

## **1 The "Category 5+" God!**

- Who also cares for the Objects of His Grace

## **2 Scripture Reading**

- Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones (divine beings),
  - ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
  - worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

## **3 Lord over the Waters**

- The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
  - the God of glory thunders,
  - the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
- The voice of the LORD is powerful;
- The voice of the LORD is majestic.

## **4 Lord over the Mountains**

- The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
  - the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
  - He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
  - Sirion (Mount Hermon) is like a young wild ox.

## **5 Lord over the Wilderness**

- The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning.

- The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
- The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare.
- And in his temple, all cry, "Glory!"

## **6 Lord who Strengths His People**

- The LORD sits enthroned over the flood (chaos); the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
- The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

## **7 Introduction**

- A year doesn't go by without the Earth
  - shuddering,
  - sinking,
  - shifting,
  - shrugging, or
  - doing something out of the ordinary.
- We call most of these events "natural disasters."
- The legal profession and insurance companies call them "acts of God."

## **8 Introduction**

- Calling something an "Act of God" is quite a human reaction to some of these catastrophes.
- The psalmist agrees.
  - "The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

- The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare" (vv. 8-9).
- Acts of God appear in many forms: wildfires, blizzards, tornadoes, hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, thunder, lightning, tsunamis, earthquakes, hailstorms, and something that happens when you come home late for dinner.

## 9 Introduction

- The ancient Romans, and especially the Greeks, were aware of the power of the feminine Earth, which is where we get the term "mother nature."
- They recognized numerous goddesses whose beneficence extended to specific spheres like lakes, trees, fruit, harvest, fertility, crops, changing seasons, and more.
- Artemis — with her quiver, bow, and arrows — was the goddess of the hunt.
- Demeter was the goddess of harvests, healthy crops, and fertile seasons.
- However, all of these gods and goddesses were bad-natured and could punish you for no good reason. Has anyone ever heard the phrase, "It is not nice to fool mother nature?"

## 10 Introduction

- Poseidon, wielding his triton, was the god of the sea, storms, and earthquakes.
- The ruler of the gods was Zeus, the god of the sky, rain, and thunder.
- When provoked, he'd hurl lightning bolts at the hapless humans who dared to ignore his power and might.

## 11 Acts of God

- Today, natural disasters — like Hurricane Katrina (Category 5), which caused an estimated \$125 billion in damage — are so powerful that a classification of disasters was created to help us understand their power.
- In September of last year, Hurricane Ian (Category 4) caused major damage in Southwest and Central Florida.
- Hurricane Ian created...

- Record wind gusts up to 140 m.p.h. (Katrina was 175 m.p.h.)
- A storm surge of 15 feet plus heavy rains flooded many areas.
- At least \$50 billion in damage.
- It was the deadliest storm in Florida in nearly 90 years, with 150-plus deaths.

## 12 Introduction

- Using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, meteorologists identify the strength of a hurricane in terms of categories, running from Category 1 (the weakest) to Category 5 (the strongest):
  - Category 1: Very dangerous winds will produce some damage.
  - Category 2: Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage.
  - Category 3: Devastating damage will occur.
  - Category 4: Catastrophic damage will occur.
  - Category 5: Very Catastrophic damage will occur — total destruction.
  - Category 5+: The LORD GOD ALMIGHTY - Total Annihilation and Have a Nice Day! 😊

## 13 Example One - Egypt

- When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground.
- So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt; hail fell, and lightning flashed back and forth.
- It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.
- Throughout Egypt, the hail struck everything in the fields — both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree.

- The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

#### **14 Example 2 - Mt. Sinai**

- On the morning of the third day, there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast.
- Everyone in the camp trembled.
- Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.
- Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD descended on it in a fire.
- The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace; the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

#### **15 Example 3 - Conquest**

- After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise.
- The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon.
- Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.
- As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

#### **16 Example 4 - Philistines**

- While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle.
- But that day, the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

- The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

## **17 Example 5 - Mt. Horeb**

- The LORD said,
  - "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD,
  - for the LORD is about to pass by."
- Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind.
- After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

## **18 Example 5 - Mt. Horeb**

- After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire.
- And after the fire came a gentle whisper.
- When Elijah heard it,
  - he pulled his cloak over his face,
  - went out, and
  - stood at the mouth of the cave.
- Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

## **19 Frozen - "Let it Go"**

- Ten years ago, the first Frozen movie hit theaters.

- According to the trailer:
  - In Arendelle's fair kingdom, a ruler did appear,  
Born with a secret power so great, alone, she stayed in fear.  
Although the force was hidden, one day, she let it go,  
And all the land was covered in eternal ice and snow.
- In the movie, Elsa accidentally injures her sister with her magic ice powers as a young child.
- Her parents tell her that she has to cool it; she can't use her power because she's bound to hurt others.

## 20 Let it Go! - Oops!!!

- But unfortunately, at some point in the movie, Elsa accidentally releases her powers in front of everyone.
- Out of fear and anger, She "let it go" —that is her superpower and hurt the one she loved—her sister Anna. {Froze her heart 😞}
- Not until the movie's end was Elsa able to find a way to use her powers to defeat evil yet not hurt those she loved.
- In other words, Elsa overcame her fear and anger by following in the way of love and so defeated evil with her superpowers without hurting the innocent.

## 21 Awesome Power with Grace

- The interesting point of all of this is how God can use his incredible power without hurting the objects of his grace.
- Examples
  - In Exodus 9, God can bring thunder and hail to Egypt but spares those living in Goshen.
  - In Exodus 19, God descended on Mt. Sinai in power with smoke, thunder, earthquake, and blast from the trumpets but spared those on the ground who were scared to death.
  - In 1 Kings 19, while shaking Mt. Horeb with a wind that shattered the rocks, God speaks to a disappointed and depressed prophet in a gentle whisper.

## 22 Awesome Power with Grace

- In our text tonight, Psalm 29
  - “The LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon,” David writes.
  - “The LORD flashes forth flames of fire ... the LORD shakes the wilderness ... the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare” (vv. 5, 7-9).
  - All of these are descriptions of what God does to His enemies.
  - Nevertheless, what does God do to the object of His grace?
  - The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)

## 23 We Have Not Come ...

- You have not come to a physical mountain, a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai.
- For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking.
- They staggered back under God’s command: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.”
- Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, “I am terrified and trembling.”

## 24 We Have Come ...

- No, you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.
- You have come to the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven.
- You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things.
- You have come to the spirits of the righteous in heaven who have been made perfect.



- You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

## 25 Summary

- God plans to bring about everlasting righteousness on the earth and rebellion proof His creation.
- Like a great storm, God will destroy His enemies.
- This storm will be so great that we might become terrified as well.
- Nevertheless, we should remember that God distinguishes between those who serve Him and those who don't.
- Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28–29)
- Again, the LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)