

Winnowing and Smelting

His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire (Mt 3:12).

To thresh the grain, they would spread it on an area paved with flat stones, and they would use a team of oxen to drag a large stone wheel or sledge over the grain to loosen the chaff from the kernel. Then with the winnowing fork, they would throw the threshed grain up in the air, and the wind would blow away the chaff, because it has no weight or glory. And what happened to the grain, to what was true and real? It fell down at the winnower's feet.

So that is going to happen, isn't it? It is a prophetic analogy. All who are the chaff, He will burn with fire. They won't burn up. It will actually burn with an *unquenchable* fire — one that never goes out. There are other places that speak of this fire (Mt 13:30; Mal 4:1; Mk 9:43-48).

Who is this talking about? It is an analogy about *people*. Is it talking about people who are in the Community? I've said many times before that our Father is just going to have to throw us all up in the air to see who comes back down and who blows away. I don't know how many have been blown away in the past 30 years. They had no weight or glory. They probably came in for selfish reasons — they just wanted a place to be, or something to eat, or they idealistically wanted to live in community. They thought, "Oh, I like community living," but that doesn't work. There is no weight there, no surrender of the person's life, no receiving of the Holy Spirit, no desiring to please Him or do His will. Those kinds of people actually reduce the temperature of the Body, hindering the purification process that is supposed to be going on all the time.

John the Baptist used the winnowing process as an analogy to give a vivid picture of our Father's judgment. It says in Mt 3:12 that our Master Yahshua will separate those without His glory from the ones with His glory. Jn 17:22 — There are those who have

received His glory and those who have not received His glory. Our Master prayed, “Father give them the glory You have given Me.” Our Master had the highest amount of glory there is. We have to share in that glory. What does it take to share in His glory? We have to share in His suffering (Rom 8:17-18). So if we suffer with Him, we will share in His glory. Suffering purifies us. It is the refining process. All the worthless stuff is burned away, leaving only the true stuff. Right now all the worthless stuff is mixed in with us, but the purifying process will get rid of it little by little as we grow.

1 Jn 3:2 says those who purify themselves will be like our Master, and share in His glory. How do you purify yourself? “Everyone who has this hope [of being like our Master] will purify himself just as He is pure.” Does the hope purify you? No, what purifies you is going through the suffering. We must go through much suffering and many tribulations to enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22). There is no way we can enter the kingdom unless we are purified, and tribulation purifies us. 1 Pet 4:12 says the same.

Unquenchable Fire

Mt 3:12; Lk 3:17 — What does *unquenchable* mean? The fire that never goes out; it is never quenched. It goes on forever and ever. Obviously it is talking about the eternal fire. People who come into the Community and lower the temperature are not building right. They are not giving themselves to what our Father wants us to give ourselves to. They are not being led by the Spirit. “All who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God.”

It says in 1 Jn 3:2, “Beloved, now we are the sons of God.” If you are a son, you have a father, and you are going to receive discipline. You have a father that disciplines you. If you don’t have a father that disciplines you, that means you are not a son. You are something else — a *bastard*, the KJV says.

So *unquenchable* means eternal. But, if we truly have the Holy Spirit, if we’re truly saved, but we are not being purified now, then we are going to be purified in the next age. As someone said to me the other day, “It is really hard, but it is good for me.” She

was really going through a hard time. She had too many things to do, but she said, “It is good for me.” And it is. We are not doing anything else in this age except being prepared for the next age. Our comfort doesn’t matter.

They caught a big rat today in a trap, and they had to take it down to the river to drown it. But it wouldn’t drown. It just kept on suffering and they would raise it up and it was still alive. It is horrible that it had to suffer so much. But it is dead now. What difference did its suffering make? It doesn’t matter whether it suffered, because it is dead. People receiving the death penalty get to eat whatever they want for their last meal. They just “chow down” on that last meal, but when they are dead, what difference does it make whether they had that last pleasure or not? It doesn’t make any difference.

But the suffering we go through makes a lot of difference. It produces an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17). Our “light, momentary affliction” does something far beyond all comparison. It produces the eternal weight of glory. So therefore, the grain doesn’t blow away. The wind doesn’t carry it away, but it falls back down to the winnower’s feet. Our Master is the Winnower, and we have to see to it that we fall down at His feet when we get tossed up in the air. Maybe someday the whole Twelve Tribes will be tossed up in the air, and we will see who comes down and who blows away.

Separating the Good and the Bad

Any time you fish with nets, you catch all kinds of fish. But some fish are inedible; the inedible ones are thrown away. The world doesn’t understand that because they will eat anything. They eat all kinds of fish, but there are only particular kinds of fish that are food. The rest are not food. There are the kinds that are good for us, but we don’t eat the fish that have another purpose besides being eaten by man. The fish that clean the ocean bed are like dross that must be separated from the rest of the catch.

1 Cor 5:6-8 says that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. We know what happened to Christianity. It became a great big blown-up loaf, very light and puffy. It

wasn't heavy. It wasn't weighted with glory. It was just puffed up. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 1 Cor 5:6-8 says we are supposed to keep the feast. So there is going to come a day when we will keep the feasts.

Christianity today is the outcome of just a little leaven that was tolerated in the first century. Paul warned the Corinthians, but they turned right into a fully leavened loaf because they tolerated just a little bit of leaven. A little leaven in a little batch of dough "turned out bad." Look at it today. It is blown up all out of proportion. But we have the New Testament, so we don't have to do what they did. They had the Old Testament, telling what happened in old Israel, but we have both the lessons of old Israel and what happened to the first church. It is written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come. So we have to consider that and not tolerate leaven. Leaven comes in and separates one part of the loaf from the other, into denominations.

Destroying the Body

So the dross is those people who as 1 Cor 3:16-17 destroy the Body. They are destroyers, as it says in Isa 49:17; they are not builders. Builders are sons. And then the sons, the builders, have to compensate for what the destroyers did. They have to work twice as hard as some of the lazy brothers and sisters. It is just as it was in the slave days. If one slave was lazy then another slave would have to make up for the lazy slave wasn't doing. Therefore, when they whipped the lazy slave, the other slave was happy because then the lazy one would start working. A lot of times that is what happens. That is just how it is. Certainly masters didn't beat their slaves unless they totally deserved it. That is the last thing they wanted to do, for they paid dearly for those slaves, and they loved them. They all worked together as a community.

Rejected Silver

There are so many verses in the Old Testament that speak of dross, chaff, and things of that nature. Those are the corrupters. Jer 6:28-30 is speaking about the

corrupters, those who destroy. Do you know how silver is refined? Lead served as an oxidizing agent to remove the dross in refining silver. As the metals are heated in a crucible, the lead oxidizes and carries off the alloy, leaving the pure silver. So what happened here in Jer 6:28-30? The lead was consumed but couldn't draw out the alloys. So the dross was not removed and therefore the silver was rejected as refractory, having resisted the refining process.

So our Father has had to reject certain people. He doesn't want to just keep the heat on someone when there is no response, no purification, no increase from the suffering. Discipline has a purpose. Our Father disciplines the son that He loves.

Our Father had to reject those whose iniquities were not put under our Master's feet, for Him to be able to return to the earth. Someone is going to have to put His enemies under His feet. And it can't just be one or two people. We have all of His enemies right here in the Body. But our Master Yahshua is in us, and we have to put His enemies under His feet. You have your own particular kind, and some of us have the same ones, but together we have all of them. When we totally put them under His feet, we are going to be totally one. We are going to love one another and we are going to be purified silver — no more dross. We will be a pure vessel, fit for the Master's table.

"Rejected silver they are called, for the Yahweh has rejected them." (Jer 6:30)

We could say it is the Christians or we could say it is the Jews. Certainly old Israel was rejected (Isa 1:22; Mt 21:43), and what the first church became was rejected. They had become so lukewarm that there was no more purification going on, since their first love left. "Your silver has become dross," it says in Isa 1:22. Silver is valuable only after all the impurities have been removed.

Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel; take away the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness. (Pr 25:4-5)

The throne of our Master Yahshua cannot be established until the refining is all done. Shepherds, leaders, and elders, take notice of Pr 27:23. Be diligent to know the condition of your flocks. Pr 26:23 and Mt 23:27 say the same thing. No amount of painting on the outside changes the rotten interior. Our Master can't come back "until the inside is like the outside and the outside is like the inside." You can shine up the outside all you want, but if the inside is rotten, it's just a white-washed tomb, as our Master called it (Mt 23:27).

Our Father is not through with us yet. He is just beginning that work in us. There is more that He has to do in me and in you. He is more powerful than the enemy. That is why we call upon His name.

1 Pet 4:12-19 — The ordeals and trials force us into a more perfect relationship with our Master. Sometimes we have to have crisis in our lives and fall into temptation to show us where we are really at, so that we will learn to maintain our communion with Him. It is the fiery ordeals and trials that force us all into a more perfect relationship with our Master.

Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are dross of silver. Therefore thus says the Sovereign: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am Yahweh; I have poured out my wrath upon you. (Eze 22:18-22)

The dross is refuse. Where does the word *refuse* come from? You are *refused* entrance into the kingdom. You are not worthy of our Master. We are in the process of being made worthy. If you make just a little progress every day, then you are doing well. You don't have to think you need to be totally changed by tomorrow. There are many things we have to overcome, but as long as we are making one step at a time, that is

what pleases our Father. That is why He put us here on earth in the Body of Messiah. So don't give up. Don't let the enemy say you're worthless, you're a hopeless case, you'll never make it. That is what he is saying to some of us right now, if we listen, and we don't put our helmet on.

So dross is the refuse from impure metals, which is separated by the process of smelting (Pr 25:4). Refuse is waste material, refused entrance into the kingdom. When the smelting process is over, it is all out (Mal 3:2-3). The dross is in the Body and it takes time to get it out through the smelting process.

We *attract* people by the gospel and we *extract* people by the gospel. People who are not drawn to our Master will find the crucible too hot. They don't like to hear the gospel; it is the stench of death to them (2 Cor 2:16). So the gospel extracts, but it also attracts. It attracts those who are willing to do our Father's will. No one can come to our Master unless the Father draws them through what they see and hear.

So that is a little bit about the smelting process. We are put into certain situations to reveal what is in us (Dt 8:2). Maybe you haven't been put there yet, but the day will come when you are put in certain places and someone will tell you to do this or go there and something will start going on in you. "I don't want to do that; I want to do this." Well, maybe our Father wants you to do that in order to get something out of you. If you do just what you want to do, it won't come out.

The day will come when you are adjusted into your proper place, according to your gifting. But that is after you are a little bit purified. Our Father doesn't want you to be a teacher until you have gone through the fire to some degree. A leader can't be corrupt. That is why it says, "Don't lay hands on an elder too soon," or you might share in something you don't want to share in.

Neshaf — Sometimes the circumstances are such that you just wonder what is happening to you. But then you see that it is just that blowing when you're thrown up, and up, and up... and you wonder if you are ever going to come down. Then you see that there are some parts of you that

are never going to come down — they need to be blown away as chaff. But it is good, because our Father shows us where we are at. He shows us what we have to work with, and where the dross is.

The destroyers say that the fire is too hot, and then they bring the temperature down, so that it doesn't even do the work in the people that want to be builders.

Migdalah bat Zerubbabel — We heard one time that when you stir the dross back into the silver, it becomes harder to separate it the next time you try. Eventually you cannot even remove the dross from the silver. So if we see things in our lives and we pretend it is not dross and stir it back in, then the next time it comes up it will be harder for us to see it. It made me want to be sharp and not stir the things back in that come out of my life.

Those who try to justify or defend themselves are the ones who are going to end up in that unquenchable fire. We have to give ourselves to the purifying process now. A lot of people, when they're corrected, say, "What about you?" They don't take it to themselves. They throw it back on others.

ha-êmeq — It should really be encouraging for the young disciples to know that there is a prophecy in Malachi that in these days our Master will come as a refiner of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi so they will be free of these things (Mal 3:2-3). Like a cook who knows how hot the fire should be to do what he wants it to do, our Father knows how hot to make the fire to purify His people.

We are so busy trying to organize the schedules and make everything perfect, but sure enough, for over thirty years now it has been that everything doesn't work out exactly right. Community is hard. It is just that way. He knows just how hot to make it in order to burn up our iniquities.

But there is always something that is trying to bring the temperature of the Body down so that we are just a bunch of half-baked potatoes. That is why, if we come together and everyone just kind of stands there, and then we say, "Okay, let's pray," you feel so terrible. It is because He doesn't want us to be that way. The fire has to be in our midst to be who we are.

Our Father will even lead us into temptation to show us where we are at, so that we can change. It is not the end of the road for us. I know that He is faithful if we just call on His name, "Yahshua!" He will come to you when you just feel as if it is the end. It is all over, but then you say, "Save me, Yahshua!" and He is faithful to come to you at that moment.

Because He is not really interested in burning us up; He is interested in saving us. And that is what He will do; that is what His name is.

Who does Yahweh hate?

Jer 6:28 — “They are all stubbornly rebellious, going about a slanderers...” They are tale-bearers, those who talk about people and spread discord. They are “bronze and iron” because that is the alloy that needs to be removed from the silver. Pr 6:16-19 — There are six things that God hates, and the seventh is an abomination — that is the one who spreads discord. Jer 6:28-29 — “They are all corrupters. The bellows blow fiercely and the lead is consumed by the fire. In vain the refining goes on, for the wicked are not removed...” They take over, as a matter of fact. And the little overcomers don’t know what to do, and they are sent away from the community (3 Jn 1:10).

Jer 6:30 — “Rejected silver they are called, for Yahweh has rejected them.” It was hard for our Father to have to do this.