**Natural Disasters:**

**A Preview of Coming Judgment**

**Introduction**

When you go to a movie at the theater you will often witness the coming attractions. For about 20 minutes they will play previews of movies that are getting ready to come out in the following months. It is really a brilliant marketing strategy because it gives you a taste of what is coming and makes you excited about coming back to the movie theater. You are there to see the movie but you are looking forward to something coming up.

This is much the way I think of natural disasters: they are previews of the coming judgment of God. As we see these storms that have hit Texas, Florida, and other parts of the world they brought much damage and loss of life. Harvey claimed the lives of 82 people and Irma has claimed the lives of 70 people (so far, this number may rise).

* Tsunami in Indonesia and Japan
* Hurricane Katrina
* Nashville Flood
* California earthquakes in 1980’s

Luke 13:1-5: Jesus uses the horrors of the day to explain the fate which befell those can befall all unless we repent. Were those who died in the hurricane worse sinners than us? No, but unless you repent, we will likewise perish. Natural disasters are previews of the final coming judgment.

Perhaps it is important to pause for a moment and state that I am not saying that these natural disasters are a judgment from God. That is possible, because God has used nature in the past to judge, but God would revel His message through prophets of what He was doing. I am not a prophet and God has not reveled anything to me, but I still think we can learn some important theological points from these things.

**A. Examples**

* Flood (Gen. 6-8)
* 2 Peter 3:1-6
* Many Plagues that befell Egypt many were natural disasters
* All plagues built to the final judgment of death of first born
* Joshua 10:11: Hailstones to kill Israel’s enemies
* 1 Samuel 7:10: God thundered against the Philistines
* Job 38:22-23: God reserved snow and hail for days of battle
* Amos 1:1: “The earthquake”

**B. Bible often describe God’s judgment in terms of Natural disasters**

* 1 Samuel 2:10
* 2 Samuel 22:14-15
* Psalm 144:6
* Isaiah 8:5-8
* Isaiah 14:30: Famine on Philistia
* Isaiah 19:5-8: Drought on Egypt
* Isaiah 29:6
* Joel 1:4: Locust Plague
* Amos 4:6-12
  + Not all of the judgments mentioned in Amos 4 are natural disasters, but a few are. Their failure to repent meant they had to prepare to meet God in judgment.

**C. Need to make preparations**

Obviously by their very nature we cannot prepare for every natural disaster but some we can. Take for example this hurricane, Florida knew a good deal in advance it was headed our way. We did not know the path it would take but we were fairly certain it would come and hit at least the southern part of the state. So, what do you do to prepare?

***Checklist for a Hurricane***

* Stock up on water
* Fill bath tub in case you need to flush toilet
* Get some food
* Board up your windows
* Cut down trees or limbs likely to fall on your house
* Have batteries and flashlights
* Buy a generator
* Know evacuation routes if things get really bad

These are just a few things and I am sure that you could name several others. I have never heard of someone who wished they had not prepared as much. Who wished they had put preparation off longer or wish they had done less to prepare.

We take storms very seriously because of their power, might, and our lack of ability to stop it. If we take that seriously what are we doing to prepare for the final judgment? Just as the storm approached and it was inevitable that it was coming so too the final judgment approaches and it is certainly coming (Acts 17:30-31).

What preparations are we making to get ready for the final judgment?

* Spending time in prayer?
* Removing sin from our life?
* Becoming more like Christ?
* Encouraging one another?

**D. Survivor Stories**

There are often survivors of certain natural disasters who are interviewed as they explain their story of survival. You feel sorry for these people, but you also have the feeling that I hope I never have to go through something like that! There were survivors of God’s wrath in the flood (Gen. 6-8) and in God’s wrath in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Lot and his 2 daughters). Don’t those stories make us say, “I never want to endure the wrath of God?!”

Natural disasters are previews of the final coming judgment. If we seek to prepare and get ready for natural disasters let us spend more energy preparing for the final judgment?

Amos 4:12: Prepare to meet your God