

## THE FIRE OF GOD

### Part One

God's Fire—not the fire and brimstone connected with eternal damnation, but—the fire of God—which is of a different quality—the empowering fire of God! The fire of God is not just a luxury as some Christians seem to think. God's fire is an absolute necessity for effective service for Him. Let's read an Old Testament story that helps explain this very point found in Judges, chapter 15. It is the story of Samson. First, let me give you some background from chapter 14.

Samson met a Philistine woman and wanted her for his wife, and told his father, "Get her for me, she is the one I want." His parents objected, as she was a pagan Philistine and not an Israelite. Verse 4 (NLT), "His father and mother didn't realize the Lord was at work in this, creating an opportunity to disrupt the Philistines, who ruled over Israel at the time."

As his father was making final arrangements for the marriage, Samson threw a party, as was the custom of the day. Thirty young men from the town were invited to be his companions. Samson said to them; let me tell you a riddle. If you solve my riddle during these seven days of the celebration, I will give you thirty plain linen robes and thirty fancy robes. But if you can't solve it, then you must give me the clothes. Three days later they were still trying to figure it out. On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Get the answer to the riddle from your husband, or we will burn down your father's house with you in it. Did you invite us to this party just to make us poor?"

So Samson's wife came to him in tears and said, "You don't love me; you hate me! You have given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer." To which Samson replies, "I haven't told my father or mother the answer, so why should I tell you?" so she cried whenever she was with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on the seventh day, he told her the answer because of her persistent nagging. Then she gave the answer to the young men.

Verse 19 –again we see the hand of the Lord in the situation, as it says, "Then the Spirit of the Lord powerfully took control of him. He went to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had answered his riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother. So his wife was given in marriage to the man who had been Samson's best man at the wedding.

Judges chapter 15, verse 1 reads, Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a present to his wife. He intended to sleep with her, but her father wouldn't let him in. Verse 2 - "I really

thought you hated her,” her father explained, “so I gave her in marriage to your best man. But look, her sister is more beautiful than she is. Marry her instead.”

Verses 3-5- Samson said to them, “This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am going to do to you Philistines.” Then he went out and caught three hundred foxes. He tied their tails together in pairs, and he fastened a torch to each pair of tails. Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run through the fields of the Philistines. He burned all their grain to the ground, including the grain still in piles and all that had been bundled. He also destroyed their grapevines and olive trees. I am sure that Samson believed he had a righteous cause against his father-in-law.

Samson watched the foxes, driven by excruciating pain run at top speed into the harvest fields, and Samson could see exactly where they were running because the foxes were leaving fields burning behind them; the fields were all ablaze! Now that is the Old Testament picture, now I want to share with you the New Testament picture.

In Luke 12:49 (NKJV), Jesus said, *I came to send fire on the earth and how I wish it were already kindled.* I believe this statement to be a reference to the burning zeal of believers, which is connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. The fervor of Spirit-filled witnesses would arouse the anger of unbeliever. Jesus took his disciples, joined them together and sent them out two by two. He put the flame of authority and power upon them, and sent them into the villages to cast out devils, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to preach the gospel. Without the fire, it would have been in vain to send those foxes into the Philistine’s fields.

Without the fire of the Holy Spirit burning in our heart and spirit, we can run and run and run until we wear out and not much will happen. We need the fire of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. It will make us effective as we go into the world and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Didn’t Jesus tell us in Acts 1:8 – *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.*” Church, move in God’s fire!

What a challenge! What a promise. Truth time! If you minister for Jesus without His fire, you are as an ebbing flame, in danger of burning out. You will work your fingers to the bone and in the end, when you evaluate your service for the Lord, you may be disappointed at the results; works without God’s good fruit. But blessed is he who depends upon the fire of the Holy Spirit. Ask Jesus to give you that Holy fire; He will do it. It will not only change your life, it will change your ministry, it will change your church, it will change your testimony; it will burn deep and cleanse all it touches around you. Fire, the fire of the Holy Spirit, it is an absolute necessity.

John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11 announced the coming of another Baptizer. John said *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with FIRE.* Jesus is that ONE—that BAPTIZER. John stood in a river of water and baptized people in cold water, but Jesus is a Baptizer of a different quality. Catch this image with me if you will, Jesus standing in a river of liquid fire. That holy fire of God and He is putting His arm around you and He is dipping you into the fire of the Holy Spirit. And you come up out of the water, burning, burning and burning for Jesus.

Did you know that the word baptism today is a religious word but, it used to be an everyday, commercial word? It was used in the trade of dying fabrics. When a cloth was put into the dye, the cloth accepted the nature, the color, the character of the dye and when it was pulled out, it looked like the dye. The dye in the cloth and the cloth in the dye. So, we see that the process of dipping meant baptism—and was called, baptism in those times.

Jesus will put his arm around you and He will dip you into that river of liquid fire. You in the fire and the fire in you and when you come out, you will look like fire, you will feel like fire, and you will be very, very hot—you will burn like fire. What a glorious baptism, this baptism into the Holy Spirit and fire. No wonder scripture says in Hebrews 1:7 (NKJV), *Who makes His angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire.*

Let me ask you a question. Can fire have fellowship with icicles? Maybe for a short time, but soon the fire will be put out. I want to have fellowship with God, who is fire. Do you? We represent a fiery God, therefore, we can move in the baptism of fire. Fiery ministers for God; this is my desire. Burn out the dross (the worthless or dangerous material that should be removed; the impurities) in my life Lord Jesus and make me a flame that will burn brightly for you wherever you send me.

**PART TWO:** Jesus fulfills His promise. This happens on the day of Pentecostal. See Acts 1:8