

The Wednesday Word, February 5, 2020: Jesus The Baptiser!

Matthew 3:11-12

"I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

How is it possible that a mere carpenter from Nazareth will baptise people with the Holy Ghost and fire? Only God can pour Himself out and baptise with the Holy Ghost! The Holy Spirit is God, not an influence of God. Isaiah 44:3 makes this clear. In that verse, Yahweh says, *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:"*

In the light of this scripture, how does anyone sincerely believe that Jesus was merely a man? For Him to be the Baptiser in the Holy Ghost, the giver of salvation, means that He is God! Furthermore, in this instance, it should also be noted that Jesus is not making this claim for Himself. Rather, it is John the Baptist who is declaring the divine authority of Christ. Did John get it wrong? Was he in error? No indeed! Consider these words, *"Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: and **all things** that John spoke of this man (Jesus) were true"* John 10:28-31. QED.

According to our scripture, Jesus is also to baptise with fire, this is in sharp contrast to being baptised with the Holy Ghost. While the saved are described as being baptised with the Holy Ghost, the damned will be, by contrast, baptised with the fire of the wrath of God. And who is responsible for both these baptisms? A carpenter? A good man? A moral teacher? No! Only God can take responsibility for this kind of action and for John to say of Jesus, He will baptise with the Holy Ghost and fire is to say that Jesus is God.

Notice also that Christ will thoroughly purge his floor. It is His floor! Notice also that He will gather His wheat, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. These words cannot be misunderstood. They contain a recognition of Christ's deity, power, ownership and lordship. The floor, the wheat, the garner and the chaff are all His own property. This is no mere man that John is talking about. According to the commentator Barnes,

"By the floor, here, is represented the Jewish people. By the wheat, the righteous, or the people of God. By the chaff, the wicked. They are often represented as being driven away like chaff before the wind, Job 21:18; Psalms 1:4; Isaiah 17:13; Hosea 13:13. They are also represented as chaff which the fire consumes, Isaiah 5:24. This image is often used to express judgments. Isaiah 41:15, "Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff."
Albert Barnes: Commentary on the New Testament

In our passage, (Matthew 3:11-12), John the Baptist clearly gives us an acknowledgement of Christ's deity. To watch Jesus at work is to watch God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

And that's the Gospel Truth!