

Holiness of God II By Fire! #2

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Last night we had a nice fire in the fireplace. Some of the wood we have had as much as ten years, and it was really dry. I have the easy type fireplace. You light the match and light the gas and you have the wood on it and everything goes really good. You don't have worry about all the huffing and puffing and paper, but the wood was so dry that once it got going it roared! I mean, we had a fire like you wouldn't believe.

We were sitting there enjoying some nice music and it got so hot that we had to back up instead of sitting in the chairs close to it. It got so hot that I had to take off my shoes and socks to cool off. I was sitting there watching that fire *roar!*

After going through this concerning God's Holiness and fire, I got to thinking:

- Why is God's Holiness compared to fire?
- What significance is it in relationship to God's character?

Obviously, Satan's counterfeit of worshipping fire and then walking through the coals of fire, and passing the children to Molech, the god of fire and have actually sacrificed the children. They have seen in the city of Carthage, they discovered a temple where there is the god Molech—another name for Baal—with his arms outstretched. They would put the children that they would sacrifice right up on top of the altar and then it would tip in and his arms would roll back and the children would roll down and be burned.

I was sitting there watching the fire and all these things were kind of going through my mind, and I thought that fire is a perfect representation because there is really no defense against a fire. You stop and think about all the occurrences of fire.

Now, we just had a big fire source disaster in Bogotá, Columbia. All of a sudden a volcano blew. It melted all the snow and all the mud and muck came running down and they're going to probably learn that 50,000 people lost their lives in just a few minutes. They said that the only ones who survived were the ones who could run fast.

Of course, the tragic thing about it is that when they had the uprising and the guerrillas from the S-19 group took over the whole superior court and judicial hall in Bogotá, Columbia, and they had a shootout and they brought in tanks and everything. Before that started there was team of American

scientists from the Bay Area and they were going to down and take a look and put sensor devices right on that mountain. They were going to set it up just like they had with Mt. St. Helens.

Compare the difference between Mt. St. Helens, when it blew and this one in terms of human life. The Americans went up there and had these sensors up and there and knew just about when it was going to blow.

Well, there were 57 people who didn't believe that it was going to blow, or blow as bad, so they lost 57 lives. Down in Columbia they didn't believe it. They were told it was rumbling but there's nothing to worry about. You don't really have to evacuate, but if you want to evacuate go ahead. I'm sure that in America they would have evacuated them and reduced the losses down to a very, very small minimum like they did with Mt. St. Helens.

But when that thing blew you have no power against it, no force against it, unless you can run fast and get out of the way.

Take all of the great disasters, think about how powerless the people were in Germany when the Americans and Britons flew over and dropped these incendiary bombs. In the city of Dresden there were dropped so many incendiary bombs that they created a fire storm where the temperature was 700 degrees, and everything burned! There was nothing left; there is no defense against fire!

Then you think about the atomic bomb; what is that? That is a small fire and just destroys everything in its path. And then the hydrogen bomb; that's a huge fire, and that absolutely devours everything!

In just thinking about all these things in relationship to the Holiness of God, we have to view it from the perspective that God is all powerful, God is all mighty; there is nothing, *absolutely nothing* that is going to stand before God! Sin is going to be devoured with the fire and wrath of God! That's how God is going to destroy it *with fire*, and *sin* is not going to stand before God!

We're going to see that when Christ returns, He's going to return and it's going to be by fire! It's going to be an awesome thing! Men will have *no defense! There's no defense against God!*

Let's just look at a couple of these things. When we get done with this series we're going to

see what a fantastic relationship that it is that God has put with all the people that He has called. It is absolutely a marvelous relationship! It think we need to look back on the sermon series *Human Nature* and realize that all the things that we listed out that we have to do:

- flee sin
- avoid sin
- let the Word of God dwell in you richly

We're going to see that in the final analysis is that it is *Christ in us that is the hope of glory!* Not that we walk a life that will please God, but rather we let Christ *live in us*, and that's the real key in overcoming.

If you really focus in on that you will find that you will be able to overcome sin, overcome the sins as they develop in the mind, and with the Spirit of God you will be able to control and have much greater success in overcoming, but the key is that it is Christ *in* you!

It's almost fruitless to tell a person, 'You go out and overcome, find sin in your life and you work on overcoming'—because it has to be Christ in you—when you compare putting wood up against fire. It just won't work!

That's why there's so much frustration when you try to overcome on your own. We've all tried to overcome on our own, and it does end up in frustration. You can do it for a while, but it ends up in frustration.

Let's pick up where we left off in part one about God answering by fire. This is quite an event, and in some ways it's a little humorous, and in other ways it's pretty devastating.

If you view it from the point of view that you are on God's side, and this is done from God's point of view, it can be a little humorous. But if you view it from the point of view of those poor soldiers, it's a little disastrous. But nevertheless, it shows the power of God and how He answers by fire.

2-Kings 1:2: "And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper room in Samaria, and was sick. And *he* sent messengers and said to them, 'Go, ask of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.'"

Whenever you have a king of Israel or one who is suppose to be a leader whom God has designated and placed there... Remember the throne that was in Samaria, God originally put there through Jeroboam. The prophet came up and tore the cloth into 12 pieces and said that two were for the house of David, and 10 were for Jeroboam. 'God is going to deliver into your hands the house of Israel,

which are the 10 tribes.

- if you will hearken to My commandments
- if you will walk in My statutes and judgments
- if you will do what is right

I will establish your kingdom and your name and your dynasty as I swore to David that I would do to his.' So, there were those two perpetual kingdoms.

Whenever God establishes a king or establishes an office or someone to carry out His authority and what God wants, then to have them turn and go inquire of the devil... We can just put in those terms, because the one behind Baal-Zebub, the God of Ekron, obviously was Satan the devil.

Here God gave an everlasting example for us, v 3: But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, 'Arise! Go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, "*Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go to ask of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?*"' Especially when you read how merciful God really was even in cases of extreme sin!

All Ahaziah would have had to have done was just go to God and say, 'God, I've sinned, I'm sick, forgive me and heal me.' God would have, but he added more sin to it by going to Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron.

Verse 4: "And, therefore, thus says the LORD, 'You shall not come from that bed on which you have gone up, but shall surely die.' And Elijah left. Then the messengers went back to *the king*. And he said, 'Why have you now come back?' And they said to him, 'A man came up to meet us and said to us, "Go, return again to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "*Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go to ask of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron? Therefore, you shall not come down from that bed on which you have gone up, but shall surely die.*"'" And he said to them, 'What kind of man *was he* who came up to meet you and told you these words?' And they answered him, '*He was a hairy man...*'" (vs 4-8).

This doesn't look too much like a man of God. Does this mean he had long hair, I would assume it would. I don't know if Elijah had a Nazarite vow or not where he didn't cut his hair.

"...and was bound with a girdle of leather around his loins.'.... [he had kind of a leather chest plate] ...And he said, 'He *is* Elijah the Tishbite'" (v 8).

When you compare that with what the pope runs around in, and what these priests run around in, this is kind of a different view of one of the prophets of God.

Verse 9: “So, he sent to him a commander of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him. Then, behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him, ‘Man of God! The king has said, “Come down.”’ And Elijah answered and said to the commander of fifty, ‘If I *am* a man of God, then **let fire come down from the heavens and burn up you and your fifty.**’ **And there came down fire from the heavens and burned up him and his fifty**” (vs 9-10)—ZAP!

- Nothing can stand in the power of God!
- Nothing can stand in the presence and Holiness of God!
- No human being can!

But God has put us in a tremendous Holy relationship with Him!

Verse 11: “So again, also he sent to him another commander of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, ‘Man of God! So says the king, “Come down quickly.”’ And Elijah answered and said to him, ‘If I *am* a man of God, **let fire come down from the heavens and burn up you and your fifty.**’ **And the fire of God came down from the heavens and burned up him and his fifty**” (vs 11-12). So, there are a hundred dead troops just at the whim, will and pleasure of the king.

There’s also another lesson for us, too. If you go to carry out someone’s commands that are against the commands of God, you’re going to pay the price for following that person instead of God. Obvious lesson right there!

Verse 13: “Finally he sent again a third commander of fifty and his fifty. And the third commander of fifty came up and fell on his knees before Elijah...” A little humility after that; I imagine so! We don’t have the conversation between the king and his third captain of 50. He probably said, ‘Hey, don’t send me out there. These others are dead.’

As he was walking out to find Elijah imagine what was going through his mind. ‘How am I going to save my neck?’ Wouldn’t you want to try and save your neck? Wouldn’t you want to keep from being devoured by fire? So, he probably figured in his mind, ‘I’ll go up there and be humble.’ Shows you what a humble attitude does.

“...and begged him [Elijah]. and said to him, ‘Man of God, I pray you, let my life and the life of these fifty, your servants, be precious in your sight.... [he changed whole emphasis] ...Behold, fire has come down from the heavens and burned up the first two commanders of fifty with their fifties. Therefore, now let my life be precious in your sight.’ And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, ‘Go down

with him. Do not be afraid of him.’...” (vs 13-15).

See, God changed His mind! God *can* change His mind! That’s why repentance is so important. Never let anything you do in the way that you sin well up in pride so much that you will not humble yourself before God. Here was quite a situation, and you can see how it worked out for this captain and his 50.

“...And he arose and went down with him to the king, and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Because you have sent messengers to ask of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron—*is it because there is no God in Israel to seek His Word?*—therefore, you shall not come down off that bed on which you have gone up, but shall surely die.”’ And he died according to the Word of the Lord, which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, because he had no son” (vs 15-17).

God answered by fire! But look at the humility there.

Let’s review one very important verse, and here’s one of the keys concerning God’s Holiness and power. We saw this example right there in 2-Kings.

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity...” God’s level of existence is what He calls *inhabiting eternity*. In other words, He lives with an eternal existence. It’s a whole level of existence above the human level. Remember what was said of Jesus? *He was made a little lower than the angels!* So, you have God, angels and mankind. God is the 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...**’” (v 15). That is precious in God’s sight, especially the contrast of it.

Last night there was a party going on, and here we were having a nice enjoyable Sabbath evening with the family and we were listening the music of *The Messiah* by Handel and the fireplace was going. Turn that all off and then just go out the door and walk down the street and see all that going on, and these exalted selfish people out there. Absolutely incredible! *Then you read God’s Word and see what God does, and see how God honors the one who is humble!*

I’ve also seen humility used in a wrong way. I’ve seen where men take it to themselves to enforce humility on other people for their own benefit of control. *You humble yourself to God! Don’t ever let any person take that humility and*

use it as leverage against you, because they'll destroy you!

We can all vouch for the fact that that can be! Just look at how fantastic it is. The greatest Being that there is: God Almighty! The One Who is Holy and inhabits eternity, also dwells with one who is humble and of a contrite spirit.

“...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (v 57). That’s how God delivers us out of our troubles.

God can deliver us out of our troubles by removing the troubles from us, or removing us from the troubles. Or He can deliver us from our troubles with His grace because we humble ourselves before Him. He can give us strength with His Spirit to see us through a trial and difficulty. There’s more than one way of escape, but it’s all keyed right here in the mind and heart, and you have that direct access to God.

Here’s another example of David. I think if you through and study the Psalms, and really get the heart out of the Psalms, you will see why David—in spite of the things that he did—was a man after God’s heart. Notice humility of David:

Psalms 18:1: “I love You, O LORD, my strength.” I want you to also keep in mind that the prophets, such as David, had a close relationship with God. But the whole system of worship under the Old Testament was a formal remote worship. They came to the temple; they didn’t have the Spirit of God in them.

This will also help us answer and fortified the thing concerning sacred names. In the New Testament we are in an intimate relationship with God and Jesus Christ. We are in the Holiest relationship we can be in by having the Spirit of God and having direct access to God the Father. That’s why we don’t have to address Him by the sacred names, because ***He is our Father!*** Therefore, we can call Him by the most sacred name, which is ***‘Abba Father.’*** Just keep that in mind! We’ll just plant that until we come to the New Testament and find out how intimate and fantastic that relationship is.

When David was king of Israel, and one of the reasons he was a man after God’s own heart was because he also had that intimate relationship with God. Look at his total dependency on God:

Verse 1: “I love You, O LORD, my strength.... [he wasn’t counting on his own strength] ...The LORD is my Rock...” (vs 1-2). Just like the disaster in Bogotá, Columbia, the ones who got onto a high rock or behind a strong stone fence, they were saved.

“...and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge... [that’s how we’re going to be in the Kingdom of God, by this same attitude] ...He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower. I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies” (vs 2-3).

Notice what David went through, v 4: “The cords of death hemmed me in, and the floods of ungodliness assailed me. The cords of the grave surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me... [or coming after him, preceding him] ...In my distress I called on the LORD, and I cried to my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him into His ears” (vs 4-5).

Remember what Jesus said Passover night: ***Don’t ask Me to ask the Father, you ask the Father directly for the Father loves you!***

So, it’s the same kind of relationship. I want you to think in your own lives: Has there ever really been a time when you sincerely and in humility called out to God that He didn’t provide an answer. Think about it! Go back and think! Sometimes the answer wasn’t what you expected. There are times when God answers us, but He doesn’t give us the answer we expect, because *He knows what is best for us!* And what He wants *through us, to us, for us and out of us.* All those things are very important.

Notice how God answered, v 7: “Then the earth shook and trembled; and the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was angry.” That’s a mighty answer, and God has not answered us in that way, to shake the earth.

But He’s answered us in many ‘earth shaking’ ways. Many things happen that are greater than shaking the earth:

- God intervening to save us
- God intervening to grant us understanding of His Word
- God intervening to give us His Spirit
- God intervening to answer our prayers

Right after I got back from the Feast—when I was working as a loan broker—there were two loans that were closing, and that was going to be it; there was nothing after that. I had to live by faith that ***God would provide!*** I had to do my part, so I spent two weeks taking my rate sheet around to different realtors and so forth. I stopped back and saw the people that I had done quite a few loans for, and there are several contractors that I did quite a few loans for. I do a lot of details for them and I don’t charge them an ‘arm and a leg’ for my services.

I stopped by this one contractor and he said he needed this and that, so it turned out that God provided five new loans coming in.

That is a tremendous thing that we can trust God to provide for us! That has happened quite a few times. There are times when it gets kind of rough and bumpy, as it does in your life, but **God will always provide!** We can claim that promise in humility, and in strength! We can go to God and say, 'God, You have promised, and I'm claiming your promise.'

If God has promised something, He stakes it upon His reputation, or upon His Holiness. So, when God told Abraham, 'By Myself I swear...' God doesn't have to swear. But that's how sure God's promises are to us. Just keep that in mind.

So, there can be what we call 'earth-shaking' things in our lives in the way that God would answer and help us, even though they don't literally shake the ground.

Verse 8: "Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured; coals flamed forth from Him." That's quite descriptive. By God's Word the enemy is devoured.

Verse 9: "And He bowed the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under His feet." Sounds an awful lot like Exo. 19.

Verse 10: "And He rode upon a cherub, and flew..." That's one thing I want to do. I hope we're all going to be able to enjoy, as spirit beings in the Kingdom of God, and that's flying around in our own cherub. Maybe we won't have a cherub, but a little small version of it. That's going to be absolutely fantastic!

My wife and I go out and have breakfast sometimes in a little café and we have to go by the airport. Here came this plane just barreling in. He was coming right over the airport and I knew he wasn't going to land because he was really coming in, and all of a sudden he pulled back and brought that plane up and almost did a loop and then straightened it out and dropped the wheels down and went around to come in to land. I thought what a fantastic thing!

What would that be like in a cherubim, if you come sailing in, go wheeling in one of these spirit-powered mechanisms. You stop and let it down very easily.

"...yea, He soared upon the wings of the wind.... [this is tremendous description and poetry here] ...He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion around Him *was* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness before Him,

His dark clouds passed through with **hailstones and coals of fire**. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High gave forth His voice with hailstones and coals of fire. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings and routed them" (vs 10-14). You can't stand against that kind of thing.

Remember what happened to Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron? *The first thing they did was let the fire go out on the altar*, upon which God said, 'You shall not let the fire go out.' Instead of going back to Moses and saying, 'We let the fire go out; you go to God and get this thing started again.' No, they figured they start a little fire of our own and put it on there.' What happened to them? *ZAP!! They were struck out; electric bolts or lightning bolts!* There's not defense against this.

That's why when Christ returns there isn't going to be any defense. They're going to get their missiles, armies, guns, cannons and everything to gather around to fight the return of Christ and ZAP and be gone just like this right here.

I'll let you read the rest of Psa. 18. That's quite an inspiring Psalm.

Habakkuk 3:1: "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet concerning erring... ['shginuth'] ...ones." If you've ever heard any Hebrews with their prayers, chantings and so forth, there are certain cadences that they have for the different things that they do with the different kinds of prayers.

As a matter of fact, Psa. 119 is a very interesting Psalm. Each one of the sections where you see a little Hebrew character, that is the Hebrew alphabet. Each one of those verses start with the letter of the particular Hebrew. There are 22 sections and each one of those sections has the same number of verses in it all the way through to the end. It was sung in a certain way at a certain cadence with this memorization of the Hebrew alphabet.

That's what we're talking about here with the Prophet Habakkuk and his prayer upon 'shginuth.'

Verse 2: "O LORD, I have heard the report about You; I am afraid. O LORD, give new life to Your work in the midst of years; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember compassion." That's quite a statement; in wrath remember mercy. Don't let your mercy be undone with your wrath.

Remember when the Apostle John received the vision about the seven thunders (Rev. 10)? The seven thunders uttered their voice and it was so bad that God said not to write it down. I think it was the book of Ezekiel when God was going to do

something that was so bad and Ezekiel said, ‘O Lord God, will You destroy all Israel?’ God said, ‘No, I won’t do that. What has come to My mind I won’t do.’

So, it’s quite an interesting statement where it in wrath, remember mercy.

Verse 3: “God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah...” that shows that God is going to come from the south and the east when He returns to the Holy Land.

“...His glory covers the heavens, and His praise fills the earth. And **His brightness is as the light; rays of power from His hand are His**, and there is the hiding of His power. A plague went before Him, and lightning went forth at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and shook nations, and the everlasting mountains were shattered; the eternal hills bowed down. His ways are everlasting” (vs 3-6).

That is quite an awesome thing with the displaying the power of God! Nahum shows the power, the glory, the mercy and the wrath altogether:

Nahum 1:1 The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. God *is* jealous...” (vs 1-2)—or zealous. For us to have jealousy, we view it as envy. When we view it as envy it is sin. Therefore, for one to read this, that God is jealous, they would think that God has sinful characteristics, unless they understood what it meant. It doesn’t mean jealous from a human point of view, it means zealous, because there is nothing equal to God.

Verse 2: “God *is* jealous, and an avenging LORD; the LORD is avenging and full of wrath. The LORD takes vengeance against His foes, and He keeps *wrath* against His enemies. The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power. And He does not by any means acquit the wicked. The LORD *has* His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of His feet” (vs 2-3).

When God intervenes to fight it’s going to be awesome. There is nothing... Think of all these highly technological devices we have, God is just going to change a few things and they won’t work. It’s going to be absolutely incredible! The planes that they make today are so technologically advanced and sensitive that they can only make 50 a year. Contrast that with what Hitler did in WWII, and what we did in WWII, Hitler was making 3,000 planes a month.

When American industry got to producing all the planes, they were making 10,000 a month. Now we’re down to 48 a years. All God has to do is change the weather. He can knock it out of the sky

with a lightning bolt. Or He can just send a magnetic change and all the computers will go wacky. Nothing to it!

Verse 4: “He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers...” Read the other prophecies, what’s going to happen? It says that He’s going to strike the delta of the Nile River and turn it into a bunch of little creeks.

Verse 5: “The mountains quake from Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is decimated at His presence, yea the world and all who dwell in it.” Read Isa. 13; that’s quite a thing that’s going to happen.

Verse 6: “Who can stand before His fury? And who can stand up in the fierceness of His anger? **His fury is poured out like fire**, and the rocks are broken asunder because of Him. The LORD *is* good...” (vs 6-7). Notice how every time you read through about the power of God and His wrath, it ends up with mercy or praising God for His goodness, either one.

Verse 7: “The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and **He knows those who trust in Him.**” That’s the only way there’s going to be salvation. With the events that are coming, who knows, we might be in some event just similar to what it was down there in Columbia. We may be somewhere some night and an angel come and wake us up and say, ‘Get out of here.’ That will be it. You’re not going to argue and say, ‘O Lord, let me take this and that.’ *No! You go! Just like it was with Lot, take my hand and don’t look back!*

Verse 8: “But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end, and darkness shall pursue His enemies. What do you imagine against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*; affliction shall not rise up the second time” (vs 8-9).

That’s really quite a description when you get through it. Let’s see about **the Day of the Lord and how He’s going to come with fire!**

(go to the next track)

Isa. 34 is talking about the power of God and the return of Christ. Let’s talk now about the return of Christ and the use of **power and fire** that’s going to take place. Just stop and think; there is nothing, there is no defense against fire, especially the fire that comes from God.

Think about all these brush fires that take place. Here are all these people that have their homes out there. When those things get going and the wind starts whipping that up, and all of those trees are going, the grass is going, there’s no defense. A lot of people think they will stand on their roof and hose it

down with water. *Nonsense!* By the time you do that and everyone else is, and the water pressure goes down to a trickle. Here comes this fire roaring in, and you don't know when it's going to be a firestorm and just drop right on the house and just devour it. It's crazy.

In Los Angeles there were these firestorms and burn a house here, jump a house and burn a house. Then burn three or four and jump three or four. All those who didn't have their houses burned, many times they said it jumped over the house and the people were praying to God—save us—and it jumps over the house. So, your defense is in God; you can't fight a fire.

Isaiah 34:1: “Come near, you nations, to hear; and, you people, hearken; let the earth hear, and its fullness; the world, and its offspring.” That's quite a statement!

Isaiah reveals the Holiness of God and also the power of God. It's not just a message to a wayward people out there tending Bedouin sheep out on the east side of the Jordan River. This is a powerful message.

Isaiah 1:2: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth...” That a pretty powerful message; God means business! Most of what's in the book of Isaiah has yet to be fulfilled. Quite a powerful message!

Again, Isaiah reiterates it, Isa. 34. Keep in mind what God also said in the book of Jeremiah: *God has a controversy with the nations of the earth!* We're really living in these Bible times. It's being impressed upon my mind more and more. We say we would like to live in Bible times; well, folks, we're living in Bible times and we see it all around us, and we're going to see the return of Christ; whether we see when we're resurrected, or we see it in the flesh and are changed flesh to spirit in a twinkling of an eye. It doesn't matter, we're going to see it!

Isaiah 34:1: “Come near, you nations, to hear; and, you people, hearken; **let the earth hear, and its fullness; the world, and its offspring.**”

- Rev. 11, the two witnesses and the message that they're going to have to the whole world
- Rev. 14 with the three angels; one of them flies through the mist of heaven preaching the everlasting Gospel as a final warning just before the end comes.

So, the whole earth is going to hear it!

Verse 2: “For the anger of the LORD is upon all nations... [Does God mean all nations? *Yes, He does!*] ...and His fury upon all their armies...”

- Rev. 16, the Battle of Armageddon, all the armies gathered
- Zech. 14:12 where He's going to gather all the armies at Jerusalem

“...He has completely destroyed them, He has delivered them to the slaughter. Also, their dead shall be thrown out, and their stink shall come up out of their dead bodies, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of the heavens shall be dissolved...” (vs 2-4).

That's when the sun is going to be seven times hotter than it normally is. So, you can pick your choice. If you say the average is 70 degrees, then it's going to 490 degrees. If you figure it's 100 degrees, then figure 700 degrees. Needless to say, you'd better be someplace hiding, because you're going to be crackling and popping. It's going to be hot!

“...and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll...” (v 4). That's the 6th seal, the heavenly signs. That's going to get your attention! Won't that get people's attention? The heavens roll together like a scroll? Every time I think of that, I cannot help but think of how it happens real suddenly. Have you ever been surprised when you're working with a window shade and the thing gets stuck? You're trying to get it and you're working with it and all of sudden WHAM! It just scares the liver out of you. Your heart comes up in your throat and that silly thing just goes flap! flap! flap!

I can never get it out of my mind when I read this, how that that's the way that God is going to open the heavens, and that's just going to scare the terror out of everybody.

“...and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falls off from the vine, and as the falling fig from the fig tree, ‘For My sword is bathed in the heavens. Behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of My curse for judgment’” (vs 4-5). I think that Edom here is symbolic of all of the ruthlessness of the armies of all the nations, as they were ruthless against the children of Israel.

Verse 6: “The sword of the LORD is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.”

Verse 8: “For *it is* the day of the LORD'S vengeance, the year to repay for the fighting against Zion.... [then it goes on showing what's going to happen]: ...And its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust to brimstone...” (vs 8-9). Very descriptive as to what happens. Here's the description of a firestorm with all that's going on.

“...and its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be put out night or day...” (vs 9-10). No one is going to put it out. You’re not going to call the fire department and say you’ve got a fire out here, come put it out. *No!* Quenched means *to be put out*. It can burn out of its own accord, but no one is going to put it out.

“...its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none passes through it forever *and* forever” (v 10). The only thing I can say is that this is probably where the Lake of Fire is going to be located during the Millennium; wherever that’s going to be. That’s going to be a very instructive thing.

Isaiah 66:1—talks about the greatness of God: “‘For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’” (vs 1-2). Remember that the key toward **God’s Holiness and power is humility.**

vs 3-4 describes those who try to be religious without repentance and humility.

Verse 5: “Hear the Word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word, ‘Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name’s sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified.’....” We’ve all experienced that kind of thing. People in the name of God kicking people out, saying, ‘God be glorified.’

“...But He will appear to your joy and they will be ashamed.’ A sound of noise from the city, a sound from the temple, the sound of the LORD repaying His enemies. ‘Before she travailed, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a man-Child.... [talking directly of the birth of Christ] ...Who has heard such a thing?... [now it goes into the first resurrection] ...Who has seen such *things* like these? Shall the earth be made to bring forth ***in one day?*** Or will a nation be born at once?...” (vs 5-8). *Yes!*

- What are we called? *A Holy nation!*
- Are we not all going to be resurrected at the return of Christ? *Yes!*

So, a whole nation will be born at once!

“...For as soon as Zion... [that’s God’s headquarters; talking about God’s plan] ...travailed, she also gave birth to her children” (v 8). ‘We are the children of God’ (1-John 3).

Verse 9: “‘Will I bring to the birth, and not cause to be born?’ says the LORD...” If you have any doubts about the resurrection, here it is. God isn’t going to carry His plan just so far and then drop the ball. He says that He’s the Beginning and the

Ending; that means He started it and He’s going to finish it.

“...‘Shall I cause them to be born, and shut the womb?’ says your God. ‘Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all who love her. Rejoice for joy with her, all who mourn for her; that you may suck and be satisfied with her breasts of consolations; that you may milk out and be delighted with the fullness of her glory.’” (vs 9-11).

Doesn’t it talk about those of us who ‘are newborn babes who desire the sincere milk of the Word,’ etc. Symbolically, there is no greater affectionate relationship between a nursing baby and the mother, and between the affection and the nourishment, growth and the whole relationship is absolutely fantastic!

Verse 12: “For thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like a flowing stream. Then you will suck *thereof*, you will be carried upon *her* sides and be dandled upon *her* knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted in Jerusalem.’ And you will see, and your heart will rejoice, and your bones will flourish like the grass. And the hand of the LORD will be known toward His servants, and *His* fury toward His enemies, for behold, **the LORD will come with fire...**” (vs 12-15).

I could have read just the one verse 15, but I wanted you to get the whole picture of what God is doing. Too many times you can read a verse out of context, which too many people have done, and they talk about ‘the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath,’ which He is. And the God of the New Testament is a God of wrath:

Hebrews 12:29: “**For our God is indeed a consuming fire.**” It says that the seven last plagues are *the wrath of God* (Rev. 16). But there’s also the mercy and goodness of God.

Isaiah 66:15: “For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots like a tempest, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke **with flames of fire, for by fire and by His sword the LORD will execute judgment with all flesh;** and the slain of the LORD will be many” (vs 15-16).

Let’s see how this fire is going to be. We can tie this in with the light of God. {Note sermon series: *Gospel of John*: coming to the light, walking in the light, etc.}

Luke 17:22: “Then He said to the disciples, ‘*The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it.*’” This has two references:

1. the days of the physical ministry of Jesus Christ

The disciples would look back and yearn to see those days again. Almost from day one they had trouble.

2. this is a prophecy of looking forward to the return of Christ and the days of the Son of man involving His return

Verse 23: “And they shall say to you, ‘Look here,’ or, ‘Look there.’ Do not go, neither follow *them*.” {note Matt. 24; when they say He’s in the desert, don’t go forth; when they say He’s in the secret chamber, don’t believe it} There are people who have done that. People say now that Christ is in the desert someplace; He’s hiding. The Jehovah Witnesses say that He’s in a building in New York someplace; that a secret chamber. He came 1917! He’s in a secret place in New York and He’s just waiting to reveal Himself. *Nonsense!* That building would have been burned down long ago, if you really understand about God!

Lord Maitreya I think his flunky disciple is Rajnee; he got booted out. I was so glad to see that. That did my bones good, although the rat got away with all the money.

Verse 24: “For as the light of day, whose light shines from *one end* under heaven to the *other end* under heaven, so also shall the Son of man be in His day.”

That word *lightning* (KJV) is an unfortunate translation. When we think of lightning we think of a bolt of lightning. This isn’t what it’s talking about; it’s not a bolt of lightning.

Matthew 24:27: “For **as the light of day**, which comes forth from *the east* and shines as far as *the west*...”

I’ve seen a lot of pictures of lightning. There was one I’ll never forget; it’s called *the lightning tree*. There are certain magnetic places on the earth that the lightning comes down to these magnetic places and this was a bare rock and there was a tremendous storm. Here were all these dark clouds and there was always lightning in this place. So, this photographer decided with this storm coming up he would get his camera out and take the time shots. He got what was a lightning tree. It looked like some great, huge tree, like a giant redwood tree.

The lightning spread out like roots on the ground and it went up into the clouds, just an awesome picture.

If you can get a book on lightning and look at that and just think about it and the power that’s

there. That will just stand your hair on end when you see it, just absolutely awesome. But that’s up and down, that’s not east and west.

- What goes from the east to the west? *The sun does!*
- What does it say that Jesus Christ is like in His full strength? *The sun in its full strength!*

There is going to plenty of time to see the return of Christ. It’s going to be just like the light of day that shines from the east to the west. That’s what it’s talking about here. “...so also shall the coming of the Son of man be” (v 27).

Luke 17:25: “But first it is necessary *for* Him to suffer many things and to be rejected by this generation. Now, as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in **the days** of the Son of man” (vs 25-26). That is talking about His return.

This shows that **the Day of the Lord** covers more than just one time period. As a matter of fact, **the Day of the Lord** can mean:

- the whole thing beginning with the Tribulation clear down to the return of Christ
- God’s intervention beginning with the sixth seal down to the return of Christ
- the day of God’s vengeance (Rev. 16); the Day of the Lord

It can mean all of those. That’s why He says here “...the days of the Son of man.”

Verse 27: “They were eating, they were drinking...” If you want to know what kind of business to go into, it’s eating or drinking.

“...they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day *that* Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed *them* all. And it was the same way in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building” (vs 27-28).

The same thing; life goes on as normal; but look out, it’s going to catch up. If nothing happens for a long time, look out, the results are going to be worse.

Verse 29: “But on the day *that* Lot went out from Sodom, **it rained fire and sulfur from heaven** and destroyed *them* all. **This is how it shall be in the day that the Son of man is revealed**” (vs 29-30). It’s going to be by fire! By light! It’s going to be quite an awesome thing!

Trial by Fire:

There's one other category of fire that applies a little differently. This is symbolic fire, but it's still from God. That is the kind of fire that is a **trial by fire, or God's purging us as with fire in His correction**. If God corrects us, what are we? *We are His children!* If He does not correct us, then we are not His children and we're called something else.

There are times when we go through trials that are 'trials by fire.'

If you have *The Messiah* by Handel and you've had tough week and you really want to get your mind on God, get it out and listen to it. There is this one, sung by a baritone:

Haggai 2:6—talking about the return of Christ. "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once again—it is yet a little while—I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.... [an awesome event] ...And I will shake all the nations; and the desire of all nations shall come... [Christ will come] ...and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts" (vs 6-7).

Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight. Behold, He comes,' says the LORD of hosts. 'But who can endure the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For **He is like a refiner's fire**, and like fuller's soap'" (vs 1-2)—**to really purify and make white**. That has active, living bleach in it.

Have you ever seen a refiner's fire? *That's in a special furnace so it can take heat up to well over a thousand degrees!* You put in the silver and burn off all the dross. You put in the gold and burn off all the impurities.

Verse 3: "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." There are trials that come!

We're guaranteed there are going to be trials. Let's look at some the trials that we go through from this perspective. We ask God to deliver us from them that is true. But lots of times God delivers us from them with His grace and mercy to see us through it, rather than remove us out of it. Think about that the next time you go through a trial. ***They're going to come!***

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation **gold, silver, precious stones...**" (vs 11-12). ***Every one of these becomes***

better by fire. Gold and silver becomes better, and precious stones become better and more brilliant and have more character in them.

"...wood, hay *or* stubble" (v 12). There's the opposite. I think there's a lot of wood, hay and stubble that's being built.

You can build yourself quite a nice comfortable little place out of straw. If you're ever where you're caught out in the elements, see if you can find yourself a stack of hay and just dig yourself a little tunnel in it or take the bales and build something around where you can get in and get out of the cold. You'll stay nice and warm. But it isn't permanent.

They used to have the thatched roofs—still do in England—and they have to change those thatched roofs every once in a while. What they do is layer it every year with new roofing. But if you get a fire in those things, WOW! it is gone; the house is gone!

Verse 13: "The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because **it shall be revealed by fire**; and **the fire shall prove what kind of work** each one's is." So, those trials are going to come. It's called a *fiery trial!*

Verse 14: "If the work that anyone has built endures... [on the foundation of Christ] ...he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, **as through fire**" (vs 14-15).

Let's see where this kind of admonition is given, and see where it is in *love*, though it is *in correction*.

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God." In the sense of the resurrection of Christ, He is the Beginning of the creation of God through of the resurrection. Both are true statements.

Verse 15: "I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm..." (vs 15-16). And you can sure see why, in the world today, things get lukewarm.

Everything is so convenient, so plush and everything is there. Sin is around us on every side. People just get use to it. Like Mrs. Lot, she couldn't see what was wrong with Sodom. She just overlooked all the stuff that the homosexuals were doing. They made fine artistic things, and made nice clothes and had good merchandise and wares.

They're good cooks and all this sort of thing. **They got use to it; lukewarm!**

"...because you are lukewarm and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (v 16). In the original it reads: *I am about to spew you out of My mouth!*

Verse 17: "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy...' That's why it's so important to always remain humble before God, so that God blesses you with some physical things. If God blesses you, He can take it. I'm sure that we're all aware that we're not set our hearts on the physical goods. **They can come and go!** Just remember the thing concerning fire. That's why it's right here in this chapter. **All those physical things can be burned up!**

"...and have need of nothing'; and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to **buy from Me gold purified by fire** so that you may be rich..." (vs 17-18). There again, purifying the character by the fire of trial; that is **the Godly character: the gold, the silver and precious stones!**

"...and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, **so that you may see**" (v 18). That's quite a statement!

I think that it's very important, brethren, that through God's grace we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge, and that we see our own selves.

- What is that we need to see most of?
- What is it that we need see more importantly than ourselves or our own sins?
 - ✓ *We need to see God!*
 - ✓ *We need to see God in our lives!*
 - ✓ *We need to see our relationship with God!*

Verse 19: "As many as I love, **I rebuke and chasten**.... [therefore, this fiery trial is in love, for correction and our own good] ...Therefore, **be zealous and repent**." If there is true repentance, God never turns it down.

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 20-22).

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Kings 1:2-17
- 2) Isaiah 57:15
- 3) Psalm 18:1-14
- 4) Habakkuk 3:1-6
- 5) Nahum 1:1-9
- 6) Isaiah 34:1
- 7) Isaiah 1:2
- 8) Isaiah 34:1-6, 8-10
- 9) Isaiah 66:1-2, 5-15
- 10) Hebrews 12:29
- 11) Isaiah 66:15-16
- 12) Luke 17:22-24
- 13) Matthew 24:27
- 14) Luke 17:25-30
- 15) Haggai 2:6-7
- 16) Malachi 3:1-3
- 17) 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
- 18) Revelation 3:14-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 19
- Psalm 119
- Revelation 10
- Isaiah 13
- Rev. 11; 14; 16
- Zechariah 14:12
- Isaiah 66:3-4
- 1 John 3
- Revelation 16

Also referenced: Sermon Series

- *Human Nature*
- *Gospel of John*

FRC:bo
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