

THE FIRE OF GOD

4. Fire Empowers



Introduction

Before the discovery of electricity people used fires to cook their food and warm their houses. Many still do. It is essential to their daily lives. We too need the power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. As we have already seen, when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, it appeared as tongues of fire. That encounter transformed those fearful followers into bold believers. They had received power!

- ◆ What difference did the coming of the 'Holy Spirit and fire' make in the lives of the disciples? Acts 2:4, 43, 4:31, 5:12-16
(They were now able to speak in tongues and began to preach with a boldness they did not have before. Also they performed miracles in the name of Jesus, healed the sick and cast out evil spirits.)
- ◆ Who is the promise of the Holy Spirit for, according to Acts 2:38-39?
(The promise of the Holy Spirit and his power was not only for those listening, but their children, and all those who would come to believe in Jesus in the generations to come.)

Many of us have received this promise. The Holy Spirit lives within us and we have experienced times when we have boldly shared about Jesus to others. Is that fire still burning in your heart?

- ◆ What did the Apostle Paul urge Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 1:6?
(He urged him to fan into flame the gift of God within him. The word that is used in the Greek language literally means 'keep the fire alive'.)
- ◆ Why do you think Timothy needed to be reminded of this? 2 Timothy 1:7-8
(It seems that Timothy struggled with timidity and fear. He felt ashamed of speaking out boldly about Jesus. Paul encourages him to stir up the fire within him – the fire of the Holy Spirit who was given to empower him.)
- ◆ We may be like Timothy! Do you struggle with timidity, fear or embarrassment? What advice did Paul give to him? 2 Timothy 1:8, 14, 2:1, 3
(Paul tells him not to allow shame to fill his heart, but allow the Holy Spirit to be in control. Then he urges him to be strong and endure hardship like a soldier.)
- ◆ By the time John wrote the book of Revelation, the church in Laodicea had become lukewarm. The fire had grown dim in their lives. What did Jesus, through the Apostle John, tell them to do? See Revelation 3:19-20.
(Jesus told them to repent and do so earnestly. Then they were to welcome Jesus and live in close fellowship with him.)
- ◆ Perhaps you have experienced times when the fire has grown dim. What has helped you in those times? Share. It would also be good to pray for one another.

Conclusion

John the Baptist declared that Jesus was the One who would baptise us 'with the Holy Spirit and with fire'. On the Day of Pentecost the disciples experienced this, but the promise is for all of us who come to Jesus.

Have you received that empowering of the Holy Spirit? If not, ask Jesus. He is the One who gives. If you have, then ask yourself this question – is the fire still burning brightly? Timothy was reminded to ‘stir into flame’ or ‘keep the fire alive’ in his life. Fires can die down and they can even go out. Let’s repent and ask God to fill us afresh with the Holy Spirit and with fire.