

## The Refiner's Fire

Ezekiel 22: 17-30

7/27/03

### Intro

- Bill Ritchie here on July 30th.

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Jerusalem is about to go through a very difficult trial, they will be under siege for almost 1 ½ years. This will be the greatest trial the city has ever endured.

Here, God explains His purpose in doing so. He says that the city will be in the “refiner’s fire.”

There are many times when we go through trials and difficulties of many kinds – God also allows us to go through the refiner’s fire as well.

### **In these verses, we will learn insights from the “refiner’s fire.”**

#### **I. It takes heat to remove dross**

##### A. There are several types of dross

- BRONZE – “brazen face” – hard, “they don’t know how to blush
- TIN – In Hebrew, “substitute or alloy” (mixed with copper to make bronze)
- IRON –hard, used in making weapons and tools
- LEAD – soft and heavy “plumbum” we get the word, “plumber” from it. Actually poisonous.

**Jeremiah 6:28-29 – the rebellious are like these metals.**

##### B. Heat softens and separates

- Why doesn’t God just make life easy?

- It’s even hotter of God blows on it (verse 21)
- God is softening our hearts
- And separating the dross to **purify**.

**Malachi 3:1-3** - refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap

##### C. Sometimes the pot is on “simmer”

- The siege of Jerusalem lasted 18 months
- Sometimes God allows us to stay in our problems a lot longer than we would like
- “I’ve learned that lesson, let’s get on with it.”

**Illus** – Paul asked three times for the thorn in the flesh to be removed.

**II Corinthians 12: 9-10**, “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly therefore, I would rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me...for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

#### **II. Silver is the life refined by God**

##### A. It begins with a teachable heart

- Look for what God wants us to learn in trials
- Don’t “kick against the goads.”

**Psalm 32: 8-9**, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be like the horse or as the mule which has no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check.”

B. Knowing the distinction of holy and not

Vs 26

- Silver and dross are useless when mixed.
- God wants us to understand the difference between good and evil

**Hebrews 5:14**, “Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

C. Teaching the difference to others

Vs 26

- God brought this against them that they would not teach others what was holy and what was not
- God desires to see in us a commitment to train others in the ways of God

**I Samuel 2:12**, “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men: they did not know the LORD.”

**III. The godly will “stand in the gap”**

Vs 30 – God was searching for a man among them...

A. God is looking for those who will stand

- I want God to be able to find what he is looking for in us.

**II Chronicles 16:9**, “The eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout the whole earth, in order to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are completely His.”

B. Who will build up the wall

- The wall was there to separate the people of God from the world.

**Ezekiel 13:5**, “You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the Lord.”

**Isaiah 58:12**, “And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.”

C. Who will stand in the gap

- God is looking for those who will be as Moses and stood in the gap
- To make intercession for others who are lost

**Illus – Moses would stand in behalf of the people asking for mercy.**

- God wants to find us praying for those who are lost.

Conclusion

**God is searching even today for those who look to God in times of trouble and who grow in stature, even as those who “stand in the gap.”**