

# (The Fire of God) the Baptism of Fire

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and the fear of God in preparation for the second coming of Christ, and highlights the responsibility of parents to bring up their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord.*

**Duration:** 58:53

**Scripture:** Malachi 4:5, Matthew 3:2-11, Luke 1:17, Revelation 2:5

**Topics:** "Fire Of God", "Spiritual Responsibility", "Repentance"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the critical message of repentance as preached by John the Baptist, urging the church to prepare for the second coming of Christ. He highlights the need for a genuine change of heart towards sin, warning against the dangers of a faith that lacks true repentance. Poonen stresses the responsibility of fathers to guide their children spiritually, asserting that the church cannot replace parental guidance in leading children to Christ. He calls for a baptism of fire, which signifies a deep, transformative experience with the Holy Spirit, essential for true discipleship. The sermon serves as a wake-up call for believers to take their spiritual lives seriously and to seek a genuine relationship with God.

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## Transcript

I want to turn to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 3 and the words of John the Baptist as he introduced the Lord Jesus. You know he was the forerunner of Christ and he was sent by God specially to prepare the way for Christ. And I see that that ministry is, if we open ourselves to it, is what prepares our heart to receive Christ as well.

Just like John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare Israel to receive Christ, that ministry, the emphasis in his ministry is what prepares our heart to receive Christ as well. And that emphasis is what the world needs to hear today to be, and especially the church, is to prepare itself for the second coming of Christ. So that's why I want to look at this verse.

His message, you know, was essentially a message of repentance. Matthew 3 and verse 2, he came in the wilderness saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Change your mind about sin.

That is my understanding of the word repentance and I believe that's what it means. Change your mind about sin. Change your attitude to sin.

Turn around from sin. It takes time to get victory over sin. Maybe years sometimes with some habits that we have indulged in for many years.

But it doesn't take more than a moment to change our attitude towards sin, to change our mind about sin. And the tragedy today in Christendom is that we have heard about faith without repentance. We hear about the grace of God without understanding the fear of God.

And we try to understand grace without understanding law. Remember that God sent his message of grace to this earth after 1,500 years of keeping people under the law. That wasn't a mistake.

It was a preparation. And that's why the people of Israel, those who responded like Peter, James, John, Paul, and all understood the grace of God, I believe a thousand times better than a lot of Gentile Christians and a lot of Christians today. Because most Christians today have never heard much about the fear of God in their whole life.

Right from day one what they hear is about the grace of God. And the end result is that they haven't really seen the seriousness of sin. I mean if you had to offer a goat as a sacrifice, you know how expensive a goat is when you commit sin.

You understand the seriousness of sin pretty quickly. Because whenever it costs money we understand the seriousness of something. And that's how God taught those Old Testament people to understand the seriousness of sin.

But we have Christians today who've never spent one rupee when it concerns sin. It's just one word, Lord forgive me. And repentance is not understood.

I know many people who have come to this church who imagined that they were born again before coming here, who told me that they really understood salvation only after coming here. Why? We don't preach a different gospel than anybody else. We preach that salvation is by faith, not by works.

We got a trust in Christ. He paid the price for all our sins. In that way it's the same.

But we preach repentance. We explain what sin is. You can't turn away from sin until you know what sin is.

Supposing you go to a strange group of people who've never read the Bible and tell them turn from sin. They don't understand what sin is. You go to some headhunters, they don't even think chopping off somebody's head is sin.

So unless sin is explained, nobody knows what turning away from sin is. And that has been the problem with a lot of preaching in Christendom. And that's why, because Christendom has neglected the message of John the Baptist, we have in many many cases people who imagine they are born again who are not really born again.

I've often thought of the words of Jesus to the Pharisees who sent their preachers all over the world, we read in Matthew 23, anyway around the Mediterranean. And he said you people cross land and sea in order to make one convert. And when you convert that person, he becomes twofold a child of hell than yourself.

How does a person become a twofold a child of hell? Everybody is all a single child of hell to start with. He becomes double a child of hell and I fear, I fear that is the condition of some people sitting here. When you

think you're born again, you're not really born again.

That's how a person becomes twofold a child of hell. Now there are lots of people in the world who don't even imagine they are born again. Well they are single children of hell.

The twofold children of hell are mostly found in churches that preach salvation without repentance. So wherever you find a church that preaches about being born again, without the message of John the Baptist to turn from sin, change your attitude towards sin, there's a great danger of a lot of people sitting there who are not really born again who imagine they are. The I've made you a watchman.

If you see the enemy coming and you don't blow the trumpet and the enemy comes and kills God's people, I will require their blood at your hand. But if you warn them, if you blow the trumpet and they still don't turn, then they're responsible, not you. That's the word of the Lord spoken to my heart many a time.

Your responsibility is not to take people to heaven, but your responsibility is to tell people the way there, the importance of repentance. If you blow the trumpet, you explain to people. There are some times I've gone up to people and told them, I don't think you're really saved.

And I'll tell you honestly, a lot of our young people sitting here right now, your children, they're not saved. It's alright if they are three or four years old. I'm talking about the teenagers.

And if you think that the Sunday school is supposed to bring them to Christ, you're wrong. If you think the young people's meeting is supposed to bring them to Christ, you're wrong. The Bible says, fathers, bring up your children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord.

That responsibility is not the Sunday schools. It's not the young people's. It is the father's.

Now, then who is the Sunday school for? The Sunday school is for children whose fathers are not converted. Who is the young people's meeting for? The young people's meeting is for those whose parents are non-Christians, not for those whose parents are Christians. If you are a father and you're a member of this church and your child goes to hell, I want to tell you the responsibility is 100% on you.

It's not on the Sunday school. It's not on the young people. And you have to take that responsibility.

It's no use going to the elders and say, do something, have some young people's meeting for my son. What do you mean have some young people's meeting for your son? I've heard people say that. People who were never interested in young people's meetings when their sons were two years old and who themselves could have taken some interest for young people when they were young, but not interested at all.

And now when their children are teenagers, they say, what are we doing for the young people? What did you do for the young people, brother, when your children were two years old? There were young people here. It's your responsibility. I want to put it squarely on your shoulder.

I want to blow the trumpet so that none of you ever think that it's the church's responsibility to bring your children to Christ. It is you as parents who've got to bring your children to Christ. And if you have failed in doing that, you need to fall on your face before God and say, God, there's something wrong with me as a father, something wrong with me as a mother, something wrong with me as parents.

Everything that's happening in the world around us today points to the fact that Christ is coming soon. I want to be ready. I don't want a single one of my children to be lost.

And not only that, I don't even want a single one of my children not to be a disciple of Jesus. I want them in their generation to lead other people to Christ. Do you have that burden? I mean, to get your children saved and go to heaven is the bare minimum.

That's like saying, I managed to put my children in the kindergarten. How many of you are happy if your children managed to get into the kindergarten? Is that all you want, your children's education? Or do you want your children to go on from kindergarten to get a degree, perhaps, as to be a disciple of Jesus spiritually? And don't you want them to get a job to support themselves? That means spiritually leading other people to Christ. That's what we should desire for our children.

We should not be happy merely, oh, my children are saved. You know, I'll tell you something. I want to say that very straight.

If you are satisfied, my children have accepted the Lord, they're saved. I tell you the chances are, please listen to me, they'll be lost. I've seen enough people who are just crossed the border and sitting on the border, who you see them five years later, they've gone back to the other side of the border.

It's true. Don't be satisfied that your children have accepted the Lord and just crossed the border. Make sure they are way away from the border.

They become disciples of Jesus and are following him. There's no danger of their being lost. And whose responsibility is it to exhort their children to be disciples? My children are all in their 30s.

But even today, I write to them almost every week, urging them wholeheartedly to turn from sin, to be disciples of Jesus. I don't care if they're halfway around the world. I tell them that.

Do you do that to your children? It's the father's responsibility to proclaim the message of John the Baptist to the children. Turn from sin. Change your attitude to sin.

Do not love the world. Turn around from the world. And you must know the condition of your children.

You must know what their spiritual condition is. And you must pray for them. Pray that God will restrain them.

Pray that God will break their bones in a road accident, if there's no other way that God can turn them around. How many of you would pray that? I'd pray. If I hear that one of my children is going astray, not following the Lord, I'd even pray God would break their bones in a road accident, so that they'll turn to hell.

Because I know that is nothing compared to going to hell. That's nothing compared to living in the world and glorifying the devil. These things are serious.

I believe we need to take it very much more seriously than we have taken it so far. And that is a word particularly for you and particularly for a lot of parents who've been in CFC for many many years. And those of you parents who are lucky enough to hear this message when your children are two years old, start now.

Start now. Teach them to honor their father and mother. Teach them to respect older people.

Teach them the fear of God right from the beginning. Teach them the seriousness of telling lies. Teach them the seriousness of rebellion.

If you've got daughters, be careful that they don't copy the fashions of the world. Even if you see other young sisters in the church following the fashions of the world, tell your daughters I don't want you to be like them. Yeah, that's your responsibility.

That's what I'd do if I had a daughter. And if she said, but dad, other people in CFC are like that, I say I don't care whether other people in CFC are like that. You're my daughter and you're not going to be like that.

How many of you have the courage to say that? You have to. You don't have to criticize anybody. You don't have to find fault with anybody.

Make sure that your children follow the Lord. You don't have that responsibility for somebody else's children. If somebody else wants their sons and daughters to be worldly, that's their business.

But you make sure that doesn't affect your children. It's so very important. John the Baptist, the reason I say this is because you know John the Baptist came with a particular ministry.

The angel Gabriel said in Luke chapter one to his father before he was born, he said that you're going to have a son and he's going to be filled with the spirit from the moment that he leaves his mother's womb. That means from birth and he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord and he will go, this is Luke 1 17, Luke 1 17, he will go as a forerunner before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah and what's he going to do? What's the ministry of John the Baptist foretold before he was born? He's going to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children. You know that's the ministry of John the Baptist.

To get the fathers to take it more seriously with the bringing up of their children. Instead of just going to meetings and taking the children to the meetings, he's going to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children to be more interested in their children and not just to be occupied with making money and a lot of other things in the world and he's going to turn the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, the attitude of the righteous. He's going to change these disobedient people to have a different attitude towards sin which is the attitude of the righteous.

You know that's when we know we have really repented. Have you repented? It's not too late. Christ has not yet come.

There's still hope. The day of grace is still there. It's time for us to repent.

Do you know what was the Lord's last message to the churches? The last message of the Lord in the Bible to the churches. Revelation 2 and 3. Repent, repent, repent. Five times.

Repent, repent, repent, repent. Churches need to repent. Do you know what is the Lord's last message to the elders of churches? To five of the elders in Revelation 2 and 3. Repent, repent, repent, repent.

I have regular elders meetings with all our 70-80 elders in our churches and that's what I preach to them. Repent, repent. Some listen to me, some don't.

Yeah, I have to tell you some don't. And I see the result in those who don't. I don't do anything.

It's God's church, not mine. But I see the result in them when they don't repent, when they don't judge themselves in secret, when they think everything is all right in a little while, their nakedness becomes manifest to everybody. They themselves are to hang their head in shame.

Elders of churches. So with God there's no respect of persons. I'm not a favorite of God, neither are you.

God loves all of us equally and the laws of God are the same. If I jump off the roof of this building, I'll fall. The law of gravity applies to me and if I exalt myself in pride, God will resist me.

Just like the law of gravity. It doesn't make a difference who you are. God resists the proud.

So it's good for us to hear these words and to humble ourselves. In Matthew chapter 3, there's another thing that John the Baptist preached. He said, I'm only baptizing with water, but there's one coming after me.

This is Matthew 3 and verse 11. I baptize you with water for repentance. He would not baptize people if they didn't show some evidence of repentance.

Some people came to him for baptism and he told them, verse 8, you better bear fruit in keeping with repentance. I'm not going to baptize you. Today a whole lot of people are baptized who haven't repented.

That's another problem in today's Christendom. As for me, he says, I baptize you with water for repentance, but now there's someone coming after me whose shoelaces I'm not fit to open. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

There is a baptism in water. There's a baptism in fire. There's a second promise in the New Testament.

First one is, he will save his people from their sins, Matthew 1.21. The other is here in Matthew 3.11. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, I believe that if born again Christians who were so eager to be baptized in water would be just as eager to be baptized in fire, boy, we would have a different type of church. I see around the world a lot of born again Christians who are so eager to be baptized in water.

We're not eager to be baptized in fire. I see fathers who are very eager to see their children as they grow up. I hope my son and daughter will be baptized in water and you'll get a sense of satisfaction.

My child has taken baptism. It's almost as though a certificate. Your child will definitely go to heaven.

Rubbish. If you parents were just as eager that your water baptized son or daughter would also be baptized in fire, perhaps you might have had a different type of son or daughter. How many of you can say honestly, I'm eager.

My children are baptized in water and baptized in fire. Baptism in water is easy. You just go to a man.

He just dips you. We baptized a lot of people here who we discovered later on are not even saved. We thought they were.

I think I myself have baptized people like that. Philip baptized people in Acts chapter 8 who later on we discovered were not saved. But the Holy Spirit, Jesus never baptizes anybody in fire.

He's not saved. I'll tell you that. He's never made one mistake.

Throughout the world every preacher has probably made mistakes in baptizing people in water. We're not really saved. We pass the bread at the Lord's table and I'm absolutely convinced without a shadow of doubt that number of people who break bread on Sundays in this church are not saved.

I'm convinced. I don't stop them because I don't know. The Bible says that a man examined himself.

We warn people if they don't take it seriously that's up to them. But if only, if only those people who are so eager to take part in the Lord's table and who never miss the Sunday as the Lord's table and who are so eager to come to the elders and say can I take part in the Lord's table. If only they were so eager to go to Jesus and say Lord baptize me in fire.

Boy their lives would have been different. Baptism means an immersion. We don't believe in sprinkling.

Baptism is a word which is a Greek word which means immersion. We immerse in water but like John the Baptist said I can only immerse you in water. There's another one who immerses in fire.

Don't come to me for the baptism in fire. Don't come to me and say brother please lay your hands on my head. I'm sorry I can't baptize you in fire.

I can baptize you in water no problem. But if you wanted the baptism in fire you got to go to Jesus. He's the baptizer in fire.

He's the only one who baptizes in fire, who immerses in fire. I want to tell you dear brothers and sisters that is what we all desperately need. That was the message of John the Baptist.

That is what we need to hear in these days as a preparation for the second coming of Christ. What is the preparation for the second coming of Christ? Repent. Fathers turn your hearts to the children.

Let's come to Jesus to be baptized in fire. This is what John the Baptist preached. That's what we need to preach because we it's no use saying we're approaching the last days if we don't preach the message of John the Baptist.

You know this quotation I just read to you from Luke chapter 1 where John the Baptist before his birth, his father was told that he would go in the spirit and power of Elijah. His father Zachariah was very well versed in the scriptures and he knew what that meant. I mean you may not have known what it meant but he knew what it meant because that was the last promise in the Old Testament.

Let me turn you to the last promise in the Old Testament in Malachi chapter 4. Malachi 4 we read in verse 5. The Lord says I am going to send you, this is the promise, the last promise in the Old Testament, I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and when the hearts of the children, when the hearts of the fathers, when the fathers take the initiative and realize it's their responsibility, don't put the responsibility on the mothers, when the fathers in the church realize it's their responsibility to turn their hearts to take the matters of their children seriously, then and only then will the children also turn to the God of their fathers. But if the fathers are lazy and careless and think everything is okay because my son's coming to the meeting, then the children will be worldly wayward and will not turn to the Lord.

But he will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children, the hearts of the children to the fathers, otherwise I will come and smite the earth with a curse. But when John the Baptist came in that spirit, Jesus

said concerning him, we saw this once before, that if you receive him, Matthew chapter 11, I want to He told the Jewish people, if you are willing to accept John the Baptist, he was talking about John the Baptist in verse 12. You're referring to the whole section, he was talking about John the Baptist.

He said, if you accept John, if you Jewish people accept John the Baptist as the fulfillment of that Old Testament prophecy from your prophet Malachi, that this is the Elijah to come, then he is the Elijah to come. But did the Jewish people accept him? No. They killed him and they killed the one he foretold about, Jesus.

So that prophecy in Malachi has not yet been fulfilled because they didn't. And then when we go back to Malachi, we see that the prophet Elijah is to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. The great and terrible day of the Lord was not the first coming of Christ.

There he came in grace. When he comes a second time, that will be the great and terrible day of the Lord when he comes in judgment. And just before he comes in judgment, he said, I'm going to send Elijah the prophet.

And we know that John the Baptist was not actually Elijah. Elijah had gone up to heaven. There's no transmigration of souls.

What the Lord meant was somebody who comes in the spirit of Elijah. So John the Baptist was Elijah in this sense that he came in the spirit of Elijah. He was a completely distinct individual from Elijah who lived 700 years before him.

But he came in the spirit of Elijah. And it's the same thing that's going to happen in the last days. There's going to be, I believe more than one, the spirit of Elijah.

Because it was all right to have one Elijah for a small nation like Israel. But when you think of the whole world and seven billion people, one Elijah won't do. We need many people in the body of Christ who come with the spirit of Elijah.

Prophets, preachers, preaching of the spirit of Elijah. I believe we need thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands in the last days of people who will proclaim the message of Elijah and the message of John the Baptist. Repent.

Fathers, turn your hearts to your children and come to Jesus to be baptized in fire. Elijah too was a prophet of fire, you know. The way he proved to Israel that Jehovah was the true God.

You know on the Mount, on Mount Carmel when he stood with 450 false prophets of Baal. And I want you to know one thing. Those 450 prophets of Baal were all descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They were not strangers. They were nominal Jews, like we talked today about nominal Christians. Just like the Pharisees in Jesus' time were descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And a lot of born-again people today, who think they are born again, who are the prophets of Baal, in Christendom today. See the equivalent of Baal today is money. Why do I say that? Because Elijah stood on Mount Carmel and said, choose whom you want to serve, Jehovah or Baal.

You can't serve both. And Jesus came and said in Luke 16 13, you can't serve God and money. Same thing, what Elijah said.

That's why I know that the New Testament equivalent of Baal is money. Now you may think, how in the world did those Old Testament people imagine that they could serve Jehovah and Baal? That's crazy, isn't it? It's very easy to look back at the failures of people in another generation and say, how in the world didn't they see it? We think of people who lived before Martin Luther's time and say, how in the world couldn't they see in the Bible that salvation is by faith and not by works? And it's not by putting money into some church offering box that your soul goes to heaven. How in the world did people get that crazy idea? It's easy to see the fault of another generation.

How in the world did people in Elijah's time think you could serve Jehovah and Baal? Love Jehovah and love Baal. Let's apply it to our time. Today, as I said, Jesus said the equivalent of Jehovah and Baal are God and money.

Let me ask honestly, do you think there are Christians in the world who love Christ and also love money? Who follow up to Christ, follow up to money? Who value Jesus and also value money? Who love Jesus and love money? Who serve Jesus and serve money? Forget all the other Christians in the world. Ask yourself, do you love Jesus and money? You got to be honest there. Then you can understand how those people believed they could love Jehovah and Baal, how they could serve Jehovah and Baal.

We're doing the same thing. I've seen numerous people. I found it in my own life in my younger days.

I didn't have to look far. A false preaching of the gospel has made so many Christians imagine that you can love Jesus and love money at the same time. I'm not talking about using money.

Jesus used money, but he never loved it. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that money is the root of all evil. Money does a lot of good.

A lot of the gospel preaching is due to money. Poor people, the Bible speaks about helping the poor with money. There's nothing wrong in that.

It's the love of money that's the root of all evil. I don't know how many of you have read that in your Bible. The love of money is the root of all evil.

Do you know that every child of Adam has it in their flesh? If any of you think you don't have it in your flesh, you're fooling yourself. Of all the sick people in the world, the most sick are those who don't know they are sick. If you know that you're sick, you seek to be free from it.

I've never heard of a person who knows he's got cancer and doesn't want to be free from it. I've known of a lot of people who had cancer and never knew it for two, three years till suddenly they went for a scan and discovered they've got cancer. And the doctor says you had it for three years.

Have you ever gone before the Lord and the Lord told you you've had the love of money in your heart for 25 years? No, you've never had it for 25 years. Ever since you were converted. Have you ever heard the Lord tell you that? Or you never heard it or you imagine the moment you said those magic words, Lord Jesus come into my heart, love of money disappeared from your heart.

No, it's not like that. Let's face up and be honest. Or have you imagined that it's only the rich people who earn a lot of money who are lovers of money? Show me one beggar in Bangalore who doesn't love money.

I've never found one. The other poorest people in the city, they all love money. And you go to the richest people in the city, they love money too.

So where does the love of money reside in the hearts of poor people or rich people? I'll tell you, if you're a child of Adam, it is there in you. And I thank God for the day when I recognized it and said, Lord, I cannot serve Jehovah and Baal. I cannot serve Christ in money.

I cannot love God in money. I will fool myself if I think I can serve one God one day, Jehovah one day and Baal another day and Jehovah one day and Baal another day. No, I have to be free.

That's what Jesus told the rich young ruler. You've got so many good qualities. You want to serve the true God, but you love money too.

You can't. You can't be my disciple. We got to see that brothers and sisters.

We've got to learn that there must be only one God in our life. There are many people from non-Christian religions who would be willing to accept Christ because they already have many gods and they just add one more. Christ is one more.

And very often we have to tell them, no, it's not enough. You have to forsake the others and accept Christ. You can't have Christ plus the others.

That's exactly what we have to say to many people who imagine they are born again. You can't have Christ plus money. You can't have Christ plus Allah or Christ plus Krishna.

I mean, if somebody chooses to worship the other gods, fine, but that's their choice. If somebody wants to worship Allah, fine. If somebody wants to worship Rama or Krishna, fine, or Buddha, fine.

But you can't have Christ plus that. That's all I say. If somebody wants to worship money, fine, but you can't have Christ plus that.

I mean, that's the gospel we've all understood, but have we applied it to ourselves? It's one of the greatest hidden idols among born-again Christians. And so, what does it mean to be baptized in fire? Right from the beginning of time. You know, there was no fire that we read of in the Bible until sin came into the world.

We read in Genesis chapter 2, chapter 3, sorry, God is a consuming fire. But Adam could walk with him the very first day he was created and fellowship with him. It's amazing.

Adam could fellowship with a God who was a consuming fire, but a day came when he sinned. And then we read in Genesis 3, that when God put Adam out of the garden of Eden, he put, verse 24, he drove the man out, Genesis 3, 24. And at the east, in the garden of Eden, he stationed a cherubim, some type of angel, with a sword of fire.

Not just a sword. I mean, a sword itself is pretty dangerous, but a sword of fire, guarding the tree of life. There were two trees mentioned in the garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge.

And it's very interesting that God put a flaming sword only in front of the tree of life. There is no flaming sword around the tree of knowledge. Here was a flaming sword with a cherubim, then went round and round and round and round, guarding every way to the tree of life.

If you want to go to the tree of knowledge, there's no sword there, there's no fire there. Anybody can go and partake of it. You know the spiritual application of it? When you come to the Bible, if you come to it as a tree of knowledge, where you want Bible knowledge, it's a great eagerness for Bible study these days.

And people think they are spiritual, because they like Bible study. There are many people who told me around the world, they like to hear our Bible studies. There are two ways you can approach God's word, as a tree of knowledge or a tree of life.

That's up to you. The Pharisees approached it as a tree of knowledge, and they had fantastic knowledge. And when you come to the Bible as a tree of knowledge, there's no sword that has to fall on your self-life.

There's no fire that has to burn up your self-life. You can just increase in knowledge and your head can ooze with Bible knowledge. You can become a professor in a Bible school and be the most selfish, unconverted, godless person in the universe.

You know it's possible. And the greatest example is the devil, who knows the Bible better than anybody else. He could even quote scripture to Jesus in the wilderness.

Imagine knowing the Bible so well, that you pick out the right verse out of all those verses in the Old Testament to quote to Jesus. He really knew the scriptures, the devil. And it's very easy for us brothers and sisters to come to meetings like this and to increase in knowledge.

You know in many places I travel, I find many people eagerly take down notes. That's good if the reason is to read those notes again and to remind themselves, maybe I didn't get everything in the meeting. Or they listen to the CD again, very good.

Or read those notes again so they're reminded again so the message sinks in, excellent. But a lot of people take notes because they are preachers. There are a lot of people who go to our website to listen to messages because they want to preach those sermons.

What are they coming to the website for? For knowledge, not for life. There is a price to be paid for life. The sword has to fall on yourself life, like it fell upon Jesus.

That sword is a two-edged sword. It fell on Jesus and does to fall on us too. Not only Christ was crucified but I am crucified with Christ too.

It's only then that I live. Today a lot of people are seeking to live without being crucified with Christ. Paul said in Galatians I am crucified with Christ and I live and the Son of God lives in me and it was real in his life.

Today a lot of people say the Son of God lives in me but they are not crucified with Christ. I say how in the world did you bypass the sword and the fire and get to the tree of life? That must be a counterfeit tree of life, not the real one. The real one has got a sword and a fire around it.

Paul got to it by being crucified with Christ, by having our old man crucified with him. Today a lot of people say the Son of God lives in me but it's not the Galatians 2 20 root that Paul mentions. It seems to be some other root they took.

Yeah there is another root but it doesn't lead to the real tree of life and that's why a lot of Christians today their Christian life is so unsatisfying. Oh brother I'm depressed, I'm in a bad mood. Yeah you will be

because you went to the wrong tree of life.

If you come to the real tree of life you will not live in depression and gloom and discouragement and defeat. Think of Christians who are born again for 25 years still losing that temper yelling at their wives just like they did 25 years ago. You think such people have come to the tree of life? No sir they have come to the tree of knowledge.

People watching internet pornography and then coming to the church and raising their hands and saying Jesus you're everything to me, rubbish you're everything to me. He's not everything to you. If he were everything to you, you wouldn't go to that internet pornographic site.

You would hate it. You would turn away from it when the devil tempts you to go to some internet pornographic site next time. Think of the devil telling you like this put your head in that toilet bowl and lick it.

And you do it once and the devil says one more time lick it. And you lick it like a fool. You still want to lick it tomorrow, next week, married people, young people.

Well if you want to lick it that's your choice. But I have to tell you the truth. You haven't come to the tree of life.

You know what you need? I'll tell you. You need repentance, and the baptism of fire. It's a fire that was there in front of the tree of life.

You see in Genesis 4, it says here, I like this story because it's the beginning of two streams in the human race, Cain and Abel. And the interesting thing is both streams here started with worshiping the true God. Cain came with an offering to Jehovah.

What does it say in verse 3? It came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to Jehovah the true God. Not to some idol. He was no idol worshiper.

He was no atheist who said there is no God. He was a deeply religious person who took the best of his offerings. He paid his tithes as it were.

And he brought an offering to the true God. And Abel also brought an offering to the true God. And it says here that the Lord, verse 4, the last part, had regard for Abel and for his offering.

The devil has twisted that around with so many modern preachers who teach it like this. In many Bible schools they teach it like this. See the subtle difference how the devil turns it around.

The Lord had respect for Abel's offering because it was a lamb with blood and therefore he had respect for Abel. No, that's not what the Bible says. Read it carefully.

The Bible says the Lord had regard for Abel and therefore for his offering. Is it like that in your Bible? It's the man. This was not a sin offering.

This was an offering of thanksgiving. And in an offering of thanksgiving even in Leviticus, you didn't have to have blood. No, people could bring grain as an offering of thanksgiving.

Cain's ground, it says he was a tiller of ground. He had a fantastic crop and he said I want to give an offering of thanksgiving to God. Here's my offering of grain because that was his job.

And Abel, he was a keeper of sheep. He had his flock multiplied. He said I want to give thanks to God.

He brought an offering from his profession. Both of them brought an offering from their own profession. There was nothing wrong in that.

An offering of thanksgiving to God. Why did God accept one and not the other? It doesn't say God rejected Cain's offering and therefore he rejected Cain. No, read verse five.

He rejected Cain. That's why he rejected his offering. So don't believe everything that you read in theological books in Bible schools and for Bible school professors teach.

It's Abel. And you know what verse in the New Testament this has reference to? What Jesus said. When you come with your offering to God and there you remember that somebody's got, you've hurt somebody and they've got something against you, leave your offering there.

God won't accept it. Even if you say you're born again, you come with the blood of Jesus, God will not accept your offering because you haven't set things right with your wife, you haven't set things right with your neighbor, you haven't set things right with your husband or somebody else. Your offering will not be accepted and God will not have regard for you or your offering.

That's what we read here. He did not have regard for Cain or his offering because there was something that God saw in Cain's heart which was not right. How did Cain know? This is the point I want you to see.

How did Cain know that God had accepted Abel's offering? I believe there was only one way. Fire came from heaven and consumed that offering and Cain was waiting for the fire and nothing happened. The offering was okay but nice grain but no fire.

That is the difference between a religious person and a spiritual person. A religious person comes with his beautiful hands lifted up and prays and all that. There's no real fire.

A spiritual person has got a fire inside, the fire of God. Not something he makes himself. The fire of God comes and burns up his offering and he becomes like the bush in the wilderness burning with fire.

He may be a smaller bush than those big other bushes but I'd rather be a small bush on fire than a big bush without the fire of God. I want you to turn to Leviticus in chapter 9. Leviticus chapter 9 we read Moses and Aaron offered up a burnt offering to God. Now let me tell you a little bit about the burnt offering.

Verse 22 it says here he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offering. Sin offering if you had to shed blood. That's a picture of Christ on the cross but burnt offering was a to God and the way God accepted a burnt offering we read is in verse 24.

Fire came from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering. That's the only way you know that God's accepted it. The burnt offering if it was a bullock they had to cut it up into pieces the priest and to put every piece.

Now picture this in your mind. A priest is cutting a bullock and putting it on the altar and he leaves one leg behind. He said I think I'll take it home and eat it.

No fire and he prays and prays and prays and prays no fire because there's something he has withheld for himself and that's exactly the reason why there's no fire in the lives of many Christians. They put an offering but everything is not there and the Lord who sees everybody's heart says I can see something in your life not yielded. You can pray till eternity there'll be no fire.

They had to put every piece on the altar and once the last piece was laid there there was no delay. Fire. You know a lot of people are waiting for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

They might as well wait a hundred years because it cannot come because you got to wait. God is the one who's waiting for the last piece to be put on the altar. I remember one preacher who was seeking for the baptism of fire and he thought he had laid everything on the altar.

He's waiting waiting waiting nothing happened till the Lord told him you want the baptism of fire to become a more famous preacher right? You won't get it. Then he discovered as God showed him that there was a lust in his heart to be like D.L. Moody or Charles Finney or someone like that who was ministry was changed when they were baptized in fire or like somebody else they heard of and he laid it on the altar and God met with him immediately. You know the other day the Lord spoke to me through a verse I just like to share it with you.

It's in the message translation of Matthew chapter 7 and verse 23 which the Lord speaks to those whom he sends away in the day of judgment. You know I will declare to them Matthew 7 23 I never knew you depart from me you who practice lawlessness and the message bible says do you know what I'm going to say to such people in the last day you missed the boat listen to this all you did was use me to make yourself important. I tell you it shook me all that you did was use me the Lord says to make yourself important.

You know how many preachers are doing that today using the Lord's name to make themselves important musicians singers to make money to make themselves important to fool people plenty of it turn back to Leviticus chapter 9 we read there the fire fell and wherever the fire falls people are excited it's wonderful to have the fire of God fall but what happens when the true fire of God falls you see Aaron had two sons we read in the next verse Leviticus chapter 10 verse 1 Nadab and Abihu they took their fire pans and put fire in them themselves and offered a strange fire before the Lord that means this was not a fire that came from heaven they produced it themselves to fool people hey fellas here's the fire just like you saw yesterday my dad Aaron bringing the fire down here we brought it to

we are his sons we got it and they had lit the fire themselves you can't play the fool with God like that it says fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them verse 2 God judged them because they produced a strange fire and there's a lot of strange fire in Christendom today the strange fire of emotionalism where people are brought into a meeting and they're great manipulators up there leading the singing and master of ceremonies who know how to manipulate people to whip up their emotions through various ways and songs and certain type of songs and a certain beat on the drums and the guitars to whip them up and whip them up and whip them up and produce what they say is a fire it's not a fire it's a strange fire of emotionalism and there's a lot of it in Christendom today and the

proof of it is these fellows who imagine they got a fire in the meeting they go away from the meeting and commit adultery and lose their temper and watch internet pornography and love money and do everything to prove that they don't have a fire there's the false fire the bible speaks about lying signs and wonders not real signs and wonders Jesus did real miracles most of today's miracles 99% of them are fake I believe in

real miracles I've seen some of them but more 99% of what goes on in the world today is fake false fires fooling gullible people that some miracle has happened when nothing has happened with hypnosis and the techniques of psychology to fool people don't be fooled a lot of preachers today are fooling people with the false fire of psychology let me turn to your verse in the

old testament in jeremiah twice the lord says that in jeremiah chapter 6 and chapter 8 jeremiah chapter 6 and verse 13 let me read this to you from the message translation everyone is after the dishonest dollar or rupee the prophet and the priest everybody they're all after getting money jeremiah 6 verse 13 prophets and priests everyone in between are twisting my words and doctoring the truth changing the truth and they're saying to people verse 14 it's not so bad you'll be fine things are just fine when things are not just fine and they have no shame the lord says to the people verse 16 go and stand at the crossroads and look around for the old road the old way preached by the apostles but they said nothing doing we're not going to go that way well god is patient he sends the message a

second time in jeremiah 8 verse 8 the last part your religious experts have taken you for a ride the last part of verse 9 they know everything except the word of god and again in verse 10 middle everyone is after dishonest money prophets and priests are twisting the words and they're saying in verse 11 it's not so bad you'll be all right but things are not bad but things are not fine they're pretty bad there's false fire all over be careful brothers and sisters don't be fooled i'll tell you some marks of the true fire your self-life will get burnt up fire always reduces things to ashes when the fire felt on that burnt offering there was nothing left it was burnt to ashes completely the fire will bring purity in the inner life and if it doesn't do that you probably got a wrong fire let's

seek god come to jesus be prepared for his second coming ask him to baptize you immerse you in fire let's pray let's bow our heads before god while our heads are bowed in prayer if you can think of one particular area that god has spoken to your heart say lord that's the area where i want to respond and show me the next step if you take the first step the lord will show you the second in a general way you can say yes lord i want this message but it won't work think of one specific area and say lord i want to take that area seriously and then you'll know that you mean business with god that area may be different for each of you may god have mercy on us heavenly father i pray you'll apply the truths we have heard today to the deepest parts of our being change our lives prepare us for the

second coming of christ as we see the world sinking into greater chaos turmoil help us to be a people ready for your coming we pray in jesus name amen

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