

## THE HOLY SPIRIT “Fire”

### Establishing the Symbol-

Deut 4:24 “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” NIV

*‘elohiym is a consuming fire. Fire is a symbol for the entire Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

#### *Father:*

Ezek 1:27-28

27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of **fire**, and that from there down he looked like **fire**; and brilliant light surrounded him.

28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking. NIV

#### *Son:*

Rev 1:14-16

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. NIV

#### *Holy Spirit:*

Ezek 8:2-3 NIV

2 I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like **fire**, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.

3 He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. **The Spirit lifted** me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.

#### *The Holy Spirit represented by fire:*

Isa 4:4

The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by **a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire**. NIV

Matt 3:11 NIV

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire**.

Acts 2:2-4

2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 They saw what seemed to be **tongues of fire that separated** and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them **were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. NIV

1 Thess 5:19 “Do not put out the Spirit's fire;” NIV

*Fire as a symbol in Scripture for the Holy Spirit is clearly established. What is fire? Or better yet, what is the most common form of natural fire from heaven? Lightning!*

### **Lightning-**

*Lightning is the result of the balancing of the electrical charge in a cloud. As water [WATER] particles are driven up by updrafts [WIND] in a thundercloud [CLOUD], they collide with other water particles, causing a loss and gain of electrons. Eventually, the cloud gains a net positive charge near the top and a net negative charge on the bottom. Eventually, the electrical resistance in the air breaks down and an electrical discharge between the positive and negative charges of the cloud happens. A lightning bolt heats the air around it to 20,000<sup>0</sup> Celsius (about 3 times the temperature of the Sun!).*

Ps 18:6-13

6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

7 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry.

8 Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.

9 He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet.

10 He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him-- the dark rain clouds of the sky.

12 Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and **bolts of lightning**.

13 The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. NIV

*Lightning in Scripture as ascribed to God usually involves judgment (as in Egypt) or warfare. They are called the arrows of God. Certainly, they are a mighty exhibition of His power!*

### **Fire-**

*Fire is combustion. Combustion is a rapid oxidation<sup>1</sup> accompanied by the emission of light and heat. The three key principles of combustion are:*

1. Heat energy is necessary to initiate combustion.
2. The reaction is self-sustaining once the ignition source is provided
3. For combustion to occur, you must have:
  - A. Fuel
  - B. An oxidizing agent
  - C. Heat to produce free radicals
  - D. Uninhibited free radical combination<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Oxidation-** the chemical combination of an atom with oxygen and the chemical bonds contain energy.

*This is true in the natural, but our God is eternal. He is self-sustaining. He is fire without combustion.*

Ex 3:1-5

- 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire **it did not burn up**.
- 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up."
- 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."
- 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." NIV

*Fire teaches us not only about the Holy Spirit, but also how He interacts with us. Fire puts out light and heat. As the lampstand in the holy place lit the table of shewbread, so the Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding of the word He had written (1 Cor. 2:14-16). Romans 12:11 tells us we are to be hot in the spirit. The flames of a fire are beautiful to look at and bring light and cheer into a home. But one would be foolish to deal with the flame haphazardly or presumptuously. A flame is immaterial, yet powerful; even so the Spirit of God.*

*What does fire teach us about the Spirit's interaction with us?*

1. Light – The Spirit's fire lights our path.

Ex 13:21

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in **a pillar of fire to give them light**, so that they could travel by day or night. NIV

2. Heat – Heat energy always flows from hot to cold or from higher energy state (God) to lower energy state (us).
3. Three types of heat transfer:
  - i. Conduction – caused by molecular vibration and collision transferring kinetic energy to other molecules.
    - Laying on of hands - 2 Tim 1:6 "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." NIV
  - ii. Convection – heat transfer because of a movement of a fluid (air) containing the heat.
    - Praise, worship, and prayer
  - iii. Radiation – heat transfer by electromagnetic waves.
    - Matt 8:8 – 'The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.' NIV

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<sup>2</sup> **Free radical**- an atom or group of atoms containing at least one unpaired electron and having a short lifetime before reacting to form a stable molecule.

4. Key principles of combustion:

i. Heat energy is necessary to initiate combustion.

- The Lord lit the altar fire and He lights the fire in us.

Lev 9:23-24

23 Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

24 Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown. NIV

Acts 2:3-4

3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. NIV

ii. The reaction is self-sustaining once the ignition source is provided.

- We have a responsibility to keep the fire burning once lit.

Lev 6:12-13

12 The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it.

13 The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out. NIV

2 Tim 1:6

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. NIV

iii. For combustion to occur, you must have

a. Fuel – ourselves (Rom 12:1) and the gift of God (2 Tim 1:6).

b. Oxidizing agent – wind (air), the Holy Spirit

c. Heat to produce free radicals

- Sun, the Father

Ps 84:11a “For the LORD God is a sun and shield” NIV

- Sun, the Son

Rev 10:1

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. NIV

- Each other

Eccl 4:11

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? NIV

- d. Uninhibited free radical combination
  - The Spirit of the Lord brings freedom.

2 Cor 3:17

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. NIV

5. Products of combustion:

- i. Heat – warmth of fellowship with God and each other.
- ii. Smoke – prayer, praise and worship (Rev. 5:8).
- iii. Fire gases – sweet smelling savor (2 Cor 2:15).

6. For adequate combustion, you need the three T's: Time, Temperature, and Turbulence.

*What else does the fire of the Holy Spirit do in our lives?*

John 16:7-11

7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. NIV

*In a general sense, the three broadest symbols of the Holy Spirit (wind, water, and fire) give reference to this convicting work of the Holy Spirit (sin, righteousness, and judgment respectively). Fire is a major implement of the judgment of God. Isaiah 4:4 even tells us that the spirit of judgment is a spirit of fire. But the judgment is against the evil one and all his works.*

1 John 3:8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.** NIV

*God uses the Holy Spirit's fire to destroy the works of the devil in us by purifying and refining, burning the bonds that bind us, driving out vipers, and trying our works.*

**Purifying and refining-**

*Whatever defilement will not wash away must be burned away:*

Lev 13:52, 57-58

52 He must burn up the clothing, or the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has the contamination in it, because the mildew is destructive; the article must be **burned up**.

57 But if it reappears in the clothing, or in the woven or knitted material, or in the leather article, it is spreading, and whatever has the mildew must be burned with **fire**.

58 The clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or any leather article that has been washed and is rid of the mildew, must be washed again, and it will be clean." NIV

Num 31:21-23

- 21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone into battle, "This is the requirement of the law that the LORD gave Moses:  
22 Gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead  
23 and anything else that can withstand **fire** must be put through the **fire**, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand **fire** must be put through that water. NIV

*The water of cleansing had the ashes of the red heifer in them. The red heifer was a total burnt offering. So even in the cleansing water there is fire!*

*Refining fire:*

Zech 13:8-9

- 8 In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.  
9 This third I will bring into the **fire**; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'" NIV

Mal 3:2-4

- 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's **fire** or a launderer's soap.  
3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,  
4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. NIV

1 Peter 1:6-7

- 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.  
7 These have come so **that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire**-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. NIV

*The trials we suffer are the turbulence necessary for adequate combustion in the furnace of trials to refine our faith.*

Rev 3:18

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. NIV

**Burning the bonds that bind us-**

Dan 3:21-25

- 21 So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace.

- 22 The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego,  
23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.  
24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king."  
25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." NIV

*Not only did the fire burn their bonds, it also killed their captors!*

Judg 15:11-15

- 11 Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."  
12 They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves."  
13 "Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock.  
14 As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands.  
15 Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men. NIV

### **Driving out vipers-**

Acts 28:3-5

- 3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.  
4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live."  
5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. NIV

Luke 10:19

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. NIV

### **Try our works-**

1 Cor 3:10-15

- 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.  
11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.  
12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,  
13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.  
14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.  
15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. NIV

Mark 9:49 “Everyone will be salted with fire.” NIV

*The Lord’s desire is to set us alight and make us free by His fire. In closing, I would like to read a quote from Andrew Murray’s The Holiest of All commenting on Hebrews 12:29.*

Heb 12:29 “for our “God is a consuming fire.” NIV

“Fire may be either a blessing or a curse. All depends upon my relation to it whether it meets me as a friend or an enemy. The fire of God, as it comes to purify, to consume the sacrifice and convert it into its own heavenly light-nature, to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to transform our being into flames of love, - blessed the man who knows His God as a consuming fire. But woe to him on whom the fire of God descends, as on Sodom and Gomorrha, in wrath and judgment. Oh that in the fulness of faith all believers might see and fear this impending judgment, and, moved with the compassion of Christ, give themselves to warn men and snatch them from the fire. **For our God is a consuming fire.**”<sup>3</sup>

*Let us with holy awe, wade into the river of fire (Dan. 7:9-10) in Holy Spirit baptism to have our hearts cleansed, our faith purified, our sacrifice accepted, our bondages broken, and our works proven that we may receive His full reward! All the while, reaching out that others might be saved!*

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All*, Whitaker House, 1996, p. 515-516. Emphasis in original.