

Bad Zeal, Good Zeal

Acts 8:3: As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

When Paul made his list of things of which he once boasted, he included this description, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church". He was certain that he was doing "God service". Oh the delusion of unbelief! "Wisdom is justified of all her children." One can picture this supercilious pharisee officiously demanding warrants for the arrest of the heretic Christians and gleefully committing them to imprisonment and then torturesome deaths. And all the while sating his conscience with the unfounded satisfaction that he was acting under the authority of the Almighty.

This same folly has been repeated in other epochs as well. The Spanish Inquisition was culpable for the most heinous forms of torture and death ever devised. Deluded priests were doing what they were sure was God's will in purging the church from the heretical protestants. We currently observe the Islamic radicals beheading the infidels who reject the Koran. Honor killings within Hindu and Islamic communities are committed by misguided zealots who intend to enforce their morality by the edge of a sword.

What a glad resolution to the case of the madman persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. *Galatians 1:23 ...he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.* As is the situation with us all who have found the Lord, what we once were, we are no longer. So Paul who was once feverishly invading the houses of believers in search of evidence that could condemn them to death, had become a welcomed guest who zealously bore the glad tidings that offered the promise of eternal life. *Acts 20:20: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.*

Have a blessed day,

Pastor