

# Choose Fire

by G.W. North

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*In 'Choose Fire', G.W. North emphasizes the necessity of choosing God's fire over mere tradition in our worship and lives.*

**Duration:** 1:25:02

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 29:23, 2 Chronicles 1:1, Matthew 3:11, Luke 12:49, Acts 2:3, Hebrews 12:29

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher continues the theme of fire from the previous night. He emphasizes that Jesus Christ came to send fire, which represents holiness in every aspect of our lives. The preacher refers to the book of Zechariah, where it is stated that the purpose of the fire is to bring holiness to all areas of our lives. Moving on to the second book of Chronicles, the preacher focuses on Solomon, who became king and was greatly blessed by God. The sermon highlights the importance of seeking God's presence and allowing Him to magnify us in our lives.

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## Transcript

You may have gathered from the opening announcements that we, our theme last night was fire and I want to continue on it tonight. In fact it was while we were walking down the road that brother said to me, would it, wouldn't matter if we sang the same hymn again to open with? I said no, I think he might have ideas on singing it every night. Hallelujah.

And so it's a wonderful thing, as we sang in that hymn, send the fire. You know that was the avowed intention of Jesus Christ. That's what he said he'd come for.

He came for other things as well of course, but he came to send fire. Praise his wonderful name. Well, you may recall last night that the great objective in sending the fire, as it was in the great book of Zechariah we looked, was that in the end there should be even bells on horses' harness, holiness unto the Lord.

That was the reason for it. That there should be holiness in every department of our lives. Glory be to the name of the Lord for that.

Now I want to continue with the theme and I want you to turn with me, please, into the second book of Chronicles. The first book of Chronicles finishes, if I look into the 29th chapter, that's the last chapter of the first book of Chronicles. Verse 23, it says that Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king, instead of

David his father, and prospered.

And all Israel obeyed him. And that's the great truth that we're introducing ourselves to. The second book of Chronicles opens up with this great man Solomon, who had been made king.

His name means peaceful, wonderful. And so in the first chapter of second Chronicles we read these words. Verse 1, Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

And I want to say this to you, whoever you are in this room, your God, whoever is your God, is with you. Did you know that? And ultimately either your God is the devil or the real God. Your God is with you now, right where you are sitting.

You keep that very clear. So if you know what's going on in your life, if it's pretty horrible, you know who's God. Well, do you know which God you have? Just keep that clear.

If it's wonderful, you know who your God is. Just as clear cut as that. And the name peaceful is very significant.

If the real God is your God, you've got peace. You're a peaceful person. It means full of peace.

If Satan is your God, or if you've made money your God, or drugs your God, or drink your God, or woman your God, or man your God, then you're in a rough time. You may not think you are, sometimes, because there are some pleasures in the life of sin. But God makes it very, very plain to us.

Let's read it again. Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. Then Solomon spake unto all Israel.

Notice this magnified man, this magnificent man. Notice the way he moves. He speaks to Israel, to all Israel, to the captains of thousands, of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.

Please, if you were here last night, recall what I said about governors in Zechariah, will you? So Solomon and all the congregation with him went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had made in the wilderness. That's the place to really have a tabernacle for God in the wilderness. If you can make one there, you're pretty good.

But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirgiz-Jerim to the place which David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for the ark at Jerusalem. Moreover, the brazen altar that Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord, and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burned offerings upon it.

Tremendous, isn't it? A thousand burnt offerings. Magnificent man, wasn't he? A magnificent man gives and does magnificently. It's as clear as that.

But that's not particularly the moment that I want to draw your attention to. You, if you're not familiar with the Scripture, or even with those few words that we've read, may wonder what it was all about. Well, let me tell you, this man, Solomon, had to make a choice.

And I want to tell each one of you in this room that you've got to make choices very clear. You can't drift into anything good. You can't drift into anything that's of God.

You can drift to hell. You can drift in the devil's way. There's crowds, millions of them going that way.

You can drift with them. But when you want what God has to give you, and what God can do for you, if you want this fire, we're going to look into it a little later, then you've got to make some choices. Is that all clear to you? Marvelous thing for us to see the truth.

The choice that Solomon had to make was this. He had to choose between two things. He had to choose between what his father had done and what Moses had done.

The trouble with Israel at that time was that they were divided. They were divided. When I'm talking about Israel, I'm not talking about the ten tribes.

I'm talking about this great thing of God. The division had come about this way, that way back in Israel's history, because of the declension in the priesthood, starting with the sons of Eli. You really have to get reading in your Bible to know this, but you can read it.

That's how I found it out. The sons of Eli had done something absolutely wrong. Hophni and Phinehas, their names were, if you want to know.

I reckon you're glad you weren't christened with a name like that, Hophni or Phinehas. You might be Phineke, but you didn't want to be called Phinehas. Here is the great thing for us to understand.

They took the ark of God when they ought not to have done it, and they took it out imagining that if they had the ark of God in the battle, they would win the battle. They were moving under superstition, even though they were moving in the true faith that was on the earth. They were moving in superstition.

They got all the jargon. They knew everything about it. They'd been brought up in it from babyhood, and they moved in complete superstition.

They took the ark of God, and instead of winning the battle through their fetish, they turned the ark of God into a fetish. They lost the battle. The ark was taken, and it was put into Philistine land, which is Palestine that they're all arguing about to this day.

You will know that. I hope so, that you know what's happening in the world. And they put it in the temple of a god they had called Dagon.

This Dagon was a horrible image, half a man and half a fish. And they left the ark there in the temple of Dagon. When they left this ark, the ark of God, in the temple of Dagon, they went home.

The next morning when they went, Dagon was on his face on the floor. So they put him back up and went home again. Next morning he was on the floor and smashed.

And they realized that there was some power here in this ark. They were quite living in superstition. They never knew the truth at all.

Well, I could go on and tell you all kinds of stories. They shifted it from here, they shifted it from there. But at last they realized that there was something connected with this ark that they knew nothing about.

And so they sent it back. They sent it back to a place called Beth Shemesh. The whole of these stories, with this story, would take me all night to tell you.

So I'm just chopping in here and there. And this was back among the people where it belonged. And they kept the ark of God there and they put it into a house there and everything was fine.

During this time the king of Israel called Saul was made king. He turned his back completely on the ark of God. David had to say afterwards that we never once inquired at the ark all the time Saul was king.

That was one of his great downfalls. He was head and shoulders above everybody else and he thought he was head and shoulders above God in the end. And so on.

Then there came a time when the ark was shifted from this place, Beth Shemesh, to a place called Kirgiz-Jerim. And there it stayed. And during this time Saul was king and Saul was killed and David came to the throne.

And there came a time in David's life when he said to himself this ark has no business there in the house of Kirgiz-Jerim in the house of Obed-Edom actually. We'll make a place for it in Jerusalem. He had heard that there was great blessing in the house where the ark of God was.

And he, being a little selfish for the blessings of God thought he would bring this ark to Jerusalem. So he made a tent for it and went down and at the second attempt was able to bring, I may refer back to this a little later, able to bring the ark into Jerusalem and he put the ark in a tent in Jerusalem and there it was. But the tent, the tabernacle that God had ordered to be made for the ark wasn't in Jerusalem.

It was a place where we read at Gibeon. There was everything else in Gibeon. The tabernacle, the altar, all things.

But in the tent in Jerusalem there was the ark. Now David died. Solomon came to the throne and he had to make a choice.

Was he going to what daddy had said? Was he going to the ark? Or was he going to the place where the altar was? The altar was not in Jerusalem, just the ark. He had to make a choice between worship and make a choice between that and fire. He made his choice.

You've got to make a choice. When these days, when everybody's on the worship and praise bandwagon you've got to make a choice. It's nothing new.

People choose that. When Solomon came to the throne he knew which way he got to go. Glory be to the name of the Lord.

And we read it. He did not choose to go to the ark. Now you might have thought that's what he would have done.

He saw that the altar was there. The place of truest worship. That's where he went.

We'll read it again. Verse 3. Solomon and all the congregation with him would God you men could lead the congregation to this. Would God you could.

We've been singing about fire. All right. Down they went.

They went to the high place that was at Gibeon. Verse 3. There was, now listen to this, the tabernacle of the congregation of God. It was David's tabernacle.

It was almost private. It belonged to the king. It didn't belong to the congregation.

Here was one of Solomon's greatest perceptions. You may be sitting there wondering, well I didn't know all this. Well, you could have done if you had read your Bibles.

And you begin, I trust, to see the tremendous significance of this. I hope you do. He took the congregation of the people, all the people, to the place where the altar was.

That's where he took them. Aren't you going up to where David used to go? It's your family tent. I'm going to Gibeon.

Now think of it. All the congregation. And he personally took a thousand sacrifices.

Just think of it. The greatness of this man. The immensity of him.

He went for fire. We'll see a lot more about him. He didn't just go for lovely singing, playing of wonderful instruments, and all the things that go with it.

He went for the fire. He saw what the need of Israel was. I want to tell you that I believe with all my heart that the need of Israel today, and I'm not meaning just the nation Israel, I'm meaning the whole Israel of God, is fire.

That's the need. We've all bought all the songs of praise. We've all bought the worship things.

We've all gone for that. Nobody loves worship choruses more than I. If you trace my singing, I go much more for the worship choruses than I do for the jingling praising choruses. You just, you listen.

Here is the great thing. But he saw where it lay. And that's where he went.

And he broke with his tradition of his family. Now if you trace Solomon back, you will find that he'd done this before he came to the throne. I won't tell you where to look.

I want you to read your Bibles. You'll find that Solomon did this. And he'd made up his mind.

He went to the brazen altar, verse 5. The thing, the original thing. Bezalel, the son of Uriah, the son of Hur, had made this. Right out there in the wilderness.

When the real, real original was made. Bless this man, Solomon. He went back to the foundations, beloved.

Most people are going for the peripheral things. Our brother stood up here and he talked about let's make it a fire conference. I said to the Lord, well if that's what you want, Lord, that's what we can do by the grace.

But I believe that. I believe it's up to us. You may think that's very Arminian.

You can think what you like. It's up to us. Hallelujah.

I believe this with all my heart. God has made the provision. God has given the truth.

God has laid it out. Now what are we going to do about it? That's it. Praise God.

One of the great things I always remember about one of the greatest men of miracles that ever lived. He died shortly before I went to Bradford. That's many years ago.

He went to a Quaker meeting once. Have you ever heard me tell this story? These stories were rife about him in Bradford where I was. And they sat in dead silence as Quakers are wont to do.

After a while, it was Smith Wigglesworth. After a while, Smith couldn't keep quiet. He started up and he began to sing and preach and one thing and another.

And they put up with it for a little while. And then at the end they got home and they said, No, you know, we don't do that. We just sit and wait for God.

We don't wait. We keep silence. If God doesn't move us, then we don't do anything.

So Smith said, Well, if God doesn't move me, I move him. You say, Wow, that's nearly blasphemous. Oh no, that's because you've never read your testament properly.

You'll find that many moved God. Many people moved the Lord Jesus when he was on earth. They moved him.

He said, Have you ever discovered that? Look for it next time you're reading your Gospels. Just look for it. Keep your eyes open.

And when we see these things, it's up to you, son. It's up to you, daughter. It's quite clear.

We can sing about fire and sing our heads off. But it's up to you whether you have it or not. I mean, I like to sit by the fire.

I'm very appreciative of the people I'm living with. They keep me warm. But I haven't got it.

I haven't got the fire. I warm myself at it. It's very nice.

But I don't carry a gas fire around in my pocket. I just want you to come down to reality. You can come and warm yourself.

It's whether or not you've got the fire. That's the thing that counts. So Solomon went up thither.

I love him. He went to this brazen altar before the Lord. Hallelujah.

That's where the brazen altar was before the Lord. Well, you say, But the ark wasn't there. That's right.

Things had gone all wrong. That's the trouble. Things have gone all wrong.

Perhaps here I need not declare that. Perhaps it saw in many hearts things have gone wrong. That's right.

Things had gone wrong. You say, Well, David did his best. That's right.

That's always that when things go wrong. Some good man gets up and he says, Well, I'm going to do something about it. Say, Good on you, David.

And he got hold of the ark. And he pitched a tent for it. And that's where he brought it.

But as good as it was, it wasn't right. What Solomon is famous for in Scripture is he brought everything together. And he got everything right.

The right thing in the right place at the right time. Even when David went to get the ark, you will remember he was doing the right thing. It shouldn't be stuck out where it was.

It was the right thing to do, but he did it in the wrong way. You can do the right thing in the wrong way. Same as lots of people are doing the wrong thing in the right way.

And there's a great muddle and a whole mix-up all over the world. Right through charismatic or whatever, fellowship or evangelical or anything out of circles. There's a whole great muddle and a mix-up.

Solomon, I want to repeat it to you, my beloved friends, is famous in Scripture because he did it right. He got it exactly right. And I want to tell you there's a moment when people get exactly right with God for him to do things.

Solomon chose. He went to the fire. That's where he went.

He didn't go to the psalms singing. You can read about it. He didn't go to the singing.

He didn't go to those sorts of things. Afterwards he brought them together, but he didn't go to it first. Singing and dancing and all that round the ark.

And this is the place we're in. We're in the Acts 15 position. This is being pumped all over the world.

The tabernacle of David is going to be restored. That's the place where there wasn't any fire. Let me tell you that.

There was only the ark and the singing. And upon people who are not instructed in truth, people can push over their notions. Of course, you can read it in Acts chapter 15, forgetting that there's a whole Bible full of truth before that.

So that you should understand. Solomon went for the fire. That's what he went for.

Would God that everybody in this room never gave themselves any rest until the fire was burning. They were having wonderful services at David's tabernacle. But it wasn't God's tabernacle.

It wasn't the tabernacle of the congregation. It wasn't the tabernacle of the common man. Join me.

I'm a common man. And God wants us to see this and get the scales off our eyes lest we be led by the nose instead of led through the understanding. Now God wants us to see this very clear.

When Solomon did this, it says in verse 7, that night, after this man had offered a thousand sacrifices, you just think of it, the time it must have taken, the blood that must have run, the continual burning that went on. Just let it sink right in. Imagine it.

And that night, when that was all passed, God appeared to him and he said, Ask what I shall give thee. You come to the place of fire and all that's involved in it, and God will probably ask you what you want. He never went there to ask God for anything.

He went there to give God something, if you remember. Beloved, I want to tell you that all the secret longings of your heart will be met because this man had a secret longing in his heart, but he never put that before God. It's wonderful when God invites you to ask Him for something, isn't it? Because you haven't got a lot of things that you want to say.

God said, Now ask. And like all these great people who have ever done anything in the Bible, you'll find that they had great secret things, never mentioned it to anybody. The deep secrets of his being.

Now you've got some. Whoever you are, if you say that you're belonging to God, deep down in the depths of your being, there's a longing that you've never voiced. You say, How do you say it like everybody? Well, you've got it with Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah was a man of fire, wasn't he? Right, we sang it. And Elisha's there. And then when they crossed Jordan together, Elijah said, Now ask me what do you want? And that's the time it was voiced.

Deep, deep longing. Now, you and I are not brother and sister. Not in truth.

Not in reality. And there's somewhere deep down in the longings of your bowels that you don't even open up and speak about. There's a God you know in a wonderful way.

Amen. We're only brothers and sisters in the Spirit in one sense, but not in this. It's my Spirit, whether you're one with my Spirit or just one in the Spirit.

There's a lot of difference. We all ought to be one. Solomon took the whole people.

We've all got to be one. He didn't say, Come with me. I want you to pray with me.

He said, Come with me. We're going to the place of fire. And they went.

God let him put it right first. And then he said, Now just ask me what you want, will you? I tell you, beloved, you'll have such a relationship with the hour of God if you'll come to this. There won't be any mourning and groaning and losing heart if you'll come to this.

Ask what I should give thee. And Solomon, verse 8, says to God, Thou showed great mercy unto David my father. He didn't say, Oh, hallelujah, glory.

He didn't get into that nonsense where people lose heart. He said, Do they lose heart shouting glory? Oh, easily, easily. There are so many ways out.

When God deals with you, don't go off tracking along on some other line of your own. Come to it, he says, you ask me. And he says, Thou showed great mercy unto David my father.

Thou hast made me to reign in his stead now, O Lord God. Let thy promise unto David my father be established. Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth.

In multitude. He'd already got his eyes open. He could have said, Like the stars of heaven, for Abraham was given them both.

A vision of stars of heaven. If he could count them, they would be his children. He had a vision of the dust.

He saw the dust of the earth, too. If he could have counted that, then that's where Solomon went. He knew they were only the dust.

They weren't the stars. Give me wisdom, Lord, he asked, that I may go in and out. And God said to Solomon, verse 11, I'm hastening on only for time's sake, because this was in thine heart.

Beloved, why don't you come down to what's in your heart? Not a choice of a million things or a thousand things or ten things that you say might be in your heart. When you come to the great basic thing in your heart, I want to ask you a question. What is it? What is it? Because I'll tell you what, you'll go for it.

You needn't ask why you're here or why you're there. You've gone for what was basic in your heart. Everybody does.

God brought him to that. Jesus put it this way, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. That's what he is.

What do you think about your people? They're just the dust, Father, that's all. He didn't say we're all stars. We're all heavenly people.

We're all very much earthy people. That's what he said. He was honest.

But this is a wonderful nation. You've just come through forty years of the magnificent reign of David. Yes, he might have said.

But he put the ark in his tent. Everybody thought, whoopee, wonderful. It was far better than it had been.

But lots of people want to rest in something which is far better than it was before. Instead of the ultimate. It's always the good that stands in the way of the best.

Always. And people go for that which is good. Instead of going for the excellent.

And that's what Solomon went for. Amen. Great man, Solomon.

Chapter two. Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the Lord. And a house for his kingdom.

And Solomon told out three score and ten thousand men to bear burdens. Four score thousand to hew in the mountains. Three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, the king of Tyre, saying, Now listen to what he said. As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me. Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God.

To dedicate to him and to burn before him. That's what he said. That's all I want this house for.

Oh, we're going to put the ark in. It's got to be this, it's got to be that. He knew, beloved, that it was all a waste of time, ultimately, in the true kingdom of God, unless there was the burning.

He was a man of fire. Know what you're talking about when you say send the fire. He said, I only want this house to dedicate it to him, to burn before him.

Let's read. Sweet incense for the continual showbread, for the burnt offering. Morning and evening, it was all burning.

Hallelujah. Listen, I want to tell you this. I'll tell you why he was a man of fire.

Because there was something burning inside him. I only want to burn. I only want to burn.

Don't you want to be a king? We're all king's kids, can't you hear it? Don't you want to be a king's kid? When he prayed, he talked about being a servant. He talked about his father David being a servant, not a king. That's what they talked about.

Somehow I feel a great kinship with this man. I just want to burn. That's all I want to do is to burn.

You showed mercy to me so that I can burn towards you. I want to dedicate it. And he goes on.

We could have read so much. Let's read in verse 5. The house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods. As we saw with Dagon.

But who is able to build him a house? Seeing the heaven and heavens cannot contain him. Who am I then that I should build him a house save only to burn? Let me just change the word. Sacrificially before him.

Because we're in another covenant. That's all I want. I want to burn, Lord.

I want to burn unto you. That's all I want. Do you see it? Or do you? Or are you going to go for it? There's no salvation, not the real salvation, without the fire.

Oh, glory be to the name of the Lord. Lord, I want this to get hold of me. I want it to burn and burn in me.

What is it? Burn, burn in me. My idols overthrowing. Is that it? Prepare my heart for thee.

My Lord crucified. These are the great writings of men. It's all coming from that same source, that first hymn that we sang.

Those two hymns we sang came from the Salvation Army. I've just quoted from the Salvation Army songbook. That's what they were.

They were a fire in this land when they started. They're not fire now. Got good bands, of course.

Lovely songsters. They've gone for David's lot. Good instruments and singing, you see.

That's where it goes, once the fire goes. It goes into that. People want that.

They think it's first class. It's second class. God opened everybody's eyes.

There's been a Bible in our possession and all our lives. But we've never read it properly. So we've been sidetracked.

That isn't to say you shouldn't sing or clap your hands. That's not what I'm saying. But I want to know which one of you is pure fire.

That's what I want to know. And I'm asking you in the name of God. Hallelujah.

All right. The time came when the temple had to be built. This man was elect of God to build the temple.

He starts in chapter 3. Just going to read the opening words. Solomon began to build the house of the Lord of Jerusalem. So on.

Now we're going to miss it. If you read down through the chapter, you will find that he made all the things about the house. You know, wonderful truths.

And then when he moved to making artifacts, the first artifact he made was in chapter 4. He made an altar. First thing he made of the artifacts. He made an altar.

Blessed be the name of the Lord for this man. He was true to the flame that was burning in him. He never got sidetracked.

He made the altar first. He was true when he said to Herod, he didn't say one thing because it sounded good and then acted differently when it came to it. He said, I only want this house to burn.

That's all I want it for. First thing of the artifacts, the altar. Hallelujah.

Wonderful, isn't it? Have you got it? You, if you were here last night, you will recall that in Zechariah, we saw two things. Fire and the fountain. All right? The fountain was opened.

The next thing he made was, verse 2, the molten sea, the place of cleansing. Fire, cleansing. Fire, washing.

Fire, cleansing. The same in Zechariah. The Bible is true right through.

They go together. This church is not clean unless the fire is burning in it, and no churches. That's the tremendous truth.

Why do you think God baptized men and women in the Spirit in fire first? Why? Nothing about cleansing in that sense, lavers and fountains in Acts 2. Fire! That's right, isn't it? That's why the Salvation Army swept through this land. In the beginning, they were pure fire. I'm not advising you to go and join them, although I'm a Salvationist.

I've never worn a uniform in my life. I'm a Salvationist. But I want to preach true salvation.

Praise the name of the Lord. He makes the altar. Chapter 5, the temple is built.

What a wonderful thing happened in chapter 5. You know what it is? He does the same again in verse 2. He assembles all the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, chief of the fathers of the children of Israel. They were going to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. You keep singing about Zion and the city of David, so someone said, Out! Out! Just keep it clear.

God said, Out! This is not the place for it. Shatters our wonderful thoughts, doesn't it? Takes us out of the dreamland that people think is high spirituality. Moves us into truth, rugged truth.

Do you like it? Do you want it? So that's what they did. And when at last they got it all assembled and everything was in its right place, it says that it came to pass verse 13 in the last verse, but when the trumpeters and the singers were as one, he got them all together at last to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. That

then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

Have you ever seen the glory? Do you know what you'd be looking at if you could see the glory? What would you expect to see if you had been amongst that crowd that day? What would you have thought you would have seen? You wouldn't have seen any stained glass windows. Understand that. What would you have seen? Well, the Bible is its own interpreter Turn back with me to the book of Exodus.

And in this book, chapter 24, I want to tell you, whoever you are, your questions are all answered in this book. Your needs are all answered in this book. They don't get answered on a psychiatrist's couch.

You understand that? They're all answered in this book. We go back to chapter 24, when Moses, who I think I might talk to you about tomorrow night, if it be God's way, for he was a man of fire too. They were all men of fire, the great men of God.

We come into the end of chapter 24. Moses, verse 15, goes up into the mount. This is Sinai.

And a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai. And the cloud covered it six days.

And the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire. Now you know what you'd be looking for.

Fire. There it is. The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire.

And it's so wonderful that you say, Devour me, Lord. Devour me. Have you ever been devoured by the glory of God? Do you know what I'm talking about? Devouring fire.

And listen, a living man went up into it. Moses. You can go into it too.

It was wonderful. Filled the place. Now I want you to see where Solomon is in all this.

Where's Solomon? Verse 1 of chapter 6 of 2 Chronicles. Hallelujah. Solomon.

Where is he? We'll find him in a moment. He is watching it with all the rest of the people. Everybody was watching it.

Solomon said, The Lord has said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. But I have built a house of habitation for thee. And the place for thy dwelling forever.

And the king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood. They're all up on their feet.

They'd seen the glory. They're on their feet. They weren't sitting back.

They weren't even down on their faces. They weren't even praying. They just stood there.

And saw something they'd never seen in their lives before. The glory of God. Have you ever seen a man with the glory of God on his countenance? Have you seen a man that's looked into the glory? Have you? Don't change your faces.

Your heart's right on your face. Did you know that? Remember it when you look in the glass tonight. Your heart's on your face.

And makeup can't change it. Not when you talk about this. Glory to God.

Well, there's so much here. Let's go on, shall we? It says in verse 12, where was he? This was where the voice was coming from before the altar. That's where he was.

I'm going to tell you this. He knew that the visitation of glory that had come would have been transient and would have come and gone. Except the altar was in it.

He knew. God had given him wisdom and understanding. I wish everybody had got the wisdom and understanding.

I wish they had. He's standing by the altar. And I want to tell you something.

It's loaded with sacrifices. Loaded. Loaded with something that God could come and burn up and burn in.

Let's read it. He stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, spread forth his hands. Can you see him? This great man of God.

You know, when God really works, you lose sight of everybody else, pretty much. You lose sight of yourself, saying, I'm too shy, I can't do it. Unless self goes, beloved, you're never going to get anywhere.

He was lost in God. He was real. Don't do things just to attract attention.

That's all sham. Anybody could turn a somersault. I could do it in front of you now, although I'm a little beyond 70.

I could turn a somersault, but you'd all be looking at me then. That's not the matter with God. He just had lost himself in God.

He was beginning to see the fulfilment of something, but he says, Lord, it's not enough. It's not enough. I know, Lord, would God that everybody else knew, that it's the altar.

I went to the altar, and I'm standing by the altar. That's where he stayed. And he's looking around now.

He kneels down, he's on a scaffold. I invite you to read all these chapters through, at your leisure, if you ever get any. And he's on the scaffold.

Hallelujah. He goes on, and he prays such a prayer, such as never came out of the lips of another man on the earth. It's all recorded in this chapter.

Read it. He prays for people that are fit. He prays for people that are unfit.

He prays for people that are near. He prays for people that are far. He prays for people that everybody knew his own heart.

He said that. He said everybody knows the state of their own heart. You do too.

You do. And he prayed out the state of his too. Praise God.

And how did it happen? What happened? Listen. Let me read verse 40. Now, my God, let I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be opened, and let Thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation. Are they? In this fellowship, or wherever you've come from? Not say, I've got a saved heart.

Are you clothed with salvation? Is that what people see when they look at you? Do they see salvation? This was his prayer. At this point, he wasn't saying, Oh God, save all the sinners in Liverpool. Do you know what I mean? I said we'd come to that probably before we're through together, but not tonight.

He was clothed with salvation. Think of it. I mean, meditating before the Lord today.

Think of being clothed with salvation. That is, even the outward things about you, obviously, they're all salvation. God help us.

Let Thy saints rejoice in goodness, O Lord God. Turn not away the face of Thine anointed. Remember the mercies of David Thy servant.

Now, when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. Amen. Second visitation of glory, when the fire came.

Glory filled the house. Fire came down. It was all baptized in heavenly fire.

The fire is the fire from heaven. It was a new thing. When he went to the altar up there at Gibeon, it was the altar where the fire never went out.

It had been burning and burning and burning. Now he sees a complete new beginning. That fire had been put out.

It wasn't used anymore. Did you know that? Here was a new altar. Are you ready to build one? Are you ready to make a new altar for you? Are you? Are you ready to make a new altar for you to the kings or governors and leaders? Are you ready? And the fire came down.

New fire from heaven. Same fire that had been on the old altar. A new visitation of fire came down on the altar.

It was wonderful. And the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the house. They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, worshipped, praised the Lord, saying, He's good.

Oh, this is the goodness of God to you, beloved. The fire. You say, but God's been good to me a thousand times.

Yeah, He wants to be better if it's possible. He's got more good to show you. Isn't that wonderful? I can almost hear old Solomon saying, I'm not moving from this altar till the fire comes.

Bless you. I'm not getting down off this scaffold that He built beside the altar. I'm not getting off it till the fire comes.

Of course, I can't state that. But I know in here. I mean, it's not written in Scripture that He said it.

But why do you think He was standing by the altar? Why wasn't He up there, up front, gawping inside at the glory in the house of God? Why wasn't He? The fire here. Glory be to the name of the Lord. And I want to tell you, you can have the fire here.

You can have it. God is no respecter of persons. None at all.

You say, now that's marvelous. But wait a minute. You haven't heard anything yet.

You haven't heard anything yet. Cast your eye down the chapter. Listen to this.

Verse 4. The king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord. Listen to this. King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep.

That's the way the house was dedicated. Fire. Glory.

Fire. Blood. Sacrifice.

Hallelujah. And if you want to pay any less price than that, close your doors because you'll never be what God wants you to be. That's your prayer to go all the way.

What a tremendous thing. And look, let's read on. The priest waited on.

Well, verse 6 is the important thing. Verse 7 is the one I want you to see. Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord.

For there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the piece offerings. Because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings and the meat offerings and the fat. So he turned the whole of the interior court.

The whole of it was one great blazing fire. All of it. How about that? I don't know what all the fire chiefs in the world would have thought about that.

But never burnt the fabric down because God was there. See? No fear. Glory.

The fire came. Hallelujah. Everywhere you looked, fire, fire, fire, fire.

One great big, if I may say, bonfire. I know the Lord will excuse that expression. For God.

For God. God save us from our tiny little specks of experience. It was all on fire.

All Israel. Because one man made a decision. He said, no, I'm not going to Dad's den.

Somebody's wigwam. Or tent. I'm not going.

I'm going to the tabernacle of the congregation of God. And that's what he made them. Gather them all there.

Praise the name of the Lord. Fire will do it. And nothing but the fire will do it.

Nothing. Nothing. Let's go back to chapter 3. Do you know where Solomon built the temple? He built it on the place of fire.

Solomon, for chapter 3, began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah. Where the Lord appeared unto David, his father. In the place that David had prepared.

In the threshing floor of all men. The Jebusite. You say, well, what's that got to do with it? Let's go back to 1 Chronicles.

Chapter 21. This Bible is a wonderful book, beloved. It's completely self-explanatory.

It's all here. Have you ever heard me say before, if I didn't worship the Lord, I'd be an idolater. I'd worship this book.

It's all here. But I don't worship it. It's only a means to an end.

But how wonderfully true. Moriah, yes. In chapter 21 of 1 Chronicles, we read about one of David's great mistakes.

And sins. It's not the one about Bathsheba. In case that sort of titillates your imagination.

We're in this. He wanted the children of Israel numbered. And God would not have it.

You know, when Jesus was on the earth, a man said to him once, Are there few that be saved? And Jesus, not being born in the east end of London as I was, was very polite. And never said, mind your own business. But that's what I would have said.

Nothing to do with you, how many are going to be saved. You can read about this in Luke chapter 13. Make a mental note of it.

Are there few that be saved? God never let anybody know how many there were in Israel. Never. It was known only to him.

He wouldn't let anybody count heads. But David thought, he got to such a place, it's amazing how you can get to a place because you're a leader or a king. He thought he'd have Israel numbered.

And he thought when he got the answer to it, that he'd got the number at the end. Because the fellow that numbered Israel was supposed to do, because the king told him to, didn't do it. He disobeyed the king.

He preferred to obey God. You understand that? And he wouldn't count some of them. And David thought he'd got the number and he was rejoicing in the wrong number.

But as soon as it was done, his heart smote him. God dealt with him. And you know, God said, you can take three choices.

Let's read it, shall we? God said in verse 9, he spoke to Gad, David's seer. Oh, the old name for prophet. Go and tell David, thus saying, thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things.

Choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David and said unto him, thus saith the Lord, choose thee. Now I'm saying that to you tonight.

I started on this note. You've got to make your choice as an individual and as a fellowship. And a fellowship is only a gathering of individuals.

And what's happening in the fellowship, in any fellowship, is the sum total of the state of everybody that attends it. Did you know that? It's not his fault, it's not her fault. It's the sum total of everybody.

And Gad, he says, chose you, so David chose. The things were, three years famine, twelve, three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee, or else three days the sword of the Lord. And pestilence in the land, the age of the Lord, destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel.

Now therefore advise thyself what word I should bring again to him that sent me. David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait. Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord, for very great are his mercies.

I advise you to do that, whoever you are in this room. Fall into the hands of the Lord. His mercies are very great.

Let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent the pestilence upon Israel. There fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it. And as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed it, That's enough. Stay now thine hand.

And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of all men, the Jebusite. David lifted up his eyes, saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces, and David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed.

But as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and on my father's house, but not on thy people that should be plagued. I just want to say this. There you're hearing a shepherd speak.

So you'll know whether you're a shepherd. There you are hearing a true shepherd speak. God took him from following the flocks, he said so.

Amen. The angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, He should go up and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite. And here you have the reason why David couldn't go to the tabernacle of God that his son went to.

The tabernacle of the Lord, verse 29, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, they were at that season in the high place of Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God. He chose to have the ark and inquire at that.

He was afraid. So David built the tent in Jerusalem for the ark out of fear. Out of fear.

He made an altar, verse 26, David built there on the threshing floor of Ornan an altar unto the Lord, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings and called upon the Lord, and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of the burnt offering. How good he was to this man. But he couldn't face the original altar.

God's always merciful in judgment. He said, God's been good to me, but is it the highest and the best? Is it? Is it the original that you've got? Have you got the original thing? Have you? I don't know. I haven't come here to judge.

You should judge yourselves. Chapter 22, verse 1, This is the house of the Lord God. This is the altar of the burnt offering of Israel.

So when Solomon built the temple, he built it there, the place where God set the fire. Even the very foundations, when they dug down to lay the foundations, they found the place where David had offered where the fire came. And then, now we're going right back, Genesis chapter 22.

And in Genesis 22, God said to Abraham in verse 2, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell you, I don't need in this company, I'm sure, to elaborate on this. You know it was the place of the altar where Abraham built the altar and father offered the son and received him back in a figure from the dead. That's where the temple was built, on the ashes of the fire that Abraham made, the place of the altar.

That's where the temple was built, on the ashes of the place where God answered by fire. That's where it was built. And I want to tell you that no man can build a temple for God and it's built upon the exact foundations where the fire came.

And that's why works fall to pieces and that's why they dissolve and crumble into dust because they get on one of the other ten or a hundred sidelines that are not the important thing. God will ever do it. He'll ever do it.

Wasn't it wonderful that when God lifted his finger to that angel who was going through in the curse, he stopped him at that place. The angel had his sword out and he was on that exact spot. And men of God saw it.

This is the place. The place of fire, Lord. God save us and forgive us if anybody's laid one stone to try and build anything for God that isn't on this fire.

It isn't on a vision. It isn't on this line. It isn't on that line.

It isn't on something else. It's on the fire. Glory be to the name of the Lord.

I love this man, Solomon. He said, All I want to do is to burn. I don't want to do anything.

No, I'm not a musician like my father. No, I can't make psalms. No, I can't play harps.

I want the fire. Amen. What is it that you want? What I want to tell you, it'll all be plain what you want in a few weeks time or a few months time.

Same with me. It's all right. We're all in the same boat, if a boat it is.

Any church, any group, fellowship, I don't care what you call them, it'll all be plain. Oh, hallelujah. I'm so glad that God brings us back to this.

I want you to catch the vision of a man saying, I'm going up to the original Lord. I'm going to the original. But not David, your great king.

No, not David, my great father king. I'm going after you, Lord. Didn't I tell you last night that God cuts off the idle shepherds? They worshipped David almost.

God raised up a greater than David. But didn't David, yes, yes, yes, he's a wonderful man. We're not even fit to talk about him, he's so wonderful.

That's not what I'm talking about. The whole thing is, beloved, David, that he bred a son. After his sin, he bred him.

How good God is, this merciful and gracious Lord. There's no need for anybody to despair. No.

No need. You can get up on your two feet and you can say, Lord, I know a young man. Oh, he'd been a terror of a fellow.

I'd better say too much about him, he may be recognised. Sorry, I'm fighting a sneeze. The police begged him to leave a certain city in which he was living.

Anyway, that's how he was. Terrible fellow. All right.

One day, he listened to a tape. I won't tell you who the preacher was. But he said, after he'd listened to this tape, God, if you can do that for him, you can do it for me.

He got down there on his knees and God did it for him. Did it for him. It's all plain, beloved.

I said, you'll see it on your face. Look in the glass when you get in. You'll see where the glories come.

Perhaps you don't need to, because you can feel the set of your features already. Hallelujah. Bless the name of the Lord.

God's doing great things, beloved. He's going to do great things. Just imagine that you were there looking into that devouring fire.

And then you say to yourself, have I got this devouring fire? Ask yourself the question, please. Lord, if you haven't got it, don't let the devil shove you down into your boots. Stand up and say, I'm going to have it, Lord.

You can do it for them, you can do it for me. God's eager. Amen.

You can write a new chapter in your life, even in your Christian experience. Do something absolutely marvellous for you. Don't think, I can speak in tongues, or I can prophesy or anything like that.

David could do all that except speak in tongues. He gave marvellous prophecies, and I don't know what. Don't get tied up in the peripheries.

Get down to the foundation. Dig down. God has stopped the angel of vengeance right at the exact spot.

Amen. Let yourself fall into the hands of the Lord, will you? That's what David did. He then saw the fire fall, first time he'd ever seen it.

Okay. He bred a son who went on to see it, and this time all Israel saw it. Not just David.

All Israel saw it. This great blaze of a kingdom of God on the earth. I believe with all my heart, beloved, that that's what God wants to do here.

With all my heart. What do you believe? Tell him. Let's pray.

And tell him in faith. Don't tell him running away backwards. Just tell him.

Don't talk about yourself. Tell him the truth. He's God.

He does it. We sang, God of Elijah, hear our cry, send the fire. That's what we sang.

Come on, let your hearts rise to it. Don't ever trail into the habit of singing things that you don't really want to mean, will you? I want to tell you it'll burn up every trace of sin in your life. I want to tell you it'll make your weak heart strong and brave.

You'll jump over that fence to tell your neighbor. That's what you'll do.

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