

The Refiners Fire Lesson 2 4Q 2007

The Crucibles that Come

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – is a crucible a bad thing, a good thing, a necessary thing?

Do we need to have crucibles in our lives? Why?

MAL 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

MAL 3:2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Rev 3:18

If you had a broken leg and went to PT, when you put weight on that leg for the first time, began to stretch the muscles and tendons would there be pain involved? If you had the attitude I will be glad to do the PT as soon as there is no pain would you ever walk again? Now would is the physical therapist who is overseeing your therapy your friend or your enemy?

We are infected in our minds and the process of healing can be painful, does God sometimes bring us into situations that can feel bad but are actually good for us?

SUNDAY

Read top memory verse – thoughts? Are we surprised by trials and difficulties in this world? Why or why not?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Can we tell whether something is good or bad simply by how it feels?

Questions from TQ page 19:

To what extent can the trials and difficulties we face be blamed on Satan? Do our trials have a supernatural source? Why or why not?

Would there be any suffering if there was no sin? So in one sense isn't all suffering a result of Satan or traced back to Satan? Does that mean though, that Satan directly, by his own personhood causes all suffering or trials or difficulties? Does he cause some?

What about the source of trials – supernatural? Never, always sometimes – examples?

Book of Job, the sufferings and trials of Job were from a supernatural source –

Who sinned that this man was born blind... neither Christ said, no supernatural source.

Some difficulties result from sin, some from unwise choices. Does God punish us by these difficulties or merely let us reap the results?

When someone smokes does God afflict them with lung disease? If you don't brush your teeth does God punish you with cancer?

Then what about the stories of the OT, where God did punish? How do we understand those stories? What is the ultimate goal from God's perspective? To get us to live an extra seven years longer or to heal us for eternity? To save just the human race or to eliminate sin and secure the entire universe?

Colossians 1:18-20

Why is it often necessary for us to suffer adverse results in order to be brought back into God's will?

Is pain a bad thing? If one doesn't brush their teeth what happens? Cavities and what do cavities feel like? Pain – and what will the pain lead one to do? Hopefully go to the dentist for healing and learn how to care for your teeth, but what if there was no pain?

If you touch a hot stove what do you feel? Pain and what will the pain lead you to do?

Leprosy is such a devastating disease and an accurate metaphor of sin because leprosy destroys one's sensitivity to pain and therefore we

persist in destructive behaviors destroying ourselves and not even knowing it.

TQ page 21 states, "Peter's statement in the memory verse 'do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering' (1Pet 4:12) may have been more understandable to first-century Christians than to us. Faced with a panoply of pagan religions, all legally recognized and popular, they probably were not too surprised that their illegal and unpopular faith engendered trials and tribulations." – thoughts? What about today?

In our society do we have a panoply of "pagan" religions and competing idols which make the Christian faith full of trials? TV, internet, video games, drugs, porn, multiple other religions – what about in countries around the world? Are there countries where converting to Christianity is illegal and punishable by death? Yes, many Islamic countries will execute someone who converts to Christianity.

What do we learn about those who would kill someone because they changed their religious beliefs? And if they believe God would be pleased with this what kind of a god have they constructed?

MONDAY

Read top memory verse – thoughts? The lesson, in the last paragraph, states the Satan is a defeated foe, how is Satan defeated and if he is defeated why is he still causing so much trouble?

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. John 12:31-33

Who is the prince of this world Jesus is referring to? Satan, and what will cause the prince of this world to be driven out? The death of Jesus – was Jesus successful in His mission to drive the devil out, in other words did Jesus win at the cross? Then does that mean the devil is no longer here on the earth, that he has been driven out? No, then where was the devil being driven out from if not from the earth? From the hearts and minds of intelligences throughout the entire universe and the hearts and minds of men!

Where did Satan want to sit enthroned? The mount of assembly Isa 14:13 as the one most loved, adored and worshipped. Where has the devil set up his shop?

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
2 Thes 2:3,4

What is God's temple? Did this man of sin go into the heavenly realms and throw God off His throne and set himself up there? Or is this referring to the Spirit Temple, that he set himself up in the hearts and minds of people? That he has gotten people to believe lies about God, to believe Satan's version of reality? So where does Christ's death cast him out of? The heart and mind of the believer? How?

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil—Hebrews 2:14

This is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

Jesus, by His death revealed the truth about God, Satan, the nature of sin etc. that destroys the lies which hold us captive and thus cast Satan out of our minds and hearts!

How then is Satan a roaring lion seeking someone to devour? What does a roaring lion do? Inspire fear, intimidate – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid – fear is part of the infection of sin. Perfect love casts out fear. Satan uses strategies that inspire our fear –

Lies believed break circle of love and trust
Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
Acts of sin result in damage to mind, character and body - terminally

A roaring lion inspires fear and fear leads to greater selfishness and the violations of the law of love

Example – consider a couple who is just married and the husband suggests that maybe it was a mistake to get married – the wife responds with the emotion of... fear and insecurity. If the fear governs her actions she will do what? Begin to control, monitor, complain about not having enough time, restrict, hover, smother for fear of losing him and how will the husband react? To pull back and disengage, which will increase fear

which will result in more smothering, controlling behaviors a viscous cycle.

A chemistry teacher and two 17 y/o high school students were arrested and jailed because the chemistry teacher was behind in her auto payments and afraid of going bankrupt, the students were failing chemistry and afraid of not graduating and so the chemistry teacher hired the students to arson her car for a passing grade so she could claim the insurance money – why? Fear.

The devil is roaring lion – a toothless, clawless lion with a loud roar trying to insight fear because fear leads to selfishness and thus self-destructive behaviors. The devil’s weapons are lies he gets us to believe that breaks the bonds of love and trust in God.

How else does the devil try to insight fear? Lies about God are high on the list...

- Believing two things that are mutually exclusive
- Letting others do your thinking for you
- Accepting symbolism as fact
- Reading the Bible and stopping with “My Bible says” and not asking but what does it mean
- Failing to incorporate all the inspired writings into a harmonious whole
- Accepting church authority rather than thinking for yourself
- Accepting feelings rather than evidence and truth

TUESDAY

Read memory verse and then first paragraph – any thoughts? Well said here.

Read fourth paragraph – is God’s wrath, as described in this paragraph, the letting go for people to reap what they have chosen, a different thing than the wrath that the wicked will suffer in the end? Or is it an accurate reflection/revelation of exactly how God will treat the wicked in the end?

WEDNESDAY

Crucibles of purification –

Have you heard of “testing” of being tested by God? Does God test His people? What does it mean for God to test His people?

When you think of testing what comes to mind? Examinations in school? Other thoughts? In the hospital we do testing on patients all the time for what purpose? To diagnose and from the diagnoses we provide treatments and then we retest, why do we retest?

Does God need to do “tests” for Him to diagnose? Do we need to be tested to help us accept the diagnosis, for us to be brought into cooperation for treatment? Will we take God’s remedy if we aren’t convinced we are sick?

God will bring you over the ground again and again until with humble heart and subdued mind you bear the test that He inflicts and are wholly sanctified to His service and work. 4T 214

Thoughts about this statement? Why would God do this? Is our salvation up to us, up to us studying, preparing and then going into examination and being tested and praying we pass? Or is salvation “healing” and Christ has procured the remedy, but it is one that requires our freewill acceptance in order for it to be effective in our lives? As we take this remedy – the remedy of truth and love – we must choose to apply it to our lives and we receive divine power to follow through with the choice. Why does God bring us over the ground again and again? So transformation can be solidified in character.

TQ page 25 – “What does it mean to have a ‘simplified view of the Christian life?’”

THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Paul complained about a thorn in his flesh – many speculate about what this was – but I think it was poor vision – and why poor vision and why was this from the Lord – Damascus Road – what happened to Paul? Blindness from the brightness of God, and this was a powerful metaphor. Those in darkness of lies about God are blind to the truth and cannot understand or comprehend it. Paul, had been blindly warring against God while thinking he was on God’s side. This impaired vision reminded him daily of his previous pride and self-righteousness and kept him humble before God.

FRIDAY

READ EGW paragraph at the top – thoughts?

Read questions 1-3 and discuss.