

# The Holiness of God I

## By Fire! #1

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We're going to go through and cover perhaps one of the most important subjects in the Bible, and the most important subject concerning God. It's going to completely open or add to, or cause you to understand about God even more, and hopefully even more about human beings.

I think that it's interesting the way that this has come about. I didn't necessarily plan it this way, but this is the way that it just happened to come about. We had just finished the sermon series about human nature and now we're going to study the most important thing concerning God, perhaps *the most important thing about the nature of God*, and that is *the Holiness of God*.

That has an awful lot to do with our whole relationship with God; it has a tremendous opening in our perspective in:

- relating to the Holy Spirit
- relating to God the Father
- relating to how we view God

Too many times we view God as a 'hip-pocket' God. How many people like to have God convenient for them to kind of be a 'good luck charm'? ***God is not like that at all!***

We're also going to see what it means to approach God and the Holiness of God. This is such a vast subject that we obviously cannot cover it in just one or two sermons.

### **Definitions of Holiness:**

- Holiness gives the expression of the essential nature of the sacred

Wherever you study in the Bible about God, the most important thing that you come across is that *He is Holy! He alone is Holy!* However, in the word *Holiness* there is not one attribute or definition.

- as the innermost reality to which all others related to God belong

Everything else about God—love, grace, mercy—all has to do with the nature and Holiness of God. With all these things, it isn't sufficient to give it full meaning.

- Holiness extends into every area of existence and has continue to everything that God does

That is in nature, history, human experience and conduct. In the election of Abraham and Israel and the New Testament Church, it has to do with our calling. Remember, it says:

- 'our Holy calling'
- we are called 'Holy brethren'
- we have the 'Holy Spirit'

All of those are key things to understand, but first we need to understand about the power of God and the Holiness of God in relationship to that.

Let's begin with some very important things concerning God. First of all, we're going to find how it describes God. We're going to see several places where there is this description of God.

Rev. 4 talks about the vision of God the Father and of Jesus Christ. We know that this is where John is taken in vision and lifted up to see the throne of God. Talk about an awesome thing to see, and awesome vision to behold.

If you want to put that in the context of all your dreams, ambitions and everything that you ever had in life, starting from a little child, there is nothing greater than to have had this vision here, *to see God!*

Revelation 4:2: "And immediately I was in *the Spirit*; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *One was* sitting on the throne. And He Who *was* sitting was in appearance like a jasper stone and a sardius stone; and a rainbow *was* around the throne, like an emerald in its appearance" (vs 2-3). All of these things are very crude descriptions of what He saw.

For me, it's awfully hard to grab a mental vision of what's being told here; in particularly because I'm not acquainted with how these stones really look and how you can view them, and also with the understanding that stones and different kinds of light are viewed entirely differently.

Verse 4: "And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and they had on their heads golden crowns. And proceeding from the throne were **lightnings and thunders and voices...**" (vs 4-5). We're looking here at all the power and source of everything that there is.

“...and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, *were* burning before the throne. And before the throne *was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne and over the throne *were* four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind” (vs 5-6).

I myself cannot even imagine what that looks like. It’s beyond my comprehension. I think of a post just filled with eyes. But I know that that isn’t the way it looks.

Verse 7: “And the first living creature *was* like a lion, and the second living creature *was* like a bull, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. And each of *the* four living creatures had six wings respectively; *and* around and within *they were* full of eyes; and day and night they cease not saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come’” (vs 7-8).

I’ve never really been able to determine whether it is said continuously. And if that is said continuously, then what else can go on around the throne of God! So, I would have to assume that this is much like the morning and evening sacrifice that was on earth, which was for praise and glory to God. So, it would be every morning and evening, day and night, and nothing stops them from doing that every day and night to say, “...Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come.”

This creates the setting of the Holiness of God! We find a very similar setting that Isaiah saw. I suppose that this one very important experience when a man really felt less than a man. Lots of times we can do an awful lot for our understanding of the Scriptures if we just try to mentally put ourselves in the position of the one writing this and just see how we would react.

Isaiah 6:1: In the year that King Uzziah died, I then saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and **His train filled the temple.**” That is His glory, whatever it was coming from God.

I suppose that would be like looking out at Halley’s comet and here’s this huge train going behind it that has all the reflection that looks like a tremendous thing of glory. I kind of have this in mind when I read this of this train. I think of it as God’s glory that just follows Him wherever He goes.

Verse 2: “Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings...” We’re talking about the same thing we saw in Rev. 4.

“...with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another, and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, *is*

the LORD of hosts... [the Lord God Almighty] ...the whole earth is full of His glory” (vs 2-3).

When we look out and view the earth, we don’t think the whole earth is full of God’s glory. We look out and see trees, plants, people, grass and animals; but you know that all of those things glorify God because He made them. He made all of them!

I hope that through this series we’re going to find a lesser station in our opinion of ourselves as human beings.

Verse 4: “And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of the one who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, ‘**Woe is me! For I am undone...**’” (vs 4-5).

There are two experiences that I have had that was not like this, but where I felt *woe is me, I’m undone!* That is just before I left Worldwide Church of God. As I look back on it now, the very day that the infamous person was ordained as an evangelist I felt this absolute cold gloom and doom just come upon me.

Then when things were being planned at Lincoln City, that very day that they were planned, the same thing happened during the Feast. That very night I felt *undone! Gloom and doom!* I thought to myself: that’s strange because I remembered what happened the last time and I just put it out of my mind. That’s the closest I have ever come to relating what Isaiah went through. He said:

“...‘Woe is me! For I am undone; for I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...’” (v 5). That’s why no one can approach God out of the goodness of their own heart! Human nature ought to tell us that. No one can, because God is Holy!

“...for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having a live coal in his hand...” (vs 5-6). We’re going to see that one of the first things about the Holiness of God is that it is associated with fire. What is Satan’s counterfeit of that? *Fire worship!*

“...*which* he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he laid *it* upon my mouth and said, ‘Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin atoned for’” (vs 6-7).

That’s quite something! A coal off the Holy altar of God, *symbolically*, and touched his lips. That’s quite different from baptism for us. This was God’s way showing that He would deal with Isaiah.

Verse 8: “And I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here *am* I; send me!’ And He

said, ‘Go, and tell this people, “You hear indeed, but do not understand; and you see indeed, but do not perceive.” Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and return, and be healed”’ (vs 8-10).

That is exactly what is happening this society today. They’re closing their eyes, their ears, everything:

- the world’s economic condition
- the disease condition
- the water condition
- the air condition
- the general health of people
- the general understanding of ‘religion’

They’re closing their eyes and their ears and doing exactly what it says here.

I think when we are done with this, you will understand why no man should appoint himself as a prophet of God. No man shall say, ‘I’m a prophet of God’ unless they’ve gone some experience like this—that Isaiah did, that John did—that they really know that it was from God. Do you see what a presumptuous thing that is?

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit...” The Spirit of God is completely antagonistic to the exaltation of human beings.

“...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (v 15).

We’re still talking about the Holiness of God, the greatness of God, the absolute marvelous and fantastic things of God. We’ve covered this before, but it’s ‘line upon line, precept upon precept’ and we’re going to learn more and more. I think that’s it very important that we understand and also realize that as we see the world—and this is something to thank God for, and that I think we are living through—going down worse and worse, and the problems and difficulties happening:

- What is happening with us?
- What is God leading us through?

*To understand more and more of His Word! And to have a clearer and better understanding of how we stand with God! That’s very important.*

I think it’s significant the way we view it, and it seems to be happening at the same time. That’s not to say that we take any credit for ourselves and say, ‘We’re God’s people and God has

to do this, God has to do that.’ **NO!** God doesn’t have to do a thing! He does not have to do a thing because we constrain God to do something. *God does it because He wants to! God does it because of His grace!*

So therefore, we don’t take the credit. The worst thing in the world to do is take credit for what God has done! That is the absolutely the worst thing in the world to do. Let’s keep that in its proper perspective, too.

Psalms 104:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with honor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as with a garment...” (vs 1-2). That’s like going to your closet and saying, ‘What am I going to wear today?’ You have this huge, vast closet and every time you would move something it would sparkle and shimmer with the different colors.

Can you imagine clothing yourself with light? What appears to be light? That’s going to be an interesting experience! When we get through with this and you really understand and contemplate and have in your mind the Scripture that says we will ‘see Him as He is.’ I wonder what wardrobe God is fixing for us?

Jesus said, ‘In My Father’s house there are many mansions, and if it were not so I would have told you, and I go to prepare a place for you.’ What is He going to prepare? *Everything!* “...covering Yourself with light as with a garment...”

“...and stretching out the heavens like a curtain” (v 2). That has always just been an amazing thing to me, every time I step out and look at the stars at night and things like that. I think of that and how God stood out there. And just like we just pull a cord and open the curtains, God put out the vastness of universe and heavens. What a marvelous and fantastic thing!

Ezekiel talks about the Holiness of God in connection with fire and power. What is the most awesome thing that human beings have created today? Is it not the hydrogen bomb? *Yes!* If you’ve ever seen some pictures of that, that is absolutely breathtaking! If you feel like you’re seeing something that makes you feel *undone*... If you had a big, huge television screen to see that thing go off, you would feel *undone!* Everyone of those who saw it, witnessed it, or were part of it have commented: What have we let loose on the earth?

That is just an infinitesimal, just a drop of the power and glory of God! Here is the vision of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 1:4: “And I looked, and behold, a windstorm came out of the north, a great cloud, with

fire flashing forth continually...”—*in-folding itself* (KJV). I’ve often tried to figure out what *fire in-folding* itself would mean. In other words, it must have been some ball of fire, instead of the flames going out, they were continually in-folding itself.

“...—and a brightness all around, *coming* out of its midst, like the color of sparkling amber out of the midst of the fire. Also out of its midst *came* the likeness of four living creatures...” (vs 4-5). Wherever we see any vision of God, it’s always associated with four living creatures.

When we come to the book of Revelation and it shows the 24 elders and the 7 spirits of God are also there. That’s the center of the universe, brethren! That’s what controls everything that goes on.

“...And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And each *had* four faces, and *each had* four wings” (vs 5-6). These are a cherubim. They’re a little bit different teraphim that we saw before.

Verse 7: “And their legs *were* straight; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot. And they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And the *hands* of a man *extended* from under their wings on their four sides; and as for their faces and wings of the four of them, their wings were joined one to the other. They did not turn in their going; each one went straightforward” (vs 7-9).

Just like these things of what people have claimed are *unidentified flying objects* (UFOs) that they go at tremendous speed and all of a sudden without slowing down or anything they go in a completely different direction. I’m not going to discuss UFOs except to say that I feel that’s what Ezekiel saw, only it was not unidentified. He identified it.

I’m sure there are demon apparitions and angelic beings that we see. I’m sure that if the technology of mankind has gone as far as it has, it’s entirely conceivable that there is such a thing as a flying saucer that *men* operate.

Here Ezekiel identified what it was, and I’m sure that a lot of things that these people see as UFOs—and I’m sure that there are a lot of them they don’t see—are the angels of God carrying out the work of God here on earth. All you have to do is read the book of Daniel. What was Gabriel doing? I’ll tell you one thing, go through and study about Gabriel and you will find that that must be the angel in charge of all of the prophecies and events leading up to the first coming of Jesus Christ. I’m sure that he’s going to be in charge and carrying out all the events and making sure that they’re done leading up

to the second return of Jesus Christ.

I feel that God is actively involved in carrying things out on earth. This thing of AIDS; God didn’t allow AIDS, *He sent it!* There’s a certain time of judgment that comes upon a people and nation that God sends it! It happens!

God didn’t allow the Flood, He caused it! Once we understand about the Holiness of God and the power of God we’re going to realize that.

Verse 10: “And the likeness of their faces *was this*: the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right *side* of the four of them; and the face of a bull on the left side of the four of them; and the face of an eagle toward the rear of the four of them. Thus were their faces. And their wings *were* stretched upward; two *wings* of each one were joined to another; and two *wings of each* covered their bodies. And each went straightforward. To where the spirit was to go, there they went without turning as they moved. And the likeness of the living creatures *was this*: they looked like burning coals of fire...” (vs 10-13).

Here again, whenever we start getting into the presence of God, as He appears, we’re dealing with a description of fire. We’re going to find in dealing with the *Holiness of God and fire*. How silly it is to worship fire, absolutely silly; you can see Satan’s counterfeit. People get all involved in that kind of thing.

“...like the appearance of **torches**. It was continually circling among the living creatures. And the fire *was* bright, and **out of the fire went forth lightning**.... [very similar to what we read in Rev. 4. 14] ...And the living creatures kept running back and forth, like the appearance of a **flash of lightning**” (vs 13-14).

You can go through and read all the rest of it. It goes through showing all this power and God’s Spirit that has to do with force, energy and what we would call *fire*, and what God also calls *fire*.

Heb. 10 & 12 shows that this also carries right on over into the New Testament. This also ties in with our being able to fellowship and assemble together and so forth.

Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some *are* accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging *one another*, and all *the* more as you see the day drawing near. For if we willfully go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries *of God*” (vs 25-27).

Why is God going to burn up the wicked in a lake of fire? Have you ever wondered why God is going to use *the Lake of Fire*? *Yes, it's a refinement, that's true!* But, ***fire is an expression of God's anger***, as well as an expression of His glory.

Verse 28: "*Consider this*: anyone who rejects *the Law of Moses* dies without mercy under *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified..." (vs 28-29). We're going to see that that also has to do with Holiness.

"...as an unholy thing, and has scorned the Spirit of grace? For we know Him Who has said, "Vengeance *belongs* to Me. I will recompense!" says *the Lord*.' And again, '*The Lord will judge His people*.' *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (vs 29-31). That's why we want to fall into the hands of God with His mercy, not fall into the hands of God with His anger.

Hebrews 12:29: "For our God *is* indeed a **consuming fire**." That is to consume everything that is evil and wicked.

When you start thinking about the rebellion of Satan the devil and everything that he did; we're going to see why God says that He is 'a jealous God.' We, as human beings, look upon that word as a trait of human evil, being jealous, because jealousy is rooted in envy, lust and covetousness. But the jealousy that God is talking about is because *He alone is God!*

So, when you view that in relationship to where Lucifer said, 'I will become like the Most High,' maybe we can understand more about the rebellion of Satan and how absolutely fearful and frightful it was.

We'll see the first encounter God had with Moses was, and I'm sure all of you will know what it's going to be, and then we're going to see some of the events that took place.

Exodus 3:1: "Now, Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian...." Let me just mention here that Midian was one of the sons of Abraham through Keturah. As priest of Midian, even though you would call them heathen—because he did not receive the blessing of Abraham, though it was of the offspring of Abraham—their religion at this time must not have been too pagan.

Remember when Moses came out and brought all the people out and was met by Jethro's father-in-law? He said, 'Moses you're a wreck, you're going to die! He said, 'All these people keep

coming to you every day, and there's this long line. You're going to wear yourself and the people out. Organize it and have captains of thousands, hundreds, tens and so forth.' Moses took his father-in-law's advice and did it.

That would tell me that the religion of Midian at that time must have not been too awfully pagan. Isn't it interesting that Moses kept the flocks, David kept the flocks and Christ was a builder.

"...And he led the flock to the west side of the desert. And he came to the mountain of God, to Horeb. And the Angel of the **LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire**, out of the midst of a bush. and he looked, and behold, **the bush burned with fire!** And the bush *was* not consumed. And Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight why **the bush does not burn up**'" (vs 1-3).

There are not too many exciting things out in the desert that come by. You may see a lizard, snake, scorpion, or something. You're out there tending sheep for 40 years; Moses was 80-years-old when God called him. He was kicked out of Egypt when he was about 40, so there's not too much to entertain yourself with.

Look out here at all these sheep all the time. That's pretty much it and once in a while a caravan would come through. So, here's this strange thing going on. Here's this bush burning.

Verse 4: "And the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see. God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, 'Moses! Moses!' And he said, 'Here I *am*.' And He said, 'Do not come near here. Put off your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand *is Holy ground*'" (vs 4-5). So, the Holiness of God is so important that wherever God is, that is Holy!

Verse 6: "And He said, 'I *am* the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

We know that it was not an angel of God, but that it was God Himself!

Exodus 19:3: "And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying..." He didn't go all the way up to God. He probably went part way up the mountain and God talked to him and said:

"...Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians..." (vs 3-4). And we remember how short their memory was; they didn't even get three days out into the wilderness before they were complaining.

There are some people who are chronic critics. That's all they can do. Most of them are hired by these preservation groups or study groups and the other half are Democrats, and they have one-quarter of them who are Republicans and the rest are just wild running all over the earth. You can't please people; they're just chronic critics and cranks!

So, God said to remember what He did, "...You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings..." (v 4). I bet there's some critic out there saying, 'Oh yeah, eagles' wings; I walked all the way, God, don't give me that.' *They did! They walked!*

"...and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed..." (vs 4-5). I want to emphasize something here very clearly: ***God is the One Who did the calling!***

- He called them out of Egypt
- He rescued them out of slavery

He does the same thing; He makes the covenant promise a general covenant. In today's legal parlance it would be 'a memorandum of understanding.' We have general principles that you bind yourself to and any subsequent agreement fits into the overall 'memorandum of understanding.' That's what we're seeing right here. God didn't spell out and make everything crystal clear. He said, ***'If you will obey My voice, indeed!'***

- What does that mean?
- How broad is that statement?

Anything God speaks! Not what you think you want to hear, or not what you want to obey, but you're saying, ***'I will obey Your voice!'*** That's the same thing in the New Testament. Go back and study John 14:

- if you love Me keep My commandments
- if you love Me you will keep My sayings

"...and keep My covenant..." (v 5). Those are the conditions that God lays upon the people.

"...then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine.... [God hasn't gone off and deserted it; all of it belongs to God] ...And **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation....**" (v 5-6). The reason would be because God will dwell among His people.

"...These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (v 6). Not a very long message; simple and easy to understand.

Verse 7: "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words, which the LORD commanded him.

And all the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.'..." (vs 7-8).

That's why it's called a marriage covenant. You stand up there on the marriage day and 'Do you, 'So and So,' promise to love and provide all this for your wife?' *Yes, I do!* 'Do you promise to submit, yield and obey the voice of your husband?' *Yes, I do!* Then ten years down the road that still applies, that very simple little ceremony, but you didn't say what you were going to say ten years down the road. Always remember that next time you're in a fight; those original words are still binding. Then you can wait till sundown and bury the hatchet and start all over again. That's the way to handle it.

"...And Moses returned the words of the people to the LORD. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Lo, I come to you in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with you...'" (vs 8-9). Why did God speak directly to the children of Israel? Do you know what they would have said if they had seen nothing and heard nothing? And every day they looked up at Mt. Sinai and it was blue sky and a hot sun and Moses staggers down 40 days later and says, 'God spoke to me.' *Yeah! HA! You betcha God spoke to you. Let's lynch this guy!* They almost did with the things that were there! This was a scary event!

"...and believe you forever.'.... [this is going to make an impression on the mind] ...And Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And be ready for the third day; for on the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, "Take heed to yourselves. Do not go up into the mountain, or touch the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be surely put to death"' (vs 9-12).

Verse 14: "And Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people. And they washed their clothes." Where did they get all the water to wash their clothes? They had to have a lot of water to wash the clothes of 1.8-million people.

Verse 15: "And he said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day. Do not approach a woman.' And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there *were* thunders and lightnings..." (vs 15-16). Notice how closely this ties in with Rev. 3.

"...and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And the sound of the trumpet was exceedingly loud..." (v 16). A trumpet will always get your

attention, that's why they use it for reveille; wakes you up suddenly. Here are all the angels out there blowing these trumpets. Think of it in that situation. Talk about an attention-getter. We'll see what an attention-getter this was.

"...so that all the people in the camp trembled" (v 16). I imagine when they first heard it, it made the hair stand up on the back of their head. Then they got 'goose bumps' and were all trembling! They shook in their boots!

Verse 17: "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God..." At that time they were all ready to march, so this must have been some ceremony. This wasn't 'here comes a mob and we'll all mob around the mountain.' *No!* They were all set and all in their positions and all went forward to meet God. It was a formal ceremony!

"...And they stood at the base of the mountain" (v 17) The nether part, the low end of the mountain. The mountain came down to the flat area and that's where they were. That nether part is right where the valley ended and the mountain started.

Verse 18: "And Mount Sinai was **smoking**..." Here this thing is burning and the thick clouds, lightning and the trumpets blasting away.

"...all of it because the LORD came down upon it **in fire**..." (v 18). When God comes in His powerful glorious form, *it is fire, all consuming*, everything physical around is consumed, gone! That's why He had to come in a cloud to prevent everything from being burned up.

"...And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly" (v 18). So, the whole thing was trembling. Everything was shaking! The people were trembling and the mountain was shaking. I imagine that a lot of the smaller rocks were rolling down and the power and glory of God descended on the mountain and here these trumpets are blowing louder and louder.

Verse 19: "And when the sound of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up" (vs 19-20).

(go to the next track)

Verse 21: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down. Command the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, who come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.' And Moses said to the LORD, 'The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You commanded us, saying, "Set bounds around the

mountain, and sanctify it.'" And the LORD said to him, 'Away! Get you down, and *only* you shall come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break forth upon them.' And Moses went down to the people, and spoke to them" (vs 21-25).

God was ready to speak, and what is the very first thing He spoke? *The Ten Commandments!* I think that even though the movie *The Ten Commandments* is as good as it is, I think they did sort of a wimpish rendition of this, when this happened. When God spoke it was all ear-splitting! There was no doubt that God spoke. Did God speak? *Yes!* Did you hear what He said? *Yes!*

Exodus 20:18: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw, they trembled and stood afar off." Don't worry about climbing up on that mountain! They got out of the way.

Verse 19: "And they said to Moses, 'You speak with us, and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die.'" That was an awesome event.

I have never been in any predicament where I felt that I was going to die; literally, completely die from some experience. Can you imagine all those people feeling this way just because of the power and presence of God.

Verse 20: "And Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to prove you and so that His fear may be before your faces, so that you may not sin.' And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (vs 20-21). That is a fantastic, awesome event! There again, it is with the power of God.

We see another description of this, Deuteronomy 4:33: "Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard and live? Or has any god attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation..." (vs 33-34). We know that God has not called any of the other nations of the world, and that makes these critic nations mad. Why do you have what you have?

We see it at the United Nations (UN). If you want to see human nature in actions, read about the U.N. whenever you can see it on the news just watch it. It's something else!

"...by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great *awe-inspiring* terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you

in Egypt before your eyes? It was shown to you so that you might know that the LORD *is* God, and *there is none other beside Him*” (vs 34-35).

I tell you, how quick did they go to making an idol? After that experience, where you’re scared to death, you’re shaking in your boots and you know it’s the voice of God, then after a few days they said, ‘As for this Moses, we don’t know where he is. Maybe he’s up on the mountain dead. Let’s make us gods. Of course, you know what happened then.

Verse 36: “He made you hear His voice out of heaven so that He might teach you. And He showed you **His great fire** upon the earth. And you heard **His words out of the midst of the fire.**” That must have really been some event!

We sit here and think that must have been awesome! I would like to have been there to see what it’s like. We’re going to see a greater fire; we’re going to see the return of Jesus Christ. I just wanted to emphasize v 36 where it is called and shown “...His great fire...And you heard **His words out of the midst of the fire.**”

It was really ironic that in our local paper was an article about Scientology and all their beliefs and God is way off on some stupid planet somewhere and that He can’t control all these evil spirits, and all these evil spirits are down here possessing people, and this happened 75-million years ago. Then the next day there’s one in there about the Mormons and how that Joseph Smith realized that God was there when His Spirit came out of a salamander.

When you read the Bible and see how God talks, what a stupid, stupid thing! Yet, intelligent people believe those things! This guy—L Ron Hubbard—wrote the book *Dianetics*. So many people have read that, and if can’t understand right from wrong they get ‘dingy’ when they get done reading it. Why? *Because it’s based on ‘dinginess’; that’s why!* It’s not based on the Truth. You become ‘dingy’ if you have a dingbat ‘religion.’

That’s the way it is with the Mormons. What a stupid thing! I know that the most impressive thing that I saw was when we were in Salt Lake City and we went to this brand new display thing where they had all the manikins and little things where they show about the Mormon religion. Here’s old Joseph Smith supposedly out there receiving a vision from God. His account is that he was lying on his back.

After he saw the salamander, he rolled over on his back and the salamander said, ‘This is God speaking.’ *No way!*

This is the way that God is going to speak: *with His great fire!* “...you heard **His words out of**

**the midst of the fire**” (v 36).

Deuteronomy 9:3: “Therefore, understand this day that the LORD your God *is* He Who goes over before you. **Like a consuming fire...**” We’re going to see how God enacts that “...consuming fire...”

“...He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before your face. So you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly as the LORD has said to you. Do not speak in your heart after the LORD your God has cast them out from before you, saying, ‘For my righteousness, the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but for the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you.” (vs 3-4).

That’s really true! How many times have you seen where a family will work hard, struggle hard and do things the best they can in the fear of God, and God blesses them with sufficient to get along and succeed. But then God blesses the children, and what happens to the children? *They think how great they are! How marvelous they are!* I’ve seen that how many times? And how many times did we even do that ourselves? God says that it’s not because of *your* righteousness but because of the wickedness of those nations.

Verse 5: “**Not for your righteousness**, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you, so that He may perform the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, understand that the LORD your God does not give you this good land, to possess it for your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people” (vs 5-6).

“...stiff-necked...” refers to just setting yourself to where you’re stubborn, refuse and won’t listen. Let’s see how God answers by fire. We see how God came on Mt. Sinai and talked with the Israelites. Well, let’s backup a little space of time and let’s look at the confirmation of the covenant that God made with Abraham:

Genesis 15:1: “After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Fear not, Abram, I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.’ And Abram said, ‘Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?’ And Abram said, ‘Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir.’ And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, ‘This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.’ And He brought him outside and said,

‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness” (vs 1-6).

After that there were different animals taken for a sacrifice: a heifer, she-goat, a ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon. He divided them in half and laid them all in a line. When the covenant was confirmed:

Verse 17: “And it came to pass—when the sun went down and it was dark—behold, **a smoking furnace and a burning lamp** passed between those pieces.” In other words, God consumed those sacrifices. He answered with fire.

We’re going to see several times where God answers with fire. You’ve read it one time here and one time there over a long period of time going to church and so forth, but this time I want to put it all together if I can.

Verse 18: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates...’—that’s a big hunk of real estate. Notice that that was his inheritance. That’s why I’ve said before that when we inherit the Kingdom of God it is going to be something we will own and possess.

God isn’t going to give us a block out in space and say, ‘Okay, inherit the Kingdom of God.’ *Where is it, Lord?* ‘Out there in space someplace, see if you can find it.’ **No! We’re going to own and possess it!**

This is after sanctifying the priesthood and the altar and so forth, Leviticus 9:22: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And **there came a fire out from before the LORD, and burned up the burnt offering and the fat on the altar.** And all the people saw and shouted and fell on their faces” (vs 22-24)—quickly bowed down with their face toward the earth.

The first time I read that you get the impression that they tripped and fell on their face. It doesn’t mean that. It means they quickly bent over and put their faces to the ground in worship toward God.

I suppose the best way you can visualize that when you see the Arabs bow down toward Mecca. That’s what you call falling on your face; you

quickly get on your knees and put your head right down to the ground. That’s what they were doing there.

Let’s see something else in Exo. 40 where they got the tabernacle finished and all setup. We saw in Lev. 9 that that’s when everything became operable. We’re going to see the pattern that God used with the tabernacle and later the pattern that was used for the temple. This was after everything was finished. The tabernacle was setup, the fence around it was all setup and Moses finished the work:

Exodus 40:34: “And the cloud covered the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” Remember what led them out of Egypt. *God did with a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night!* Here the cloud covered the tent of the congregation.

Verse 35: “And Moses was not able to enter into the tabernacle of the congregation because the cloud stayed on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed on in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey until the day that it was taken up; for the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, **and fire was on it by night**, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys” (vs 35-38).

That was there constantly showing the presence of God! When we come to 2-Chron. 5 we have exactly the same thing.

2-Chronicles 5:12: “And the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets.”

Here we have a replication of the coming of God on Mt. Sinai, and now the coming of God to the temple. They have the different rituals, and I’m sure that God told them what to do and how to do it and everything like that, with all the instructions that He gave David, which were passed on to Solomon.

Verse 13: “It came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, ‘For He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever,’ that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD.” So, we have the same thing! When God put His presence in the temple, He did exactly the same thing when He put

His presence in the tabernacle.

Verse 14: “So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud...” Isn’t that the same thing that was said of Moses, that he couldn’t minister because of the cloud.

“...for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!” (v 14). Same thing that was said of the tabernacle.

I remember when we read in Lev. 9 that after that was done then they offered all the offerings, had the priesthood sanctify it and **then fire came down and consumed the offering.**

If you want to read something very inspiring, read all of Solomon’s prayer. That’s really quite a prayer! It talks about how that he knew that God would be with His people wherever they went, and if they sinned or did this, turned their voice to heaven and turned back to God that He would hear them and so forth. Really quite inspiring.

2 Chronicles 7:1: “And when Solomon had made an end of praying, **fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices.** And the glory of the LORD filled the house.” Same exact pattern! So, we have the exact same thing.

Now, there are some other occasions where **God answered by fire!** Can you remember some of those occasions?

He answered by fire with Korah and that bunch in their rebellion. You see, once God sanctifies something and makes it Holy, no one else can come in and usurp it and do it. God said that the high priest would come out of the family of Aaron *only*. The whole thing with the rebellion of Korah, they said they we’re just ‘stupid Levities, and we have to do all this lifting and cart all of this stuff. We want to be the priesthood. We don’t like all this labor. We want to form a union and we’re going to redo this priesthood thing here.’

That’s why that was that rebellion. That’s why God answered them by fire! You betcha!

The account of Elijah, 1-Kings 18: the way this is written, whomever wrote this must have had a great time writing this:

1-Kings 18:21: “And Elijah came to all the people and said... [after all the Israelites were gathered and King Ahab was there] ...‘How long will you vacillate between two different opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him...’” God doesn’t want anyone indecisive. God is God, why be undecided] ...But if Baal is God, *then* follow him.’ And the people did not answer him a word. And

Elijah said to the people, ‘I, I alone, remain a prophet of the LORD. But Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Now, let them give us two bulls, and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay *it* on wood. But **place no fire under it.** And I will dress the other bull and lay it on wood, and **place no fire under it.** And you call on the name of your gods...” (vs 21-24)—Baal, Ashtaroth, whatever. I imagine they had their core out there. It would be like today:

- those who believe in Hinduism get so many priests
- those who believe in Buddhism get so many priests
- those who believe in Catholicism get so many priests
- those who believe in Mohammadism get so many priests
- those who believe in witchcraft get so many priests

They all take turns and run by courses. It says, “...call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD. And it shall be, the **God that answers by fire,** He is God.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘The word *is* good.’ And Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, ‘Choose one bull for yourselves, and prepare first, for you *are* many. And call on the name of your god, but place no fire *under it.*’ So, they took the bull, which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear us.’...” (vs 24-26).

The Oratory of Elijah: ‘O Baal, here us!’ When you listen to it, when I first heard it I didn’t get all the sound and it has a real catchy tune to it. A lot of these things have catchy tunes. I thought I don’t want that going around in my head!

“...But there was no voice, nor any who answered. Then they leaped upon the altar which was made” (v 26). ‘We’re going to really convince God that this is important. I imagine that there was someone out there pounding the drums. That’s probably what was going on here at the altar. They were going to really impress God.

Verse 27: “Now, it came to pass at noon Elijah mocked them and said, ‘Cry aloud with a great voice, for he *is* a god. Either he is meditating, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened!’” [Isn’t that all these pagan gods?] ...And they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves with knives and lances until the blood gushed out upon them. So, it came to pass when midday was past, and when they prophesied until the offering of *Elijah’s* oblation, there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor anyone who

paid attention. And Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' And all the people came near him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the Word of the Lord came, saying, 'Israel shall be your name.' And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar big enough to contain two measures of seed" (vs 27-32). I don't know how much that would be.

Verse 33: "And he arranged the wood, and cut the bull in pieces, and placed *it* on the wood, and said, 'Fill four water jars with water and pour on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.' And he said, 'Do *it* the second time.' And they did *it* the second time. And he said, 'Do *it* the third time.' And they did *it* the third time. And the water ran all around the altar. And he filled the trench also with water. Now, it came to pass at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said..." (vs 33-36).

Notice how long this prayer is. He didn't have a clock to time it. Prayer is not based upon time or clocks. *Prayer is based upon belief!*

"... 'LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that **You are** God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your Word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, **that this people may know that You are the LORD God**, and that You have turned their heart back again.' **Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench**" (vs 36-38). Quite and awesome display! God answers by fire!

We know there's going to be counterfeit down somewhere in the future. All you have to do is read Rev. 13. *The false prophet is going to be able to call fire down from heaven in the sight of men!* But don't forget the two witnesses. When the false prophet calls down fire out of heaven, with the power of Satan, then the two witnesses are going to do something very drastic on the earth.

Verse 39: "And when all the people saw, they fell on their faces. And they said, 'The LORD, **He is the God!**....'" It's not gods or god, but THE GOD!] ...The LORD, He *is* **the** God!" There ***He answered by fire!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 4:2-8

- 2) Isaiah 6:1-10
- 3) Isaiah 57:15
- 4) Psalm 104:1-2
- 5) Ezekiel 1:4-14
- 6) Hebrews 10:25-31
- 7) Hebrews 12:29
- 8) Exodus 3:1-6
- 9) Exodus 19:3-12, 14-25
- 10) Exodus 20:18-21
- 11) Deuteronomy 4:33-36
- 12) Deuteronomy 9:3-6
- 13) Genesis 15:1-6, 17-18
- 14) Leviticus 9:22-24
- 15) Exodus 40:34-38
- 16) 2 Chronicles 5:12-14
- 17) 2 Chronicles 7:1
- 18) 1 Kings 18:21-39

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14
- Revelation 3; 13

#### Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Human Nature*
- Book: *Dianetics* by L Ron Hubbard

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