

Omak Wildfire – *Deliverance!*

Tuesday, August 18, residents on Omak flats were warned to prepare for a level 2 evacuation. Wednesday evening about 7:30 p.m. my wife Cappy stepped outside to the back yard to care for our chickens and saw a large water tank plane flying very low, over our home. The air was very heavy with smoke and the sky to the northeast of the house was a deepening pink-orange reflection against the smoke filled sky.

We both got on our knees and began praying. While we were praying, I heard a loud banging on the north patio door to our home, and then a loud banging at the front door of our home, as red car lights flashed on vehicles parked along the road. The man at the door shouted, “Its stage 3 evacuation alert, you’ve got to GO, *NOW* – RIGHT *NOW* – the fire is already on the adjoining lot and coming this way fast!”

“GO, GO, GO!” He and other firemen urgently motioned for us to get in our automobiles and move out – immediately!

Backed with a 40 mph high wind the Concunully fire to the northwest and the Riverside fire had merged, crested the mountain tops behind us, burned rapidly crossing “the flats” toward us with a distance of less than a quarter mile away as we got into our vehicles. It was right across Grey Goose Road, adjoining our property on the north side, as we pulled out of the driveway. It was a level 3 mandatory evacuation order. We had to get in our cars immediately and leave.

Grabbing our luggage, we raced to our cars and headed out of the garage with two firemen at our car windows directing us out the driveway shouting “Move—go, go, go!” Cappy went first and I was right behind. She had put the parking lights on until she finally found the headlights switch about half-way down the road. In the right lane were the firefighters, fire-trucks and their equipment. Turning south the out of the driveway, Cappy noticed 20-30 foot flames which had already reached the row of poplar trees on the south edge our of our empty lot north of us with just a gravel road between the flames and our house.

Each of us drove south on Johnson Creek Road, toward downtown Omak. We were not to stop in Omak, but were told to drive to Okanogan (seven miles south of Omak), because the town of Omak was also in danger and under notice to prepare for evacuation as well.

Many people that were evacuated from the Okanogan Complex Fires areas were at the same Okanogan Motel where we stayed Wednesday and Thursday nights. Late Thursday p.m. we drove back to the flats to survey the damage to our are. It was appalling – devastating. We saw blackened field after field on both sides of Johnson Creek road as we approached our place. Then, in the distance we saw the green leaves of the poplar trees and our house, orchard, barn and landscaping all intact, looking like a small oasis in the midst of blackened hell. Even our chickens were ok. The lots all along

the north side of our property, on Grey Goose Road, were charcoal and cinders. There was no power, water or phone service.

The pictures below are scenes of devastation around our home and property in Omak, Washington, due to the wildfires raging in the region in August 2015. The land around our property was scorched and burned to a cinder, but the raging inferno spared our home and trees, and land. Even our chickens survived!



View to the south of our property on Johnson Creek Road.



View of the property line. "Thus far and no further," shall thy flames burn.



Behold the scorched and burned acreage to the north of our property. In the background is the Rainbow Trailer Court, which lost three mobile homes burned to the ground.



This picture is looking toward the northwest from our home and Grey Goose road. One fire started out in Riverside, north of us, and burned toward Omak; another fire started up in Conconully, in the Cascade Mountains, and burned toward Omak. Both of these fires converged and became part of the Okanogan Complex Fire. The fires in Washington state ultimately scorched and burned roughly 600,000 acres of land and 140 homes were destroyed by raging wildfires in the region. Thousands were evacuated as the fires stormed across the land.



Here is the view from out sundeck looking southward. Our grape vines and rose garden, in the foreground, and our fruit trees were spared. Even the poplar trees on the fence line survived the onslaught of wildfire which incinerated the vast field just south of our Property, as you will notice in the pictures.



Our home itself, surrounded by trees, was spared the ravages of the wildfire, although all around us fields were devastated and homes burned to the ground. Notice the scorched field in the foreground. Our God knows how to deliver His people from fiery trials.

“The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations” – sore trials and evil circumstances – “and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of

judgment” (II Peter 2:9). Praise God for His supernal grace and mercy, and the legions of angels that protected us, like an oasis in the midst of total devastation and catastrophe.



View looking northward from Grey Goose Road, on the north side of our home.



View of our mailbox and the burnt fields east of Johnson Creek Road

Praise God – our home survived the onslaught of wildfire, and by His grace, all is back to normal. The Work continues, and grateful hearts abound thinking of God’s great mercy and loving kindness.

How grateful our hearts are filled with gratitude and unending joy and prayerful thanks to God for His miracles. Our home still stands, like a lighthouse in the midst of a stormy sea – like an oasis in the middle of a desert!

Halleluliah – praise God from whom all blessings flow! The picture below shows our home as it looks today, after the firestorm and raging inferno from hell has passed us by.



What did we learn from this experience? The main lesson is being ready to evacuate at a moment's notice when peril threatens. We had to leave our house in great haste. I prayed asking God if it was his will, to please send a thousand angels around the periphery of our home to protect our property. We evacuated in great urgency and spent the night at a motel in Okanogan. Our prayers were answered.

The next day we drove back to survey the damage to our area and saw blackened field after field on both sides of the road up to our place. Then, in the distance we saw the green leaves of the poplar trees and our house still intact. Our property was like a small oasis. Even the chickens were ok. The lots all along the north side of the gravel road were charcoal and cinders. We drove to the end of Johnson Creek Road, and saw more devastation, with a few homes spared, others burned to the ground. We drove over to the Riverside Cut-off, and saw more black devastation. We drove over to the Conconully Highway and the tragic scene continued unfolding before us. All around us were signs of

a fiery and desolate “apocalypse.” On Friday, the next day, power was restored and we moved back into our home, very thankful to still have a home. We conduct God’s Work from our home, and the office, broadcasting room, libraries, and work areas, and storage areas for books and materials, are all located there. All was spared! Our hearts overflowed with gratitude. Satan struck – but God delivered! How many angels defended our property lines, I don’t know – I prayed for a thousand or more – but truly our God is a God who delivers His people.

“Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. . . . Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation” (Psalm 91:9-16).

Hebrews 13:5-6, Amplified Bible

“Let your character [your moral essence, your inner nature] be free from the love of money [shun greed—be financially ethical], being content with what you have; for He has said, ‘I WILL NEVER [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE *or* LET YOU DOWN *or* RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!’⁶ So we take comfort *and* are encouraged *and* confidently say,

‘THE LORD IS MY HELPER [in time of need], I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.
WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?’”

During the month of Elul, the sixth month of the Hebrew year, called the “month of reparation,” a time to reflect on our lives, and analyze our weaknesses and repent of our shortcomings and sins, the Jewish people reflect daily on Psalm 27. Its message is summed up in,

“The LORD is my Light and my Salvation—whom shall I fear or dread?
The Lord is the Refuge and Stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalms 27:1, Amplified).

“[What, what would have become of me] had I not believed that I would see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living? Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord” (verses 13-14).

“Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:26).