

Message Two

**The Basis of All Our Priestly Service—
the Fire from the Altar of Burnt Offering**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 9:24; 6:12-13; 10:1-11;
Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49-50; Rev. 4:5; Exo. 3:2-6

I. God is a consuming fire—Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24; 9:3:

- A. As the burning One, God is holy; holiness is His nature, and whatever does not correspond with His holy nature, He, as the consuming fire, will consume—Heb. 12:29.
- B. In Daniel 7:9-10 God's throne was flames of fire, its wheels were a burning fire, and a stream of fire issued forth and came out from before Him; the fire here indicates that God is absolutely righteous and altogether holy.
- C. Through His death the Lord released Himself into man as the fire of life to burn on the earth—Luke 12:49-50; John 12:24:
 - 1. The pneumatic Christ as the sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit is a burning fire—Heb. 12:29; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; cf. Zech. 2:5.
 - 2. This fire is the impulse (the impelling force) of the spiritual life, an impulse that comes from the Lord's released divine life.
 - 3. "We all have been burned by this fire; we have been brought together by this fire; and now we are burdened that this fire would burn many others. When the concealed glory of Christ's divinity was released, a divine fire was cast on earth to burn the whole earth. Let the fire burn on! No one can stop it"—*The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory*, pp. 11-12.
- D. The seven Spirits of God are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; these lamps of fire are for the carrying out of God's administration—Rev. 4:5.
- E. The fire burning out of the midst of the thornbush was the Triune God, the God of resurrection—Exo. 3:2, 4, 6; Matt. 22:31-32.
- F. The word of God is a fire that burns us and many of the things in which we have confidence—Jer. 23:29; 5:14; 20:9.
- G. Those who have a desire to serve God must know that God is a consuming fire that burns and energizes; when God comes to the earth, fire comes to the earth, and when God enters

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into man, fire enters into man and burns in him—Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49.

- H. The fire that burned on the altar of the burnt offering came down from the heavens—Lev. 9:24:
 - 1. After coming down from the heavens, this fire burned continually upon the altar—6:13.
 - 2. The divine fire, the burning Triune God, enables us to serve and even to sacrifice our lives—Rom. 12:11; cf. Acts 15:26; 20:24; 21:13.

II. Every priestly service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering, and our service must be the issue of the burning of this fire—Lev. 9:24; 16:12-13; 6:13; 10:1-11:

- A. God wanted the service of the children of Israel to be based on this fire; the burning of incense was their service to God, but the fire used for burning incense had to be taken from the altar—6:13; 16:12-13.
- B. Our service must come out of the burning of God's fire—Exo. 3:2-6.
- C. Fire is a source of energy; in order for our service to be full of energy, our service must pass through the fire from the altar—Lev. 6:13:
 - 1. This fire should be the energy, the driving force, the impulse, within us; if we have this fire, our service will be out of God, not out of ourselves—Luke 12:49.
 - 2. The energy and the motivating power for the New Testament service began with fire from heaven; the fire that descended upon the Galilean fishermen became the energy and the motivating power within them—Acts 2:3.
 - 3. This fire burns on those who love God, who offer themselves to God, who are willing to forsake everything for God, and who are willing to place themselves in His hands in order to be broken—Lev. 9:24.
- D. The fire from the altar is the genuine motivating power of service—6:13:
 - 1. What God does concerning our service is to send His fire to burn within us—Luke 12:49; Rom. 12:11.

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2. If we offer ourselves to God sincerely, fire will descend from heaven and burn us; this burning will become the energy that moves us, and the issue of this burning will be our service.
- E. The fire from the altar produces a powerful service:
1. The altar of burnt offering is the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the fire is the Spirit—Gal. 2:20; Acts 2:3-4.
 2. The basis of genuine service is knowing the cross and placing ourselves on the cross in order to be gained by God and to allow the divine fire to burn within us; this produces service—Lev. 6:13; Rom. 12:11.
- F. Those who experience the fire from the altar build with gold, silver, and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12:
1. Such a work is full of the element of God, has the power of the cross, and expresses God—1:18; Phil. 1:20.
 2. Only the work that is produced through burning is of gold, silver, and precious stones; the work that is not produced through burning is of wood, grass, and stubble—1 Cor. 3:12.
 3. The day will come when the work of each will be tested by fire; if our work is the issue of fire, our work will stand the test of fire—v. 13.

III. We must serve God not with strange fire but with the fire from the altar—Lev. 10:1-2; 9:24; 6:13:

- A. According to typology, strange fire is any fire other than that which burns on the altar—10:1.
- B. The failure of Nadab and Abihu lay in their failure to use the fire from the altar; what they used was common fire, not holy fire.
- C. Strange fire signifies man's natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, and natural ability offered to God.
- D. Strange fire is fire of the self; it is fire that issues from the soulish life, the fleshly life, and the natural life—Matt. 16:24-26; 1 Cor. 2:14:
1. Strange fire means that the self-life interferes with the works of God.
 2. Although the works are God's, the self-life wants to dictate the way that the works are carried out.

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3. Offering up strange fire is employing the self's methods and wisdom and insisting on the self's proposals in the service of God.
 - E. Nadab and Abihu were judged not because they did something that was not for God but because they acted according to the natural life and did something for God in a natural way—Lev. 10:1-2.
 - F. The offering of strange fire was a sin of presumption; Nadab and Abihu presumed to do something for God—Psa. 19:13.
 - G. This is a strong warning showing us that, in touching the divine things, we need to apply the cross to our natural life; otherwise, we will suffer spiritual death.
 - H. God pays attention not only to whether there is fire but also to the source and nature of the fire; our zeal must come from the altar—Lev. 6:13.
 - I. Everyone who is called of God must realize that he is a thorn-bush with a fire burning within him and that this fire is God Himself—Exo. 3:2-6:
 1. We need to learn one lesson: to work for God without using the natural life, with its energy, strength, and ability, as the fuel but by letting God burn within us.
 2. We need to be burning in spirit, serving the Lord as a slave with the fire of His life, not with strange fire, which brings in spiritual death—Rom. 12:11; Lev. 10:1-2.
- IV. The fire on the altar of burnt offering should be kept burning continually; *it must not go out, and it shall not go out—6:12-13:***
- A. Day by day and on many occasions, we need to offer ourselves in Christ to God as a continual burnt offering to be burned by Him so that we may burn others—cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Num. 28:2-4, 9-11, 16-19, 26-27; 29:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 39-40.
 - B. The Spirit causes our spirit to be burning and our gifts to be flaming; hence, we should not quench Him—1 Thes. 5:19; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6:
 1. We must allow the Lord to burn us and to keep us burning continually by fanning our God-given spirit into flame—vv. 6-7.

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2. We must enjoy God as the fire of love to love Him and others with His love—2 Cor. 5:14; S. S. 8:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:7.
3. We must have a time with the Lord every morning to have a new beginning and be revived by Him—Lev. 6:12; Prov. 4:18; Lam. 3:22-24; Psa. 119:147-148.
4. We must call upon the Lord, stirring ourselves up to lay hold of Him—Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Isa. 64:7a.
5. We must pray-read God's Word, striking the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire—Jer. 23:29; Eph. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16.
6. We must be filled with the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the seven lamps of fire and the seven flaming eyes of Christ by opening ourselves to the Lord unreservedly in order to be enlightened by Him, burned by Him, and infused with Him—Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; Prov. 20:27; Mal. 3:2.
7. We must always rejoice, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything—1 Thes. 5:16-18.
8. We must speak for the Lord to impart Him into others, enjoying Him as our burning power for purging and motivating in God's economical move—Acts 2:3-4; 6:4.
9. We must coordinate with one another in and among the churches to enjoy God as our sanctifying fire for His one move—Ezek. 1:4, 13; Rev. 1:20; Zech. 2:5.
10. The burning of the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the seven lamps of fire motivates us to rise up and take action for the carrying out of God's economy—Dan. 11:32b.