

Fire Preparedness

During the past several days, people across North Central Texas have watched with concern as the Ross Fire swept across Palo Pinto and Jack counties. As of this writing, **the fire has burned approximately 85,000 acres**, damaging homes, ranch buildings, businesses, fences, pastureland, and other property. Livestock and wildlife have been killed or displaced, families have been evacuated, and the total financial loss may eventually reach into six or seven million dollar figures.

But money alone cannot measure such devastation. A home represents years of memories. A ranch may represent generations of labor. Pastureland sustains livestock and livelihoods. A business may support not only its owner, but employees and their families.

Fire does not stop to consider what stands in its path. It consumes.

Once a wildfire gains strength, everything ahead of it is endangered. Grass, trees, fences, barns, homes, livestock, and businesses can be threatened within hours. Firefighters work desperately to establish containment lines because they understand an important truth: **a consuming fire must be taken seriously before it reaches you.**

That lesson has an even greater spiritual application. The Bible repeatedly uses fire to describe the holiness of God and the certainty of divine judgment. The writer of Hebrews gives this sobering reminder:

“For our God is a consuming fire.” — Hebrews 12:29

God is loving, merciful, patient, and gracious, but He is also perfectly holy and just. Sin will not be ignored forever. A day of judgment has been appointed by God.

Jesus warned repeatedly that such a day is coming. In Matthew 13:40–42, He compared the judgment at the end of the age to weeds being gathered and burned. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus described the final separation of the righteous and the unrighteous, concluding, ***“These (the unrighteous – RJ) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”*** (Matthew 25:46).

The apostle Paul gave the same warning. He wrote that the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven ***“in flaming fire, giving vengeance to those who don't know God, and to those who don't obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus”*** (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). Notice the two classes of people upon whom the vengeance of God will come upon: (1) those who do not know God, and (2) those who do not obey his commands.

Peter describes what will happen to the physical creation itself: ***“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” — 2 Peter 3:10***

An 85,000-acre wildfire seems enormous. Communities prepare evacuation routes. Families gather belongings. Livestock are moved. Emergency personnel stand ready. Why?

Because when destruction is approaching, preparedness matters. No sensible person in the path of a wildfire would say, “I know the fire is coming, but I will prepare later.”

Yet spiritually, many people live exactly that way. They know life is temporary. They know death is certain. They know Scripture teaches that Christ will return, the dead will be raised, and every person will face judgment. Yet they continue postponing preparation for eternity.

Peter therefore asks: ***“Therefore since all these things will be destroyed like this, what kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness?” — 2 Peter 3:11***

That is the question. Not simply, *When will the world end?* But, **Am I prepared when it does?** Preparedness for wildfire is wise because lives and property are at stake. But preparedness for eternity is infinitely more important because **your soul is at stake**. There will be no firebreak capable of stopping God's judgment. There will be no evacuation route away from the return of Christ. There will be no opportunity after He appears to begin preparing.

The time for preparation is **now**. **Hear** the gospel (Romans 10:17). **Believe** in Christ (John 8:24). **Repent** of sin (Acts 17:30). **Confess your faith** in Christ (Romans 10:9–10). **Be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27). Then **remain faithful** to Him (Revelation 2:10).

Earthly fires remind us how quickly material things can disappear. But the greater question is not whether you can save everything you possess. It is whether **you are prepared to meet God**.

“For our God is a consuming fire.” — Hebrews 12:29
Are you prepared?