

Fire of God

Week 1 – His Presence

Message Mate

- God is described as “a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut 4:24). God is a consuming fire whose love for you in turn demands your allegiance and your loyalty to love Him. The fire of God’s love does not tolerate idols and false gods, because God is jealous for your love. When we live in obedience to God and are loyal in our love for God, we find God to be full of mercy and loving grace with a burning passion of love. In contrast, when we choose to live in rebellion and idolatry, we find God to be a jealous lover with a burning fury intended to restore faithful love.
- In Genesis 15:17,18 God appears to Abram as a fire pot and blazing torch. The fire was evidence of his presence and power to create a covenant relationship with Abram to have descendants who would become the nation of Israel. About 430 years later, God appeared to Moses in fire from within a bush, and God revealed his presence and promise to set his people free from slavery (Exodus 3:1-6). When the Israelites were set free, God appeared to them as a pillar of fire to give direction to his people and to protect his people from their enemies (Ex 13:21,22; 14:19,20). God then appeared to the Israelites as fire on Mt Sinai when he declared another covenant and gave them the Ten Commandments (Ex 19:16-19; Deut 4:12-14).
- From these passages, we see that God comes as fire to reveal his **presence** so that we may know God more; to give his **promises** for our future; to give **direction** so that we go where He wants us to go; for our **protection** from evil in the natural and the spiritual; and to bring his **commandments** on how to live as people who love God, one another and our neighbours.
- One of the promises given to Abraham through fire was that Jesus Christ would come (Galatians 3:17), and John the Baptist said Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11). The Holy Spirit came as fire on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3,4). Everything that came through fire to Abraham, Moses and the people of Israel is available to us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit: reveals that you belong to God (Eph 1:13); that God is **present** in your life (1 Jn 4:13); is a **promise** of what is to come (Eph 1:13,14); gives **direction** in how to live (Jn 16:13), brings **protection** from the enemy and evil (1 Jn 4:4); and brings God’s **commandments** of love (1 Jn 3:24).
- The fire of God is powerful in revealing his **presence** and through that bringing his **promises, direction, protection** and **commandments** to us personally and as a church.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever been near a large fire which has been so hot and intense that you can't get too near or even look at it for long? Read Exodus 19:16-19 and discuss how intense the fire of God on Mt Sinai might have been and the impact that would have had on the Israelites?

(Consider moving through the next three questions reasonably fast so that you can spend more time sharing about the prayer below and then praying into these points).

2. Read Exodus 3:1-6. While this says, "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire", most bible scholars believe this was the Lord as v 4 says the Lord called to him from within the bush and v 6 says that Moses was afraid to look at God. God revealed his presence and promise to set his people free during this encounter. Have you experienced times when you have felt God has been particularly present and talked with you about being set free from slavery to sin and false gods in your life?
3. God came as fire to reveal his presence as the fire pot and blazing torch, the burning bush and the fire on Mt Sinai. Consider how God through his presence gives his promises for our future, gives direction so that we go where he wants us to go, gives us protection from evil in the natural and the spiritual, and gives his commandments on how to live as people who love God, one another and our neighbours. Choose one (or more) of these and discuss how God has ministered to you in that area (or how you might need that now).
4. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came as fire. As a follower of Jesus Christ, discuss how the Holy Spirit who is present in your life gives you his promises, direction, protection and commandments to you personally.

Pray –

The following is the prayer that we prayed on Sunday morning. Please discuss the following prayer, possibly section by section and then pray this prayer, either using these words or as a framework for praying in your own words. Let us pray for a greater release of the fire of God and the fire of the Holy Spirit. You may wish to consider praying this prayer each day for the coming week.

"Thank you God that you come as fire which is powerful in revealing your presence. Lord you are a consuming fire. Today, we ask for your fire in our church and in our lives. Come God as fire in your glory and power, come God with your burning passion of love because we yearn to be faithful, but Lord where it is necessary, come with your burning fury to restore us to faithful love.

Lord, come as fire with an increasing **presence** in our church and lives. We want to know you more, because the more we know you, the more we will become like you and the more we will reveal you to those around us.

Lord, come as fire to give your **promises**. Just as you gave a promise to Abraham with the firepot and it was being partially fulfilled with the fire on Mt Sinai, Lord, you have given us at Rangeville many promises. Fire of God come and continue to fulfil your promises for the Next Stage of Ministry and the Next Stage of the Building. Holy Spirit come and give us our inheritance in God.

Lord, come as fire to give **direction**. As you gave direction to Moses as fire in the bush to go to Egypt, as you come to Israel to a pillar of fire to give them direction, come and direct us as a church to go only where you want us to go and do what you want us to do. Holy Spirit, come and guide us in all truth, so that we would live as people of grace and truth.

Lord, come as fire for **protection** from what is evil in the natural and the spiritual. As the pillar of fire protected the Israelites from the Egyptians, Fire of God come and protect us from the enemy attacks so that we can step into God's good plans for us. Holy Spirit come, fill us because you are greater than the devil and the evil in this world.

Lord, come as fire to bring your **commandments** on how to live. As you came in fire on Mt Sinai, come as fire that we would desire to live according to your commandments to live loving God, loving one another and loving our neighbour as ourselves. Holy Spirit come and fill us with your love, because your Word tells us that love is the greatest and love is the first of the fruit of the Spirit.

Fire of God, come, reveal your presence, fulfil your promises, release your power and change us as a church and as your people to be who you desire us to be and do what you desire us to do.

We ask this in Jesus name. Amen."