

GOD IN OUR MIDST

Text: Rev 21:3; Acts 2:2-4

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Acts 2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Introduction: Here we are given in the Revelation text the statement of God's intentions towards mankind that put their faith and trust in Him. This a parallel of what He spoke through Moses to the children of Israel.

Lev 26:11 I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you.

12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Basically, God told them that He was going to set up His tent in their camp and He was going to walk among them and be their God.

But exactly, what does it mean when God says "I will be in your midst?" Let's look at what is revealed to us in the past and see if we can identify God's presence in our midst today.

I. Meet God.

A. Abram meets God.

Gen 15:17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.

18a “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram...”

1. Abram had prepared a sacrifice.
2. God appeared as a blazing torch passing between the sacrifices.

B. Moses meets God.

Ex 3:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

1. God calls to Moses out of a burning bush.
2. Appeared unto him in “a flame of fire.”

C. Israel meets “Yahweh.”

1. The giving of the Law.

Ex 24:16 and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud.

17 To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.

2. The offering of the sacrifices.

Lev 9:22 Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down.

23 Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.

24 Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

D. The one consistent aspect of the presence of God's glory was the presence of fire.

E. Why?

Deut 4:24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

II. The Fire of the Lord.

A. A daily guide for the children of Israel.

Ex 13:21 By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

B. Consumed the sacrifices.

Lev 9:24 Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar.

C. As a means of judgment.

1. Unauthorized fire.

Lev 10:10 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command.

2 So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

2. When the people complained.

Num 11:1 Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

3. As a sign of power and might.

1 Kings 18:37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

D. Fire or the effects of fire have always been associated with the works of the Lord.

1. Fire on the bronze altar to consume the sin sacrifices.
2. Fire on the Golden altar to burn the incense.
3. A ball of fire hovering above the mercy seat over the Ark of the covenant – the Shekinah glory of the Lord.
4. God in the midst of the people of Israel was a burning flaming fire.
 - a. Consuming sacrifices.
 - b. Confirming peace.

- c. Controlling destiny.
- d. Convincing of the Presence of the Lord.

III. God in Our Midst Today

- A. Paul reminds us that we are the temple of God today.

1 Cor 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

2 Cor 6:16 For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

- 1. We have become the habitation of God by the Spirit.
 - 2. What abided in the Tabernacle and Temple then now abides in us.
- B. "Preacher we don't need the fire today."
 - 1. We don't offer sacrifices.
 - 2. We don't burn incense, we pray.
 - 3. We worship with lifted hands and hearts.
 - 4. Your right. But I need to remind you that God made His entrance into our midst.
 - C. When God met with the children of Israel to give them the Law of the Old Covenant, here is what was observed.

Ex 19:17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently,

19 and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

D. When God came down to reveal the New Covenant, here is what happened.

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

E. When God is in the “house” – “Temple,” fire will be present and visible.

Conclusion: What are you saying pastor? I am telling you that when we have offered ourselves as “a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service,” God will consume that sacrifice.

“Ouch, God that’s hot!” “Yeh! And it’s going to get hotter.” “For Me to burn out the dross of this world and bring your faith forth as pure gold, I have to turn up the heat.”

Oh that, somebody would cry out, “God consume me!”

King David cried out to God. Let him describe what happened.

2 Sam 22:7 But I called upon the Lord in my distress, And he heard me from his Temple. My cry reached his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of the heavens quaked Because of his wrath.

9 Smoke poured from his nostrils; Fire leaped from his mouth And burned up all before him, Setting fire to the world.

10 He bent the heavens down and came to earth; He walked upon dark clouds.

11 He rode upon the glorious- On the wings of the wind.

12 Darkness surrounded him, And clouds were thick around him;

13 The earth was radiant with his brightness.

14 The Lord thundered from heaven; The God above all gods gave out a mighty shout.

15 He shot forth his arrows of lightning And routed his enemies.

16 By the blast of his breath Was the sea split in two. The bottom of the sea appeared.

17 From above, he rescued me. He drew me out from the waters;

18 He saved me from powerful enemies, From those who hated me And from those who were too strong for me.