

Trial By Fire – Rightly Perceiving Current Crises

USA Today reported on October 3, 2017 a little of the cataclysmic unfolding across America in their article titled, [“Storms, earthquakes, North Korea and now the Las Vegas massacre. We have to wonder: ‘What’s next?’”](#) The article laid out the various traumas to sections of America over the past few months, and it begged the question for understanding. The article ended with a quote from a pastor (of all things) in Tulsa: *“But with all that’s going on in the world,” he admits, “you can’t help but be a little bit apocalyptic.”*

[[You can read the article here:](#)]

What an amazing time to be alive on the earth! Fires and floods, wars and violence, intrigues and conspiracies abound. There is no shortage of drama. What could we possibly be learning if we were paying attention? Should the drama of the fires, the hurricanes, the floods, the murders, the political climate, the race wars, the lies and injustices, etc. cause us to pause? Might they be a harbinger?

We should be paying attention! We should be asking for eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that can comprehend. Years ago when I set myself to learn about the second coming of Christ, to understand the prophecies, to grasp the context of Revelation, the Lord spoke to me and He simply said, “Study my first advent to understand my second.”

The fires that have been raging for months, even unto today on the west coast, are symbolic of the fires of purification and judgment the Lord has unleashed. We’d do well to pay attention, to respond with, “Yes Lord, your servant is listening.” He’s speaking to us as a nation, and He’s

speaking to us individually. Wisdom will listen.

Look at what He said to His people concerning the first appearance of our Lord, and pay attention, because it applies for the second as well:

Malachi 3:1-3 KJV

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, says the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appears? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The prophet asks who could possibly stand at the appearing of the Messiah? Then he explains why that question needs to be asked: *"for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."*

Refiner's fire is the fire that purifies the gold and silver. The metal is held in the flame until the dross is burned off and the metal is purified to the point the refiner can see his reflection in it. The fire is kept at a certain temperature, one that is hot enough to burn off impurities, but not too hot that it alters the metal. It's a skill by the blacksmith. The prophet also equates this refining process to fuller's soap, which is the process of making white cloth as white as it can be.

The appearing of the Lord is foreshadowed by a cleansing of His people. The Lord sends fire to test our hearts and purify

our souls. This fire is meant to burn away the dross, the impurities. It's usually a painful process. It has to be; the impurities are mixed in with the pure and they have to be separated.

This is an amazing process because the Lord is doing this right now, and He's doing it nationally and personally. Individually we need to embrace the trials before us and allow the Lord to do His cleansing work. There are things in our lives we need to be rid of, and if we haven't expelled them of our own repentance processes, out of love and necessity, God will take us through the fire to remove them. Notice the end result: the reflection of the refiner is then seen in the metal. We should not shirk back from this process. We need this process.

Nationally, the Lord is separating the godly from the ungodly. By the time these fires, whether it be through natural disasters (fires, floods, storms, etc) or cultural disasters (race wars, political wars, economic wars, etc), have run their courses, there will be a stark separation between those who walk with God and those who do not. America's melting pot will produce two categories of people as these days ramp up: godly and ungodly. This is the separation of the sheep from the goats. This is another necessary process. Why? Because the testimony of the godly will be the judgment of the ungodly. By God's own law a judgment is established on the testimony of two or more witnesses. The ungodly will be without excuse because God is refining the godly to be a pure witness. The same word we translate "witness" is also "martyr".

Consider just recent events as a precursor. Antifa and the likes have declared a revolution upon anyone in opposition to their own beliefs. Their self-professed tactics include "punching Nazis". Who do they define as Nazis? Anyone who disagrees with them. They have armed themselves with knives, clubs and guns to beat their opposition, quite literally.

This is precisely what Islam does in every region of the world they have enough numbers to substantiate. As soon as they establish a significant presence in an area, they begin the demarcation process. Black Lives Matter has set itself on a path of violence as well, and lines and allegiances have been called for. They have aligned themselves against the police, and their narrative is a call to do the same. Consider the ongoing battle between the NFL powers and patriots. How much vitriol has been spewed from the mouths of these actors? Can we not see a separation occurring? Delineating lines have been drawn in just about every public venue. Politically, it's not really Democrats vs. Republicans anymore. It's those adhere to the Constitution, and those who would like to redefine it. It is globalists versus national sovereignty. Hollywood has set itself against Trump and conservative America. Big Pharma has set itself against the natural holistic community. There are precious few gray areas anymore.

It should cause us to evaluate our beliefs and our convictions. We should be checking our attitudes against the principles of our faith.

What did John the Baptist teach us about the Lord's coming?

Matt 3:11-12 NASU

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 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.

John predicts Christ's modus operandi: fire. Christ separates. We really need to understand this. The winnowing fork separates the worthless part from the precious. The precious is preserved, and the worthless is burned. I suggest

to you today that Christ has His winnowing fork in hand and He is separating the worthless from the worthy. When the separation is complete, His job is finished. He will return. We really should be paying attention to the separation process going on right now in our lives and in our nation.

We can't afford to miss understanding the season we're in. Evil and wickedness abound today in our nation, in our culture and society, and in this world. Righteousness abounds as well, but they are becoming starkly separated. This is purposeful. God is separating; we'd do well to cooperate. Don't fret about the condition of the wickedness, though the days are getting darker. This will not change. The raging we're witnessing in our nation with people groups frothing in violence and rebellion is indicative of a world rejecting God. Our eyes must not be fixed on these. Recall the angel's words to Daniel in his final prophecy,

Dan 12:10 KJV

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

There are two categories in this prophetic instruction: those being purified and the wicked. Those enraged and inflicting great damages on our nation, our society, and other people are quite simply wicked, with no understanding. If we are wise, we will realize we are being purified by these trials. We must submit to the purification process so that we reflect the image of our blacksmith, the One who baptizes with fire.

Are you being held in the flame? Then rejoice, and cooperate with the burning of the dross. Is fuller's soap being rubbed across you so that you are practically raw? Then rejoice because you are being made white. Be of the category of the wise who embrace the purification of the Lord. There are plenty of wicked with no understanding of the process our

nation is going through. We see them every day on the airwaves, newspapers, magazines, at our jobs, in our schools, on the internet... They will continue in their deeds without understanding. *"The wicked shall [continue to] do wickedly."* We must understand our Lord is on His way, but before He gets here, He is refining us so that He is what He sees when He looks at us.

The trials we're witnessing in our nation are the process of separating the godly from the ungodly. America is going through a demarcation, as is probably the whole world. The trials we're experiencing in our individual lives are the refining process to ready us to meet our King. May we respond with wisdom and understanding.

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