

I. Introduction and review. Heb. 12:29 *Our God is a consuming fire.*

II. God alone is eternal and self-sufficient.

A. God alone is eternal. I Tim. 1:17 Ps. 90:1-2

1. Nothing seems more stable and secure than our homes.
2. People's lives are wrapped up in their possessions.
3. Everything earthly will be burned. **II Pet. 3:10-11** *The day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*
4. We are a vapor. Here today and gone tomorrow. Ps. **39:4-5** 90:3 **James 4:14** *LORD, make me know my end and what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in your sight. Surely every man at his best is a mere breath... You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.*
5. Only that which is connected to God lasts forever. Lu. 12:33-34 Jo. 10:28 11:25f *I give them eternal life*

B. God is self sufficient (and we are not!).

1. We should have a heightened sense of our weakness, dependence and transience.
2. There is no security in earthly things. Luke 12:15-21 Isa. 25:12 *The unassailable fortifications of your walls He will bring down...*

III. God is good.

A. Thank God for 'common grace'. **1**

1. Common grace is the grace of God by which He gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation. Mt. 5:45 *He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*
2. God has established human government to protect us and maintain order. Rom. 13:1ff I Pe. 2:13-14 **2**
3. God deserves credit for all of these things.

B. We see God's communicable attributes demonstrated in many people.

1. Can unbelievers in any way reflect God's communicable attributes? Gen. 1:27 **3**
2. Goodness and love. Ps. 89:1-3 I John 4:8b Mt. 5:45 Ro. 12:9-13
3. Compassion and mercy. Ex. 34:6 Heb. 4:15 2:18 John 11:35,33 Luke 19
4. Wisdom and knowledge. Gen. 1:27 2:15 Ro. 1:27
5. To God be the glory. **4**

C. God has been merciful not to give us the full judgment we deserve.

1. To patiently give us so many days without the fires we deserve.
2. That the fire did not cause more damage and loss of life.
3. To remind us of the frailty of our lives and the temporality of our possessions.
4. To give this fire as a warning to the lost.

D. One of the great sins of our day is thanklessness towards God. Ro. 1:21

IV. God is sovereign (all powerful).

A. We do not live in a world ruled by chance or by 'Mother Nature'! Rom. 1:25 **5**

- B. Nor do we serve a god who is passive and distant. Hab. 2
- C. This fire is a demonstration of God's awesome power. He. 12:29 Ex. 3:2 13:21 24:17
To the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.
- D. God has ordained this fire. Ps. 115:3 Dan. 4:34-35 **6** *Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.*
1. God was not surprised by these fires (omniscience). Ps. 33:13-15 Isa. 40:28
 2. Everything that happens is according to God's plan. Isa. 46:8-11 Eph. 1:11
 3. God is sovereign, even over evil. Isa. 45:6b-7 Job 1:15-22 2:7,10 *I am the LORD and there is no other. The One forming light and creating darkness. Causing well being and creating calamity. I am the LORD who does all these.*
 4. God turns the wind in a moment and determines which houses will burn and which will be spared. Ps. 107:25 135:6-7 Job 12:14 **7** *Whatever the LORD pleases, He does. In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; Who makes lightnings for the rain, Who brings forth the wind from His treasuries.*
- E. God's sovereignty is a great comfort to believers.
1. We do not live in a world of blind chance and luck.
 2. He will not allow us to suffer beyond what we can bear. I Co. 10:13
 3. God's sovereign love for us does not mean, however, that we will be spared from affliction. Heb. 10:34 I Pe. 3:14 4:12 5:9 Luke 22:31 Job 1-2 **8**
 4. Nothing can separate us from God's sovereign love for us. Rom. 8:35ff
 5. We will not always know why God allows certain things to happen. Ro. 11:33
Deut. 29:29 *Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways.*
 6. God has a good purpose in this disaster (His wisdom). Rom. 8:28

V. God is just and holy.

- A. Those who suffer are tempted to be angry with God. **9**
1. Some question how God can be good and just when He allows such calamities to happen.
 2. Jesus dealt with a similar question when a tower fell. Luke 13:1-5
 - a. He does not deny God's sovereignty over this tragedy.
 - b. He does not try to defend or even explain God's actions.
 - c. He states that we all deserve what happened to them. Rom. 6:23
 - d. What happened to them was only a picture of the judgment which will come upon all who do not repent. Luke 12:4-5 Heb. 9:27
 - e. He calls upon them to repent before it is too late. Luke 13:5
 3. Instead of asking why do bad things happen to good people, we should ask why does God cause so many good things to happen to bad people?
 4. We have no right to accuse God of wrongdoing. Job. 38:1ff Ro. 9:20ff *On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this' will it?*
 5. Instead of asking why this happened here we should ask why more didn't happen everywhere. Isa. 3:9 5:20 *They display their sin like Sodom; they do not even conceal it. Woe to them. For they have brought evil on themselves.... Woe to those who call evil good and good evil...*

- B. The world is dangerous (deadly) because of human sin. 10**
1. God made the world perfect. Gen. 1:31
 2. Man's fall has put him at odds with creation. Gen. 3:17ff
 3. Death itself is the result of sin. Rom. 5:12
 4. 'Natural' disasters are commonplace.
- C. Temporal disasters are a picture of God's final judgment upon the world. II Pe. 3:10 Gen. 19:24 Ps. 11:6 21:9 Isa. 5:24 24:1ff 26:11 66:24 Rev. 20:9f,14 21:8 Jude 1:7**
11 *Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them...are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.*
1. Fire represents the holiness of God. Heb. 12:29 Ps. 97:3 *Fire goes up before Him and burns His adversaries round about.*
 2. Fire describes the everlasting judgment we all deserve for our sin. Mt. 3:10
 3. The Day of the Lord will come like a wildfire and bringing worldwide devastation as judgment for sin. Is. 24:1-12 66:15-16 Lu. 16:24 Mt. 13:50 25:41,46 *Behold the LORD will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fire and His rebuke with flames of fire. For the LORD will execute judgment by fire..*
 4. In the day of judgment, there will be no place to which you can evacuate!
Luke 21:35 Isa. 24:17-22 Rev. 6:15-16
 5. God is much more to be feared than a wildfire. Mt. 10:28 *Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- D. This fire is a reminder of God's grace and love to us in Christ Who satisfied God's justice by standing between us and the fires of judgment. I Pe. 2:24 3:18 I Jo. 2:2 Gal. 3:13 II Co. 5:21 Rom. 3:20ff 12**
1. Christ suffered the fires of God's judgment. Ex. 29:18 Gen. 22:6-7 I Ki. 18:38
 2. Today you can flee to Christ for refuge. Ps. 46
 3. Learn from this disaster and heed God's warning.

VI. Conclusion.

The Fire and the Attributes of God Quiz (please explain your answers)

- 1. What is 'common grace'?**
- 2. Government is a common grace blessing on humanity (True or False).**
- 3. Can an unbeliever in any way reflect God's communicable attributes? (Explain).**
- 4. Who should receive the credit for the love, compassion, mercy and ingenuity (wisdom) displayed in our community over this past week? (Why?)**
- 5. Mother Nature was in control of the firestorm (True or False).**
- 6. Those affected by the firestorm were unlucky (True or False).**
- 7. God planned every detail of this fire right down to which houses were destroyed (True or False).**
- 8. Christians are fortunate because we are protected from natural disasters in a way unbelievers are not. (True or False)**
- 9. Those who suffer have a right to be angry with God (True or False).**
- 10. Every natural disaster is in a sense the result of human sin (True or False).**
- 11. How does fire portray God's final judgment of the world?**
- 12. How does a disastrous and destructive fire remind us of Christ?**
- 13. In the new heavens and the new earth there will be no more natural disasters (True or False).**