

THE ENTHUSIASM OF JESUS

- I. The word “*enthusiasm*” does not occur in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Greek Testament.
- **Yet, the New Testament is the most enthusiastic of all books, and Jesus is the most enthusiastic of all men.**
 - The reason the word “*enthusiasm*” is avoided is because the connotations of this word in the first century were unsavory.
 - **Enthusiasm in the Pagan world was “*an ecstasy, or demon possession.*” An enthusiast was “*one who was inspired or possessed by spirit.*” Most fanatics or madmen were considered enthusiast’s.**
 - The Apostles and Evangelists did not like the word, so they kept it out of their writings.
 - **In today’s vocabulary, “*enthusiasm*” is a noble word. Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “*enthusiasm*” this way: “*Heat of imagination; violent passion or excitement of the mind, in pursuit of some object, inspiring extravagant hope and confidence of success.*”**
 - Though this word is absent in the New Testament the evidence of it is seen the life of Jesus. Luke 12:49-50 states, “*I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!*”

A. Jesus was a man driven by enthusiasm for the will of God.

1. Luke 2:46-47 - As a boy He was so enthusiastic for the knowledge of God that it caused Him stay behind as His parents left for home.
2. Mark 1:12 tells us that after being baptized by John and receiving the Holy Spirit that “*Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.*” NKJV
 - a. The word “*driven*” is the Greek word “*ekballoo;*” which means, “*to cast out; to drive out; to send out, with the included notion of more or less violence.*”
 - Matthew 11:12 states, “*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.*”
 - b. Jesus is so full of passion for God, that He cannot linger near the homes of men. He is driven to get alone with God.
 - c. **We see this dynamic also is the life of Paul, another man who was driven by His Zeal for God. Galatians 1:11-17.**

3. Jesus was driven by the urgency of God's will. He never ceased to use the word "must." The Greek word is "dei" which means, "necessity established by the counsel and decree of God."
 - **Matthew 16:21** - *"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."* KJV
 - **Luke 2:49** - *"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"* KJV
 - **Luke 4:43** - *"And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."* KJV
 - **Luke 19:5** - *"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house."* KJV
 - **John 4:4** - *"And he must needs go through Samaria."* KJV
 - **John 9:4** - *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."* KJV

B. Prayer was the source of His enthusiasm.

1. Jesus was always praying.

- a. **He arose early in the morning in order to find more time to pray.**

Mark 1:35 - *"And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there."*

- b. **He stayed up late at night in order to increase the hours in which he might pray.**

Matthew 14:23-26 - *"And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea."*

- c. **Sometimes He did not go to bed at all.**

Luke 6:12-13 - *"And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God."*

2. **Because He was enthusiastic in prayer, He was zealous in His work.**

- a. Men were astounded by the magnitude of His labors.

Matthew 15:30-31 - *“And great multitudes came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, dumb, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them, so that the multitude marveled as they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”* KJV

- b. Sometimes He did not take time to eat - John 4:31 - *“In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”*

- c. Even when He went away for a season of relaxation, He gave Himself to the crowds that pursued Him.**

Matthew 14:13-15 - *“Now when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself; and when the multitudes heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.”*

- d. This zealotry was mistaken for demon-possession.**

Mark 3:20-22 - *“When Jesus returned to the house where he was staying, the crowds began to gather again, and soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat. When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him home with them. “He's out of his mind,” they said. But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem said, “He's possessed by Satan, the prince of demons. That's where he gets the power to cast out demons.”* NLT

3. The crowds also bear witness to the fire which this man had in Him.

Luke 12:1 - *“In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another.”* KJV

Mark 3:9 - *“He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the multitude, in order that they might not crowd Him.”*

- a. Near the end of His life the crowds went wild in their enthusiasm of His presence.

Matthew 21:10 - *“The entire city of Jerusalem was stirred as he entered.”* NLT

- b. No man can set a crowd blazing unless his own soul is ablaze.

- c. Because of His prayer life, Jesus was a man whose heart glowed like a furnace and whose soul radiated heat wherever He went.**

C. Enthusiasm is what attracts strong men.

1. **Jesus attracted to Him strong men who became His intimate friends.**
 - a. Do not believe the pictures that paint the Apostles as limp and pallid men.
 - b. There were full-blooded, virile, mighty men, full of fire and passion.**
2. They were drawn to Jesus because in Him they saw a man who fulfilled them.
 - a. Peter had a seething soul; which caused him to step out and take chances.**
 - b. James and John were called "*sons of thunder.*"
3. **They loved Jesus with such an intensity of devotion, they were ready and willing to lay down their lives for Him.**
 - Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia.
 - **Mark expired at Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.**
 - Luke was hanged upon an olive tree in the classic land of Greece.
 - **John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward branded at Patmos.**
 - Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward.
 - **James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem.**
 - James, the Less, was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
 - **Bartholomew was flayed alive.**
 - Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died.
 - **Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel in the East Indies.**
 - Jude was shot to death with arrows.
 - **Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded.**
 - Barnabas of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonicia.
 - **Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was at length beheaded at Rome.**
4. Jesus from the first to the last was surrounded by enthusiasts because He Himself was enthusiastic.