

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BIBLE OUTREACH

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FIRST THREE DAYS

THE CONFIRMATION OF GOD AS A CONSUMING FIRE.

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The phrase "God is a consuming fire" is a biblical metaphor found in both the Old and New Testaments. It emphasizes God's absolute holiness, his righteous judgment against sin, and his refining power that burns away impurities to transform believers.

Key Biblical Foundations:

Old Testament Warning: The concept is first introduced in Deuteronomy 4:24 (and echoed in Deuteronomy 9:3), where Moses warns the Israelites against idolatry. Because God is a holy and jealous God, He cannot share His glory with idols and His anger acts as a devouring fire against unrighteousness.

New Testament Affirmation: The writer of Hebrews 12:29 explicitly states, "For our God is a consuming fire," serving as a reminder for believers to approach Him with reverence and godly fear.

The Three Meanings of "Consuming Fire":

1. Holiness and Justice: Just as physical fire consumes consumable material, God's pure holiness cannot coexist with unrepentant sin. This represents His wrath and judgment against evil.

Isaiah 4:4-5

[4]When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,

[5]then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering."

2. Purification and Refinement:

Fire is also a refiner's tool used to burn away dross and purify precious metals. For believers, this signifies God's refining presence, burning away temporary, worthless things to mold and transform them into the image of Christ.

Psalms 66:10

[10]For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

3. Power and Presence: Throughout Scripture—such as the burning bush (Exodus 3:2) and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:17)—fire symbolizes God's active, undeniable power, zeal, and intimate presence.

Exodus 13:21

[21]And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night."

1. Biblical Confirmation and Presence:

*** The Holy Spirit: In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit descended as "tongues of fire" on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3), confirming the start of the church's mission and empowering believers to preach the gospel.**

*** Answer by Fire: Throughout the Old Testament, God used literal fire to confirm His presence and covenants (e.g., the burning bush in Exodus 3 and Elijah's altar on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18).**

2. The Sacrament of Confirmation:

In Catholic and liturgical traditions, the Sacrament of Confirmation perfects baptismal grace. It is described as a spiritual seal where confirmands receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit to set them on fire to witness for Christ. Fire serves as the primary symbol of this energy and vitality.

3. Purification and Judgment

The fire of God represents absolute holiness. In the Bible, God is referred to as a "consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). This fire is understood to burn away impurities, test the quality of a believer's work, and bring about righteous judgment.