

What are some common things that people are zealous about?

How is zeal for something evidenced in a person's life?

Is there something you were very zealous for in the past that you no longer care about?

In the Bible passages that list the 12 apostles. Simon the Zealot is listed either tenth or eleventh. Tradition tells us that he was called to follow Jesus while he was a fisherman. The Orthodox church in America believes that he was the Bridegroom at the wedding in Cana. (John 2). This is all speculation of course for the Bible does not specifically say. It is important to note that all these people were called by Jesus while living their lives in the context of their times. Like you and I they all had different interests and opinions about all kinds of things. Their unity would be found in Jesus.

1 Peter 2:9-11

“The Zealot”

This Description for Simon is found in all four listings of the apostles of Jesus. Making it significant. Some commentators believe it just means He was a fiery, passionate, and devout man. But it is difficult to believe that this is all it means when it is so closely stated in all four lists.

It doesn't just mean he was a zealous man, although we can be sure that he was because it is believed he belonged to a sect of the Jews known as the Zealots.

The Zealots were a highly motivated and passionate political/militant group dating back to 167 BC when a man named Mattathias with his sons led a revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes a Seleucid King who was oppressing the Jewish Nation. When Mattathias died shortly after the revolt began, His oldest son, Judas Maccabaeus took over. He was known as “The Hammerer.”

Over time the Zealots became an underground movement that often raised up insurrection against the Roman Empire. It is believed that Barabbas may have been a member of this group. (Mark 15:1-7) It is believed that the Zealots are to blame for the Roman Empire to send its Armies in AD 70 to destroy Jerusalem.

The answer to the nation's problems was spiritual. They needed a "come to Jesus" moment. If the nation were to come together and be distinct from the peoples around it, it must come together in Him. The path to blessing would begin in the spiritual realm.

God reminded his people of this in Solomons time. 2 Chronicles 7:13-15

God spoke through Isaiah to His people. Isaiah 31:1-3

Daniel prayed this reality to the Lord while in Babylon. Daniel 9:4-8,11

The Word of God reminds us that nations are blessed as they obey the Lord. Psalm 33:12

Simon the Zealot over time would have had to crucify in his mind the idea that insurrection, rebellion, and violence would deliver his nation from their oppressors or their troubles. The solution to Israel's problems was to repent of their sins and return to the LORD.

Jesus reminded the leaders of Israel of this in His time. Matthew 23:37-39

As we look at our individual lives, our families our communities our nation and our world, let us all be mindful that the solution will always begin with a return to the LORD Jesus and then following his ways. It will be as individuals turn to Him that the blessing of the Lord will return. Like the Prophet Hosea wrote: "Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall." Hosea 14:1

Epilogue.

We don't know much at all about Simon as a man, but we can be confident that Jesus took Simon's zeal and focused it on the Good News. Some believe that Simon's ministry went as far as Britain. The circumstances around Simon's death are not clearly known. Some believe he was martyred while in Persia.