

Introduction:

- In the early 90's I was privileged to go to Anaheim CA to a Vineyard church. At this conference Leonard Ravenhill was speaking. It was a conference on Holiness. (Who does that anymore?) Ravenhill said things like:
 - *"If you want to be popular, preach happiness. If you want to be unpopular, preach holiness."*
 - *"The early Church was married to poverty, prisons and persecutions. Today, the church is married to prosperity, personality, and popularity."*
 - *"In revival, God is not concerned about filling empty churches, He is concerned about filling empty hearts."* IE. As he preached ministers began to run to the front to repent!
- *"Hell is burning while the church sleeps!"* Revival Gods's Way; Leonard Ravenhill p. 51
- *"Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat, declares the Lord. **Is not my word like fire**, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"* (Jeremiah 23:28-29, ESV)

I. Understanding Fire In The Bible

A. There are two basic understandings of fire in the Bible.

1. One is judgement. The fire brought God's judgement to people, cities and nations.
 - a) Fire separates us separates from the tree of life. This is where we first see fire in the Bible. *"He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."* (Genesis 3:24, ESV)
 - b) Sodom and Gomorrah are consumed by fire (Gen 19:24). *"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it."* (Ezekiel 16:49-50, ESV)
 - c) Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, are consumed by fire for offering "strange fire" (Lev 10:1ff). We do not really know by scripture what they did wrong but obviously it was an offense to God. My opinion would be that they brought man made fire before God instead of letting God 'light things up. What can we learn from this? Sin is a serious issue to God. The Bible is marked repeatedly by small sins that cost people greatly.
 - (1) Eating a forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6).
 - (2) Looking back where you came from (Gen. 19:26).
 - (3) Hitting a rock (Num. 20:11).
 - (4) Touching the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6:7).

- (5) Lying about real-estate profits (Acts 5:1-11).
2. Two is Cleansing. Fire symbolizes cleansing.¹
 - a) After the war with Midian, the plunder was to pass through fire for cleansing. (Num 31) the priest said that anything that passed through fire would be clean (Num 31:21-24).
 - b) Isaiah saw the temple filled with smoke, saw God's glory and was purified (Isa 6).
 - c) Daniel 3. 4th man in the fire—none were burned up...purity.
 - d) Mal 3:2 the phrase "refiner's fire." *"But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap."* (Malachi 3:2, ESV)
 - e) Our spiritual work will pass through fire. *"each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward."* (1 Corinthians 3:13-14, ESV)
 - f) These two perspectives make clear that to one fire means death and to another life. To one it means eternal judgment and to another eternal blessing.
 - B. What accounts for the difference, or what one receives is based on your position before God. Are you in Christ or not in Christ? There is no middle ground or I "hope so" position.
 1. So, fire is a separator. Same fire different outcome. When the fire of revival comes it comes in both ways. Those who do not know Jesus as Lord of their life will feel the heat/weight of conviction of sin. Those who do know Christ will literally be the fire that awakens men's hearts to Christ.
 2. Fire is a cleanser. No one escapes the fire in revival. In revival judgement begins in the house of God. (1 Peter 4:17) God comes to each believer personally convicts of sin, points to Christ, and cleanses powerfully.
 3. Anyone who wants to get to the Tree of Life must pass through the fire! Mt. 3:10-12
 - a) Fruitless trees are cut down and thrown into the fire and burned.
 - b) Those who humbly stand before God in godly sorrow He baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.

II. A Fire In My Bones!

- A. ***Is not my word like fire**, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in*

¹ Hamilton, V. P. (1999). [172 ψλ](#). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 77). Moody Press.

pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:28-29, ESV) Fire by its nature produces, heat and light because something is burned. I will just say that the believer who is filled with the Word of God will experience the heat and light of the presence of God.

1. Dt 4:24; 9:3 Speaks of God as being an all consuming fire. God is an eternal fire that will never go out!
 2. IE. Ex. 20:27-28 The lamp of God was to never go out in the Temple. This speaks of God's eternal presence with the nation of Israel
- B. God puts the Word of the Lord in Jeremiah the prophet!
1. Jeremiah, what do you see? Gods word in us causes us to see because His word is light! God at that moment is putting the Word of the Lord into him. And this word would will do two things: *"Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."*" (Jeremiah 1:9-10, ESV)
 - a) The Word destroys ...sin, sinful patterns, sinful structures, lies, false belief systems, etc.
 - b) The Word builds and heals...it makes new, restores, renews, gives life, hope , etc.
 - c) The difference is the heart of the one who are hearing! But, Oh how patient God is with us, not wanting a one to perish but all to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9
 2. The Word is to be a fire in our bones! The Word was a fire in Jeremiahs bones! *"If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."* (Jeremiah 20:9, ESV)
 - a) When was the last time you experienced the Word of God in you like a fire? When you just had to tell somebody what you found?
 - b) When was the last time you experienced the Word of the Lord in you like a fire? Like, it is wrecking you inside because you are silent and not speaking.
 - c) I believe this was the condition of the early church. The Word was a fire shut up in their bones! They could not help but speak...therefore...everywhere they went people were encountering Christ in them the hope of glory!
- C. Ministers As Flames of Fire! This is not talking about full time preachers it is talking about servants of God...you and me!
1. The voice of God does this to us. When the Logos becomes Rhema we have IGNITION! We have a fire started! *"The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire."* (Psalm 29:7, ESV) It twists might oaks, shatters cedars and yet causes the deer to give birth and all in the temple to cry, "GLORY!" IE Rev 13, two witnesses, fire from mouths.

- a) "he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire." (Psalm 104:4, ESV) If you give fuel and wind to fire you will get a wild fire! Blow on us Holy Spirit! Wind of God come. Ignite us with your presence!
- b) "Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire."" (Hebrews 1:7, ESV) When heaven and earth agree, the angels help us to be ministers on fire! God's fire!
2. "Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29, ESV)
3. Fire affects the hearts of men! "They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32, ESV)

III. Aquire the Fire!

- A. To get this fire, you have to have a humble heart. Humility is the soil in which the Word of God grows!
- B. To get this fire you have to be in the Word! His word is a fire shut up in our bones. As you are in the word, God will light a message up for you to declare in faith to others.
- C. To get this fire you have to have personal time alone with God. "For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened?" (Jeremiah 23:18, ESV) We get the Word of the Lord as we stand in His counsel! His presence. IE. It was what Gabriel said to Zachariah. Luke 1:19 "I am Gabriel! I stand in the presence of God!" If God is fire and you stand in the presence of fire, you are going to get lit up!
- D. Church, lets go after this fire!

Conclusion:

- We have a call to be fire starters!
- We have an invitation to live close to the flame of God.
- In fact, we have an invitation to be filled with the flame of God.
- "When God sovereignly pours that kind of power out on a church we call it revival. And God's purpose in such a revival is that our witness to Christ will have more conviction, more courage, more wisdom and more effect, so that God is greatly Glorified as more and more people are reached and added to the Lord." John Piper

To be in God without Christ would be hell.