

A CONSUMING FIRE

Introduction

- 1) **Hebrews 12:29** – “For our God is a *consuming fire*”
- 2) **Fire**, the visible effect when chemical processes result in combustion, can be a very helpful thing (cooking, heating)
- 3) It can also be a very destructive and fearful thing (forest and structure fires)
 - a) News reports bring scary images and tragic stories
- 4) **God** is described as a “consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29)
 - a) Description first found in the Old Testament (Deut. 4:23-24; 9:1-3; Isa. 30:27; 33:14)
 - b) A reference to God’s wrathful judgment and His awe-inspiring glory (cf. Ezek. 1:27)
- 5) What should we understand when we consider our God as a “consuming fire”?

I) **Do Not Ignite a Consuming Fire**

- A) We should be very careful not to ignite a fire that can destroy us and others
 - 1) Evil itself is like a fire that destroys (Prov. 6:27-29; Jas. 3:5-6; Prov. 16:27; Eph. 6:16)
- B) Sin will provoke the fiery wrath of God (Deut. 4:23-25)
 - 1) Wickedness is both self-destructive and brings God’s punishment (Prov. 16:18; Isa. 9:18-19)
 - 2) The end of the wicked will be eternal punishment in hell fire (Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10, 15)
- C) Avoid igniting fires of sin that will destroy and bring the consuming fire of God’s judgment
 - 1) Escape temptation and seek God’s way of righteousness (1 Thess. 5:21-22)

II) **Fear the Power of a Consuming Fire**

- A) If we fear the destructive power of fire, we will treat it with respect and act accordingly
- B) Citizens of God’s kingdom learn to accept the grace of God and serve Him with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28-29)
 - 1) God wants everyone to be saved from sin and its destruction

III) **Avoid the Path of a Consuming Fire**

- A) We see pictures of people desperately fleeing the danger of raging fires
- B) When people do not change their sinful ways, they are in the path of God’s judgment
 - 1) Sinful nations of old had continued in their wicked ways (Deut. 9:1-5; cf. Gen. 15:13-16)
- C) Good news!! God is longsuffering, forbearing, and slow to wrath (Psa. 145:8-9)
 - 1) This “slowness” of wrath gives man the opportunity to escape (2 Pet. 3:15)

IV) **Escape the Destruction of a Consuming Fire**

- A) A slow-moving consuming fire gives time for those who aren’t paying attention to wake up and save themselves
- B) There is hope and opportunity for the faithful to escape God’s wrath (Lam. 3:22-24)
 - 1) God does not want anyone to perish in their sins (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9)
 - 2) Man is quick to judge and destroy, but God is slow and compassionate (Lk. 9:51-56)
 - a) We must learn to be slow to wrath and be merciful (Jas. 1:19-20; 2:13)
- C) Jesus is the path for all sinners to be delivered from the wrath of God (1 Thess. 1:9-10)

Conclusion

A *consuming fire* is a fearful thing – sin brings the fiery wrath of God! Repent of your sins and turn to God in obedience with all your heart. Become one of His children and enjoy His wonderful comfort (Joel 2:12-13; Nahum 1:7)!