

## The Fire of God

In His dealings with mankind, the Lord has chosen oftentimes to identify and reveal his appearance to man in the form of fire. It is descriptive of the nature of God who gives light but can also execute judgement. He illuminates the night on one hand and judges the rebellious. As a fire warms, illuminates and also burns and consumes, so the Lord warms our hearts with his presence illuminates his truth to us and at the same time can convict of sin righteousness and judgement.

Why does the Lord reveal himself to us in this way? First of all, the Lord reveals himself to us through the use of many symbols which teach us something of his nature. Sometimes the Lord is associated with water, other times fire, sometimes wind, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a Dove; all of these teach us something of the Nature of God. Sometimes the character of God is described by the use of symbolism. At other times the Lord reveals aspects of himself in association with or within the physical appearance of those symbolic forms. In all of these symbolisms and figures of speech the Lord communicates his infinite nature in a way that finite man can comprehend who God is and what He desires for our life.

Why is this so important for us today? Because God wants us to experience his presence and person in a powerful and life changing way. You see there is nothing status quo about a fire. The Lord warns us as New Covenant believers to not allow the fire of the Spirit to go out. Don't extinguish its flames. And he encourages all believers to experience the supernatural endowment of power by being Baptized with the Holy Spirit and Fire.

All through out the Word of God we see His workings with mankind, and one major description of His work in both the Old and New Testament is that he is a consuming fire, Hebrew 12:29.

When Jesus walked the earth and during his ministry years, no one was closer to him than the Apostle John. That's why he was called John the Beloved. At the foot of the cross, Jesus asked John the apostle to take care of his mother. At the last supper, the bible describes John as being so close to him that he could literally lay his head back upon the bosom of Christ. He was so close to Jesus, yet we see John on the isle of Patmos in exile for his testimony for Jesus. He's an old man, tradition says that they tried to execute him by boiling him in a vat of oil, but he wouldn't boil, so they exiled him to prison on the isle of Patmos. Here is his testimony in the beginning of the book of Revelation.

**Rev 1:9-18 (NIV)** 9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11 which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." 12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I

saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

### **God appeared to Moses as a fire from within a bush.**

**Ex 3:1-6 (NIV)** 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

### **He appeared to the Israelites in a pillar of fire by night.**

**Ex 13:21-22 (NIV)** 21 By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

### **On mount Sinai**

**Ex 19:16-19 (NIV)** 16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, 19 and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

### **Fire is often associated with the character of God concerning his judgement and purity.**

**Deut 4:23-24 (NIV)** 23 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. 24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

**Matt 3:11-12 (NIV)** 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

**Heb 12:28-29 (NIV)** 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire."

**Fire was often associated with the altar of the Lord and sacrificial worship. And this revelation of fire is still with us today because the Holy Spirit continues God's work in the church today. We see the Work of God corresponding to the Old Testament witness.**

**Lev 9:22-24 (NIV)** 22 Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. 23 Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

**We see this again in 2 Chron 7:1-3 (NIV)** 1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 2 The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. 3 When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

**Acts 2:1-4 (NIV)** 1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**The Lord was serious about how we treat the Fire of God. It represents his Holy Spirit.**

**Lev 10:1-3 (NIV)** 1 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. 2 So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. 3 Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke of when he said: "'Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.'" Aaron remained silent. **Acts 5: Ananias and Sapphira: They lied to the Holy Spirit...**

**1 Thess 5:19-22 (NIV)** 19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good. 22 Avoid every kind of evil.

**The Lord is constantly reminding us in our worship to God that we have a responsibility to not allow God's fire to go out in our lives. We see the type or symbol of this in Leviticus...**

**Lev 6:8-13 (NIV)** 8 The Lord said to Moses: 9 "Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. 10 The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. 11 Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. 12 The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. 13 The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

**2 Tim 1:6-7 (NIV)** 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

## **Conclusion**

### **Acts 1:7-8 (NIV)**

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."