

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11).

We know Jesus through the Bible, or we know him not at all. That is the urgent premise behind LAC's efforts to encourage personal Bible reading and systematic Bible study. We fervently hope that you will--

1. "Stand in the Rain" with us every day as we read through the Bible in three short years. Just go to **lockportalliance.org** and click on the man in the rain.

2. Attend one of these Bible-based classes this week—

"Stand in the Rain Whole-Bible Class"--Sunday at 9:45

"Out of the Salt Shaker and Into the World"--Sunday at 9:45

"Everyday Wisdom for the Average Joe"—Sunday at 9:45

(Contact Franklyn Pfeil—pfeilmail@yahoo.com—with questions or comments.)

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## **"one way or another"**

*I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!* (Luke 12:49-50)

Twice a year, our church has a baptism service. (The next one is on May 15; if you can find your way to Lockport, NY I will be glad to get you wetter than wet!) Those are my favorite services of the year. Weddings, baby dedications, and even funerals usually don't stir me like baptisms do. So call me, and save the date!

But even if you don't call me, even if you aren't particularly interested, even if you don't believe in Jesus, you are still going to be baptized, one way or another.

One way or another.

John the Baptist put it this way:

***"I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*** (Luke 3:16)

Jesus said it this way:

***"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!"*** (Luke 12:49-50)

The old-time churches placed great importance on their methods of baptism. They could argue into the night about immersion or sprinkling or pouring.

I don't want to step on any denominational toes, but the Bible doesn't see much difference between the various means of water baptism. So go ahead and get dunked, doused, inundated, deluged, hosed, sprayed, sprinkled--or all of the above. All of those methods are indicative of the inner baptism in the Holy Spirit.

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Our various baptismal traditions--whether to sprinkle, pour, or immerse--have obscured the real choice to be made between the baptism of fire or the baptism of the Spirit. Our traditions have buried baptism's meaning--which is intended to point to the meaning of the cross itself.

**The crucial choice is between Spirit baptism and fire baptism.** Spirit baptism is to be identified / immersed with God's grace and forgiveness. Fire baptism is to be identified / immersed with God's judgment of sin.

And the only way to avoid fire baptism is to trust that Jesus underwent the baptism of fire for you! Your sins are going through fire, one way or another. They can be borne by Jesus in your stead, or they can remain on your ledger.

So remember: Everybody's going to get baptized, one way or another, whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not.

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