

Joel 2 • Our Only Hope in Judgment

Introduction

One of the repeated teachings throughout all of Scripture is that “knowledge” is not enough; “hearing” is not enough; “awareness” is not enough. The only biblical proof of our knowledge, hearing, or awareness of God’s will and working is how we live and behave. If we don’t put it into practice, we’re considered stupid, deaf, and ignorant—and ultimately doomed. Therefore the only hope anyone has in the presence or impending arrival of God’s judgment is obedience and submission to Him. Here as throughout all Scripture concerning the Last Days, Believers are admonished to do one thing and one thing only in the presence of the signs and wonders of judgment: Be wholly devoted to Him.

¹Blow a trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm on My holy
mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
For the day of the LORD is coming;
Surely it is near,
²A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness.
As the dawn is spread over the
mountains,
So there is a great and mighty people;
There has never been anything like it,
Nor will there be again after it
To the years of many generations.

[Read v.1-2]

Q: According to God’s Word, what kind of day is “the day of the LORD”?

A: “A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”

Application: Why do some of us “look forward” to “the day of the LORD” as if it is the most wonderful thing to ever come? How **SHOULD** we be looking at it? What is the proper context “the day of the LORD” should be given in our walk and faith as well as how we interpret End Times Scripture?

Q: What is the purpose of blowing a trumpet or sounding an alarm in Old Testament times?

A: It’s supposed to alert everyone to take up their prepared and pre-planned defensive positions against an oncoming enemy. If they’ve made suitable fortifications, trained properly, and had enough time to leave their current activities to take up their military positions, they are in the best position to withstand an attack. Without a proper warning it’s almost impossible to survive, but even with a proper warning, survival usually depended on the preparations and training already accomplished.

Q: Against whom is the enemy advancing?

A: Zion, which most often represents spiritual Israel, meaning all who are true Believers and followers of the One True God. These verses most certainly have multiple prophecy meanings pertaining both to literal Israel and spiritual Israel, and both to ancient Israel and Israel yet to come in the Last Days.

The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome,
And who can endure it?
¹²“Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
“Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
¹³And rend your heart and not your garments.”
Now return to the LORD your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in
lovingkindness
And relenting of evil.
¹⁴Who knows whether He will not turn
and relent
And leave a blessing behind Him,
Even a grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

¹⁵Blow a trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn
assembly,
¹⁶Gather the people, sanctify the
congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and the nursing
infants.
Let the bridegroom come out of his room
And the bride out of her bridal chamber.
¹⁷Let the priests, the LORD’S ministers,
Weep between the porch and the altar,
And let them say, “Spare Your people, O
LORD,
And do not make Your inheritance a
reproach,
A byword among the nations.
Why should they among the peoples say,
“Where is their God?””

[Read v.11b-14]

Q: What is the second description of “the day of the Lord”? What does it teach us?

A: “Who can endure it?” It reinforces v.1 that this is not a day that **ANYONE** should look forward to nor regard as something wonderful to come.

Q: Verses 1-11 explain in detail the coming terrors of judgment that have been warned by sounding the trumpet of alarm. What, therefore, is the proper response to the alarm of the coming and terrible “day of the Lord”?

A: Reconciliation to God.

Q: How is reconciliation described? Is it merely acknowledging that God is in charge?

A: It’s a call to completely bring one’s heart, soul and mind under complete subjection to God. The actions listed are those of someone who is plainly and painfully aware of their sin and coming before God in the most contrite, penitent manner possible.

- “...with all your heart...”
- “...with fasting, weeping and mourning...”
- “...rend your heart and not your garments...”

Q: What does the reference to “a grain offering and a drink offering” mean?

A: These were offerings that were made of the “first fruits”, giving to God the first from that which He gave them in terms of food and possessions. It’s a way of stating that even in the shadow of judgment He will take care of those that are 100% dedicated to Him so that they are not only able to have their own needs met but will be able to continue in their service and responsibilities to God.

Application: Did you notice that God did not say that we should react or make physical preparations for any of the signs or works of His judgment? What is the only thing we’re to do? If we truly believe we’re living in the End Times and hearing the trumpet call of warning concerning them, why is it we’re not more focused on repentance and reconciliation than being fascinated by the signs?

[Read v.15-17]

Q: What are the 2 keywords in v.15 and 16 that indicate the proper response of God’s people to “the day of the Lord”? How would you apply them?

A: “Consecrate” (v.15) and “sanctify” (v.16). Together with the terms “assemble” and “gather” they mean to call God’s people to live as separated from the world, wholly devoted to Him and His ways, completely rejecting everything connected to the world for which judgment is coming. It’s a call to every office, age, and standing (“the people”, “the elders”, “the children”, “infants”, “bridegroom”, “bride”, and “priests”) to dedicate themselves first and foremost to God.

Q: What does the reference to “Your inheritance” mean in v.17?

A: It’s a dual reference both to physical Israel—that it will be saved and sanctified as an example to the rest of the world—as well as a general reference that our commitment to being consecrated and sanctified in the Lord is a witness to non-believers.

Application: What is the primary activity in which the church should be engaged in the Last Days? [Answer: Sanctification] What does this say about you personally as well as the church or organization to which you belong?

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¹⁸Then the LORD will be zealous for His land

And will have pity on His people.

¹⁹The Lord will answer and say to His people,

“Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil,

And you will be satisfied in full with them;

And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations.

²⁰But I will remove the northern army far from you,

And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land,

And its vanguard into the eastern sea,

And its rear guard into the western sea.

And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up,

For it has done great things.”

²¹Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, For the LORD has done great things.

²²Do not fear, beasts of the field,

For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green,

For the tree has borne its fruit,

The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.

²³So rejoice, O sons of Zion,

And be glad in the LORD your God;

For He has given you the early rain for your vindication.

And He has poured down for you the rain,

The early and latter rain as before.

²⁴The threshing floors will be full of grain,

And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.

²⁵Then I will make up to you for the years

That the swarming locust has eaten,

The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust,

My great army which I sent among you.

²⁶You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied

And praise the name of the LORD your God,

Who has dealt wondrously with you;

Then My people will never be put to shame.

²⁷Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel,

And that I am the LORD your God,

And there is no other;

And My people will never be put to shame.

[Read v.18-20]

Q: What do all of the “the Lord will”/“I will” statements in this passage mean to us overall?

A: The only answer to living through and dealing with God’s judgment is God Himself. Our only required action is to consecrate and sanctify ourselves to Him; **HE** takes care of the effects of judgment on our behalf for which we can do absolutely nothing about personally.

Application: *What preparations are we supposed to make for “the day of the LORD”? Have you begun those preparations yet? Do you see God as the only hope of salvation both eternally and in the Last Days to come?*

[Read v.21-27]

Q: How would you summarize the basic message of v.21-24?

A: God will make our present good.

Q: How would you summarize the basic message of v.25?

A: God will heal and amend our past.

Q: How would you summarize the basic message of v.26-27?

A: God will assure our future.

Point: *The warning signs of the coming “day of the Lord” affects our thinking, faith and actions in the present life as we see it coming, our past as we have prepared for it up to this point, and our future as to whether we will cling to God or our own ways. The “Last Days” isn’t just a pure doctrinal or theological issue, but a barometer and measure of our spiritual walk.*

²⁸It will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on all
mankind;
And your sons and daughters will
prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
²⁹Even on the male and female servants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
³⁰I will display wonders in the sky and on
the earth,
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.
³¹The sun will be turned into darkness
And the moon into blood
Before the great and awesome day of the
LORD comes.
³²And it will come about that whoever
calls on the name of the LORD
Will be delivered;
For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
There will be those who escape,
As the LORD has said,
Even among the survivors whom the
LORD calls.

[Read v.28-32]

Q: Obviously this passage has an application for what occurred at Pentecost. How else does it apply to “the day of the LORD”?

A: The spiritual trumpet call sounding warning of the coming of “the day of the LORD” will not just be accompanied by physical signs but by a visible spiritual revival. From the time of recognition of the warning signs until the actual day occurs, there is the opportunity and work of the Gospel to save “whoever calls on the name of the LORD”.

NOTE: Studies indicate that more Jews during the past couple of decades have come to faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Son of God than have done so in the last couple of millennia. What should that mean to us in the context of Joel?

Point: When we see the actual and final “day of the LORD”, it will be too late—whatever spiritual preparations we’ve made will have set our outcome; it’s the days leading **UP** to that day that are being touted here as the most important because there is still opportunity to be reconciled to God and do His work.

Overall Application

- How have you viewed “the day of the LORD”? Has it seemed like some sort of coming “holiday” of celebration? Or do you see it as something to be feared? What’s the proper place it should take in your faith and behavior?
- Do the activities and discussions of the Last Days drive you deeper towards God or just tease your curiosity? Do you see that God’s calling is for sanctification and work for His kingdom in these times and not any kind of physical preparations?
- How well do you understand and even believe that the attitude you take concerning “the day of the LORD” provides the basis for God’s work in your past, present, and future?