

# THE FIRE THAT HEALS



***But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.***

***“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”***

*Matthew 3:7-12*

John the Baptist is saying, *“I applied water to your life but the one who comes after me brings fire”.*

Two kinds of fire.

**Either the fire that heals or the fire that consumes.**

## **The fire that heals.**

***I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.***

## **The fire that consumes.**

***His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”***

We all know something about the fire that consumes, the fire of judgment. We know this in our hearts, we are aware, intuitively, that just as surely as one day we're going to die, one day there will be a judgment of separation of good from evil, an accounting. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and we know it. He's going to clear his threshing floor and he's going to gather his wheat into the granary and the chaff he's going to burn with unquenchable fire.

What we don't understand quite so clearly, is that there's another kind of fire from God that does not destroy.

**It cleanses, it heals, it quickens, it refines.**

And if we have any hope of escaping the fires of judgment, we need to become well acquainted with this fire that cleanses and heals.

***I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.***

***He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.***

### **Moses**

Moses met God at the Burning Bush, a bush that was inflamed and yet remained green. Now, this flame that Moses saw was the outward manifestation of an inward fire which had been burning within, and upon, and around this man Moses for 40 years in that wilderness of Midian. Refining him. Teaching him what it means to be poor in spirit. Cleansing him. Making him ready to walk with God. And now he's arrived at the place where the fire has done its work. He sees this burning Bush. It's time for him to fit into the purpose of God and bring the people of Israel out of bondage.

Moses was well acquainted with the fire that heals.

### **Isaiah**

Isaiah had a vision of God in the Temple and saw the Lord high and lifted up and he was filled with fear, and he cried out...

***“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”***

*Isaiah 6*



And this painful year, this awful year, for Isaiah when King Uzziah died, culminates in the fire cleansing the mouth of this prophet, so that now his mouth is able to speak things he could never say before.

Isaiah knew the fire that heals.

## **Daniel**

Daniel lived at the very heart of the Kingdom of Satan, Babylon. You could say he lived at the heart of the heart... because he was in the center of the bureaucracy of Satan, up near Satan's throne. And never does Daniel complain and say "Get me out of here Lord, I can't take it anymore. Give me a little break here". Never does he say this, because all through his life, and it was a long one, there in the middle of all this junk, Daniel is preserved in the midst of hell, his mind, body, and spirit are preserved by the fire of God.

***In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.***

The great sea is the multitudes of the earth, multitudes of people, souls of men.

***And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.***

Daniel 7:1-8



It's like Daniel is in Washington DC or Moscow, right up in the upper echelons of government, right near the top decision makers. And he can see, clearly, that the kings of this earth for the most part, are but pawns being pushed around by these giant and grotesque spiritual beasts that control their behavior and dominate it... through their own lust for power, no doubt. That these little horns with eyes and a mouth are kings or people high in government. But Daniel doesn't get intoxicated by this power, as most people do. He doesn't get overwhelmed by this because he also sees that all this power, manifested and symbolized by these giant ugly beasts, is still under the authority of the One who sits on a throne of fire.

Daniel sees the fire that heals.

***As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.***

And so he sees that these beasts which represent power systems of the earth.... businesses, governments, any kind of power structure .... are under the authority of the One who is on the throne, and that they are already destined for the fire.

***"I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking.***

This man.

***And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.***

And so now as the kingdoms of the earth, the power structures of the earth are brought down under the authority of the One who sits on the throne of flame, the Messiah appears, the one who comes to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

***I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.***

***And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.***



***As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'***

*Daniel 7:9-18*

And the saints who shall receive and possess the kingdom forever, forever, and ever are the ones who are baptized by this Messiah with the Holy Spirit... and with fire.

Most of us are already quite aware of the fact that there's a move of the Spirit going on all over the earth. And with this stirring of the Spirit, there is also an increase of the fire. The Spirit comes to give us new eyes so that we can see God and the things of God. A new mind so that we can think with the mind of Christ, the mind of God, and the thoughts of God. And a new tongue so that we can speak the Word of God with power.

But right in behind the moving of the Spirit, comes the fire. The fire comes to burn all the distractions, and all the pettiness, and all the fear, and all the besetting sins, that undermine what we're trying to do. So that we can do something valid and effective with these new eyes, this new mind, and this new tongue.

## What is this baptism of fire?

It's suffering of some kind.

Nobody likes to talk about it but Jesus talks about it. And we've got to look at it too.

**Pain, isolation, rejection, opposition, conflict ....**

... that comes because you're being faithful and walking in the Spirit of the Lord.

He didn't promise that if we followed him, it would all be a bowl of cherries.

**He promised that there would be fire.**

And we need to learn to get accustomed to that, adjust to it and literally welcome it.

## Our Lord's baptism of fire began the very day the Spirit came to him.

He came up out of the river Jordan and received the Spirit, and he did not immediately go into Jerusalem or Galilee and preach the Kingdom and heal the sick. But he was, by the Spirit, driven into the wilderness first... to be tempted by the Devil.

And there, his baptism of fire begins.

That's where Jesus picks up his cross and he carries it all through his ministry, all the way to the time he gets to Calvary. And it's this baptism of fire which begins then and continues on through ... that makes his baptism with the Spirit so effective.

## On the day of Pentecost.

***When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.***

Acts 2

These tongues of fire were the outward sign that now not only has their baptism of the Spirit begun, but also their baptism of fire. And that baptism of fire for them, continues all through their days.

For Peter, it was persecution that began very shortly after Pentecost and took him all the way through the rest of his life until he dies on some kind of cross.

For John, it begins there also and carries him through persecution after persecution, until he ends up on a barren, rocky island in the Aegean Sea as an exile.

For Paul, his baptism of fire begins on the day that Ananias comes and lays hands on him that he might receive the Holy Spirit. And remember, Ananias was already told by the living God, "I'm going to show Paul what great things he must suffer from my namesake".

God is not sadistic. He's not trying to put us through pain. But it is through the fire that Paul becomes effective. He's dogged by all kinds of problems; Weakness of his flesh that keeps him dependent on God and enables the power of God to really move through him.

For many of us... the months, years, decades have brought us fire. There have been problems (along with the blessings) ... troubles, conflicts, strains. Sometimes these are invisible to anybody but God. Perhaps nobody in this world has any conception of some of the things that we've gone through in the months, years, decades.

What we need to see is that this fire is good, it's helpful. It's refining us and healing us so that we can be effective in the work that God is giving us to do. That we are not to run from it, turn our backs, and flee.

**But we are to open our arms and welcome and receive it.... and be transformed by it.**

For instance, we go out into the world, into our neighborhoods, our communities, among our friends, our relatives, our workplaces, or wherever we go, and we begin to proclaim the Gospel. We talk about Jesus. And we experience and discover, as we do this, that people don't fall on their faces and repent, and say *"thanks a lot; Gee, I really appreciate it, that's wonderful"*, and then they vote you the hero of the city. What happens is that only a small percentage respond in a positive way. The majority will always oppose you. And they'll say *"What are you doing? We thought that you had brains. You're crazy."*

And as we begin to experience persecution, the amazing mystery is that in this fire... the effectiveness of our witness increases tenfold.

**The fire doesn't kill our witness, the fire makes it stronger.**

Or if in obedience to our Lord... we go out there and we join ourselves to the people who are rejected by this world. He sends us specifically to the lost sheep; the poor, the maim, lame, and the blind. He does not say *"go and look and see if you can find a Nicodemus, go and look for a man or woman of influence to see what they can do"*. He says *"go to the ones that nobody cares about."* And so, you do that, you go out there and you look for them and your experience turns out to be that instead of them saying, *'Gee; It's wonderful that you came down to spend some time with us. Isn't that marvelous?'* That's not how it works. What happens instead is they say, *"What do you think you're doing, you hypocrite, get out of here. I don't need you"*. Sometimes they'll take your help and then they'll say it. It won't be, *"Thanks a lot"*. But it will be fire.

And the mystery again is that, as we do this faithfully, our effectiveness at bringing healing to the poor, the maim, the lame, and the blind, doubles... triples ...increases tenfold. As we experience fire from them... our power to bring healing to them increases.

If we insist on remaining faithful to the Lord with no shortcuts, no compromises to receive money, power, influence, or protection from the world. But instead, we trust God, the result is not that we will in six months have a new cathedral built. The result will be that after 10 years or longer, many times, we may look like failures. And your best friend from high school days or whatever comes up to you instead and says, *"I expected better things from you."* Well, *what do you have to show for all these years following Jesus? What good has it done you or them?"* And at first, you're covered with shame. And then, the Spirit of Glory and of God comes to rest upon you.... the fire.

And you find that in this fire comes the power to turn water into wine, to raise the dead, to bring life to a dead church.

***Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.***

... (or a busybody)

***Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.***

Judgment has begun at the household of God, not only with you, but all over the earth.

The fire is coming to us to ready us for the work, now to be done, that will take us into things and enable us to accomplish things in God that we never dreamed we would do.

***“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”***

The time of the unquenchable fire is approaching.

In order to give the world a fair shake and a fighting chance, God in his mercy is now raising up a people who are to manifest the Kingdom and warn the earth... with clear, unmistakable signs of God's love. These people who are now being raised up are already feeling the fire. If we are among them, called to be among them.... we will feel the fire too.

When this fire comes, and as it comes, let's not run away from it. Let's embrace it. Let's welcome it... so that refined and cleansed, we may go out there and open the eyes of the blind and waken the dead, to the Living God and to his Living Son.

**.... Before the consuming fire begins its work.**



*Message: Richard E. Bieber 1984. Transcribed and edited 2022 by Maranatha Mirror  
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*Prayer- Yes Lord, help us to embrace the fire that heals, to welcome it ...so you can refine us, cleanse us. Burn away all that holds us back, all that holds us in the powers of the rulers of this world. May we not fear it, may we see your hand at work in it as we face discouragement, let downs and difficulties. In the midst of the fire may we be covered by your Spirit, so we can rise up with the humility, the love, compassion, and the power to open blind eyes, waken the dead to you, the Living God and to bring healing to this world. Amen*

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