

Study 25 - IGNITED BY THE FIRE OF GOD III

“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

Continued from last week...

Part III: Ten Purposes of the Fire of God

1. One purpose of the fire of God is to generate a passion for saving souls.

(a) How did Jesus describe His followers? (Matthew 5:14a)

(b) For what purpose must we allow the light of God’s glory to shine through us to the world? (Verse 16)

We cannot be light if we are not on fire.

2. A second purpose of God’s fire is to bring judgment. In the Bible, we see that God sometimes sent His holy fire for the purpose of judging those who blatantly disregarded Him and His commands.

(a) What happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah due to their multiple transgressions and profound iniquity? (Genesis 19:24)

(b) What happened to the sons of Aaron, who were God’s priests, when they offered “profane fire” before the Lord? (Leviticus 10:2)

(c) What are now being reserved for fire until the final day of judgment? (2 Peter 3:7a)

Each time the earth fills with corruption and violence, God brings His judgment to purify it— usually through fire.

3. A third purpose of the fire of God is to purify and sanctify His people.

(a) How is the Lord’s judgment of believers different from His judgment against the world? (1 Corinthians 11:32)

(b) What should we be doing so that the Lord has no need to chasten us? (Verse 31)

(c) What should we ask God to do for us as we undertake the above process, and why? (Psalm 139:23–24)

God’s fire falls only where there is sacrifice because it proves that what was offered to God is real.

4. A fourth purpose of God’s fire is to reveal our true motives and the genuineness of our faith.

(a) To what is the Messiah compared? (Malachi 3:2b)

(b) In what manner will He “sit”? (Verse 3a)

(c) For what purpose will He refine His people? (Verse 3b)

5. In what way did Peter describe the testing of our faith through various trials and persecutions? Complete the following:
 1 Peter 1:7: "... that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though _____, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
6. On the day of judgment, what will the fire of God test? (1 Corinthians 3:13b)

7. A fifth purpose of God's fire is to produce within us a passion to fulfil our callings.
 (a) In what way did the prophet Jeremiah describe the word that God had put in his heart, which he tried to suppress? Complete the following:
 Jeremiah 20:9b: "But His word was in my heart _____..."
 (b) Was Jeremiah successful in holding back what God had placed within him to tell the Israelites? (Verse 9b)

The fire of the presence of God releases the passion that is in Him.

REFLECTIONS ON REKINDLING ONE'S GIFTS

In 2 Timothy 1:6, the apostle Paul urged Timothy to stir up the fire of the gift of the Holy Spirit he had imparted to him, that Timothy had already received, and that had been active in the beginning. The Greek word translated "stir up" is *anazopureo*, which means "to rekindle." First, we must stir up our personal gifts so that, later, with the same fire, we can help others to stir up their gifts. This demands a decision on our part to seek to be ignited by God's fire.

8. A sixth purpose for the fire of God is to produce within us a passion to persevere and to overcome opposition to God and the gospel.
 (a) What did Jesus endure during His challenging ministry, His unjust trials and interrogations by religious and political leaders, and His agonizing death on the cross, because of His passion for God and "the joy that was set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2)? (Verse 3a)
- (b) List various difficulties and trials the apostle Paul endured for the sake of the gospel, with an endurance initially fuelled by the fire of his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. (2 Corinthians 11:23b-28 NIV)

Discipline earns the admiration of others, but passion is contagious.

9. A seventh purpose of God's fire is to produce a passion within us to know Him intimately.
 (a) Recall the reasons why Paul said he counted as loss everything that previously had been gain to him. (Philippians 3:8)
- (b) What were among Paul's highest spiritual goals? (Philippians 3:10)

When the old atmosphere is changed by an atmosphere of glory, then hunger and thirst for God are produced in people's spirits.

10. An eighth purpose of the fire of God is to produce supernatural boldness in us.

- (a) What did the religious leaders see and perceive about Peter and John that caused them to marvel? (Acts 4:13a)
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(b) What did these leaders realize? (Verse 13b)

11. After Peter and John were warned by the religious leaders not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, they met with their companions and prayed to the Lord.

- (a) What is one thing they asked for? (Acts 4:29b)
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(b) What happened to them as a result of this prayer? (Verse 31b)

REFLECTIONS ON BAPTISM WITH FIRE

There are believers who have received the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues and who have been filled with power from heaven, yet they never testify of Jesus. Neither do they pray for the sick or cast out demons. They have the dynamite, but it has not been lighted with fire. When the fire no longer burns, regardless of how much oil there is, the lampstand will not shine. Likewise, we cannot be powerful, effective witnesses of Jesus if our lamps have not been lit with the fire of the glory of God. Christians who are passive and indifferent have either lost the fire or never received it to begin with.

Baptism with fire takes place when we go before God so that He can set us ablaze with the same kind of passion that burns in His heart—the passion to be witnesses of Jesus and to bring the truth of the dominion, lordship, and will of the King to earth by doing miracles in His name and by His hand.

12. A ninth purpose of God's fire is to produce a passion to see miracles, signs, and wonders as a confirmation of the gospel message.

- (a) What did Peter and John and their companions ask the Lord to do in connection with their prayer for boldness? (Acts 4:30)
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(b) In what way was this prayer answered? (Acts 5:12a)

13. A tenth purpose of the fire of God is to produce revival. Jesus' anointing was one that brought physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual transformation to people's lives, and it is an anointing He has passed on to us through the indwelling Holy Spirit. For a review, record the various aspects of this anointing. (Luke 4:18–19)

Jesus comes for a church that is not only experiencing revival but also is on fire for the harvest.

Conclusion

While Jesus ministered on earth, His greatest passion was to release the fire of God's presence so that, after His resurrection, multitudes of people around the world could reproduce His miracles and lead men and women to know the Father with the same passion that He had. In addition to providing for our salvation, this is the reason He went to the cross and died. When He was resurrected, a baptism of fire was released over the disciples at Pentecost, and they immediately began to shake up the world. Every believer needs to have such an experience. It helps us to produce supernatural evidence proving that Jesus indeed lives. Without it, we will have only an opinion about supernatural power—pure theory. However, once we experience the fire, we will ignite in a never-ending passion that will lead to the demonstration of supernatural power. We will also be able to transfer that power to others, in order to release revivals, healings, miracles, signs, and wonders. These manifestations will deliver individual people, cities, and nations from the bondage of sin, sickness, and curses.

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, thank You for all the students who are learning about Your glory through this Bible study. May those who have never before been filled with power through the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues be filled right now. Release the fire of Your presence to everyone who hungers for it. Submerge and ignite them in it. May they be filled with Your power and fire! We have absolute faith that Your fire is burning within us right now. In the name of Jesus, amen!

Action Steps

- ▽ Whenever you seem to lose your fire and passion for God, ask the Holy Spirit to release that fire and passion within you once again. Use Psalm 139:23–24 as your prayer and ask the Lord to search your heart for any wrong attitudes so that you can repent and return to Him.
- ▽ When you experience the fire of God's presence, do not be afraid, knowing that it is for your sanctification, not your condemnation. Respond in submission, humility, faith, and obedience.
- ▽ Once the fire of God is ignited in you, go as an instrument of the Lord and be a witness of Jesus. Tell others about the gospel of salvation in Jesus, pray for and lay hands on the sick for healing, and cast out demons. Seek to use the various spiritual gifts and abilities that God has given you, as the Spirit works through you.