

2:1

"Sound the Alarm" -get ready!!

-The DOTL will be a day of darkness and not light (Amos 5:18, 20)

2-10

Description of the Lord's army of judgment

-destructive

-expedient

-fearsome

-ordered, efficient

-unstoppable

-everywhere

-strength of the LORD

-The LORD leads this army Himself

We must be careful of rejecting God's revelation of Himself because it offends our thoughts of how we think that He *should* be.

-“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.” (Is 55:9)

-Rather than judge God's revelation because it offends *our sense of justice*, as if our sense of justice was more perfect than His, we should humbly ask Him to help us understand, but above all things recognize that God is God and we are created. The clods of clay ought not to judge the Potter for how He turns the wheel.

12-13a

True repentance explained: This is what the LORD declares!!

-Even Now!

-When judgment is on the doorstep and the sounds of the locusts that destroy are filling your ears, there is still time to return to the LORD

-Return with all your heart

-Return (eng.), convert (latin), repent

-Returning implies having been there once

-this is for believers!!

-We must repent if we believe in Jesus

-Repentance is giving up the right to save ourselves

-With all your heart (1 Sam 16:7), not merely formal acts of piety

-Hosea 6:1-2 VS 14:1-2

-Judges 10:6-16, part. 15-16 showing repentance

-Not just the “branch” sins, but the “root” sins

-Yet, with signs of a heart's turning

-Fasting, weeping, mourning

-confession of specific sins we struggle with

-an acceptance of shame, for the hope of forgiveness and freedom

-Rend your hearts: Authenticity before God in Repentance

-Rending garments was a sign of mourning

-God wants the true mourning of the heart, not merely the outward religious act

-Ps 34:18; 51:17; and Isaiah 57:15

Charles H. Spurgeon story

A woman who came to him in desperate “repentance”, but perceiving her lack of authenticity, he questioned her specific sins by taking her through the 10

commandments, of which she could not name one of which she had failed...Her “humility” was pious and forced, counterfeit, because she knew it was the pious thing to do, but she had not wrestled with her actual selfish heart.

13b-14

Motivation to Return: God Draws Near to His People in Grace

-Return, for...

He is gracious

He is compassionate

He is slow to anger,

He is not easily provoked

He is abounding in steadfast love

He relents over disaster

He may give you the means to worship!

Think about this for a moment: When we would think that God would be the farthest away, turned the most against in wrath and judgment and anger, we find that God is still moving towards us in grace!! He is proclaiming the way out of devastation, of the turning away from trusting in empty nothings and the fruitless pursuit of ME. He is proclaiming His willingness and even more than mere willingness, His PASSION to place you in His standing of grace. He relents! He relents! He relents from disaster!! He is the God who turns from destruction, not only turns destruction away but provides the very means of intimacy with Him. This is the point of God leaving behind some grain and wine for offerings, not for the mere presence of the ritual, but for the drawing near of the sinner to the Holy God...for intimacy with Him. He is pulling you close in love. He is drawing near to intervene and then providing all the means necessary for you to do the same...to draw near to Him in return.

You see, God is not far off, not so far that Heaven must be ascended to bring Him down, for He has condescended to come near to sinners, so that He is not far from each us (Acts 17:27). This God who leads the army of destruction, who calls forth the oceans to overstep their boundaries, who speaks from the whirlwind and reins in the thunderclouds, who sets his foot on the highest mountains and strides across the stars...this God moves near to you in grace. This God draws near with just mercy and holy love. We remember today His greatest act of drawing near: the cross of Christ. It would have been incredible for God to merely have become a man and walked the earth teaching us, but Jesus came to do more. “This is my body, broken for you.” “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” God ultimately drew near to sinners when Jesus died for them. How can we claim that God stands aloof and far off in judgment? He does not! Though He judges, He closes to us and bears that holy wrath in holy love. God is for you! Never let the enemy deceive you! God has drawn close to sinners! What?! Yes! Yes! Eternally yes!

As you pass the bread, the emblem of Christ’s body broken for you, please speak these words to the one to whom you pass the sacred bread: “The body of Christ broken for you. God is near.”

As you pass the cup, the emblem of Christ’s peace-making blood, please speak these words to the one to whom you pass the sacred cup: “The blood of Christ poured out for your sins. God is near.”

“The death of Jesus offers hopes to those who are overcome with guilt and conviction by offering cleansing and acceptance. Though we are sinners, God will not count our sins against us. He receives us because Jesus has died and put away our sins and reconciled us to God, who now, and forever, relates to us as a father relates to his son, and nothing can separate us from his love. Here the broken find hope, for in Christ we are cleansed.” — Joe Thorn, *Note to Self*