripture about the salvation of his chosen by the doing and dying of his own dear Son, three times we read “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this!”

To have a race of beings surrounding him who should know both good and evil, —

- who **know evil** by having fallen into it and

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becoming themselves the very embodiment of evil, —

- a race of creatures who **know good** by the experience of his goodness and grace, being made by him good, righteous, and holy, by the goodness, righteousness, and holiness of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, —
- to have a people **forever bound to him, the source of all goodness, by an overwhelming obligation of love,** —
- to have **a people for himself, as his own peculiar treasure,** a people who have washed their robes and made them white by the blood of the Lamb, world without end, —

that thought, if you will permit me to use such language, seems to have awakened “the zeal of the LORD of hosts” to perform it.

Proposition: “*The zeal of the LORD of hosts,*” the fervency of his love, the energy of his omnipotence, the fire of his grace, “*the zeal of the LORD of hosts*” is utterly devoted to the salvation of his elect by Christ.

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The Lord God, from eternity, before ever the earth was made, purposed that his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, would come into this world and take into union with himself our nature, —

- that in our flesh he would **bring in everlasting righteousness**, —
- that in our flesh he would **suffer and die** for our sins, for the satisfaction of divine justice, and put away the guilt of all his chosen, —
- and that by the power and grace of his Spirit he would **make his redeemed new creatures** in Christ, forming an everlasting union of life between us by the new birth, making his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, partaker of our nature in the incarnation, and making us partakers of his nature in the new birth.

ROMANS 6:17

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts,” the fervency of his love, the energy of his omnipotence, the fire of his grace, “the zeal of the LORD of hosts” is

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utterly devoted to, to use the expression of the serpent, to having a people who shall “be as gods, knowing good and evil.” This is exactly what God the Holy Ghost tells us the Lord God has done for us, and calls for us to praise him for doing in Romans 6:17.

(Romans 6:17) “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

It requires “the zeal of the LORD of hosts” to perform this. This could not have been done by mere power, or the wisdom of God, or even by the love of God. **All the attributes of the Triune God must be brought forth and put into exercise to accomplish this great work.** — *“The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this.”*

(Romans 6:17) “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the

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heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

This is what **Mr. Hawker** said in commenting on this verse of Holy Scripture.

“For myself, if I know anything of my own heart, I hope that I can truly say, I hate sin, I would not willingly and wilfully commit a single sin for the world. Yea, I loathe myself in my own sight for sin, the sin of my poor fallen nature. And sin becomes more bitter to me, as Christ becomes more precious. But, with all this, I say, I would rather be a sinner saved, and saved in such a way as I am saved, by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, than to have never known sin, neither known Christ as a Savior.”

CORRECT TRANSLATION

The words of Romans 6:17, as they stand in our translation, are precisely accurate. They are in exact

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agreement to the Greek. Nothing can be added to or taken from this statement, without doing injury to it and changing its meaning altogether. Paul thanks God that we were once the servants of sin. But now, are in obedience to Christ. He thanks God that we were one lost and are now saved, that we were once unregenerate and now are regenerated by the grace of God, that we were once dead in trespasses and in sins and are now alive in Christ Jesus.

Most read the passage this way: God be thanked that though you were the servants of sin. But that is not what the text says. The text reads...

(Romans 6:17) “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

You might ask, “Can it be imagined that the Apostle would thank God that we were once in the drudgery of Satan and doing his service?”

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Paul’s answer is clear. If the God’s glory is thereby more advanced, if sin is overruled by him to show forth his greater glory, we must indeed and do delightfully say, with him...

(Romans 6:17) “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

Just as poison is sometimes made a medicine for healing and sickness of body is made the means of health for our souls, the sin and fall of Adam and our sin and fall in him, laid the foundation for the revelation of Christ, as a Savior and Redeemer. We could never have known our blessed Christ as our Savior and Redeemer, had not our shame in sin afforded an opportunity for the display of his glory, in washing us from our sins in his blood!

REASON FOR THANKSGIVING

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The holy Lord God, by infinite wisdom and grace, has made our sin and misery the occasion of our greatest possible blessedness. — Oh, what a great reason this is for thanksgiving and praise to our

God! Let no one misunderstand my words. I offer no excuse for any man’s sin. And I certainly do not excuse my own. We do not attempt, by any means, to escape our own responsibility for sin, or to charge God with sin. — *“God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man”* (James 1:13). But **our great God is so infinitely wise and gracious that he turns our greatest misery into our greatest good and sovereignly overrules our sin to make it an occasion for our eternal blessedness** (Romans 8:28).

Yes, to quote **Jonathan Edwards**...

“Divine wisdom has found out a way whereby the sinner might not only escape being miserable, but that he should be happier than before he sinned; yea, than he would have been if he had never sinned.”

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“The zeal of the LORD of hosts” performed it. — **By the redemptive work of Christ, the sins of God’s elect are turned into a means of accomplishing greater happiness, joy, and everlasting glory than we could ever have known if we had never sinned.**

— *“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”* And I am saying that God in infinite wisdom ordained our fall in our father Adam, and overrules our abounding sin that his own elect might forever enjoy the superabundance of his matchless free grace in Christ.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Sinful man is brought into a nearer union with God in the Person of Christ our Substitute than we could ever have enjoyed had we not known sin.

Had we never sinned, Christ would not be our Surety and Substitute. But now...

- God has assumed our nature in the Person of his Son.
- We are members of his body (Ephesians 5:30).

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- Christ is our Brother and our Husband.
- And we are the Sons of God (1 John 3:1).

Our temporary separation from God, by sin, has been made the means of our eternal union with God in Christ by redemption (John 17:20-23).

(John 17:20) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (22) And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts” performed it.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

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Man, by reason of his sin, has greater and fuller knowledge of God, his glory, his grace, his justice, his holiness, and his love than he could ever have possessed had he never sinned. — “*The zeal of the LORD of hosts*” performed it!

- We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ our dying Substitute (2 Corinthians 4:6).
- And in his death we have the love of God commended to us (Romans 5:8).

This will be the theme of our heavenly praise forever and ever (Revelation 1:5-6).

(Revelation 1:5) “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (6) And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

LOVE FOR CHRIST

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Our redemption from sin and death by Christ causes us to have a love for God that we could not otherwise have.

One day this love will be brought to perfection. But even now, the love of Christ that constrains us is something Adam in innocence and the angels in heaven could never know.

- Great forgiveness produces great love (Luke 7:47).
- Great forgiveness is the greatest possible motivation for love, adoration, devotion, and praise (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 6:20).

(1 Corinthians 1:26-31) “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: ⁽²⁷⁾ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ⁽²⁸⁾ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

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(²⁹) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (³⁰) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (³¹) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (¹⁰) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (¹¹) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20) “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (²⁰) For ye are bought with a

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price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts” performed it!

FAITH IN GOD

Fallen man, saved by grace, has a greater, more sensible dependence upon God than he could otherwise have. And God is glorified by his creatures’ dependence upon him. Fallen man, saved by grace, knows by painful and abundant experience that he has no hope but the free grace of God in Christ, who is our all in all. Fallen, helpless man cries, *“The LORD is my Portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.”*

Did you ever notice (Genesis 2:17) that the forbidden tree was called *“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?”* God is the One who planted that tree in the midst of the garden. And he ordained that our father Adam eat the fruit of that forbidden tree, to taste the evil of sin, because he had wisely and

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graciously determined that his elect might know the great and glorious good of redemption and grace in Christ. — God the Holy Ghost tells us that this grace abounding to us in and through Christ Jesus is truly a great reason for thanksgiving and praise to our great God, who is the God of all grace (Romans 6:17-23).

(Romans 6:17-23) “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto

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holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!” — *“The zeal of the LORD of hosts”* performed it!

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts” has made chosen, redeemed sinners his masterpieces (Ephesians 2:8-10).

(Ephesians 2:8) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast. (10) For we are his workmanship **(masterpieces)**, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts,” the fervency of his love, the energy of his omnipotence, the fire of his grace, “the zeal of the LORD of hosts”...

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- Brought Christ into the world in our flesh. — The Wonder of the Incarnation!
- Brought in everlasting righteousness for us by our Savior’s obedience!
- Brought the Son of God to Calvary!
- Brought the Lord Jesus Christ up from the grave and seated him upon the throne, King forever!

(Isaiah 9:6-7) “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

- “*The zeal of the LORD of hosts*” brought Christ to us at the time of love. — “*He must needs go through Samaria!*”

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- “*The zeal of the LORD of hosts*” formed Christ in you!

TRUST CHRIST

Faith in Christ is the obedience Paul speaks of in this Romans 6:17. — Will you obey that form of doctrine set before you in the gospel, trusting Christ alone, and be saved; or will you go on trusting yourself, your good works, your own righteousness, and your will until you find yourself forever damned in hell?

(Luke 7:36-50) “And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. ⁽³⁷⁾ And, **behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner**, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, ⁽³⁸⁾ And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs

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of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

(39) Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. (40) And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

(41) There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. (42) And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? (43) Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

(44) And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into

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thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? ⁽⁵⁰⁾ And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

May “*the zeal of the LORD of hosts*” perform his master work in you, for Christ’s sake!

Amen.