

Christian Foundations

Lesson 9

Baptism with Fire

This lesson belongs to: _____

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Baptism with Fire

Key Verse: *“John 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. His winnowing fan is in His right hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.’” Luke 3:16-17*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help the disciple embrace the baptism with fire as the Lord’s process to bring His people into full maturity and service. Trials, temptations, tribulations, adversities, pressures, and persecution can become God’s purifying instruments to separate us from the influence of the flesh, the world, and the devil.

1. Three Ways God Purifies His People

- _____: The Old Testament sacrifices were made to atone for the sins of the people and were necessary to purify the priests that served the Lord in His tabernacle. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.¹⁸² In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.¹⁸³ When we believe in and accept the blood of Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins, His blood cleanses and removes sin from our lives.
- _____: Once saved, we are to be purified (or renewed) in our minds.¹⁸⁴ Because of our past life in sin, rebellion, and exposure to this world’s system of ungodly beliefs and values, our defiled thinking must be purified and transformed. God transforms our minds through the means of His word as we read, study, meditate and apply it in our lives.¹⁸⁵ Abiding in the word of God will purify our hearts of ungodly beliefs, philosophies, and useless religious concepts and renew our minds to the truth of God that sets us free.¹⁸⁶
- _____: Water can wash away surface impurities, but it takes fire to consume and to refine. Fire will consume all that can be burned, and will refine hidden impurities in metal by bringing them to the surface so that they can be skimmed and discarded. The baptism of fire consumes works accomplished in the flesh and purifies the motives and attitudes of the heart through a series of fiery trials. This work of sanctification begins when we are baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit and continues throughout our lives as we walk with Jesus. The Agent of this fiery sanctifying work in our hearts is the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus Christ is the Baptizer with _____.

- Matthew 3:11-12 *“I 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.”*

3. The Baptism with Fire burns up the _____.

- Matthew 3:12 *“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*
- “Chaff” is the shell or husk that encases the wheat kernel. This husk is broken loose from the kernel during the threshing process and then separated through winnowing. The chaff is then burned with fire.

4. In biblical imagery “chaff” refers to two things:

- The _____ (fleshly) nature.

¹⁸² Hebrews 9:22

¹⁸³ 1 John 1:7

¹⁸⁴ Romans 12:2

¹⁸⁵ Ephesians 5:26; Romans 12:2

¹⁸⁶ John 8:31-32; Colossians 2:8

- The _____.
5. The Baptism with Fire can also refer to the _____ of God.
 - Hebrews 12:25-29 *"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.' Now this, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."*
 6. In times of renewal, Jesus will come to His people as a _____ and as _____
 - Malachi 3:1-2 *"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. '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.'"*
 7. Jesus comes to _____ His people and to restore _____.
 - Malachi 3:3-4 *"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. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years."*
 8. The Baptism with Fire can also be described as a time of _____ or _____.
 - Jeremiah 17:10 *"I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."*
 - Psalm 66:10 *"For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined."*
 - Proverbs 17:3 *"The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts."*
 9. Our heart is _____. Therefore we do not _____ what is in our heart.
 - Jeremiah 17:9 *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"*
 - Proverbs 20:9 *"Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin'?"*
 - Proverbs 28:26 *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered."*
 10. Since we do not know our own heart, we should ask God to _____ our heart.
 - Psalm 139:23-24 *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*
 - Psalm 26:2 *"Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and my heart."*
 11. The condition of our heart is important for many reasons:
 - God _____ at our heart.¹⁸⁷
 - Out of our heart spring the _____ of life.¹⁸⁸
 - What is in our heart will determine the _____ in our mind.¹⁸⁹
 - The pure in heart will _____.¹⁹⁰
 - Our heart determines what we _____.¹⁹¹
 - All _____ originates in the heart.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ 1 Samuel 16:7

¹⁸⁸ Proverbs 4:23

¹⁸⁹ Proverbs 23:7

¹⁹⁰ Matthew 5:8

¹⁹¹ Matthew 6:21

¹⁹² Matthew 15:19

- We might fool others but _____ knows our heart.¹⁹³

12. Although God does not tempt anyone, God will _____ and even _____ times of testing in our lives.

- Genesis 22:1 “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham...”
- Deuteronomy 8:2 “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.”
- 2 Chronicles 32:31 “However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.”
- Psalm 105:17–19 “He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.”
- Matthew 4:1 “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

The Fire of Testing and Temptation

The Scripture is clear, we do not know what is in our heart—but God does! Therefore God will reveal to us what is in our heart by allowing us to experience His refiner’s fire. Although God already knows what is in our heart, His refiner’s fire will bring to the surface for us to see what is hidden or denied. His purpose in doing so is not to condemn or shame us, but that we might cleanse ourselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”¹⁹⁴ Granted, the fire of God can be painful at the moment, but like precious gold and silver, we must be refined time and time again until all the dross is removed.¹⁹⁵ One of the refiner’s fires can be exposure to *temptation*. Satan is the tempter.¹⁹⁶ God never tempts anyone, but He does allow temptation to cross our path to reveal the evil desires already present in our heart.¹⁹⁷ God will use temptation as a test of our love for Him.¹⁹⁸ God has promised that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape so that we can overcome it.¹⁹⁹ God does not intend temptation to destroy those who love Him. When we take the “way of escape” He has provided with each temptation, we reveal our love for Him. Another refiner’s fire can be the test of *obedience*. God tested Abraham’s commitment to Him by asking him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son.²⁰⁰ Abraham’s faith in God was strong and he passed the test by obeying God. Because Abraham obeyed, God intervened and said, “Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”²⁰¹ What God commands of us can be very painful at times to fulfill. Jesus was obedient even unto death on the cross. Jesus’ humanity was tested by God and He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.²⁰² The test of obedience will challenge our independent, rebellious, and selfish nature. When we obey, God considers our faith more precious than gold that is tested by fire.²⁰³ Another refiner’s fire can be *affliction and persecution*. This fire comes from unbelievers and the disobedient. When we suffer for Christ’s sake, our faith and love is purified. The non-essentials and excess baggage that steal away our complete devotion to Christ begins to melt away in this fire. Jesus becomes all we need because He is all we have. A genuine love for Jesus, for our brethren, and even for our enemies overtakes us, making us more like Jesus. The refiner’s fire also include *trials, pressures, adversities, and problems* whether they are caused by situations, people, or by ourselves. These can bring the worst out of us. But that is the point. God knows it is in there! Because He is refining our heart, He *intends* to bring it out. When we feel the refiner’s fire heating up in our lives, we must not despise it. We must not reject it. We must not run from it. We must not harden our heart. We must not blame someone else. God may allow Satan, people, and circumstances to heat up the fire, but we are the gold that God is refining. Jesus embraced the work of God in the cross and did not curse those whom God allowed to carry it out. Even so we must embrace the work of Jesus our Refiner, the One who baptizes us with fire. When we do, we are sure to come forth as pure gold and conformed to His image.

13. God allows trials in order to test our _____. Therefore we should embrace every test with

¹⁹³ Acts 15:8

¹⁹⁴ 2 Corinthians 7:1

¹⁹⁵ Job 23:10; Psalm 12:6

¹⁹⁶ Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5

¹⁹⁷ James 1:12-15

¹⁹⁸ John 14:15

¹⁹⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:13

²⁰⁰ Genesis 22:1-2

²⁰¹ Genesis 22:12

²⁰² Hebrews 5:7-8

²⁰³ 1 Peter 1:7

- _____ knowing that the test carries with it the potential to enrich our faith and bring forth a _____ for God's glory.
- James 1:2 *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials."*
 - *"It is better to pass the test and get a testimony than to fail and get the moanies."*
14. The testing of our faith produces _____ which helps us to become _____ and _____, lacking nothing.
- James 1:4 *"But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."*
15. God is looking for _____ and _____ during times of testing and suffering.
- Hebrews 5:8 *"though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."*
 - Hebrews 11:17 *"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."*
16. God will test us with _____ experiences.
- The "wilderness" is a time of delayed fulfillment of God's promise. Faith and patient endurance is required to stay steadfastly obedient to the Lord until His word is fulfilled.
 - Deuteronomy 8:2 *"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."*
 - Psalm 81:7 *"You called in trouble, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah"*
 - Psalm 105:19 *"Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him."*
 - There are times when God seems distant and detached from our lives so we experience a crisis of faith, a feeling of being forsaken. This crisis of faith has been called the "Dark Night of the Soul". God is in control of this season and His purpose is not to destroy our faith in Him but to bring us to a complete trust in His promise to never leave us even when there seems to be no evidence of His caring presence.²⁰⁴ Job experienced this crisis of faith. Jesus in His humanity experienced this also on the Cross.²⁰⁵
17. The Baptism with Fire can also be illustrative of taking up the _____.
- Luke 12:49-50 *"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!"*
 - Matthew 20:22 *"But Jesus answered and said, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'"*
 - Matthew 16:24-26 *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'"*
18. When we fail the tests before us, we should learn to receive _____ from our Heavenly Father knowing that He loves us and is committed to our graduation into victory.
- Hebrews 12:5-11 *"And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*
19. The _____ of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the _____ that shall be revealed in us.

²⁰⁴ 2 Chronicles 32:31

²⁰⁵ Matthew 27:46; 28:20; Mark 15:34; Hebrews 13:5

- Romans 8:18 *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*
20. When the test seems to be overwhelming and the fire too hot to endure, consider _____ lest you become weary and discouraged in your soul.
- Hebrews 12:3–4 *“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”*
21. During times of testing it is important to keep our eyes on the _____ of the prize set before us—the blessing and reward that passing the test will eventually bring!
- Hebrews 12:1-2 *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
 - Philippians 3:13–14 *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*