



THOSE GLORIOUS FIREWALKERS!

We'd like to share a thought today which may help to explain why God's chosen ones have been going through some of the most difficult spiritual trials and testings of their entire lives. It may also why, in spite of their most ardent prayers for relief, these trials have not just gone away. Obviously, God has had a reason for allowing them to intensify as they have!

Recently, the Lord spoke a word to my heart concerning a brother for whom we had been praying. It was a word which we felt was to be taken positively, as an encouragement from the Lord. Moreover, in the course of the dealing, He made me to know that this word was not only given for this brother personally, but also, in a broader sense, it pertains to ALL who have been called to conform to His glorious image. The Spirit said quite simply to me,

*"I have determined to hold his feet to the fire,
until they look like Mine".*

Immediately following these words, John's description of the resurrected Christ in Rev. 11:5 came to mind... "and His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they had been burned in a furnace... The thought is almost frightening, isn't it?"

Have you ever heard anyone use the age-old idiom of "holding one's feet to the fire" before? What they meant by this was that they were going to keep the pressure on that individual, they were going to give him no rest, they were going to bear down upon him with such force and intensity, that he would finally assume his moral obligations, line up with their desired expectations, conform to a certain standard of conduct or consciousness, etc. It was another way of saying that they were not going to release that person from the heat of intense scrutiny and high expectation, until they saw a change in him. Does this not describe how our Lord is dealing with His children in this hour? Yes, it is true that Jesus loves us just the way we are. And, yes, His love for us is unconditional. But aren't you glad that He loves us so much that He will not leave us in that condition? His highest desire for each of us is that we should

ultimately look like Him; and He will go to any length to make this a reality. Therefore, He holds us in the fire, even when we kick, and scream, and think we've had enough. He knows just what it will take to achieve the objective. And He works incessantly toward that goal, in spite of our objections! He is content that once we share His vision, then we shall understand why it was necessary!

There are several things we might mention about the appearance of Christ's feet; chief of which is the fact that John's description of them was never meant to be taken literally. This should be apparent, since he referred to them as being "like unto...". This shows plainly that he was speaking in a metaphorical sense; he was creating a word-picture in the minds of his readers (and what an excellent picture he gives)!

Secondly, we would add that the mention of His feet speaks figuratively of His walk (which incorporates the consciousness, character, conversation, and conduct expressed or displayed in the sight of men and angels). It's another way of commenting on the expression of His life in general; the demonstration and exhibition of that life, as He makes contact with the earth (realm of humanity).

As many of you know, brass, in biblical symbolism, represents judgment. This is seen by the fact that both the altar and the laver, in the outer court of Moses' tabernacle, were made of brass. And this, of course, was where the disobedience and defilements of the people were dealt with. Sacrifices were offered upon the brazen altar for the sins of the people; while the brazen laver was for the cleansing of the priests. Jesus was the fulfillment of both of these (as well as every other piece of furniture in the tabernacle), in that He took the judgment, and bore the sins of the whole world upon Himself at Calvary. He vicariously absorbed the penalty for all our transgressions, so that we would not have to! Praise God! Because of His virgin birth, because He came into this world without the sinful legacy others were born with (Psa. 51:5), He did what no other human being was qualified to do! But besides that, has it occurred to you lately that Jesus, in order to remain eligible for His all-important role for lo, those thirty-three long years, had to be judged Himself? Perhaps it is time that we reconsidered this fact! Not only during those forty days and nights in the wilderness, but throughout His entire life, He had to be subjected to the extreme fires of testing, not as the Son of God, but as the Son of man, that He might completely be able to identify with mankind, and that He might perfectly fulfill His calling and election. He took the heat like a man, that we might become the sons of God!

While I was reading over this passage from Rev. I :15, I noticed something conveyed in the original Greek, which is almost overlooked when read only from the Authorized version. There is a condition described here, which plainly reveals God's ultimate, eternal purpose for holding not only Christ's feet to the fire, but ours, as well. The word, "burned", as is used in the King James translation, should more accurately be rendered, "glowed" (this is the way it appears in the Greek New Testament). Is there a difference? Most assuredly there is! We know that in order for something to burn, it's composition must be of a combustible nature. But for something to glow (perpetually), it must be of a more enduring substance. Now, both burning and glowing are responses to the fire. And for a short duration, even that which is in the process of being burned may emanate a momentary glow (much the same way a "falling star" shines temporarily, until it burns out). But know ye that in the fulness of time, the fire will at length reveal the true constitution of a thing. Beloved, it is an undeniable fact: the fire cannot be fooled! If the substance is ignitable, it will eventually be reduced to ashes; if it is not, then it will simply be refined to the highest degree of purity. The fire makes manifest the basic make-up of the material, and openly declares its consistency for all the world to see.

Looking again unto Jesus, our Author and Finisher who gives us faith, we see that when our Lord trod upon this earth, He gave us the perfect example of what it is like to have "feet like unto fine brass". Why, He was the greatest "firewalker" that ever lived! For centuries, men in various parts of the world have mystified multitudes of spectators, by walking (or, at least, creating the illusion of walking) upon hot, glowing coals of fire. In fact, in some cultures, a walk among the fiery embers was even required of those who had hopes of being initiated into the ranks of their priesthood. It was looked upon as an act of moral purification. But without fear of contradiction, we can boldly declare unto you that no one ever did it quite like Jesus! You see, He encountered all the trials and temptations common to mankind. He was faced with the same kind of pressures wherewith each of us are familiar. There was no area of His life which escaped the all-searching flame; in no thing was He spared. In fact, we are persuaded that the pressures He encountered were more intense than what any of us might even imagine at this time! Many years ago, the question was posed by wise old Solomon, "Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Prov. 6:28). The answer, up until that time, was a resounding NO! Every man (or woman) who had ever passed through the fiery path of fleshly lusts, trials, or temptations had always come out with "charred feet", so to speak, in one form or another. Every one of them had "flammable" elements in their "soles"; that is, elements which responded poorly to the heat! Oh, they might have been victorious in one situation, only to turn around, and find

themselves "flame-broiled" in another form of testing over which they had no power. We know this to be true, because according to the divine Record, "ALL ha've sinned (missed the mark), and come short of the glory of God" But when Jesus stepped forth on the human scene, He bore an entirely different testimony. We read that He "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15)! It mattered not whether He was being tempted with one of the common sensual allurements which appeal to the natural appetites in man, or whether He was being led along the fiery pathway which passed by the house of that "great harlot", religious Babylon, whose sweet, seductive influences had slain many strong men (Prov. 7:26, 27). Regardless of whether He was walking through one of those challenging natural circumstances, which is generally of a frustrating nature (which had the potential of causing Him to "lose His cool", so to speak), or whether He was being forced to pass through the flaming words and false accusations of His chief critics (whose tongues set on fire the course of nature, being set on fire of hell; James 3:6). ..He always did what was right. He calmly kept His composure! No matter how hot "the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire" made them (Isa. 54:16), and no matter how intense the heat became under His feet, there was absolutely nothing in Him that would ignite! Much to the devil's dismay, Jesus simply would not burn! The flame would not kindle upon Him! Why, He wouldn't even blister! In fact, the hotter the adversary made the trial, the more fervently Christ's feet "glowed"! He radiated with such an intense purity, such indescribable peace, such absolute discipline and self-control, the multitudes were absolutely astonished by Him! They could not help but admire this Man's walk! It was totally above reproach! Ah, beloved, we believe that it was because of this very thing that He had such influence with the people! They understood that what He taught them, He had first walked out Himself! He not only instructed them in the overcoming life; He demonstrated what it was like to have power over the fire! That made all the difference!

The question might be asked: how was it that Christ was able to walk through the midst of such tremendous fires, and remain unsinged? How did He keep from being completely overwhelmed by them? We believe that one of the main reasons was that He stayed focused in the heavenlies! He kept His eye on the Lord of the fire, instead of looking at the fire itself! You see, while His feet were walking out the purposes of God in the earth, His head was "in the heavens" (John 3:31)! He was not the least bit overwhelmed by the fire, because He understood it's origin! He knew from whence it came! We read that "His eyes were like a flame of fire", which, among other things, could be taken to mean that He had a vision of the fire; He knew and understood it's purpose in His life! Unlike Peter, who, while walking on the water took his eyes off the

Lord, and filled them with the wind and waves (thus allowing those agitated waters to engulf him), Christ always stayed above the fire, by beholding the presence of the Father in the midst of it. This was reflected in His eyes! (Furthermore, He understood that satan only operated God's "bellows"; which is to say, the power which he had to "heat up" the coals in the fire was first given to him by God; Rom. 13:1, Job 1:6-12)! This enabled our Lord to walk in full assurance of faith through the most challenging, tempting, and life threatening circumstances ever encountered by man, without flinching, and without being distracted from His goal! He was kept in perfect peace, because His mind was stayed on Him (Isa. 26:3)!

Beloved, what was true of Him can also be true of us! We can have eyes like His; which will, in turn, enable us to have feet like His! This walk is available to us today! We read in I Corinthians 10:13 that "there hath no temptation (trial, testing) taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (tried, tested) above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it". The key-operative line in this passage is that God is faithful. He is in control. He will not allow us to be tested beyond our ability to endure (and, mind you, none of us are going through anything that has not been faced to some degree or another by someone before us). Our God can be trusted in this! He knows our limitations better than we; and when we have reached those limits, He makes a way of escape, that we might bear some more! It should be pointed out that His way is not an evacuation from the fire, or around the fire; it is a way through it! And through it we shall go, until finally we emerge on the other side of our great tribulation, bearing His victorious testimony of peace which passeth understanding!

This is the destiny of those who yield themselves unreservedly to the Lord. Even now, the feet of God's king-priestly company of "firewalkers" are being "conditioned" in the flames of fiery trials and daily tribulation; and even as we speak, a bed of coals heated "seven times hotter" than in any previous generation is being prepared! The stage is being set; the world will be watching! What a breathtaking sight this will be! We need not fear, however, for once He has consumed everything in us that can be burned, and refined the metal of our inner nature to its highest degree of purity, then, regardless of the temperature, we will simply "glow" all the more with the glory of God. Isn't this our real purpose in life, anyway? You see, at such a time, we trust that God will have already taken "the burn" out of the fire for us; and by then, there will be nothing there to threaten us, to make us afraid! (The fire is an enemy to us only so long as there are things in us that respond negatively to it, or as long as

there are things that we are afraid of losing to it. But when we truly get victory over it, it will not matter! The sufferings of this present time, or any time in the future, for that matter, are certainly not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us)! As did our Lord Jesus, we, too, will "glorify the Lord in the fires" by walking in a way that magnifies and radiates His holy name (nature) to the rest of creation! As a prophetic confirmation to these thoughts, Isa. 43:1-2 says, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; THOU ART MINE... when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee". Praise God for the hope of His calling! As we become victorious over every Adamic tendency in us now, we will then be able to stand calmly and triumphantly with the Lamb on a "sea of glass" (which speaks of a transparent walk, having nothing to hide or be embarrassed of) "mingled with fire" (Rev. 15)! Then it shall be said by the inhabitants of the world, "How beautiful are the feet of Him... and how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15)! Our feet will glow like His! Hallelujah!

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