ZEAL AND KNOWLEDGE

Intro: Paul discussed Israel’s zeal and knowledge; Rom. 10:1-2 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” Both zeal and knowledge are important so let us look at each of these.

I. ZEAL.
   A. Defined as “ardor in the pursuit of anything; ardent and active interest; enthusiasm; fervor.”
   B. Zeal for God is enjoined;
      1. Gal. 4:18 “But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”
      2. Tit. 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
      3. Rev. 3:19 “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

II. KNOWLEDGE.
   A. Defined in a religious sense: “a clear understanding or perception of the will or word of God.”
   B. The attainment of such knowledge is enjoined.
      1. 2 Pet. 1:5-6 “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;”
      2. Col. 1:10 “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”
      3. Eph. 5:17 “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
      4. 2 Pet. 3:18 “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

III. ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE.
   A. This is enthusiasm without light; activity without guidance.
   B. Examples of this.
      1. The Jewish Nation; Rom. 10:1-3 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge 3For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”
      2. Simon Peter; Mat. 26:50-52 “And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him. 51And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear. 52Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”
      3. Saul of Tarsus
         a. Acts 22:3-4 “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was
zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.”

b. Phi. 3:6-7 “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

4. Many modern-day religionist manifest a lot of zeal, but often without knowledge (cf. Pentecostals).

C. Danger of zeal without knowledge.
1. Israel, though having a zeal for God, was not saved.
2. Saul’s zeal wrought havoc with the church.
   a. Acts 7:58-59; 8:3 “And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.... As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and halting men and women committed them to prison.”
   b. Phi. 3:6 “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”
   c. Acts 9:4 “And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”
3. Those who run in the dark, run to their own destruction; Mat. 15:14 “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

IV. Knowledge without Zeal.
A. This is light without enthusiasm; understanding without activity; faith without works.
B. Examples of this.
1. The Christians at Sardis.
   a. Rev. 3:1-3 “And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”
   b. They had heard and received God’s Word, but were dead, without activity.
2. The Galatians.
   a. Gal. 5:7 “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”
   b. At first they were devoted Christians, but they had lost their ardor.
3. Many present-day Christians.

C. Danger of knowledge without zeal.
1. It is sinful; Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
2. It brings condemnation, the punishment of many stripes.
   a. Luke 12:47-48 “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”
b. Amos 6:1 “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!”

V. ZEAL AND KNOWLEDGE.

A. This is light and enthusiasm; understanding and activity; faith and works. This is the ideal state.

B. Examples of this.

1. Paul the Christian; Phi. 3:13-14 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

2. The disciples in Jerusalem; Acts 2:41-42 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

3. Christians of our day.

C. The blessedness of it.

1. A crown of righteousness; 2 Tim. 4:6-8 “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8Henceforth 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.”

2. A crown of life; Rev. 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

3. A garland of victory;

a. Heb. 12:1 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,”

b. 1 Cor. 9:24-25 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”