These are the days to be courageous, bold and full of faith.
from
Finish Well, as sung by Karen Peck and New River

Prayer Study #524

SET A FIRE DOWN IN MY SOUL: THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

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Baptism Review

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Hebrews 6:1-2

THE SIX FOUNDATION DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. The doctrine of baptisms
4. Laying on of hands
5. Resurrection of the dead
6. Eternal Judgment

REVIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Notice that the author of Hebrews speaks of baptisms, not baptism. The Greek word, *baptidzo,* means to cause something to be dipped or to immerse something beneath the surface of water or some other fluid. According to Derek Prince, "*It is total in the sense that it involves the whole person and the whole personality of the one being baptized; it is transitional in the sense that, for the person being baptized, it marks a transition-a passing out of one stage or realm of experience into a new stage or realm of experience never previously entered into. The act of baptism may thus be compared to the opening and closing of a door. The*

person being baptized passes through a door opened up to him by the act of baptism, out of something old and familiar, into something new and unfamiliar. Thereafter the door is closed behind him, and there is no way of returning back through the closed door into the old ways and the old experiences."

The Greek scholar Rick Renner adds this, "*The Greek word baptidzo originally meant to dip and to dye. A person who comes to Jesus Christ can be likened to an old garment that needs to be dipped into a vat of dye so its color can be changed. However, the person isn't dipped into a vat of colored dye, but into the precious blood of the Lamb!"*

The verse in Ephesians 4:4-6 (*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in you all)* does not contradict the fact that there are baptisms. This particular verse is in reference to the baptism into the Body of Christ, which is done by the Holy Spirit, when someone accepts Christ and His salvation. Paul here is talking about the specific baptism that brings us into the Christian body. It is the only baptism that is absolutely necessary, really saves us and is in the Blood of Jesus since there is NO OTHER WAY of salvation except through Jesus alone.

There are 6 New Testament baptisms. We will briefly look at them all, but our focus in this study is on the Baptism of Fire.

1. **John's Baptism (done by John in water as a sign for repentance)**: John the Baptist, carrying the mantle of Elijah, is one of the most unique men of the Bible. No miracle is ascribed to him and no significant prophecy, in the traditional sense of prophecy. Yet Jesus said of his cousin John in Matthew 11:11, ***"…among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the***

Baptist…" and in Matthew 11:9, ***"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet."*** John had two requirements for baptism under his ministry: repentance and public confession of sins. He refused to baptize the church leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, because they showed no real evidence or desire for a changed life and refused to admit they were sinners. *Repent* was not only the first word of John's ministry (Matthew 3:2) but also of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:17). And really repentance was the theme of all the prophets of the Old Testament. So why did Jesus, who had no need of repentance, insist on being baptized by John? Because He was setting an example and pattern for all Christian believers to follow. John's Baptism was a time to repent and leave sins behind and to get ready for the Messiah. When the Messiah had come, John's Baptism was no longer necessary.

2. **The Baptism into the Body of Christ (done by the Holy Spirit in the blood of Jesus)**: This is the only one of the baptisms that is absolutely necessary for salvation, and thus it is the most important baptism of all. This is done by the Holy Spirit, and we are baptized, not literally but spiritually, with the Blood of Jesus. John 16:8-11 tells us: ***"And when He*** [the Holy Spirit] ***is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you shall see Me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged."*** In other words, He, the Holy Spirit, will convict men of sin, convince men that Jesus is the righteousness of God, and convince men that the power of Satan has been broken over their lives. This is that one baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-6. Again this is a baptism into the Blood of Jesus and is possible only because of the blood. Derek Prince points out 6 facts of how the Blood of Jesus impacts our lives:

a. **THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS, I AM REDEEMED OUT OF THE HAND OF THE ENEMY.** *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy* (Psalm 107:2).

b. **THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS, ALL MY SINS ARE FORGIVEN.** *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.…*(Ephesians 1:7).

c. **THE BLOOD OF JESUS, GOD'S SON, CONTINUALLY CLEANSES ME FROM ALL SIN.** *But, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin* (1st John 1:7).

The Amplified Bible renders this verse: *But, if we* [really] *are living and walking in the Light, as He* [Himself] *is in the Light, we have* [true, unbroken] *fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses* (removes) *us from all sin and guilt* [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations]. (1st John 1:7 AMP)

d. **THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS, I AM JUSTIFIED, MADE RIGHTEOUS, JUST AS IF I HAD NEVER SINNED.** *Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we should be saved from wrath through him* (Romans 5:9).

e. **THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS, I AM SANCTIFIED-MADE HOLY OR SET APART TO GOD AND SEPARATED FROM THE**

DEVIL. *Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate* (Hebrews 13:12).

f. MY BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT-REDEEMED, CLEANSED, SANCTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS. THEREFORE, SATAN HAS NO PLACE IN ME, NO POWER OVER ME, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, JESUS! *What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's* (1st Corinthians 6:19-20).

ALL Christians must be baptized in the blood of Jesus by the Holy Spirit who draws us to Jesus in order to even be correctly called Christians. That is the fundamental, foundational law of Christianity. Again this is that one baptism that is referred to in Ephesians 4. Without the Baptism into the Body of Christ, all other baptisms are worthless.

3. **Christian Water Baptism (done by other believers in water):** *Do you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His* (Romans 6:3-5). In First Love Ministries, we believe in what is called *credobaptism.* What this means is that we only baptize believers in Christ. Water Baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inner work in a person's life of being truly

born again by faith in Christ Jesus. We go through baptism, first of all, to tell the world publically that we are believers in Jesus. Secondly, we are baptized to remind ourselves that we have been spiritually dead in trespasses and sins but now are spiritually alive only because of Jesus and His giving of His life for us that we might have life. Finally, we go through Water Baptism to follow the Lord's own example, remembering that He is the Pattern Son. He, though without sin, was baptized by John the Baptist. The act of Water Baptism is an obedience to scripture. It is in water and is done by other believers who have already gone through the process. When we administer Water Baptism, we always remind the baptismal candidates that ALL people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. ALL are in need of a savior, and there is ONLY ONE SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST. The scriptures make it very clear that He is the ONLY way to heaven. Any religion or set of beliefs that contradicts this is totally false.

We do not baptize babies because they have not asked Jesus into their hearts, but we do dedicate babies to the Lord.

The Apostle Peter gave two commands to the Jewish audience that acknowledge their belief in Jesus after Peter's preaching. They asked, "What shall we do?" to correctly respond to the Christian message. *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38). Those two commands were to repent and then be water baptized.*

While we take water baptism seriously, we do not believe that it is a requirement to go to heaven, based on the fact that Jesus said the thief on the cross would be with Him that

day in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43), and he obviously was not water baptized. However, Jesus Himself said, ***"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized*** [water baptized] ***will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"*** (Mark 16:15-16).

4. **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit (done by Jesus into the Holy Spirit):** I believe with all my heart that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit will be absolutely necessary for the days that are soon coming. Only the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit will help us overcome what is coming on the earth and will help us stand in that evil day that is coming. If you have not had this experience, you are no less a Christian, but it is available for those who seek and really want it. Jesus Himself is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. The initial fulfillment of the prophetic words of Jesus, ***"For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now,"*** came on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus had been crucified and ten days after His ascension into heaven. Acts 2:1-4: *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

   James G. Lawson writes in his excellent book, *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians,* concerning the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: "On the day of Pentecost, the world was given the greatest example of God's power to transform the lives and character of men, so as to make the weak strong and powerful. Pentecost was the pouring out of the "former rain" (Hosea 6:3) of God's Spirit, just as in the last days

there will be an outpouring of the "latter rain" (James 5:7). By His death on the cross, Jesus made such a great atonement for sin that God could safely pour out His Spirit on all mankind without the universe thinking that He was regarding sin lightly. It was the atonement of Christ, therefore, that purchased this great Pentecostal gift for the world."

5. **The Baptism of Fire** will be discussed at length at the end of this study.
6. **The Baptism in His Sufferings:** Very few here will ever enter this baptism, although some will. This is not a popular baptism in our American Church, which is more interested in meeting in a comfortable building and being taught a gospel that requires no sacrifice. The Baptism in His Sufferings is seldom talked about, and too often those of us who do talk of it don't really understand the cost of this baptism.

   James and John, prompted by their mother, came to Jesus and asked to be put in the primary positions in His Kingdom, an iniquity drive that still exists in the ministry today for prominence and popularity. *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him saying, "Teacher we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them,* ***"You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"*** *They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them,* ***You will indeed drink the cup that I drink and with the baptism I am baptized with, you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared"*** (Mark 10:35-40)

   Paul calls this baptism, "*the fellowship of His sufferings:" Yet indeed I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish,*

that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith, that I may know Him and the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead (Philippians 3:8-10).

Peter spoke of this baptism briefly in 1st Peter 4:12-16-*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

Jesus said of this baptism in Luke 12:50, ***"But I have a baptism to be baptized with and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!"***

This is not a baptism of fire where we go through trials and tribulations, but it is a baptism, much deeper and more costly, that identifies us with the crucified Christ. The emphasis is not on us and our sufferings; it is on Jesus and what He did for us. Among the characteristics of this baptism are the following:

a. **Men will hate you because of the Christian message that you preach** (Luke 6:22-23-***Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven. For in like manner their fathers did to the prophet.***).
b. **You will be persecuted** (John 15:20a-***"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you"***).
c. **You will experience shame** (Acts 5:40b-42-…*and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they*

commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ).

d. **You will suffer** (Philippians 1:29-*For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe Him, but also to suffer for His sake*).

e. **You may be called upon to bear in your body the marks of Jesus Christ** (Galatians 6:17-*From now on let no one trouble you, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ).* Paul's physical body permanently showed the scars, the marks, the wounds, and disfigurement of the beatings that he had endured for the Lord Jesus. The word *marks* in this passage is the Greek word *stigmata*, which means scars. Paul is saying, "If you want to know if I am a follower of Jesus, look at my scars." Are you willing to bear in your body the marks of Jesus Christ?" We may well have to answer that question one day, either on the mission field or even in a reprobate nation that no longer respects the things of God.

f. The ultimate fulfillment of this baptism will be the ultimate cost, i.e. physical death.

No doubt only those of the Remnant Company of the Last Days, those saints in Revelation 12:11, who *overcame him* [the dragon, i.e. Satan] *by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death*, and and also God's *doulos* or bond slaves will be willing to enter into this baptism. Although not all bond slaves or those of the Remnant Company will pay this ultimate price, but all sure will be willing to do so. Will you?

Why will men kill Christians with such vengeance? First, like Cain their works are evil, and they will be greatly jealous of those whose works are righteous (1st John 3:12: *…not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous*). Secondly, they will be following the orders of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:15: *He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed*). Also, the Babylonian World System will hate Christians and try to destroy them (Revelation 17:5-6a: *And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*…). Finally, men will kill others simply because these others are Christians (*When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held*-Revelation 6:9). This, of course, is already taking place with ISIS in the Middle East and has been done throughout the ages.

For those who choose to be baptized into His sufferings, Christ says, ***"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*** Those who accept this baptism should follow the example of Paul in Acts 21:12-14: *Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."*

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

Although I have no real scriptural support for this, I personally believe that no one can enter into the Baptism of His Sufferings without first being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Unfortunately, most of the Body of Christ will never know the joy of being filled with the fire of God because this baptism costs something, which a carnal Church is unwilling to pay. We incorrectly teach seekers "to just accept Christ, and your problems will all go away." We should be teaching them that entering into a real relationship with Jesus may cost us everything, but it is more than worth it.

"I [John the Baptist] *baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one* [JESUS] *who is more powerful that I, whose scandals 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 scandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

<u>What is the Baptism with Fire</u>? 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.

   The problem with this viewpoint is that there is never any mention of fire in scripture when other people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. Others believe that the context of the scripture and the verses that follow indicates that Christians will receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, but non-Christians will be baptized

with fire (i.e. they will be sent to the "lake of fire" mentioned in Revelation 20:15. However, the "lake of fire" is never referred to as "baptism with fire," and I find this viewpoint almost ludicrous).

3. I believe the correct viewpoint is 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 baptism sets spirit-baptized believers "on fire" to do the work of the ministry, but it also includes a refinement by fire.

   All of us want to be on fire to do the work of the ministry, but most of us don't want trials and tribulations. Yet such testings are essential to burn off the dross or impurities of our life. Trials and tribulations are given for the following reasons:

   a. **To purify us and our faith**: 1st Peter 1:6-9-*In this 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, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-the salvation of your souls.*
   a. **To increase our patience**: James 1:3-…*knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*
   b. **To chasten us because He is the Father and we are the child:** NKJ Hebrews 12:6-*For whom the LORD loves he chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.* New Century Version Hebrews 12:6-*The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as His child.*
   c. **To bring us to a better place**: Psalm 66:10-12-*For You, O God, have tested us. You have refined us as silver is*

refined. You brought us into the net. You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water. But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. Acts 14:21-22-*And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*

d. To grow us up and make us strong: James 1:2-4-*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Our Proper Reaction to Trials and Tribulations

1. **We should count it all joy! James 1:2-***My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.*
2. **We should recognize that all testing has a purpose and His grace really is sufficient. 2nd Corinthians 12:7-10-***And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me,* ***"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*** *Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
3. **We should expect it. 2nd Timothy 3:12-***Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

4. **We should be confident that the Lord will deliver us in due time. 2nd Timothy 3:10-11**-*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra-what persecutions I endured. And out of them ALL the Lord delivered me.*

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

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

"For I," says the LORD, "will be a wall of fire all around her [Jerusalem=the Spirit Filled Church], *and I will be the glory in her midst"* (Zechariah 2:8).

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 launderer's 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 of righteousness (Malachi 3:2-3).

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

And he [the antichrist] *shall pass over to this stronghold for fear, and his priests shall be afraid of the ensign* [the sign of Christ] *saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion* [the remnant of the Church, the overcoming and sold out ones of the Last Day's Church] *and His furnace is in Jerusalem* [the Church] (Isaiah 31:9).

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned nor shall the flame scorch you (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).

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 (which includes females, too, because in Christ there is neither male nor female-Galatians 3:28) who have a heart to minister to and for Him. He will burn away the dross and ignite us for service in these Last Days. He is coming back for a Church without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27). 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-the five wise virgins did while they waited for the Bridegroom- 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. In this place, there is coming a Baptism of Fire that will ignite believers, some of whom will go to the nations. There will be a new zeal in us to proclaim the Gospel until the whole world knows Jesus. Fire! Fire! Fire! Baptize us with Fire!

HOMEWORK: Watch the Video!

I sent the video *The Final Reformation-The Beginning* to some people. It is 1 ½ hours long and I think has been around for a short while. I got some wonderful reactions from those who watched it, including an out of state response: "*I have yet to watch this. But I wanted you to know that* [his wife] *did earlier this morning and apparently had quite the spiritual experience. I won't go into all the details but will say that she called me joyfully crying.*"