

Title: **CHRIST IN THE FLAME OF FIRE**
Text: Exodus 3:2
Subject: *Christ Typified by Fire*
Date: Tuesday Evening — March 14, 2006
Tape # Exodus 16

Introduction:

Let's begin tonight in Genesis 15. When the Lord appeared to Abraham and confirmed his covenant to him, fire passed between the divided pieces of the sacrifice, and consumed them.

(Genesis 15:17-18) "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. (18) In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

In Exodus 3, The Lord God is about to send Moses back to Egypt to deliver his people, in fulfillment of that covenant promise he made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14.

(Genesis 15:13-14) "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; (14) And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

And, when he was about to fulfill his covenant, by delivering his people from Egypt, we read in Exodus 3:2, — "*The Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire.*" The message of the burning bush is so rich and full that I intend, as the Lord enables me, to preach several more messages to you from Exodus 3.

Proposition: Here we see Christ in the flame of fire, and have a clear example of fire used in a typical way, portraying our blessed Savior.

That is my subject. We have before us a vision of Christ, the Angel the Lord, in a bush burning with fire, and we are told specifically that the our Savior appeared to Moses "*in a flame of fire.*" The afflictions of Israel were great, but the Lord's mercies were greater. The Son of God appeared in a flame of fire, displaying his incomprehensible deity, majesty, and glory as our Deliverer and Savior.

LIGHT

Fire is a good, instructive type of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Light is always associated with fire; and our Savior declares, "*I am the Light of the world*" (John 8:12). He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. 1:3). His brightness is described as "*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). All who follow the Lord Jesus, all who believe him, walk in the light as he is in the light. Walking in the Light, we confess our sins and confess that Christ alone is our Light and our Righteousness.

(1 John 1) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) (3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (4) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you,

that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

(1 John 2:1-2) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"

WARMTH

Fire provides heat and warmth. When the Lord Jesus comes to us, opens the Scriptures to us, and shows us things concerning himself out of the Book, he causes our hearts to burn in us. — "*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us ..., and while He opened unto us the Scriptures?*" (Luke 24:32). When our hearts are cold as ice and hard as a stone, if Christ will appear, we are melted before him immediately.

PURIFIES

We commonly associate purity and purification with fire. And, when Christ is the Sun of Righteousness arises in our hearts with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2), giving us life and faith in him, we stand with him and in him pure before our God, with "*a pure conscience,*" clothed in the pure and white linen of his righteousness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

CONSUMING

We all know that fire is consuming. When our Lord Jesus comes in grace, he is our Light and our Purification. By his presence and his grace, we are warmed. But when he comes upon his enemies in wrath and judgment, he comes to consume.

(Deuteronomy 9:3) "Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee."

(Hebrews 12:29) "For our God *is* a consuming fire."

NO HARM

Yet, there was something in this appearance of Christ to Moses that was startling and great. "*He looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*" How beautiful that is! How blessed! Although the fire completely engulfed the bush, possessing it entirely, it did not harm even its most tender twig or most delicate bud! **The same divine fire which consumes the wicked blesses us!**

- It was in fire that he appeared **at Sinai**, in the giving of the law (Ex. 19:18-19).
- Yet, it was in that same fire that he appeared in saving mercy to **Isaiah** (Isa. 6:4), and to **Ezekiel** at the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:4), and to **John** on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:14).

- And Malachi tells us that in all his works as our great High Priest, he is “as a *refiner’s fire*” (Mal. 3:2), not to destroy, but to refine, cleanse, purify, and perfect.

(Malachi 3:1-2) “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. (2) But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.”

As John the Baptist asserted, though he shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, he baptizes his own with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. 3:11). God the Holy Spirit is the “*Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning*” (Isa. 4:4; 28:6). As the Spirit of judgment, he illuminates and convicts us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. As the Spirit of burning, he enflames our souls by shedding abroad in our hearts the love of God for us, making us, like John, “*burning and shining lights*” (John 5:35) in a world of darkness.

William Huntington wrote, — “In the light of the Spirit there are such views of Christ’s person, loveliness, and fulness, and such beauties in God, his Word, and ways, as give heat and fervor to all our devotions; while the promises which flow into the heart, come as live coals from the altar, and increase the ardor. And the joy that springs from love is, at times, like the visible flames which on the altar, ascending to God from the hallowed fire within, which is pent up in the heart till the flames of joy give it vent.”

OTHER APPEARANCES

The Lord Jesus frequently appeared in the Old Testament in a flame of fire. Each appearance, like those given to Abraham in Genesis 15 and this one given to Moses in Exodus 3, are full of instruction.

- As he led Israel through the wilderness, “*the LORD went before them ... by night in **a pillar of fire** to give them light*” (Ex. 13:21). — Our blessed Savior will never leave us in darkness.
- When he entered into a covenant with Israel at **Mount Sinai**, “*the LORD descended upon it in fire*” (Ex. 19:18; 24:17).

(Exodus 19:18) “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”

(Exodus 24:17) “And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.”

The fire at Sinai is both an emblem of his justice and of his unapproachable holiness, teaching us that we must come to God only by faith in Christ, upon his altar, without any works of our own (Ex. 20:24-26).

(Exodus 20:24-26) “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. (25) And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. (26) Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”

- There was an unceasing representation of the Lord Jesus on the altar, in the “***holy fire that never went out***” (Lev. 6:13), typically assuring us of the everlasting efficacy of Christ as our sin-atoning sacrifice, by which we are perpetually accepted in him

- Of all the Old Testament appearances of our Lord in a flame of fire, none is more delightful to consider than his appearance to **Manoah and his wife** (Judges 13:17-20).

(Judges 13:17-20) "And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? (18) And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret? (19) So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did wonderously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. (20) For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground."

If you look in the marginal reference of your Bible, you will notice that the word "secret" in verse 18 is really "**WONDERFUL.**" You know whose name that is. It belongs to our Savior (Isa. 9:6), for whom and by whom all things are. Everything is designed to bring honor and glory to the him, whose name is Wonderful. Most particularly, the work of redemption and salvation is to the praise, honor and glory of his Wonderful name (Rev. 4 and 5).

When Manoah and his wife made a sacrifice to him, "*the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar*" (Judges 13:20). Similarly, the intercessions of Christ ascend to heaven with our prayers (Rev. 8:3; Rom. 8:26-28).

(Romans 8:26-28) "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (27) And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. (28) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his purpose*."

- When **Solomon dedicated the temple**, "*fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple*" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). — The Lord God hereby shows us his acceptance of our sacrifices, including those of our bodies (Rom. 12:1) and our praise (Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), by Christ Jesus.
- When he revealed himself in his initial vision to **Ezekiel**, he had "*the appearance of fire all around*" (Ezek. 1:27). — So our Lord Jesus Christ reveals himself in light and glory (John 1:14), as the Lord of all providence, doing all things with wisdom and purity.
- And, today, as he walks **in the midst of his churches**, our blessed Savior has "*eyes like a flame of fire*" (Rev. 1:14; 2:18). — Here, in his house, by the preaching of the gospel, our Savior gives his light to purify and warm, to refine and comfort, to guide and to protect his own.

The Lord God makes his servants "*a flame of fire*." And the Word of God is compared to fire. — "*Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*" (Jer. 23:29). Our Savior declared, "*I am come to send fire on the earth*." And so he does.

- Once more, **when comes again**, "*his eyes [will be] like a flame of fire*" (Rev. 19:12). — He comes as a consuming fire of wrath upon the ungodly.

The torments of the damned are uniformly described in Scripture under the image of fire. — "*A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell; and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the nations*" (Deut. 32:22). — "*The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*" (Isa. 33:14) The Son of God speaks repeatedly of a worm that never dies and a fire that never is quenched. And in his solemn description of the last day, in the tremendous judgment of it, he has already recorded the very words with which he will speak to the sinners. — "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and all his angels*"

(Matt. 25:41). What terrible language is used to speak of the fire of God's wrath in that last great day in Revelation 20!

Men have, through the ages, hotly debated about whether the fires of hell and of judgment are literal or figurative. But the question is altogether insignificant. Whatever the fires of hell are, they are exactly suited to their purpose: — The Execution of God's Furious Wrath!

It is written, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*" And at the same time we read, "*For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever*" (Ps. 19:17-18). That is sufficient.

(2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; (7) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

Does Christ's fire enlighten and warm and purify you? Or will it consume you because of your unbelief?

Amen.