

Judgment Starts With the House of God

We are living in times of great shaking, of refining and purifying. How should we respond? In the words of the gospel song and the spirit of Isaiah 6, we should say, "Take the coal, touch *my lips*, here I stand." Let the cleansing start with me.

Without question, God is purifying His church, bringing the dross to the surface with the heat of His refiner's fire. It is ugly, painful and grievous.

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Many hearts are shattered; many lives are devastated.

God's children wonder, "Who can we trust? Where do we turn? Is anything we believed real?"

In fact, we are witnessing the hand of God at work. We are witnessing the love of God in action.

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This is a move of the Holy Spirit. This is what happens when the Lord our God draws near. It is intensely difficult, but it is also awe-inspiring.

As the Old Testament prophet Malachi wrote:

"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of

his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years" (Mal. 3:1-4, NIV).

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