

The Cry of Alarm (2:1-2)

1. Beginning in chapter 2 - the text calls the people of Jerusalem to arms to face a new threat that is about to bear down upon their walls.
2. This is a new threat and a new army. It is not insects but human warriors, and their target is not wheat, barley, or grapes so much as it is the city itself.
3. Joel called for the trumpet or ram's horn ("*sopar*") to be sounded.
4. During the wilderness period the trumpet was used to:
 - A. summon people to the tent of meeting
 - B. signal the start of camp movement
 - C. sound an alarm
 - D. announce a "holy convocation"
5. In verse 1 it served as a warning. The wall towers of ancient cities were manned by guards whose responsibility it was to be on the alert for enemy attack and to sound the alarm when any suspicious movements were spotted.
6. In this case God functions as the watchman of Jerusalem. Through Joel He sounded the alarm for everyone to prepare for the approach of the enemy.
7. God did not look for the city to respond by manning the towers. They should head to the temple for services of repentance and recommitment.
8. The trumpet was to be sounded "in Zion." Zion in the Bible is used in several different senses.
9. Geographical Zion was a rocky summit or fortress which David conquered from the Jebusites and built his palace.
10. After David's day the term "Zion" came to symbolize Jerusalem as the center of true worship. Joel calls Zion "my holy mountain/hill" - the only sanctuary of Jehovah recognized by the prophets.
11. The blast of the trumpet was to be a warning to "all the inhabitants of the land," i.e., citizens of both northern Israel as well as Judah. All who heard that sound should "tremble." The recent locust plague should have been Israel's wake-up call.
12. The alert was motivated not by the approach of just any powerful enemy; rather "the day of the Lord" was coming, and that coming was near at hand.
13. Some in Israel understood the "day of the Lord" to be a time when Israel would triumph gloriously over all foes (cf. Amos 5:18). But not so!

14. For Israel and Judah that day would be one of darkness and gloom, of clouds and blackness. (Zephaniah 1:15)
15. As in the locust plague, in the day of the Lord - Zion would be approached by a great and mighty people. This coming enemy had never appeared before, nor would it ever appear again.
16. Here we find ourselves in the context of a military event with theological significance. (Read verses 3-11)
17. The recent locust plague was *unusual*; this future disaster would be *unique*.
18. As ancient cities had watchmen, Joel was serving as spiritual watchman of Judah. He urgently warned of an approaching enemy, which is likened to an army of locusts.
19. It would be a foreign army (v. 2) that would serve as God's judgment against His people.
20. The destruction of the day of the Lord could be averted only by genuine national repentance and seeking the Lord's mercy with faith. (Read verses 12-19)
21. The Lord's promise began with a proclamation that the agricultural produce (grain, new wine, and oil) destroyed by the locusts (cf. 1:10) would be restored.
22. He then announced that His people would never again be an object of scorn to the nations. (cf. 2:17)
23. Next - God announced that the threat described in Joel 2:1-11 would be averted (v. 20a).
24. He would turn against the very army He had been bringing against His disobedient people (cf. v. 11), driving it into the desert (a parched and barren land) and the seas (the eastern sea and the western sea, probably the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea; cf. Zech. 14:8).
25. Verse 25 summarizes the theme of verses 19-24. The effects of the locusts would be completely reversed. Speaking as though compelled by legal obligation, the Lord promised to repay the nation for the crops which His great army of locusts (cf. Joel 1:4) had devoured.
26. The agricultural abundance (2:26a) would prompt the people to praise the name of their covenant **God**, who had worked wonders for them (v. 26b).
27. This last expression placed the restoration of agricultural blessing in the mainstream of God's miraculous historical deeds on behalf of His people
28. The nation would also acknowledge (know) His active presence and His rightful place as their God (Joel 2:27).