

## **THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER #3: FIRE FROM HEAVEN**

(July 2010 – Beausejour Church – Pastor Chris Jordan)

OPENING TEXT: This summer, we are going to Jesus and saying, “Lord, teach *us* to pray!”  
**“Now it came to pass, as Jesus was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1).**

### KEY TEXT:

**“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49).**

- The original Greek word translated “send” is ballo, which means to throw or to cast.
- Why did Jesus come to the earth? To throw fire!

### **FIRE = is mentioned over 500 times in the Bible**

- Gen. 3:23 - sent an angel and a flaming sword to guard the Garden of Eden
- Gen. 19:22 - set a couple of cities on fire (Sodom & Gomorrah)
- Ex. 3:2 - set a bush on fire when He appeared to Moses
- Ex. 19:28 - set a mountain on fire
- Leviticus - God told his people to set things on fire (offerings)
- Numbers - fire by night

INTERESTING NOTE: The only books in the Bible that don’t talk about fire are Ruth & Esther (girls books). See – boys like to play with fire.

There’s something significant about FIRE in the Scriptures:

- Fire represents the very presence of God! “Our God is a consuming fire!” (Heb. 12:29).
- People are fascinated by fire! Stories of FIRE.
- Last week we were camping, my boys especially wanted to build and play with fire.

STORY: In a little town unknown to many, there was a small church. One night smoke and flames consumed this little church. People from all over town stood in the streets and watched the church as it burned. The local preacher drove up and noticed several people that he hadn’t seen in a while. Walking up to one man he asked “Where you been, I haven’t seen you around here in a while.” The man responded, “That’s because I’ve never seen this church on fire!”

QUOTE: Leonard Ravenhill

“You never have to advertise a fire. Everyone comes running when there’s a fire. Likewise, if your church is on fire, you will not have to advertise it. The community will already know it.”

THE BIG IDEA: Jesus wants to baptize His people with the Holy Spirit and fire. It’s time to get ignited, and allow the refiner’s fire to burn away anything in us that’s not of the Lord!

**“John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Luke 3:16).**

BACKGROUND TO THE BIBLE STORY: (1 Kings 18:17-19).

- God had called for a draught in the land because of the wickedness of the king.

“17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" 18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals. 19 Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.”

- Elijah was a prophet of the Lord who took a stand against the wickedness of his day.

#### DRAMATIZE BIBLE STORY:

**Cast: King Ahab, Elijah, (450) prophets of Baal, (400) prophets of Asherah**

“20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

- That word falter literally means to dance between two opinions. They were content to go to church on Sundays, but live like the world the rest of the week.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. 24 Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." 25 Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it." 26 So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they danced about the altar which they had made. 27 And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey (*going to the bathroom*), or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. 30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." 32 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. 36 And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.

- Note when the fire of God was about to fall – at the evening sacrifice.
- If we want to see the fire from Heaven fall, we need to be willing to sacrifice!

**37** Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." **38** Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. **39** Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" **40** And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." (1 Kings 18:20-40).

- God is looking for men and women like Elijah who will take a stand for righteousness!

**CLOSING CHALLENGE:** (Malachi 3:1-3).

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi."

- Who was this messenger?
- John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah before Jesus came.

**STORY: The Black Death**

In 1665 the residents of London were dying by the thousands each day. The bubonic plague was spreading from house to house because of the unsanitary conditions. Rats and fleas spread the germs throughout the city. Almost 30,000 people died, almost a third of London's population at the time. This plague was so bad experts say the entire population of London would have died if it had not been checked. But on September 2, 1666, the Great Fire of London broke out and burned uncontrollably for five days. Most of the structures in Medieval London were wooden, and almost the entire city was reduced to ashes. But when the fire finally died, the people discovered many of the rats and fleas had been killed in the fire and the epidemic of the Black Death was halted. The fire cleaned the city of the impurity that was killing its people.

**How do we know when we need fresh fire from Heaven?**

1. When you have no desire for Bible study and prayer.
2. When it no longer bothers you that people in the world are lost and going to hell.
3. When you rationalize sin and compromise with it regularly.
4. When you skip church just because you were up too late the night before visiting friends.
5. When you life revolves around money, and you stop honouring God with your finances.
6. When worship and service to God does not excite you.

**Do YOU need fresh fire from Heaven?**

**"And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out."** (Lev. 6:12).

**PRAYER:** For FRESH FIRE!

Beausejour Community Church Website:

[www.beausejourchurch.ca](http://www.beausejourchurch.ca)

Pastor Chris Jordan's Blog:

<http://thelandofpromise.blogspot.com/>