

THE BIG IDEA: The people of God with the fire of God can accomplish the will of God.

The Take-Off

This has been a journey.

For 50 Days we've dedicated ourselves to prayer corporately, individually, and to fasting.

We've done over the last 7 weeks what we've studied during the Burn series: buy the field, rebuild the altar, and stretch the tent.

All of this has been in preparation for God answering his people with fire.

Today - Pentecost Sunday - is the day we celebrate the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early church.

The main account of that is found in Acts 2, and while we're not looking at that chapter today, know that Pentecost is when the church as we know it began.

Men and women - filled with the Holy Spirit - sent out to testify about Jesus.

The message God's given me for today will have us in 2 passages: 1 Kings 18 and Isaiah 61.

Go ahead and find both of those so that you've got them ready.

I want to wrap up 50 Days to Fire and our Burn series this morning by encouraging all of us to receive the fire.

We'll start in 1 Kings 18:16-39.

1. The fire of God is the sign that exalts God before men (the REALITY of the fire)

- a. Reading the Bible with us during 2019? You're experiencing the "boots on the ground" approach to the Bible
- b. This is going to be the "parachuting in" approach, so as we jump into the account, let me help provide some context:
 - Ahab was the king of Israel / 1 Kings 16:30 tells us he was more evil than any kings before him
 - He was married to an evil woman, Jezebel / 1 Kings 18:4 tell us that she hated God's people
 - 1 Kings 16 tells us that, as a result of marrying Jezebel, Ahab began to worship the false Gods Baal and Asherah
 - Elijah was the prophet of God, and Ahab and Jezebel couldn't stand him
 - Israel was in a 3 year drought and Elijah told Ahab it was the result of his idolatry (so you can see why they didn't like each other)
- c. Now that we got the context, let's jump into the account
- d. **1 Kings 18:16-18** / The problem is not 2 people, but 2 opposing worldviews
- e. **1 Kings 18:19-24** / The proposal is a showdown of sorts on Mount Carmel
 - Carmel was regarded by Baal worshippers as Baal's dwelling place (homecourt advantage!)
 - Baal was considered the god of fertility and also the god who sent rain, caused crops to grow, and provided food for his people. He was also believed to send fire from heaven (lightning?).
 - Elijah's proposal was a contest on Baal's mountain with Baal's prophets, and the winning God would be revealed through a sign that Baal was known for (fire)
- f. **1 Kings 18:25-39** / How the contest played out
 - vv. 25-30 / Baal's prophets went first but couldn't get fire
 - [Survivor fire-starting challenge - humans can be bad fire-starters]
 - vv. 31-39 / Then it was Elijah's turn
 - As if 1 against 450 wasn't enough, Elijah made it harder / 12 large jars of water on the altar (v. 35)
 - Today, the odds in our culture are stacked against the believer, too
 - vv. 37-38 / God answered by fire then, and he still answers by fire today
 - v. 39 / **The fire of God is the sign that exalts God before men**

2. The fire of God is the fuel that enables God to work through men (the RESULT of the fire)

- a. It's great that God reveals himself, but God's endgame isn't to simply exist as God, right?
- b. How do we know that? Genesis - he created us - and Jesus - he came for us
- c. The entire storyline of the Bible is God created it all, we ruined it all, and then God gave it all in order to restore it all
- d. So it isn't enough to see the reality of the fire - we also need to see the result of the fire
- e. For that, we need to begin in **Isaiah 61:1-4**
- f. v. 1 / the Spirit - fire is a symbol throughout the Bible of the Holy Spirit

- g. vv. 2-4 / what is the result of the fire? The poor, brokenhearted, captives, mourners and grievors will become “oaks of righteousness” and the rebuilders, restorers, and renewers of the desolate places!
- h. **The fire of God is the fuel that enables God to work through men**
- i. We need to walk through a few more Scriptures to really see this truth
- j. First, **Luke 4:18-19** / Jesus quotes the Isaiah passage as his mission statement
- k. We can know for sure that Isaiah was pointing forward prophetically to Jesus’ ministry
- l. Second, **John 14:12** / Jesus says we’ll do WHAT HE WAS DOING and even greater when he leaves
- m. What was Jesus doing? Isaiah 61:1-4 / we’re called to do that, too
- n. Third, **John 16:7** / Jesus said his leaving meant the fire’s coming
- o. Why do we have the Holy Spirit? Why is Pentecost such a big deal? He is the fuel that enables God to work through men.
- p. In other words, **the people of God with the fire of God can accomplish the will of God.**

The Landing

If that statement is true (and it is - we just walked through the Scriptures!), then the only response we should have is, “Lord, fill me with your fire!”

One last verse before we do

It’s possible to think that we don’t need to receive the fire because we’ve already received the Holy Spirit when we were saved

It’s true - we did

But Paul wrote a command in **Ephesians 5:18** - “Be filled with the Spirit” - that implies our need to be filled, and filled, and filled with the fire of God

Paul uses the present tense - he isn’t saying, “Hey, church, at some point when you deem it necessary, think about being filled with the Spirit.”

He’s also writing to people who have already been given every spiritual blessing (1:3) and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13).

According to the authority of the Word of God, I call you to receive the Spirit of God, to receive the fire.

As the band leads us, come to the altar and let’s ask God to answer us with fire!