

4 Defining Attributes of the Fire of God

There are many attributes that can be accurately utilized to describe the nature of God.

In Scripture we see that He is defined by love, mercy, compassion, holiness, anger toward wickedness and so forth. All of these and many more words can and do accurately depict the nature of God.

However, one thing that can be seen over and over again in Scripture is the fact that God is a God of fire. His very essence is revealed by fire throughout the Old and New Testaments. We clearly behold over and over again that His very presence is full of this powerful force that so accurately depicts who He is.

In the Old Testament, we behold God descending upon Mt. Sinai as the mountain shakes while fire and smoke ascends from His presence. When Elijah calls upon God to reveal Himself to the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, here we see the Lord answer with fire as the altar and even the ditch full of water is engulfed by His burning and consuming nature. When Moses encounters God in the wilderness, here once again we witness God's fiery nature as He consumes a bush that will not burn.

The late E.M. Bounds once said, "God must be represented by a fiery church or He is not truly represented. God is all fire and His church, if it be like Him, must also be aflame with the great eternal interest of His." His point is valid and as we see the birth of the church (*ecclesia*) in the book of Acts, the description is highlighted through the baptism of God's holy fire upon those gathered in the Upper Room.

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came

from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared to them tongues as of fire, being distributed and resting on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to speak" (Acts 2:1-4).

It is important to recognize that the New Testament church was birthed in and through God's fire. Therefore, His fire must be characteristic of who we are as God's people or we cease to represent Him accurately.

The hard truth is that it does not matter so much what we do, say or even preach if the *fire* of God is not present in our lives and even in our gatherings (whether large or small). What we accomplish is oftentimes religious and routine. We can easily end up with a form of religion that is void of God's power.

Therefore, we must live in the midst of God's fire. Our initial baptism of the Holy Spirit is crucial, but we also need fresh fiery baptisms from the Lord as we advance His purposes on the earth. In truth, a culture can only be affected through the validity of God burning in and among His people in an ongoing and ever-increasing manner.

What Does God's Fire Among Us Represent?

1. Fire is validation. (Heb. 12:29).

God's presence among the people of Israel was the very thing that validated the fact that they were God's chosen nation. The same holds true for the church in this hour and throughout history. The fact is that when God is among us, we don't have to prove to anyone that we are called by His name to do His works on the earth. His fire validates our mandate and calling as His people.

The testimony of the Lord is His own glory. It's this glory that we as His people are ordained to carry in us, as well as

upon us. This weight of glory proves or validates through fire the authenticity of His eternal workings that consume us for His divine purposes.

2. Fire produces purity. “But who can endure the day of His coming, and who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap” (Mal. 3:2).

The fire of God among us must purify us or it is not the true fire of God. The fact is that the Lord will oftentimes scorch us before we experience the ointment of His love and deep mercy. This is important to our understanding of God’s nature and the way that He works in our lives as His people.

Therefore, the experiencing of God’s fire must consist of more than emotional excitement, blessing, rejoicing and such, even though all of these are valid and biblical. The authentic fire of God will always initially bring an awareness of sin that leads to a life of repentance and righteousness. This amazing work of grace frees us from condemnation and the holiness of God becomes our native air, which is full of eternal joy.

Fire will also destroy spiritual dullness among God’s people. It will always illuminate Jesus and in turn as the old hymn says, “The things of this earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

3. Fire instills deep passion. “As the deer pants after the water brooks, so *my soul pants after You, O God*” (Ps. 42:1).

When we are arrested by the fire of God, the result is that our hearts are gloriously gripped and in turn, passion, hunger and thirst for the living God is gloriously awakened within us. We become very much aware of the fact that only God can satisfy the longings of those who have tasted of His goodness. He then becomes our ultimate desire and joy.

When we are supernaturally awakened by divine union with Jesus through His fiery nature, it is then that we are ultimately destroyed for the things of this world and eternity is branded upon our hearts. In turn, we adapt to the ways of the kingdom of God and the spirit of this present world becomes foreign and undesirable to us. This is the place of continual burning experienced by an ongoing and ever-growing passion for the Lord.

4. **Fire begets more fire.** “Then the churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and were built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

The nature of fire is to grow and reproduce rapidly. In the natural, what may begin as a small campfire, if it is let loose and the barriers are destroyed, the result is a violent, consuming apprehension of everything in its path. This is the pattern of God and the way that He moves and consumes His own people, a city, a region or even a nation.

The result of God’s spreading fire is a powerful and sovereign display of His glory that can and will arrest a generation for His eternal purposes. This is a pattern that has been experienced throughout history. The truth is, that fire must beget more fire. Will we be among those who become the fuel for God’s eternal purposes?

Closing Quotes

“Spirit-filled souls are ablaze for God. They love with a love that glows. They serve with a faith that kindles. They serve with a devotion that consumes. They hate sin with fierceness that burns. They rejoice with a joy that radiates. Love is perfected in the fire of God.” –*Samuel Chadwick*

“My fear is not that our great movement, known as the Methodists, will eventually cease to exist or one day die from

the earth. My fear is that our people will become content to live without the fire, the power, the excitement, the supernatural element that makes us great." –John Wesley {eoa}

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