

## El Akal Esh: God, a Consuming Fire

Picture our God as dwelling in self-engulfing fire

Deuteronomy 4.23–24

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Billy Henshall – Hebrews 12.28–29

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on God

### Prelude:

#### I. Do you want to see something spectacular?

A. Ezekiel begins his Book by saying

1. that the heavens were opened to him and
2. he saw visions of God.

B. The prophet looked to the north and

1. a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself came toward him, and
2. there was brightness all around it and
  - a) radiating from the center of it
  - b) he saw the color of amber,
    - (1) coming out of the midst of the fire.

C. Then four unusual looking creatures came out of the fire.

1. Each one had four faces,
  - a) one looked like a man,
  - b) the second one looked like lion
  - c) the third an ox, and
  - d) the fourth an eagle.
2. They had legs and wings.

#### II. Ezekiel pictured the fiery nature of these four living creatures:

**13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. 14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.**

### – Ezekiel 1.13–14

A. Look at the fire.

1. These four living creatures each had four different faces,
2. looking in four directions,
  - a) as they come out of this self-engulfing fire,
  - b) they continue to look like burning coals of fire.
    - (1) There were also what appeared to be
    - (2) torches going back and forth between the living creatures.

B. Ezekiel also saw lightning coming out of the fire

1. while the four living creatures ran back and forth,
2. doing so quickly like a flash of lightning.

C. Then Ezekiel spoke of the movement of the living creatures and the many eyes they have.

D. Suddenly, Ezekiel noticed that they were carrying something.

1. What looked like a firmament was over their heads, and
2. on the firmament he saw what appeared to be a throne, and
  - a) on the throne he saw someone
  - b) who looked like a man.

### III. Ezekiel 1.27 shows the spectacular appearance of the man on the throne:

**27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.**

### – Ezekiel 1.27

A. From His waist and above,

1. Ezekiel saw the color of amber and
  2. with that color he saw fire all around and within that amber.
- B. From the enthroned man's waist and down,
1. the prophet saw fire
  2. with brightness all around the scene.

#### **IV. Finally, the holy prophet made this heavenly declaration:**

**28b This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.**

#### **– Ezekiel 1.28**

- A. Ezekiel saw God
- B. as the four living creatures carried Him toward the prophet.
1. God came out of the fiery cloud.
  2. The fiery living creatures carried the fiery God.
    - a) He is El Akal Esh.
    - b) He is God, a Consuming fire.

#### **Persuasion:**

##### **I. God, A Consuming Fire**

- A. Ezekiel 1 is not the first time that the Bible shows God associated with fire.
- B. In Exodus 24,
1. the Lord told Moses to come up into Mount Sinai.
  2. Moses himself got to experience something that no one else ever had:

**15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. 16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.**

– **Exodus 24.15–17**

- a) Isn't this Moses the same one
  - b) who saw God in a bush that burned with fire?
    - (1) What did that represent?
    - (2) God was in that consuming fire in the bush.
- C. Deuteronomy 4 gave the children of Israel a stern warning
- 1. that Israel not forget God
  - 2. nor the covenant that He had made with them
    - a) by making an idol, and then
    - b) he explained why:

**23 Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. 24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.**

– **Deuteronomy 4.23–24**

- (1) That puts it in the context of a punishing God.
- (2) Israel, if you turn to other gods,
  - (a) Jehovah God will be like a consuming fire,
  - (b) His jealousy will move Him to consume you.

## II. God and Fire

- A. Genesis 19 shows God wiping Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 1. Notice the means that He used:

**24 Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.**

– **Genesis 19.24–25**

2. Those cities learned that our God is a consuming fire.

B. Leviticus 10 shows two sons of Aaron learning

1. that our God is a consuming fire
2. when, oddly enough, they misused fire:

**1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.**

– **Leviticus 10.1–2**

- a) He had specified the source for their fire for this offering, but
- b) they must have thought that any fire will do.
  - (1) They learned that was a terrible mistake and
  - (2) they died by fire.

C. Numbers 11 shows that Israel in the wilderness

1. had to learn
2. that Yahweh their God is a consuming fire:

**1 Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.**

– **Numbers 11.1**

- a) He does not like a complaining spirit.
- b) Fire showed just how much it displeased Him.

D. Numbers 16 is the record of

1. two hundred fifty men

2. who challenged the leadership of Moses:

**35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.**

**– Numbers 16.35**

E. Deuteronomy 9 shows

1. that God as a consuming fire

2. also meant that He was for Israel.

a) Moses let them know that they were about to cross The Jordan.

b) On the west side they would encounter the giants

(1) of whom it had been said,

(2) “Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?”

**3 Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.**

**– Deuteronomy 9.3**

(a) The giants of whom the 10 spies had feared

(b) would fall before Israel because their God is a consuming fire.

F. Isaiah 30 has several references to the fiery nature of the God of heaven.

**27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar,  
Burning with His anger,  
And His burden is heavy;  
His lips are full of indignation,  
And His tongue like a devouring fire.**

**30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard,  
And show the descent of His arm,  
With the indignation of His anger  
And the flame of a devouring fire,**

**With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.**

**33 For Tophet was established of old,  
Yes, for the king it is prepared.  
He has made it deep and large;  
Its pyre is fire with much wood;  
The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone,  
Kindles it.**

**– Isaiah 30.27, 30, 33**

1. The prophet started the chapter showing the futility of trusting in Egypt.
2. Then he shows in these passages
  - a) things about God
  - b) that cannot be said
    - (1) of the gods of Egypt or
    - (2) of the government of Egypt.
3. In my estimation,
  - a) the things that Isaiah said
  - b) are reasons to place your total faith and your life
    - (1) in the hands of God because
    - (2) regardless of what you face,
      - (a) He will bring you through it.
      - (b) Remember that your God is a consuming fire.
        - i) Just wait on Him, and
        - ii) you shall see what He does in your life.

**Exhortation:**

- I. **My exhortation to you comes from Hebrews 12.**
  - A. Remember always that you are in the kingdom of heaven.
  - B. Therefore, if everything around you is falling apart,

1. you are not falling apart because
2. of the nature of the kingdom of which you are a citizen, and
  - a) look at who the writer said is on our side:

**28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.**

**– Hebrews 12.28–29**

- b) I am telling right now
  - (1) before the end has arrived,
  - (2) that you are on the winning side.

## **II. Do you need prayers to help you endure to the end?**

- A. that you might always remember
- B. what God is for you?