

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

May 1, 2008

Volume 7 Number 9

The Devouring Spirit of God

When Moses and Aaron tried to convince the Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave Egypt, they showed him miracles that demonstrated the power of Yahweh. In one instance, Aaron cast his rod to the ground and it became a serpent. Then the imitating magicians of the Pharaoh cast their rods to the ground and they also became serpents. However, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods!

- 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.
- 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. -Exodus 7

Yahweh reveals the power of His Spirit through visible forms. Satan imitates these visible forms to deceive the world into believing that he is really God. In each case, however, Yahweh demonstrates that His power is greater than that of Satan.

Yahweh's spiritual messengers are angels, which often appear in human form. The angel Gabriel, for example, appeared to Daniel in the form of a man:

- 21 Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.
- 22 And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill and understanding. -Daniel 9

Satan, however, also has his angels, which work to deceive people into believing that they come from Yahweh:

- 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. -Revelation 12

Satan's angels may serve as "familiar spirits" of the dead. Like the angels of Yahweh, they may also show themselves in human forms. For example, when King Saul of Israel asked the woman from Endor to call up the "familiar spirit" of Samuel, she called up spirits out of the earth that she called "gods:"

- 13 And the king said to her, Be not afraid: for what saw you? And the woman said to Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. -1 Samuel 28

While Yahweh sends His Spirit from heaven, Satan's spirits ascend out of the earth, into which his angels were cast. The woman described these "gods" as having the form of an "old man," wearing a mantle. Convinced that the apparition was that of Samuel, Saul proceeded to bow in venerating worship of the spirits:

- 14 And he said to her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself. -1 Samuel 28

Even though he believed the apparition of the familiar spirits to be that of the godly prophet and priest, Samuel, Saul was in total disobedience to Yahweh:

- 6 And the soul that turns after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. -Leviticus 20

Yahweh also shows His spirit in the form of fowls. He told Moses that He brought Israel out of Egypt on "eagles wings:"

- 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. -Exodus 19

The Spirit of God also appeared in the form of a dove, which descended upon Yahshua (also called Jesus):

- 16 And Yahshua, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, behold, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: -Matthew 3

Satan's spirits, are likewise described as appearing in the form of fowls:

- 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. -Revelation 18

The form of fire also often demonstrates Yahweh's presence. He first appeared to Moses from a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush (see Exodus 3:2-4).

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

Come to Understanding

He likewise showed His presence on mount Sinai in fire:

18 And mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because Yahweh descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. -Exodus 19

Yahweh sent fire to consume the sacrifice that Elijah offered in the presence of the prophets of Baal:

38 Then the fire of Yahweh fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, Yahweh, he *is* the God; Yahweh, he *is* the God. -1 Kings 18

Yahweh later carried Elijah to heaven in what appeared as a chariot and horses of fire, driven by a “whirlwind.”

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both apart; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. -2 Kings 2

When the Spirit of God descended upon the people in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost, He showed Himself to them in the appearance of fire:

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. -Acts 2

While the Spirit of Yahweh, seen as a fire, demonstrates the presence of His glory, it also demonstrates the power of His might. As a tongue proceeds forth from a mouth, He sends His judgment as a “devouring fire:”

27 Behold, the name of Yahweh comes from afar, burning *with* his anger, and the burden *thereof is* heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: -Isaiah 27

His Spirit, seen in the form of fire, devours those who have the imitating spirits of Satan. When Aaron’s priestly sons, for example, offered an unholy sacrifice of “strange fire,” Yahweh “devoured” them with His fire:

1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Yahweh, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from Yahweh, and devoured them, and they died before Yahweh. -Leviticus 10

False prophets can even make people believe that they are calling down the fire of the Spirit of God from heaven. Those who see and believe their imitations are deceived into worshipping Satan in the form of created images:

13 And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceives them that dwell on the earth by *the means* of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. -Revelation 13

Visions of Yahweh’s judgment by the power of His Spirit appear in the form of devouring fires, as well as in the form of devouring ravenous birds or beasts. For example, Yahweh told Ezekiel to prophesy against the “chief prince” called “Gog,” whom He would give to be devoured by “ravenous birds” and by “beasts of the field:”

4 You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you, and all your bands, and the people that *are* with you: I will give you to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. -Ezekiel 39

On the other hand, Yahweh says He will also destroy those of the land of Gog, which is called “Magog,” with fire. His people, as well as the deceived nations, will then know that His holy name is Yahweh:

6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I *am* Yahweh.

7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not *let them* pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I *am* Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel. -Ezekiel 39

In the great end-time spiritual battle described in the Book of Revelation, *both* Gog and Magog, as well as the deceived nations, are devoured by the fire of God:

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encircled the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. -Revelation 20

In whatever form the Spirit of Yahweh reveals Himself, He “devours” the imitating spirit of Satan. By the power of the name of Yahshua the Messiah (also called Jesus Christ), the devouring Spirit of God that is in us has overcome the spirit of Satan that is in the world:

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. -1 John 4

Come to Understanding is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our growing list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies
Kerby F. Fannin, Ph.D., Director
P.O. Box 260, 114 East Main Street
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.
biblical@ibiblical.org
517-547-7494

You may view this and past editions online at: www.ibiblical.org
Scriptures are from the:

Proper Name Version of the King James Bible. 

©2008 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.