



Full Gospel Fellowship

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Update International Edition

"Unity in Righteousness"



The BAPTISM OF FIRE

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3:11,12).

The Holy Spirit came upon the 120 on the day of Pentecost empowering the church to minister the gospel unto all the world, but the fullness of the Baptism of Fire is yet to come. In a short time after that memorial day of Pentecost, corruption began to slowly eat away its infant purity. In less than 100 years the word of God was adulterated, the church's character was marred and many cultic practices were infiltrating its defenses. In five hundred years the church could hardly be recognized as the one that began on the day of Pentecost. However, the final chapter of the church has not been written. Satan will not succeed in defeating God's purpose in His church. The baptism of fire is coming!

THE PURPOSE

"And he said, Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined.." (Dan. 12:9,10).

PURGED. The Hebrew word is **barqan**, or to clarify (brighten) examine, select. God knows how to polish His people so they stand out. He will examine, select and cleanse.

PURIFIED. The Hebrew word is **laban**, or to become white. A variation of the word is used to describe the whiteness of the clay in a brick.

REFINED. The Hebrew word is **tsaraph**, or to refine as in metal. Otherwise be subjected to heat until all the impurities are separated.

The purpose of the Baptism of Fire is to purge, purify and to refine the Body of Christ. God desires to exhibit His wisdom through the Church throughout the ages to come, and this cannot be done with a church controlled by its own ambitions.

GOD WILL CLEANSE HIS TEMPLE

The Lord will come to His temple "and who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (Mal. 3:1,2). God cleanses from the inside out. First it's the refiner's fire that brings to surface the impurities and then the imagery of the prophet turns to the ancient method of laundering, treading with the feet, kneading, and beating the clothing. The heating and the beating process is to continue until His temple is cleansed!

"And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise" (St. Jn. 2:14-16).

Jesus publicly displayed His anguish and disgust at the religious practices of His day. The priests were committing extortion in the house of God. The priests were inspecting the sheep being brought by their owners for sacrifice, rejecting them and allowing them to trade in their imperfect sheep for one approved, then the priests would recycle that sheep to another person later on. That is extortion! Since the only coins allowed to be used in the temple were the **temple shekel and the Galilean shekel**, the worshipers were forced to exchange their coins. The moneychangers were making an enormous profit in the exchange.

There are many unwholesome practices going on in the church today. Extortion is not a pretty word, yet it is a word that describes these practices. The scourge of cords is in the hand of Jesus and His house is to be a house of prayer and not profit.

Jesus purged His disciples through the spoken word (St. Jn. 15:3). As the leadership of the church begins to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, anointed words will be spoken to cleanse the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:26). David sang, "The word of the Lord is tested", and that word is purified seven times. The word of the Lord "is fire within" and a detergent without. The Bride of Christ is destined to become glorious and beautiful as described by Solomon; "How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are!...You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you..You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes...a garden locked" (Song of Solomon 4).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, So that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing, says the Lord" (Mal. 4:1-3).

The day the Lord is preparing will grant victory and preservation for the believer, but destruction to the wicked. The day will resemble a furnace which burns up the wicked, yet the righteous receive no harm. The example of the three Hebrews in the furnace is appropriate in this case. The Christian, purged by the fire of God, treads down the wicked. for they will be ashes under his foot.

CONCLUSION

The baptism of fire will purge, purify and refine the church.
God will come to His temple with fire to refine and soap to cleanse.
God will drive away the extortioners that seek profit in His house.
The righteous shall skip about like calves from the stall on the ash of the wicked.

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