

Liberty Commentary September 16, 2009



President Obama's recent speech on health care reform has been described as passionate. Jennifer Donahue entitles her article on President Obama, "*Obama Brings Passion to Health Care Reform*". Donahue writes, "Obama's tone brought the passion, commitment, and force of the campaign trail to health care legislation... Obama has legislation he will champion. He will bring the energy and power he showed voters on the stump to this health care legislation." Irrespective of your opinion about nationalized health care, it can be said that the President is passionate about health care reform.

Passion can be described as an intense enthusiasm for something. Most everyone is passionate about something in life. Whether it is for a certain political agenda, money, power, health or anything else that consumes and drives our lives. Jesus tells us that our passion in life should revolve around a love for Him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matthew 22:37). Perhaps the greatest need for the church today is a passion for Christ. I really believe that if we will see Jesus for who He is and see that He has a passion for us, a love for us that sent Him to the cross because He desires a

relationship with us, it will transform our lives and result in a passion and desire to live for Him.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were primarily tasked with the job of telling the Israelites that if you do not turn from your sinfulness, if you do not turn back to God, if you do not redevelop a passion for God, God will bring judgment upon you so that you will come back to Him with a heart of passion for serving Him. Many of the issues that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel dealt with are very similar issues that we deal with today in our culture and in the church, that is Gods people have lost their passion for serving God. As in the days of the prophets, when an individual, a church, a nation loses their passion for God and a passion for reaching the world for Christ judgment is soon to follow.

There were three main areas of sin that the prophets dealt with in the lives of the people of their day, and I will say there is a great similarity today.

1) **Idolatry:** We have the same problem today. It may not be a physical idol, but we worship and idolize celebrities, materialism, power, sensuality (satisfying the senses). In this postmodern culture many worship political correctness, tolerance and plurality of all ideas. In the book of Isaiah 2:17-22, Isaiah warns Israel do not take up the practices of the lost, of the heathen nations. The Lord is the true God return to Him or He will judge you.

2) The second problem was that of **false worship**. Israel was going through the rituals of worship. They observed the feasts and the rituals, but their heart was not with God. There was no passion for God, just ritual. We have similar problems today in our churches and individual lives. We have lost our passion for God, we are just going through the motions, and God says to Israel I will judge you. That same warning applies to us today. God alone is worthy of our praise, worship and service. (Isaiah 1:10-15, 18-20.)

3) The third area addressed by the prophets is that of **mistreating one another**. God was saying to Israel, a right relationship with me will produce a right relationship with those around you. (Jeremiah 7:3-8, 10, 20).

These prophets were much more than predictors of the future, they were watchmen standing guard over a people and warning them that if they do not recapture their passion for God, God will bring judgment upon them. We are perhaps approaching a very similar situation in our churches, our nation, and our individual lives today. With 74 churches closing their doors every week in America, with 40 percent of the American population unchurched, with the continent of North American being the only continent in the world where Christianity is not growing, with not one county in the United States in the last ten years seeing any increase in overall church attendance, and with the decline and redefining of morality we have become busy in nothingness and have lost our passion for God and lost our passion for the world coming to Christ.

The point that the prophets kept pointing out to the Jews was that we may have struggles, but keep your hearts ablaze with a passion for God because God will deliver you. God will triumph and we will be blessed if we remain faithful. Do not allow the cares of this world to steal your passion for Christ because He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He is worthy of our service. (Revelation 19:16)

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