

## On Fire But Not Burned Out

For over 60 years, I have been reading the story of Moses and the burning bush, as recorded in Exodus 3, but when I read it a few moments ago, I got a lesson from it that had never occurred to me before. Of course, this is the way God's Word is. We could read it daily for a hundred years, and though we might assume that we have exhausted its meaning, it is ever fresh and new.

We have seen preachers or others who seemed to be "on fire for the Lord" at some time in their lives, but after a while they seemed to burn out. We may remember Jeremiah who said, "And if I say, I will not make mention of him, not speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain" (Jeremiah 20:9). **What was once a burning fire in some preachers has become little more than warm ashes now.** We hear frequently in many areas of life talk of "burnout," but it is especially troublesome to hear of preachers who get "burned up" at something and quit preaching the Gospel.

What was it that made the bush not burn up or burn out? It was no doubt a miracle, but it was nevertheless the power of God. It was the miraculous power of God that was behind the first preaching of the Gospel when cloven tongues like fire came and sat upon the apostles and they began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2). Without such a miracle, it is still true that the Gospel is the power of God to save, and if one gets his power and utterance from the Holy Spirit, and is strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16), the chances of him burning out would be almost nonexistent.

However, if his power comes from a consciousness of his own great wisdom, insight, oratorical ability or other such factors, it may well be that he will burn out as a Gospel preacher, and possibly even burn up eventually. **When the weak and limited man comes to the strong and limitless God, he can be on fire and still not be consumed.**

*By T. Pierce Brown*