

# “The Lord was not in the fire”

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With rampant fires filling front pages across the country, our hearts and our prayers embrace all involved.

Sometimes it's easy to feel helpless in the face of such destructive force. But opening thought to see that God is the only force and that this force is good begins to take away the feeling of helplessness.

I've found inspiration in the life of prophet Elijah. At one point, Elijah felt helpless, but God conclusively showed him what is true power and force. The Bible's account says that as the Lord passed by Elijah, there was “an earthquake; but the Lord was not earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice” (I Kings 19:11, 12). This encounter indicates to me that God's power governs the universe in safety and peace.

Acknowledging in prayer this divine government of safety and peace can bring a change to any situation. My husband and his friend experienced a remarkable proof of how humbly affirming God's tender, powerful presence can bring an immediate halt to a destructive fire.

They were teaching school in a one room schoolhouse on a large ranch in Arkansas. One day while my husband was in the house several miles away, he received a phone call for help from one of the children. who was at the school house with his friend. A fire had broken out behind the barn, and they needed his help. The weather had been very dry and the wind had been blowing from the same direction for several days. He gathered shovels and blankets to help put out the fire, and he started the twenty-minute drive to the fire.

As he set out, he turned to God in prayer, and knew that his friend would also be praying. My husband's prayer was one of gratefully affirming that only God was in control. His all-power was a force for good that governed the whole universe in harmony. God's mothering love kept all creation safe.

When he arrived at the scene of the fire, he witnessed an amazing

outcome. The raging fire had been extinguished. He saw a large pine tree at the edge of a clearing that stood as a testament to what had happened. The half of the tree that faced the clearing had been consumed, and the half of the tree that faced the woods was still green.

His friend explained that he had tried to stamp out the fire while it was still in the clearing but realized that it was out of control. In a state of utter helplessness, the friend turned to God in all humility, acknowledging the presence of His heavenly kingdom. The wind pushed the fire across the dry clearing, but just when the fire got to the edge of the clearing and the tree caught on fire, the direction of the wind suddenly reversed and blew back on the fire, in essence putting the fire out. Once the fire was out, the wind resumed its original direction and continued to blow in the same direction as the previous days for the rest of that day. When my husband arrived, there was no fire to put out. He and his friend stood in awe and deep gratitude for what had happened. Had the tree continued to burn, it could have caused a major fire in the dry timber. Upon hearing this experience, the ranchers in die area could offer no explanation as to why the prevailing winds suddenly changed for a brief of time, only to resume their original direction.

Perhaps an explanation can be found in the book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of this newspaper. She gives this spiritual insight on wind: "That which indicates the might of omnipotence and the movements of God's spiritual government, encompassing all things" (pg. 597). My husband and his friend experienced proof of the presence of that all-encompassing power of God, governing His universe in harmony. God's safe presence is at hand.

*When thou passest through the  
waters, I will be with thee; and  
through the rivers, they shall not  
overflow thee: when thou walkest  
through the fire, thou shalt not be  
burned; neither shall the flame  
kindle upon thee.*

**Isaiah 43:2**