

Joel 2.1-3.2

[THE COMING OF YHWH'S "ARMY" OF FINAL JUDGMENT]

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of YHWH is coming, it is near-- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Fire devours in front of them, and behind them a flame burns. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them. They have the appearance of horses, and like war-horses they charge. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale. Like warriors they charge, like soldiers they scale the wall. Each keeps to its own course, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another, each keeps to its own track; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls; they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. YHWH utters his voice at the head of his army; how vast is his host! Numberless are those who obey his command. Truly the day of YHWH is great; terrible indeed--who can endure it?

[CALL FOR FASTING AND REPENTANCE]

Yet even now, says YHWH, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to YHWH, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for YHWH, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of YHWH, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O YHWH, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

[YHWH RELENTS AND PROMISES ABUNDANCE]

Then YHWH became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. In response to his people YHWH said: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a mockery among the nations. I will remove the northern army far from you, and drive it into a parched and desolate land, its front into the eastern sea, and its rear into the western sea; its stench and foul smell will rise up. Surely he has done great things! Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for YHWH has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in YHWH your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of YHWH your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, YHWH, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

[OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT]

Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of YHWH comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as YHWH has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom YHWH calls.

[JUDGMENT AGAINST "THE NATIONS"]

For then, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations.