



BAPTISM BY FIRE

By

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Baptism By Emersion



Open your Bible, notice what the book of Matthew says about baptism.

Matthew 3:11 (NKJV)

I (John the Baptist) indeed baptize you with water unto 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 gospel of Luke says much the same thing.

Luke 3:16 (NKJV)

John (the Baptist) answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Many have heard and know about water baptism but talk of being baptized by the holy spirit is rare and even less so baptism by fire. In this short presentation I would like to look into baptism by the Holy Spirit and by fire with a little more care and attention.

I have heard it said that baptism by fire is a highly undesirable baptism and that the consequence of this baptism is death, the second death, eternal death. I am not of that opinion. I will show you scriptures that show that baptism by fire is a requirement for all Christians in order to be cleansed and purified and properly prepared for eternal life in the kingdom of God. The second death by fire is a total consumption where nothing is left but smoke and ashes.



Purification Or Cleansing By Water And By Fire

Next look at what Mark said in his ninth chapter.

Mark 9:49 (NKJV & GNB)

For everyone will be purified with fire as every sacrifice is seasoned with salt.

Surely He includes all the saints, God's chosen people, and the sacrifices made to God.

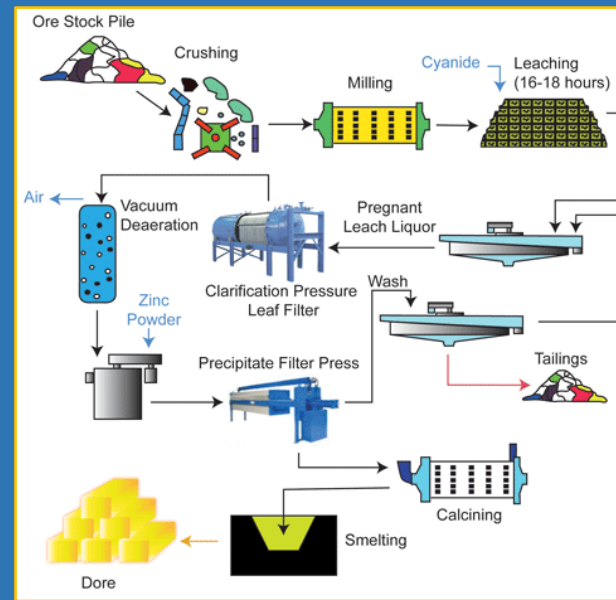


In Numbers chapter 31 verse 22 we get another concept and more insight into the reasons for the multiple types of baptisms or purification techniques, notably by water and by fire.

Numbers 31:22 (GNB)

Everything that will not burn, such as gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead, is to be purified by passing it through fire. Everything else is to be purified by the water for purification.

Clearly fire and water are used for purification purposes. They make a perfect analogy for the symbolism of baptism.



Gold, A Spiritual Symbol

Gold is often considered mineable when the grade exceeds 3 grams per ton. That converts to about 3 parts per million or 0.0003 percent. By comparison UCG members make up about 0.00017% of the population of the earth, a surprisingly close ratio.

In order to get useable gold from the ore extraction techniques need to be used. These techniques produce doré bars. The doré bars can have varying percentages of gold and need to be refined by fire to be purified. This refining process by fire is what the Bible uses as an analogy for baptism by fire. The Canadian Maple Leaf gold coins are 99.9999% pure gold. God's standard will even exceed this.

For the sake of discussion it looks like God has already chosen people who have golden qualities but they are in need of purification, Paul and David being prime examples. The Bible uses baptism by fire as symbolism for this spiritual refining process.

2 Timothy 2:19 (NKJV)

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

believing truth
 discerning of spirits interpreting various languages
 mercy prophecy love joy peace patience goodness gifts of healings
 justice faithfulness **WORKS WITH ETERNAL REWARD** kindness ministering
 word of knowledge gentleness self-control truth working of miracles
 speaking various languages words of wisdom exhorting giving cheerfulness
 leading teaching truth

1 Corinthians 3:9–15 (NKJV)

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Verse 15 here clearly points to continuation of life and not a second death. So the fiery trial is a purification process and not an eradication process.

1 Corinthians 12:4–11 (NKJV)

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

As you can see the gifts of the spirit are basically the same thing as the works of the spirit and they correspond perfectly with individual works of truth. These works that people do through faith, beliefs and imagination will all be tested by the baptism by fire by Jesus Christ.

Heart Purifying Spiritual Gifts



Romans chapter twelve mentions a few other types of works that saints develop and perfect as these gifts are transmitted through God's spirit.

Romans 12:6–9 (NKJV)

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Psalms 66:10 (GNB)

You have put us to the test, God; as silver is purified by fire so you have tested us.

Proverbs 17:3 (NKJV)

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests the hearts.

All our works of the spirit get tested, the works of the hands and especially the works of the heart.

Zechariah 13:9 (GNB)

And I will test the third that survives and will purify them as silver is purified by fire. I will test them as gold is tested. Then they will pray to me, and I will answer them. I will tell them that they are my people, and they will confess that I am their God.



Spiritual Gold Refined By Spiritual Fire

Revelation 3:18 (NKJV)

I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

The bible is saturated with symbolism. A person must use discretion and reasoning and intelligence to come to proper understanding. Prayer, meditation, fasting and study are required in this process. God created man in His own image. God is a thinker, a reasoner, a creator, these are all part of His spiritual image. Man must follow suite, learn from God and Jesus, follow their example. We are not mere physical resemblances. God is love, God is light, God is spirit.

If Not In This Life Then In The Resurrection

The saints are being put through the fire of purification in this life. Others will be purified at the Great White Throne Trial. This trial will be to test those who have not yet received the truth of God to see if they will accept the truth of God and of the Bible and of Jesus. It will be like a final court case or an intense course in righteousness or a testing and judgment on the reactions to the word of God. It will be like all these things but it will surely be something no one has ever seen before. It will be fearsomely miraculous, overwhelming and awesome, a splendor, a wonder and a marvel. It will be moving.



Revelation 15:2 (RSV)

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside** the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

** the ASV(1901) and the GNB say 'standing by,' the KJV says 'stand on,' the NIV(1984), the RSV and the AMP say 'standing beside,' the NASB and the NKJV say 'standing on.'

Revelation 4:6 (NKJV)

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

Sea Of Glass Mingled With Fire



Revelation 20:11–15 (NKJV)

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

My understanding is that there is a great deal of difference between the mingled fire on the sea of glass and the lake of fire. The mingled fire on the sea of glass is to test and refine and purify. The lake of fire is to totally consume and destroy and reduce to smoke and ashes. Those who accept the authority of God will not be totally consumed by fire but will rather be purified and made acceptable to God and be transformed into spirit beings to live eternally with God and His Son Jesus in the soon coming Kingdom of God.

I wonder where this lake of fire comes from that suddenly appears. It crossed my mind that once those who believe the truth are transformed into eternal living creatures the sea of glass may become a lake of fire that totally consumes those who reject God and His truth.

The Overcomer, The Evil And The Holy



Revelation 2:11 (NKJV)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Revelation 20:6 (NKJV)

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Back To The Present

Endure the fires of baptism and strive to attain the first resurrection to be kings and priest for Jesus during His 1,000 year reign on earth just prior to the Great White Throne Judgment and the prospect of a second death.

Malachi 3:2–3 (NKJV)

But 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 launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.

Look at the example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who trusted onto to death God and His Word.

Daniel 3:16–18 (NKJV)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Baptism by fire is a very good thing that God puts us through. It is highly beneficial and necessary. It removes doubt and reinforces faith. It eliminates false ideas and ideals and decontaminates truth. It burns off evil and purifies righteousness. We should develop an appreciation for it and go through it with increasing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control, the fruit of the spirit of God. This is a lifelong ongoing process for Christians. It is the Way of God and it is a way of life for the converted and convicted.



Baptismal Spiritual Fulfillment And Completion



1 Peter 1:6–7 (NKJV)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Psalms 66:12 (NKJV)

You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

Matthew 3:11 (NKJV)

I (John the Baptist) indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He (Jesus) who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Psalms 66:5 (NKJV)

Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

