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It won't be water but fire next time in the bible

The first reading for Mass this Tuesday, taken from the Second Letter of Peter, is a warning to us. There's an old spiritual that says, "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, no more water but the fire next time." This reading today speaks to us of the "fire next time" and reminds of the need to be ready for the coming of the Lord. There are four aspects of teaching contained in the Second Letter of Peter: 1. The PATIENCE that is PURPOSEFUL - The text says, Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard "delay," but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Though the Lord seems long delayed in coming (about 2000 years!), the text tells us that this is so that as many of us can be saved as possible. Notice that the text says that God wants us to come to repentance. His patience should not be viewed as an excuse for presumption but rather as an opportunity for repentance. This is no time to be saying, "I'll do it later." This is a time to be serious about repentance and to prepare to meet the Lord. Note, too, that the Greek word here translated as repentance is μετάνοια (metanoia), referring not just to better behavior but also to new mind. Our transformation is not merely external but internal as well. When what we think changes so does our behavior. When our thinking is conformed to God's revealed truth, our priorities, feelings, desires, and decisions all begin to change. Conversion and repentance are the results of being a transformed human being with a new mind. 2. The PASSING that is PERILOUS - The text says, But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out. In effect, this says that God's gonna to set this world on fire one of these days, and when He comes it'll be Sudden, for the text says that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. This is a consistent image that Jesus used for the Day of Judgment as well, but it should not be true for us who wait and watch. St. Paul says, But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief ... So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled (1 Thess 5:4,6). Further, the image of the thief is also not appropriate for us if we realize that all we have and all we are belongs to God. For those who are worldly and claim authority over themselves and ownership over their possessions, God is a thief who comes suddenly and in a hidden way. He overtakes their apparent ownership and puts an end to it. To them He seems like a thief because He "steals" what they consider to be theirs. They are badly misled. For us who watch and are prepared (pray God), the Lord comes not to take but to give, to bestow upon us and reward us as we inherit His Kingdom. Shocking, for the text speaks of roaring heavens and fire that overwhelms, dissolving everything. Here, too, although the image is shocking it should not alarm us if we are already on fire. At Pentecost (and personally at our baptism and confirmation), the Lord lit a fire within us to set us on fire spiritually, to bring us up to the temperature of glory. Thus, for those in the Lord, the "weather" on that day will seem just fine. The prophet Malachi speaks of the twofold experience of the Day of the Lord in this way: "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. Notice therefore, that for some the Day is burning with wrathful heat, but for the just, it is a sunny day wherein the Sun (Son) of righteousness will bring warmth and healing (Mal 4:1-3). An old spiritual gloss on this verse says, "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, no water but the fire next time." Thus, God wants to get us ready by setting us on fire with His love and grace. If God is a holy fire, then we must become fire ourselves to be able to endure the day of His coming. Showing, for the text says that all things will be revealed. This fire burns away the masks that many people wear, exposing them for what they are. The Lord says, But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken (Matt 12:36). There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs (Lk 12:2-3). Now even the just may wince at this, for all have a past and would prefer that the past stay in the past. However, when I've visited 12-Step meetings I've noticed that many of the recovered attendees will recount vividly what they did when they were drinking. They seem to do so with little shame and much laughter, for they share it with those who understand, and as ones who have been set free from the source of the problem. Perhaps the disclosing day will be like that for the just. For the unrepentant, however, imagine the fear and embarrassment as their secrets, sins, and injustices are disclosed to those who are also unforgiving and unmerciful. It'll be a bad scene, really. 3. The PRESCRIPTION that is PROCLAIMED - The text says, Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be? You ought to conduct yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace. The text asks, rhetorically, "What sort of persons ought you to be?" The answer, in a word, is "fiery." God has lit a fire in us to purify and refine us. Hence on that day, when the Lord will judge by fire, we will pass through. Though some final purification (purgation) may take place, the fact that the fire has been kindled in us and fanned into flame, will mean just that: purification, not destruction. St. Paul describes the just as going through the purgatorial fire that leads to purification rather than to destruction in Hell: If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames (1 Cor 3:12-15). So, the prescription for us is to let God set us afire now to purify us, making us more holy and devout. The fire of His Holy Spirit is the only thing that can truly prepare us and permit us to endure the day of His coming and to be spared the "wrath to come" (cf 1 Thess 1:10, Matt 3:7, Romans 5:9; 1 Thess 5:9), when God will judge the world and everything in it by fire. 4. The PERFECTION that is PROMISED - The text says, But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. This text presents the possibility that the created world will not so much be destroyed as purified by God's fiery judgment. While it may also signify the total destruction of all that now is and a replacement of it with new heavens and a new earth, some posit that it means that the created world will instead be renewed. This view would correspond with other texts such as Romans 8 (For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:20-21)) and Isaiah 1. Whatever the answer to the debate, the bottom line is that the new (or renewed) world will be a heaven wedded to earth in which the full righteousness of God will be manifest. Further, we will be without blemish and at peace. Yes, God's gonna set this world on fire one of these days, Hallelujah! God's fire purifies that which is holy and burns away all that is lacking or unholy. God will restore all things in Christ! Since the horrific massacre at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, which left nine innocent people dead, and the ensuing debate that followed regarding the Confederate flag flying on state grounds in South Carolina and Alabama -- seven historically Black churches have burned down in just 10 days across four southern states. Mount Zion AME, the last church to burn, was previously victim to an arson attack by two members of the Ku Klux Klan on June 20, 1995. According to Mark Potok, a senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center, the fact that these recent fires occurred in the wake of the Charleston shooting is cause for concern because of their potential to be retaliation for the backlash against the Confederate flag that followed the tragedy. After photos surfaced of suspect Dylann Roof with the Confederate flag and wearing White supremacist patches, retailers such as Walmart and Amazon suspended sales of the flag because of its popularity with White supremacists. Four of the flags were recently removed from the state capitol grounds in Alabama, and South Carolina lawmakers will decide whether or not to do the same next month. Websites popular with White supremacists, such as Stormfront.org, lit up with angry denuncements of the treatment of the Confederate flag. "The single most suspicious thing about these fires is that they came so close together and so hard on the heels of attacks on the Confederate battle flag, which is a revered symbol of the radical right," Potok told USA Today. It also appears that a conversation I consider to be "false logic" has begun, and is being spread through some social media sites: that what occurred at Mother Emanuel AME Church and the recent fires at the seven churches can be explained away as being an attack on Christianity. This counter-narrative boggles the mind. If the egregious acts which have occurred were indeed an attack on Christianity, then the question must be asked: Why are churches with predominately White congregations not also experiencing some of the same acts of violence and being burned down? I am reminded of a quote by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as it related to the segregation that occurs in many of our faith communities, "It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning." So if one is to follow the purported "logic" being put forth, both the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church and the subsequent arson attacks -- which have all been at predominately Black churches -- would then lead one to hypothesize that Christianity, at least in some parts of the South, exists only in Black Churches. I do not accept this, and I strongly believe that a majority of people would find this conclusion to not only be false, but also an illogical conclusion. However, this type of counter-narrative allows some aspects of American society to avoid the more disturbing reality that the burning of churches is history repeating itself. Over the years there has been a long list of attacks targetting predominantly Black churches in the United States as a mode of social control and as a manifestation of terror and White supremacy. It is not an accident that in many of those past cases the burnings involved members of the Ku Klux Klan and other White Supremacists. Given this history -- how do we as a nation proceed from this abyss? At times such as these I find the writings of the late novelist, essayist, playwright, poet and social critic and civil rights activist James Baldwin to offer a clarion call for action. Baldwin, in a 1962 article "Down at the Cross, a Letter from a Region of My Mind" that appeared in the New Yorker wrote: If we -- and I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of others -- do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world. I believe that we must hold mainstream media accountable as well. More media time and coverage was given to the senseless burning of a CVS store in Baltimore than has been given to these recent church burnings. People on Twitter have said that what is happening is not receiving enough coverage from U.S. news organizations. Some individuals have been calling for more to be done to both cover these incidents and to investigate them under the hashtag #WhosBurningBlackChurches, which has received more than 150,000 mentions in just seven days. Baldwin in his seminal book The Fire Next Time wrote, "We must not ask whether it is possible for a human being to come truly moral, I think we must believe it is possible." America -- we can, and must, be better and do better. Do you like this song? (click stars to rate) I tell you it's gonna rain it's gonna rain you better get ready and bear this in mind God showed Noah the rainbow sign it won't be water but fire the next time. Way back in the bible days Noah told the people it's gonna rain but when he told them they paid him no mind and when it happened they were left behind I tell you it's gonna rain it's gonna rain lord you better get ready and bear this in mind God show Noah the rainbow sign it won't be water but fire the next time. Listen they tell me when the water begin to pour they knock on the window they knocked on the door they didn't know exactly what to do You don't want this to happen to you I tell you it's gonna rain it's gonna rain lord you better get ready and bear this in mind God showed Noah the rainbow sign it won't be water but fire the next time Noah said I'm sorry my friend God's got the key you can't get in if something don't happen to the hearts of man the same thing is gonna happen again I tell you it's gonna rain it's gonna rain you better get ready and bear this in mind God showed Noah the rainbow sign it won't be water but fire the next time Noah told the people in plenty of time but they were to simple and they were to blind and when it came that awful day they tried to pray but their prayer was to late I tell you it's gonna rain it's gonna rain lord you better get ready and bear this in mind God showed Noah the rainbow sign It won't be water but fire the next time It won't be water but fire the next time It won't be water but fire the next time

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