

Week 11 | Joel 2:1-2a “Alarms, Sirens and Trumpets”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As we move into **Joel 2**, the scene shifts immediately with the sounds of air raid sirens, trumpet blasts, television interruptions from the emergency broadcast company saying, *“this is not a test, this is a real-life emergency, this is not test.”*
- B. Well, Joel’s day isn’t the only time that trumpets have blasted, and alarms have sounded. On May 10th, 1940, around 9:30PM Corrie Ten Boom, along with her father, and Bestie, her beloved sister sat around the radio to listen to the Dutch Prime Ministries speech that night.
- C. The question that haunted the Dutch people for months, and weeks was, *“will there be war throughout the whole of the Netherlands?”* With England, France and Germany at war, it seemed inevitable. That night, as they were gathered around the radio, the Prime Minister, with assurance from high sources on both sides, said in a soothing voice, *“There will be no war in Holland. Holland’s neutrality would be respected. There is nothing to fear. I urge you, my Dutch brother’s and sister’s, remain calm.”*
- D. But as soon as he stopped speaking, Corrie’s father spoke up, saying, *“It is wrong to give people hope when there is no hope. It is wrong to base faith upon wishes. There will be war. The Germans will attack, and we will fall.”* Corrie’s father said to the girls, *“Oh my dears, I am sorry for all the dutchman now who do not know the power of God. For we will be beaten. But God will not be beaten.”*
- E. Just five hours after the Prime Ministers assurance to the Dutch people that there would be no war, Corrie was clutching Betsie near the kitchen, as they listened to the distant sound of explosions getting closer, planes flying overhead, and gunfire breaking the silence of the early morning as the occupation was making its way into the Netherlands.
- F. I ask you today, do you see the lights on our American preverbal dashboard all lit up? Do you hear the buzzer sounding? Do you hear the alarm bells ringing? Do you hear the trumpet being sounding in our hour, in our moment?

II. TRUMPETS, ALARMS AND INTENTIONAL DIVINE DISRUPTION (JOEL 1:1)

1. **Joel 2:1** *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is at hand...”*
- B. It’s not quite clear why the call is increased from **Joel 1**. It could’ve been a cool/casual response to the first wave of locust among them, or a fresh attack of locust, but **WHAT IS CLEAR**, is that the challenges of **Joel 1** (*as terrible as they are/were*), have given way to the horrors of **Joel 2**.
- C. This opening call isn’t coming from the prophet Joel, but from Yahweh Himself, the Creator and covenant keeping God of Israel. Jerusalem, like many other important cities in the ancient world had walls, towers and fortified areas from which the watchman would be on the lookout for approaching armies.
 1. This trumpet is a shofar, or a ram’s horn, and it was used as a call to war, and a call to worship similar to a Church bell ringing throughout a city.

- D. This trumpet, this alarm was a warning blast that took place to warn Israel of impending attacks, to prepare the people for what was coming their way. It was often used of the prophets, a watchmen people (**Jeremiah 4:5; 6:1, 17; Isaiah 21:11-12; 52:8; 56:10; Ezekiel 3:17; Hosea 9:8; Micah 7:4**).
- E. Ezekiel likened himself as a watchmen for the nation of Israel, one who was responsible for sounding the alarm, to the extent that if he saw something and did warn the people, then he would be guilty of any blood that was shed (**Ezekiel 33:1-7**).
- F. Zion/Jerusalem was a high place, and it was thought to be an impenetrable city, because the temple was there, and God Himself was the protector. Israel had won many battles, battles where they were outnumbered, battles where their weapons were silence, a rock, the transformation of a wooden staff, torches, glass pitchers and trumpets. Could this present call be anything different?
- G. As I mentioned last week, Israel understood the day of the Lord as a day of vengeance on ungodly nations, but they never assumed it was a day pointed or directed towards them; until now. The painful reality for Israel, because they have disobeyed the covenant, Yahweh is in their midst, calling for the trumpet to be sounded, to warn of an impending army, not of locust, but the northern army, an army of fierce humans, led by the Lord God Omnipotent.
- H. God Himself, Who's standing among them, acting as their watchmen in great mercy, calling for the sounding of the trumpet, warning of impending trouble, is not calling Israel to man the ramparts of war and resistance. Yahweh's calling them to man the ramparts of repentance and humiliation. They aren't to dress in the regalia of war, but in sackcloth, they aren't to stand up in confidence, they are to bow down in humility. This is a call to tear their hearts and return to the Lord their God.
1. Israel has a much greater threat than locust, and Babylon; the Lord God Omnipotent, the God who's never lost a battle, against His enemies or His family.
- I. Sound An Alarm, Let The Inhabitants Of The Land Tremble—The alarm is intentionally disruptive. Its purpose is to send a stab of fear into the hearts of God's family. The situation was/is dire. The army was impending, it's being led by God, and if they didn't turn, there was going to be nothing left.
1. The sounding of the alarm was to rouse you out of bed, to shock you for the purpose of enlistment. God wants them to drink in the severity of the moment, to survey the scene, which is why Joel asks, "...has anything like this happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers?"
 2. Translated into today's vernacular, the blowing of the trumpet and the sounding of the alarm is what we call day of the Lord preaching. It's preaching that produces trembling, prophetic preaching that produces the fear of the Lord in the hearers. It's the spirit of prophecy alerting God's family to the crisis at hand.
 3. It's preaching that's a mixture of God's unrelenting kindness, coupled in the same breath with the righteous nature of God, the holy nature of God, the forceful committedness of God, to produce a holy nation, a people set apart for Himself.
 4. Day of the Lord preaching isn't flashy preaching, it's not hipster preaching, or even relevant preaching; it's faithful preaching. Joel's aware that according to **Deuteronomy 28**, Israel has broken the covenant, and the locust invasion of chapter 1, has now given way to the army invasion of Joel chapter 2.

5. One commentator rightly said, “*Joel’s understanding is that they are on the verge of significant biblical prophecy being fulfilled in their moment. And therefore, Joel’s newness lies in his application of the old words.*”

III. THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Joel saw two references to the day of the Lord; some which WERE happening, and one that WOULD happen. These historical and present days of the Lord were smaller days, leading up to the Day of the Lord, the Day of His return.
- B. Israel saw understood that these smaller, lesser day of the Lord’s among them would eventually give way into The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, or the final Day of the Lord. These judgments among Israel then, and us now, are only harbingers of what’s to come in the days ahead.
- C. There’s three primary ways to the see the day of the Lord;
 1. The Day of the Lord is a day of calamity and retribution—Joel is calling Israel to see that this calamity among them is God’s divine retribution for the sins of the nation. Joel is saying, “*make no mistake about this calamity, it’s surly coming from God, and it’s in response to your collective wandering from Him. You’ve left your first love.*”
 - a. Our response to the day of the Lord is always the same; repentance, confession and returning to God wholeheartedly.
 2. The Day of the Lord is a day of Judgment—The day of the Lord is a day when God Himself is rightly calling everyone to His judicial bar to give an account. It’s a day of reckoning, a day of settling in the court of God.
 3. The Day of the Lord is a day of spiritual and imperishable blessing—The outpouring of spiritual blessing, the effecting of spiritual/physical deliverance, the fulfilling of the purposes of infinite mercy, all come about in that promised and expected day.
- D. “*Every major event in the book of Joel is connected by Joel to the day of the Lord. The locust plague is seen as God’s army, who’s coming among them signals dreadful destruction from the Almighty (Joel 1:6,15). Then it’s seen as the army that comes against Jerusalem, which is a day of darkness, gloom, clouds and blackness (Joel 2:1-11). But the day of the Lord is also seen as Israel’s salvation/deliverance, in which not only does rain fall on parched ground, but so also the Holy Spirit is poured out, accompanied by dreadful signs in the heavens. And finally, Joel pictures the destruction of the northern army and the judgment of all nations, is from beginning to end the day of the Lord. A day when Yahweh comes down as a Warrior to slaughter His enemies (Joel 2:20; 3:9-11,16), as the sky grows black, and Jerusalem experiences healing and vindication (Joel 3:15, 18-21). You have to see the paradox of the day of the Lord is at the same time, one event and many events.*”
- E. The Day of the Lord is the thematic link that binds together events as desperate as a Locust plague, a foreign invasion, the gift of the spirit empowering people of all social classes to prophesy, and the last judgment. Joel’s big goal is to persuade his audience that God’s plans are moving forward, that the will of God among them, as drastic, and devastating as it seems is coming to pass. He’s moving the ball down the preverbal field.

IV. THE COMING DAY OF DARKNESS (JOEL 2:2A)

1. **Joel 2:2a** “(it’s) A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...”
- B. Many today say we can’t preach a doom and gloom message, and my response is why not? Jesus had doom and gloom preaching. And here Joel is clearly telling us that this day for them, and a yet coming day would be a day of darkness and gloominess. We can’t escape this yet coming day, regardless of how much we would love to, we can’t. We must embrace the full council of God and that includes something’s that we don’t like.
- C. It’s clear that **Exodus 10:15** is in Joel’s mind, a day when locust the locust plague covered the whole of the land as God was delivering Israel from Egypt. A time when the uncanny normal scenery was obliterated by these teeming legions of dark bodied insects into an all engulfing day called the day of the Lord.
- D. This is also a repeat picture of God’s visitation on Sinai (**Exodus 19:9; 20:21; Deuteronomy 5:22**). The clouds of darkness accompanied Him at the giving of the law, and now He’s coming among them in the same way to enforce the implications of disobedience to the law, to the covenant. He’s enforcing the backside of covenantal relationship, just like He did at Sinai.
- E. The locust had cut off the sun and moon in Joel 1, but now those locust are giving way to a physical army, an army of humans, a more punishing army, a more formidable army not bringing the dawning of a new day, but the dawning of darkness (**Amos 5:18-20**).
- F. Beloved, Yahweh, the Creator and covenant keeping God is in America. The trumpet is blasting, the alarm is sounding, the bells are ringing. Do you hear it? Are you awake? Are you disrupted? Even greater still, are you responding to Him, not on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or the courthouse, but in the secret place of the Most High? Have you enlisted before Him, not at the ramparts of resistance and war, but at the ramparts of repentance and humiliation?