PRAYER STUDY 36

The Baptism of Fire

Matthew 3:11

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Matthew 3:11

John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Luke 3:16

What is the Baptism with Fire? There are three different main views of this experience.

1. Some believe Christians are automatically "baptized with fire" at the same time they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. They cite the "tongues of fire" that came onto the disciples at Pentecost in Acts 2. Thus, they see the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Baptism with Fire as the same experience.
2. Others believe that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit comes after salvation and the Baptism of Fire comes after the experience of being baptized in the Spirit. This, according to this viewpoint, will set spirit-baptized believers on fire to do the work of the ministry and will include a refinement by fire.
3. Finally, still others believe that the context of the scripture indicates that Christians will receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but non-Christians will be "baptized with fire"(i.e. the "lake of fire" in Revelation 20:15.

The problem with viewpoint #1 is that there is never any mention of fire when other people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The problem with viewpoint #2 is that there is no record in the entire New Testament of anyone receiving both the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Baptism with Fire, although the New Testament frequently mentions those baptized in the Holy Spirit and baptized in water. The problem with viewpoint #3 is the "lake of fire" is never referred to as "baptism with fire". Most theologians and Biblical scholars, citing Matthew 3:4-3:12, take the position of viewpoint #3 saying that the context of scripture indicates this baptism with fire is for the unsaved, unrighteous. I am certainly no scholar, but my personal view is that viewpoint #2 is more probably correct.

Let's look at a few scriptures dealing with fire from God:

For our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29

For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her(Jerusalem=the church), a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. Zechariah 2:5

But who shall abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like Refiner's fire and like fuller's 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. Malachi 3:2-3

Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire. Psalm 104:4

*And he[*the anti-Christ*]shall pass over to this stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign*[the sign of Christ], *saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion*[the remnant within the church, overcoming, sold out ones of the Last Day's Church] *and His furnace is in Jerusalem*[the church].

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle against thee. Isaiah 43:2

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.
1st Corinthians 3: 11-15

Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle of any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:25-27

So what is the point of all this? I believe the Lord is going to baptize us with fire both to purify the Sons of Levi(male and female who have a heart to minister to and for Him)and burn away the dross *and* to ignite us for service in these Last Days. He is coming back for a church without spot or blemish. His Baptism with Fire will cause the Church of the Living God to have no spot or blemish. Like the 5 Wise Virgins-(virgins symbolize the true church)-whose lamps-(which symbolize our witness)-are full of oil-(which types the Holy Spirit)-and are lighted with fire-which symbolizes the Holiness of God, we will be totally focused on the coming Bridegroom and although we may slumber to some extent while we wait for Him, we will have made proper preparation and will be part of that Church that has been made without spot or blemish because of the Baptism with Fire.