

Why Fire?

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32, NIV)

Throughout the Bible, fire often symbolizes the presence, power and work of God. In the Old Testament, God’s presence guided his people in the form of a pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21, 22). In the New Testament, Jesus himself said, “I have come to bring fire on the earth” (Luke 12:49). God’s fire usually serve two primary purposes in people’s lives, depending on how they respond to him (see Deuteronomy 4:24; Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 12:29). For those who accept his Word and follow him, his fire purifies and refines them into what he created them to be. But for those who reject and defy him, the fire of God’s means judgment that will eventually consume and destroy. Ultimately, God’s fire is meant to ignite within his people a passion for him and his purposes.

Before Jesus left the earth following his resurrection, he told his followers that he would send the Holy Spirit to empower them to effectively serve him and spread his message (Acts 1:1-8). That promise was fulfilled on the on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). One of the signs of the Spirit’s arrival was what appeared to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each person who was filled by the Holy Spirit. Though that particular sign of fire occurred only on that day, the spiritual empowerment that began at Pentecost is still available and continues to operate in and through Spirit-filled followers of Christ to this day.

The notes and commentary in this study Bible reflect an uncompromised Pentecostal perspective. This is based on a firm belief that Christians today can and should experience the purposes and power of God’s Holy Spirit in the same way as Christ’s followers did in the first century church. From Acts to Revelation, you can read about what Jesus’ followers did through the power of the Holy Spirit. To this day, the baptism in the Holy Spirit--being immersed in the power of the Spirit--continues to fill Christians with the desire, urgency and ability to carry out Christ’s command to take his message throughout the world (see Acts 1:8; 2:42-47; 4:31).