

Fire of God

Week 2 – His Judgement

Message Mate

- God uses the flames of fire as his servants (Ps 104:4), including as a way of judgement. In Genesis 18:25, God is seen as the ultimate Judge of creation, and He discriminates between the righteous and the wicked. God's judgement is based on his character of love, faithfulness, righteousness and justice (Ps 36:5,6; Dt 32:4). God's judgement comes in two timeframes: before Jesus' second coming when God brings judgement in real time, sometimes with fire; and at Jesus' second coming as the final judgement which will be with fire.
- God brought judgement with fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, but only after he offered salvation to those who could have chosen to accept his offer (Gen 19:24). This shows us that God's judgement is specific in separating the righteous and the wicked. God used fire for judgement on two sons of Aaron who had been commissioned as priests but were not using God's authorised fire or following His commands (Lev 10:1,2). This shows us that God's judgment is on those who look the part but use counterfeit and violate God's commands. God brought judgment with fire on the Israelites who had experienced His presence and blessings yet rebelled and complained against God (Num 11:1-3).
- God brought judgement with fire when 250 community leaders who had been won over by rebellious influencers misused Scripture, abused spiritual power in unholy ways and opposed God and those He appointed (Num 16:1-3, 11, 35). The final Old Testament story where God judged with fire involved a king who worshipped false gods, sending his soldiers to arrest the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:11-13). This shows us that God's judgement is on those who align with those who worship false gods and arrogantly disrespect those who bring God's word. These examples show that God used fire as His servant to judge those who were unrepentant.
- Matthew 3:11,12 shows us that Jesus will separate the righteous from the wicked, and the unrepentant wicked will be burnt with unquenchable fire. Jesus is coming again and will come in fire (2 Thess 1:6,7) on the day of judgement when the unrepentant will be judged with fire (2 Pet 3:7). Finally, those who align with Satan will be judged with fire (Rev 20:7-9).
- God desires no-one to perish and He freely offers salvation to all through faith in Jesus Christ. God is always just and in love will separate the righteous and the wicked. The righteous need never fear the fire of judgement because they will go to be with God for eternity. The wicked and unrepentant will be subject to judgement with fire when Jesus comes again to bring judgement with fire for eternity.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Fire, like a bushfire, can be uncontrolled and indiscriminate, but whenever God used fire for judgement it was very specific in who it affected. Discuss the comment that God's judgement with fire is specific in separating the righteous who are saved while the wicked receive just punishment.
2. Discuss the following quote: *"The only way God can give love, including justice, to his people is by removing those who are hurting them. He cannot help everyone, not because he wants anyone to perish, but because many choose to reject the salvation that he freely offers to all."*
Roy Gane - (New International Version Applied Commentary – Numbers).
Consider how this reinforces that God is specific in separating the righteous who accept Him and the wicked who reject the offer of salvation He offers freely to all.
3. Read Leviticus 10:1,2. Nadab and Abihu looked the real deal, but used unholy fire from a source other than that which God commanded them to. As such their "worship" was counterfeit and violated God's command. How might people today use counterfeit or violate God's commands in "worship" (don't restrict worship to just Sunday services)?
4. Read Numbers 16:1-3, 11 and 35. In this case judgment was on respected leaders who misused Scripture and abused spiritual power in unholy ways (using the sacred censers when they were not authorized to do so) and opposing God and those He appointed. Discuss examples of this that might be relevant to us today?
5. The reference to fire in Matthew 3:11,12 is interpreted by some as referring to the fire of judgement. Discuss how this view reinforces the view that God brings specific judgement with fire on the wicked who are unrepentant.
6. In conclusion, God is always just and, in His love, separates the righteous and the wicked. Discuss the assurance that the righteous, having put their faith in Jesus Christ, never need fear the fire of judgement and will go to be with God for eternity.

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.

"Dear God, we thank you that you are a God of love, faithfulness, righteousness and justice. Thank you that through your love, faithfulness, righteousness and justice, you want none to perish, so we thank you that through your Son Jesus Christ, you have made a way for all to receive forgiveness of our sins and be restored into a loving relationship with You.

Lord God, we ask for your holy fire to burn through our church, our people and property to reveal what is righteous and what is wicked in your eyes. Lord, let your fire burn in the lives of each person here and in our church causing us to be convicted of our sin and turn wholeheartedly to you, or Lord, make the consequences of your judgement clear for those to choose to rebel against you, so that they may make an informed choice.

Lord, for those who have repented and chosen you, we acknowledge that we have sinned. At times, we too have violated Your commandments, we have rebelled and complained against You, we have misused Scripture, we have disrespected your leaders and those who have brought your word. We have aligned with false gods of this world. Lord, thank you for sending your Son Jesus Christ through whom forgiveness is possible. Lord, we confess our sins and ask for your forgiveness so that we may truly grow in righteousness to be the people you created us to be.

Come God and bring your fire of your presence, your promises, your direction and protection, and your commandments. Come God and bring your fire of judgement so that we who choose you will have no fear of the fire of judgement, but will live with certainty of your love, faithfulness, righteousness and justice until Jesus comes again with fire and we go to be with Him.
Amen.”