

God's Refinery - cont.

Yes, he does! God "refines" us for these good reasons:

- To test our faith (Proverbs 17:3; 27:21; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15)
- To help us comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)
- To make heaven attractive (2 Corinthians 4:16ff)
- To make us learn to trust Him (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- To make us appreciate our blessings in the here and now (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- To remove any sin in our life (James 1:12)

The Refiner's Product

What is the final result of all of this refining? God wants to make us a true follower of Christ who bears the true image of Christ (Romans 8:29). And God wants to make us a fine product that he will put on display one day in his own house – heaven (Revelation 21:27; 22:14-15). Friend, will you stand the heat? Will you pass the test?

- Chris Reeves -

- Word of the Week -

"Firstborn" (Gr. πρωτότοκος) is an adjective describing Jesus (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; etc.), the firstborn in Egypt (Heb. 11:28), and Christians (Heb. 12:23). We are the "church of the firstborn ones". This word refers not simply to place (first), but to preeminence. As Christians, we hold a preeminent place with God. Let's remember that this week.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

God's Refinery

But he knows the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10)

In Bible times, and even today, metallic ore was heated in a pot (or crucible) to a melting point and the metal was extracted (Job 28:1-2; Psalm 12:6; Isaiah 48:10; Jeremiah 6:29; 9:7)

The metal was then heated to a liquid state and the impurities (dross) were skimmed off to bring it to a fine or pure state. This is what is mentioned in Proverbs 25:4-5:

Take away the dross from the silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner. Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

Refined metals were more precious and expensive because it took work to refine them (1 Chronicles 28:18; 29:4; Revelation 1:15; 3:18). In like manner, the refined Christian is precious in the sight of God and man.

The process of refining illustrates God's dealings with his people. God wants his people to be “refined” in the furnace of life and come out the other end pure and faithful to him (Psalm

17:3; 26:2; 66:10; Isaiah 1:22-26; 48:10; Jeremiah 6:27-30; 30; Malachi 3:3). Consider these words found in Zechariah 13:8-9:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God.

The Refiner's Pot

God uses various situations in life to refine us. These situations are like a refiner's pot into which we have been placed. Sometimes God gives us...

- Challenging commands in his word like when he told Abraham to offer up his son Isaac (Genesis 22). Will you obey the challenging commands of God in the New Testament?
- Physical afflictions like he did with Job (Job 23:10). Will you pass through the afflictions of life and remain faithful to God?
- Judgments and punishments for sin like he did with Israel (Isaiah 48:10; Ezekiel

22:17-22). Will you learn from these, humble yourself, and become a better person?

- Controversies and divisions among Christians like he did at Corinth (1 Corinth 11:19). Will you be on the right side of controversy and division (the side of truth) when these come and show that you are approved and faithful?
- Persecutions against the faithful like he did with Israel and New Testament Christians (Daniel 11:35; 12:10). Will you remain faithful as you pass through the fiery trials of persecution? Consider what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:6-7:

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Refiner's Purpose

Why does God test us the way he does? Why does he send “negative” things our way? Does he have a good purpose for all of this? - continued