

Strange Fire or Sacred Flame?

“Behold the Burning Ones”

Isaiah 6:1–5 (NKJV): **1** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. **2** Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” **4** And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. **5** So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.”

Isaiah 6 opens on a scene none of us can conjure: the Lord enthroned, the temple shaking, and seraphim—whose very name means “burning ones”—hovering overhead with six wings, veiling their faces, and flying in awe. Their voices echo: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:3)

This was not gentle flicker—it was holy blaze, radiating divine presence and purity.

Then one of them took a live coal from God’s altar and touched Isaiah’s lips: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven.” (Isaiah 6:6–7)

God’s fire—not symbolic, not manufactured—radically cleansed the prophet and commissioned him for prophetic ministry.

A FIRE HAS DIMMED: THE EARLY CHURCH’S IGNITED ZEAL

In those early post-Pentecost centuries, the Church operated under powerful witness: healings, bold martyrdom, prophetic courage—all signs of Spirit-empowered flame burning among the people. Though not all recorded in dramatic tongues-of-fire fashion, Church Fathers speak of a zeal and supernatural power rarely experienced today.

Consider Polycarp, disciple of John the Apostle, who stood before pagan judges at age 86. When an executioner tried to burn him alive, the flames merely encircled him with a radiant glow—and when he was

stabbed, his blood extinguished the fire. He declared: **“I bless you, Father, for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ.”**

Such martyrs illustrated a fire that outlasted the flame, a presence that carried them through persecution and into eternity.

These were not weekend Christians with lukewarm convictions. These were men and women so consumed by the Spirit of God that not even death could extinguish their devotion. They sang while the flames licked their flesh. They forgave while the sword was at their throat.

They didn’t just *speak* in tongues—they *stood* in fire.

Their lives weren’t marked by moments of emotionalism but by **a furnace of unwavering faithfulness. So here is the question that shatters pretense and pierces comfort:**

Can we honestly say that the same fire that burned in their bones now burns in ours? Do we carry that same holy obsession with Christ—one that refuses to bow to culture, to compromise, or convenience?

Is there still a raging flame in your soul—or just warm memories of what revival used to feel like?

Have we settled for echoes instead of encounters... *reminiscing* about the fires of past moves, while no longer carrying the flame ourselves? Let's be honest...

- **The fire has not left us. We left the fire.**
- **It has not grown cold—we have.**
- **It has not gone silent—we've just stopped listening.**
- **It has not abandoned us—we've exchanged it.**

We traded divine presence for polished production and swapped burning altars for branded platforms.

We exchanged the Spirit's trembling power for a safe, sanitized religion that knows how to clap on beat but has forgotten how to weep between the porch and the altar. We didn't lose the fire—we left it smoldering on the altar when it no longer fit our schedule.

The early Church was married to poverty, prisons, and persecutions. Today, the Church is married to prosperity, personality, and popularity. But oh... there was a time...

- **There was a time when the fire fell and entire nations felt it.**
- **When preachers thundered from pulpits with voices soaked in eternity.**

- When sinners clutched the backs of pews, trembling under conviction.
- When schoolhouses became sanctuaries and factories turned into prayer rooms.
- When bars shut down, and jails emptied out—not because of legislation, but because of visitation.

We call them the **Great Awakenings**—but they were really great **returnings**.

- Returnings to the altar.
- Returnings to the Word.
- Returnings to the Fire.

And all of this—without LED walls, without social media, without celebrity preachers. Why? Because they had something far more powerful...**They had holy fire.**

GREAT AWAKENINGS: FIRE REIGNITED ACROSS THE AGES

Throughout history, God has answered prayer with revival fire:

- Jonathan Edwards witnessed hearts shattered under deep conviction during the First Great Awakening.

- George Whitefield preached with fire that brought tens of thousands to repentance across America and Britain.
- Charles Finney declared that revival is birthed where Christians pray with passion, not ritual.
- The Welsh Revival (1904–05) overflowed with miracle after miracle; communities transformed.
- The Azusa Street Revival (1906) ushered in modern Pentecostalism: tongues, healings, racial unity, and a global outpouring of the Spirit.

Samuel Chadwick, writing from that era, declared: “The soul’s safety is in its heat. Truth without enthusiasm... ritual without soul, make for a Church without power. Destitute of the Fire of God, nothing else counts; possessing Fire, nothing else matters.”

Men ablaze are invincible. Hell trembles when men kindle... The Church is powerless without the flame of the Holy Ghost. WE ARE NOW A CHURCH THAT FORGOT FIRE...as a result...

John the Baptist was a voice crying in the wilderness - Our generation is a wilderness crying for a voice.

Tragically, the only fire some people know is the fire of the wrath to come! Oh, how we need the fire of the Holy Ghost again.

Our institutions organize, our events entertain, yet without prayer-fueled zeal, revival flame cannot burn.

John Wesley lamented: “My fear... is that our people will become content to live without the fire, the power, the excitement, the supernatural element that makes us great.”

From the fire-consuming seraphim who purified Isaiah’s mouth, through the courageous blaze of early martyrs, to the revivals that shook continents—God’s flame has always fallen on those who hunger for His presence over human methods.

Let us refuse compasses of human hype and embrace Heaven-sent fire: cleansing, empowering, unwavering. May our hearts burn with divine heat that transforms lives and missions.

Leonard Ravenhill, the prophetic voice of the 20th century revival movement, said: “The Church right now has more fashion than passion, is more pathetic than prophetic, is more superficial than supernatural.”

But there is a holy indignation and righteous frustration building in this generation and One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed.

WHAT I AM TRYING TO SAY IS:

Real Fire: **Heaven's Flame, Not Man's Fame**

Real Fire is God-Initiated, Not Man-Generated

- **Leviticus 9:24 (NKJV):** *“And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.”*

This was real fire—God's fire. It didn't originate from man's hands or emotion. It descended from heaven as a sign of God's acceptance.

Real fire is always God's response to obedient sacrifice. It comes after order, not chaos—after obedience, not ambition.

Real Fire Confirms Divine Approval

Throughout Scripture, real fire was used to affirm God's presence, approval, or glory:

- **Genesis 15:17** – Fire passed through Abram's sacrifice to ratify covenant.

- **1 Kings 18:38** – Elijah’s sacrifice is consumed by **fire from heaven**, proving the Lord is God.
- **Acts 2:3** – Tongues of **fire** rest on believers at Pentecost—**God initiating a new era of empowerment.**

Where there is fire, there is favor!

The real fire doesn’t entertain, it transforms. It doesn’t flatter, it consumes. It doesn’t draw attention to the vessel, it reveals the God who sent it.

Real Fire Purifies and Prepares

- **Isaiah 6:6–7 (NKJV):** *“Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it...”*

This was **real fire from the altar**—not symbolic, not strange. It **cleansed Isaiah’s lips** and **commissioned his calling.**

Only holy fire can touch unclean lips and turn them into prophetic instruments.

- Real fire doesn't just **empower**—it **purifies, prepares, and propels**.

Real Fire Stays on God's Altar

- **Leviticus 6:12–13 (NKJV):** *“And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out... A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.”*

This fire was **originally kindled by God** (Leviticus 9:24) and was to be **sustained continually** by the priests.

- **We don't light the fire—we steward the fire.**
- **Real fire is sustained by obedience, prayer, sacrifice, and surrender.**
- It's never sustained by hype, charisma, or manipulation.