

## Word Study on "Fire"



(A) The word fire in the Bible can just mean a literal fire like a camp fire to keep warm or to cook, the burning of a city in war or the burning of a sacrifice. Sometimes it can be a figure of speech describing God's purification or punishment. Sometimes it can be spiritual/literal indicating the actual presence of God as the Holy Spirit like the burning bush in Exodus 3. Sometimes it can be more than one, for example, the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah is both literal fire and punishment as the result of the wrath of God.

The words "purify" and "purge" come from the Greek word for fire. For each of the references below write, "literal," "purify", "punish" or "Spirit." (If you think it is something else besides these four, it might be. Your opinion is as good as mine. Write your alternative and discuss it with the class.) I've done the first four for you.

- |                  |                |                 |  |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| Hebrews 12:29    | <i>Spirit</i>  | Isaiah 43:2     |  |
| Genesis 38:24    | <i>Literal</i> | Jeremiah 6:29   |  |
| Leviticus 10:1-2 | <i>Punish</i>  | Ezekiel 1:27    |  |
| Isaiah 1:25      | <i>Purify</i>  | Hosea 8:5       |  |
| Exodus 13:21     |                | Micah 1:4       |  |
| Leviticus 20:14  |                | Matt. 25:1-13   |  |
| Numbers 14:14    |                | John 18:18      |  |
| Joshua 7:15      |                | John 21:9       |  |
| Psalms 18:8-14   |                | 1 Peter 4:12    |  |
| Psalms 29:7      |                | Revelation 20:9 |  |
| Psalms 97:3      |                | Matthew 3:10    |  |
| Psalms 144:6     |                | Matthew 3:11    |  |
| Isaiah 6:6-7     |                | Matthew 3:12    |  |

(B) Read Luke 3:16-17. Have you been baptized with fire? Explain.

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(C) What is Hebrews 12:29 talking about?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(D) What is 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:12-15 talking about?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

----- "FIRE" ANSWERS -----

(A) For each of the references below write, "literal," "purify", "punish" or "Spirit

Hebrews 12:29	<u>Spirit</u>	Isaiah 43:2	<u>purify</u>
Genesis 38:24	<u>literal/punish</u>	Jeremiah 6:29	<u>purify</u>
Leviticus 10:1-2	<u>punish</u>	Ezekiel 1:27	<u>Spirit</u>
Isaiah 1:25	<u>purify</u>	Hosea 8:5	<u>punish</u>
Exodus 13:21	<u>Spirit</u>	Micah 1:4	<u>punish</u>
Leviticus 20:14	<u>literal/punish</u>	Matt. 25:1-13	<u>literal</u>
Numbers 14:14	<u>Spirit/literal</u>	John 18:18	<u>literal</u>
Joshua 7:15	<u>literal</u>	John 21:9	<u>literal</u>
Psalms 18:8-14	<u>Spirit/punish</u>	1 Peter 4:12	<u>purify</u>
Psalms 29:7	<u>Spirit/punish</u>	Revelation 20:9	<u>punish</u>
Psalms 97:3	<u>punish</u>	Matthew 3:10	<u>punish</u>
Psalms 144:6	<u>Spirit/punish</u>	Matthew 3:11	<u>purify/literal</u>
Isaiah 6:6-7	<u>purify</u>	Matthew 3:12	<u>punish</u>

(B) Read Luke 3:16-17. Have you been baptized with fire? Explain. I believe anyone who is a Christian has been baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit. However this phrase "baptized by fire" has come to have a metaphorical as well as a spiritual meaning. People use it to describe living through difficult times and coming out better for it. Yes, some difficult circumstances have taught me that God is completely reliable. Others see it as meaning Jesus has the ability to immerse (baptize) people in the presence of God so that they are aware of their sin and the need they have to be cleansed of that sin. To them to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire is to be convicted concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Some people see it as an alternative -- you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit into heaven, or you will be baptized with fire into Hell. Still others see it as meaning either you yield in obedience to the Holy Spirit or He will teach you with whatever means necessary to behave yourself.

(C) What is Hebrews 12:29 talking about? If you read the chapter as a whole you discover that it is talking about the discipline of God. Hebrew 12:4-13 make this particularly clear. I believe it is saying that if we don't behave ourselves, God will put us in circumstances that teach us to behave better -- a baptism of fire in the metaphorical sense. He will purify us.

(D) What is 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:12-15 talking about? I think it is saying that only those things that are right and good will survive our encounters with God. Circumstances may burn it away. We may painfully decide to part with it while we are in fervent prayer. Only those things that are Godly will survive our trip to Heaven. I recommend you invest heavily in Godliness, especially worship and love.

**For further thought:**

[e] Compare the 7 voices of God in Rev 10:3-4 with the 7 times it says, "the voice of the Lord," in Psalm 29:3-9.

[f] Compare and discuss James 3:1-12 and Acts 2:3. Are they talking about opposite kinds of tongues?

[g] In Acts 28:1-6 is the snake symbolic of Satan, and the fire symbolic of Hell?

[h] Read and discuss Mark 9:38-50, particularly Mark 9:49. How can someone be salted with fire?

[i] In Revelation 8:5-10 fire from the altar brings destruction to the earth. What is it talking about? (See Isaiah 66:15)

[j] In Daniel 3:1-30 could it be talking about God using fire to burn away the bonds that hold us and deliver us from the power of the king of this world? Who was the fourth man in verse 25? Why was there no smell of smoke in verse 27? Do you have faith like theirs in verse 17?

[k] Is Daniel 7:9-10 describing the throne room of God?

[l] In Ezra 3:1-7 he establishes the temple sacrifices by fire again. Why don't we do this anymore?

[m] 2 Kings 2:11 mentions a fiery chariot and horses of fire. What could that mean? (See also 2 Kings 6:17)

[n] An exhaustive search of the scriptures for words related to "fire" or "burn" showed over 900 references. After discussing some of these above, you can easily find more.