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Fire on the Earth

“I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49 NASB)

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God on earth (Ex. 33:14). God’s Spirit was in Eden, and continued to work God’s will in the fallen world to guide His plan of salvation for mankind. It moved upon specific men and women of God at specific times, uttering the Word of God through them, inspiring the written Word. At the proper time, God’s Spirit came to dwell among mankind in His temple built among His chosen people of Israel. But because of Israel’s wickedness, God’s Spirit left the house of God desolate in Ezekiel’s time (Ez. 10-12). Because of this, when the Jews rejected Jesus, He told them, *“Behold, your house is left to you desolate”* (Luke 13:35a), for while the temple had been abandoned for hundreds of years, the Holy Spirit was in Jesus—and if Jesus left, the temple would be left desolate.

By His sacrifice, Jesus made it possible for people who accepted His redemption to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Without the covering of Christ’s holiness, the Spirit cannot inhabit mankind. At Pentecost, Believers first received the indwelling Holy Spirit, appearing to them as *“tongues as of fire”* (Acts 2:3). Jesus made it possible for each Believer to become the dwelling place of God’s presence on earth, having immersed you in *“the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Matt. 3:11), so that you now know *“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own”* (1 Cor. 6:19).

The indwelling presence of God sanctifies the Believer—convicting, disciplining, teaching, and guiding them into the Holy things of God. Not only this, but the Spirit also convicts *“the world concerning sin and righteousness*

and judgment” (John 16:8)—concerning sin (that it exists and must be dealt with), righteousness (that it exists, God alone is righteous, and that we are called to live righteous lives), and judgment (that God’s judgment is sure and just and will come upon all the ungodly).

In this way, the Spirit causes *“division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three”* (Luke 12:51-52), because it exposes sin, dividing the repentant from the unrepentant. *“Our God is a consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:29), and like fire, the Holy Spirit reveals the true nature of what is hiding in the wood, hay, and stubble of the flesh, separating fools-gold from gold, bringing to light what is valuable and burning up what is not—refining the things of God by fire in the Believer. The Holy Spirit does this by God’s Word: *“Is not My word like fire?” declares the Lord, ‘and like a hammer which shatters a rock?’”* (Jer. 23:29). God’s Word is the *“sword of the Spirit”* (Eph. 6:17a), which like a hammer and fire *“is living and active...piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart”* (Heb. 4:12). As God told Jeremiah, *“I am making My words in your mouth fire And this people wood, and it will consume them”* (Jer. 5:14).

While the *“whole world lies in the power of the evil one”* (1 John 5:19b), God’s Spirit is never quenched. No matter how satan tries to suppress the Spirit’s fire dwelling in the Body of Christ, the very *“gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matt. 16:18). Every day, may we give each situation and conversation to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to reveal the heart of the matter and what we should do. May we not grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) nor quench its work (1 Thess. 5:19) in ourselves and in its conviction of the world through our lives as Christ’s Body—the very house of God. Amen.

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