

Holy Fire

HEBREWS 12:29 KJV

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

The Bible has many interesting verses about fire.¹ As we examine these verses, it becomes clear that fire in Scripture is not always bad.

When the Bible says God is a fire, we understand it is not a literal statement any more than when it says God is a rock. These figures of speech are not to be taken literally, but do convey a literal truth.

We realize God is strong and dependable like a big rock, always there and able to support us. But what literal truth should we understand from, "God is a consuming fire?"

What does fire do? It changes something into another form. Fire also purifies. In fact, the English word "pure" likely comes from the Greek word for fire, which is "pur."

So one possible meaning is that God "burns" away all that is not good, and changes all that is not like Him which He contacts. Yet there are many verses where God, or His messengers, are described as having the appearance of fire. So God and His surroundings may actually look like fire to mortal humans.

After you consider the following Bible passages you may need to reconsider your interpretation of other passages about fire.

Isaiah speaks of those who will dwell with "devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings." But, instead of it being the enemies of the Lord, it seems to refer to those who walk in righteousness!

ISAIAH 33:14-15 KJV

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

Revelation chapter 15 tells of people standing in a sea of fire, but they are not sinners – they are God's overcomers!

REVELATION 15:2 KJV

¹ A larger list of interesting fire Scriptures can be found at www.WrongAboutHell.com.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

In Zechariah God says He will bring His people -- not people He will reject -- through fire.

ZECHARIAH 13:9 KJV

9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

When Ezekiel saw a vision of God on His throne, he said His appearance was like fire. (Daniel and Revelation also describe the Lord and His throne as having the appearance of fire.)

EZEKIEL 1:26-28 KJV

26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Ezekiel describes the holy mountain of God as having "stones of fire."

EZEKIEL 28:14-16 KJV

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Scripture tells us Jesus will baptize us with fire. That means placing us into fire! (This is not done to His enemies, but to those who come to Him in faith!)

LUKE 3:16-17 KJV

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

(Chaff is part of the wheat – the outer hull -- not a part that is valuable once it is harvested.)

The Book of Revelation is full of symbolic figures of speech. Stars in a hand are not physical stars. Candlesticks are not real candlesticks (Revelation 1:20). Frogs coming out of a prophet's mouth are not physical frogs. There is not a dead lamb on a throne in Heaven, nor a literal sword coming out of Jesus' mouth.

The "lake of fire" is mentioned in the Bible only in Revelation 19, 20, and 21. Whether there is a literal "lake of fire" or whether it is symbolic we don't know for sure. Being called "the second death" seems to give us a clue that it could be figurative. Whatever the lake of fire is, we know that hades and death are thrown into it. Since the Bible clearly tells us death is an enemy which shall be eliminated (1 Corinthians 15:25-26), it seems that "the second death" could be the death of death. So, if death is done away with by being thrown into the lake of fire, it is possible hades will also be done away with by the same action.

REVELATION 20:14 KJV

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Once the disciples of Jesus asked whether some people who were rejecting Him should be punished with fire. Jesus rebuked them for yielding to such a thought!

LUKE 9:54-56 KJV

54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.