

Fiery Trials

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

From my childhood up I have had a very strong dislike for fire. Because trains went up and down the mountain at the backside of our property, sparks from the rails would sometimes ignite fires in the mountain woods. Of course, Dad would make sure that a fire trail was cut between our house and the fire. But it was hard for me to go to sleep with all the worries about the fire on my boyish mind.

Although it is difficult to see any good in fires, if it was not for the heat of forest fires, many seeds in pinecones would never be sown in the forest. The hot temperature matures the seeds, causing them to burst out of the cone onto the ground, producing little seedlings in the charred woods. Beauty will be given for ashes (see Isa. 61:3), for out of the ashes a beautiful new forest will emerge.

The Christian life is filled with the ministry of fiery trials. Yes, we often fail to envision the benefits of conflict, but without pain and sorrow we would never develop a spirit of humility, a sympathetic heart, or a longsuffering attitude. In the school of suffering, we take on the virtues of our Teacher, the Lord Jesus, and a measure of Christ-likeness is manifested in us. Let’s see what is stated in this setting about fiery trials.

Fiery trials are only passing experiences! According to the previous verse, the trials of our pilgrimage only last “for a season” (1:6). As the fire in the woods eventually burns out, so our difficulties ultimately turn to smoke. Times of heaviness do visit us but they do not come to stay. The story of Job reminds us that in His own time, the God over our conflicts will turn our captivity (see Job 42:10).

Fiery trials are very purifying experiences! The “trial” of our faith is likened unto “gold . . . tried with fire.” As the refiner’s fire rids the gold of its dross, so fiery trials purge out the fleshly impurities of our lives. If we properly respond to God’s purposes, we can believe with the patriarch, “But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

Fiery trials are always preparing experiences! We are being prepared for another day, a day when we will receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls (see 1:9). The fiery trials will be behind us and a future with the Lord Jesus will be before us. What a day that will be! Oh, in that day, may we truly be “found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

