

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

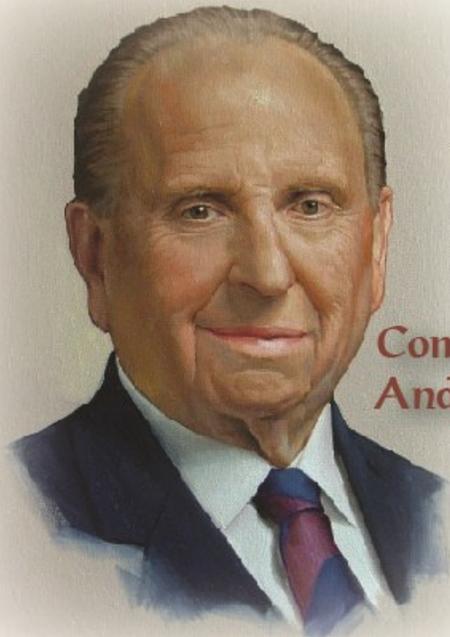
Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

26 September 2010

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Lesson 35: God Reveals His Secrets to His Prophets (Amos 3; 7–9; Joel 2–3)

Introduction



THOMAS S. MONSON

Come, listen to a prophet's voice,
And hear the word of God. . . .

If someone asked you what the living prophet has recently said, would you be able to answer the question? This lesson emphasizes the importance of listening to and following the living prophet.

Background: Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town south of Jerusalem. He ministered to the people of the kingdom of Israel from about 800 to 750 B.C. Most of these people were in apostasy. They loved riches, oppressed the poor, and were so hardened that not even famine or pestilence humbled them. As Amos confronted the people with their sins, he prophesied even

more dire penalties. Nevertheless, he emphasized that God was eager to cleanse anyone who would repent, exhorting, “*Seek the Lord, and ye shall live*” (Amos 5:6). Amos also prophesied about the latter days.

The prophet Joel ministered to the people of the kingdom of Judah. We do not know exactly when he lived, but his prophecies are of

particular importance to us because many of them concern the latter days. Joel used the powerful image of a devouring host of locusts to symbolize the devastation that armies and God's judgments would bring in the latter days. Joel also prophesied great blessings in the latter days, foreseeing that the Lord would “*pour out [his] spirit upon all flesh*” (Joel 2:28).

Lesson Highlights

- Amos teaches that the Lord reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets.
- Amos prophesies of ancient and latter-day Israel.
- Joel prophesies that God will bless his people in the latter days and pour out his Spirit upon them.

A study of this lesson will teach us that in the latter days, the Lord reveals his secrets to his prophets and pours out his Spirit on all people.

Next Week

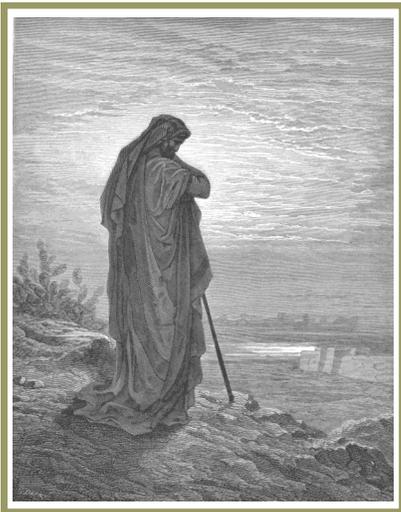
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"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, until he revealeth the secret unto his servants the prophets."

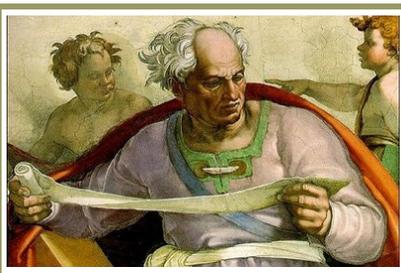
—Amos 3:7 JST.

Joseph Smith: *"...the grand rule of heaven was that nothing should ever be done on earth without revealing the secret to his servants the prophets."*

(TPJS, p264)



Amos—Gustave Doré



Joel—Michelangelo

Amos teaches that the Lord reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:6–7)

We hear the word of the Lord in our day through his anointed servants—the prophets.

Amos 3:7 - The prophet Amos taught how important prophets are in this verse.

Amos 3:6-7 - Two words were changed in the Joseph Smith Translation. Footnotes 6b and 7a; in verse 6 the word known is used instead of done, and in verse 7 the word until is used instead of but. These changes clarify the meaning of the passage.

The Joseph Smith Translation itself is an example of the Lord's secrets being made known to a prophet for our benefit.

D&C 1:37-38 – The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that we should respect the messages of the prophets as if they were the Lord's own message to us—and they are!

D&C 21:4-5 - As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord gave counsel and commandment to the Saints on

the day the Church was organized to heed the words of his prophet.

D&C 21:6 - If the Saints would do this, he promised blessings: the gates of hell would not prevail against them, the powers of darkness would be dispersed, and the heavens would shake for their good.

Each of us has seen this promise fulfilled in our lives as we have obeyed the counsel of the prophets.

Amos prophecies of ancient and latter-day Israel. (Amos 7:10–17; 8:11–13; 9:8–15)

Amos 7:10-17 - Amaziah, a priest in the kingdom of Israel, asked Amos to leave the land because Amos had prophesied that evil would come to the people and their king. Amaziah and his people did not want to hear the truth about their evil doings.

Verses 14-17 teach us that the prophet Amos had integrity and courage. He would not change what the Lord told him to say but continued to prophesy that evil would come to the people if they did not repent.

In all ages of time, many people rejected or ignored prophets' messages—and had to deal with the consequences of their choices.

Amos 8:11-13 - Amos prophesied that spiritual famine, or apostasy, would be the result if Israel rejected the counsel of the prophets.

Those same results await anyone in our time if we reject the counsel of the prophets.

Amos's prophecy of a spiritual famine was fulfilled among the children of Israel after the time of Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet. This period ended approximately 400 years later when John the Baptist was called to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. Amos's prophecy also applies to the Great Apostasy, the centuries of spiritual darkness that followed the death of the Savior's Apostles and ended with the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The absence of the word of the Lord can be compared to a famine because it indicates a spiritual famine. People today are wandering "from sea to sea" seeking for the word of the

Lord but many of them do not know where to find it. Because we have the blessings of the restored gospel, our situation can be compared to a feast.

Amos 9:8-15 – The message of hope that concludes the book of Amos promises that the children of Israel would not be completely destroyed, they would be scattered among all the nations, and in the last days they would be reestablished as a great and

Becoming at ease in Zion

prosperous people. Note that at the end of verse 9, the Lord makes clear that he is concerned about each member of the house of Israel.

Amos 6:1 - Amos warned the people about becoming "at ease in Zion".

2 Nephi 28:19-24, 27, 29-30 – Consider what it means to become at ease in Zion.

Joel prophecies that God will bless his people in the latter days and pour out his Spirit upon them. (Joel 2; 3:16–17)

The prophet Joel described some of the events of the latter days that would precede the Second Coming.

Joel 2:1-11 - He described the march of a great army

that would cause great destruction because of the wickedness of the people.

Joel 2:12-32 - He called on Israel to repent and turn to the Lord, promised that God

would be in their midst, and described the eventual triumph and redemption of Israel.

Reviewing **Joel 2:12-32** and **Joel 3:16-17** reveals what

invitations the Lord has given to those living in the latter days: Invitations:

- **Joel 2:12** - "Turn ye even to me with all your heart".
- **Joel 2:13** - "Rend your heart" (meaning to break your heart or be humble).
- **Joel 2:13** - "Turn unto the Lord your God".
- **Joel 2:16** - "Sanctify the congregation".
- **Joel 2:21** - "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice".

These invitations suggest that we must turn to the Lord with all our hearts. In doing that, we need to sanctify ourselves so we are worthy of the Lord's promised blessings.

Reviewing **Joel 2:12-32** and **Joel 3:16-17** reveals what blessings the Lord promised to those who follow him in the latter days. Blessings:

- **Joel 2:12** "He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and he will turn away the evil

from you" (Joseph Smith Translation, Joel 2:13; see footnote 13b).

- **Joel 2:18** - The Lord will "pity his people".
- **Joel 2:20** - The Lord will drive the northern army (described in verses 1-11) into a barren place.
- **Joel 2:26** - "Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied".
- **Joel 2:27** - "I am in the midst of Israel, ... and my people shall never be ashamed".
- **Joel 2:28** - "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (see also verse 29).
- **Joel 2:28** - Young and old will prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions.
- **Joel 2:32** - "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered".
- **Joel 3:16** - "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem".

- **Joel 3:16** - "The Lord will be the hope of his people".
- **Joel 3:16** - "The Lord will be the ... strength of the children of Israel".
- **Joel 3:17** - "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion".

These blessings demonstrate the Lord's commitment to his covenant people. He promises to be merciful, loving, protective, compassionate, attentive, and provide us with many choice opportunities in our days.

Joel 2:28-29 - Joel's declaration that the Lord would pour out his Spirit on all people in the latter days is a stark contrast to the famine that Amos described in **Amos 8:11-12**. The angel Moroni quoted Joel's prophecy to Joseph Smith and told him that it was not yet fulfilled but was soon to be.

Conclusion

It is a great blessing to live in the latter days, when many prophecies are being fulfilled and when we have the guidance of a living prophet. We should prayerfully study the words of the living prophet and apply his counsel in their lives.

Consider this analogy from **Elder Neal A.**

Maxwell: "Those who have lived in the midst of the famine foreseen by Amos, one of not hearing the full word of God (Amos 8:11-12), have never known the taste and nourishment of the whole-grain gospel. Instead, some have subsisted on the fast foods of philosophy."

(Men and Women of Christ, p39)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What are the results for us personally if we reject the counsel of the prophets?
- What can we do to sanctify ourselves so we are worthy of the Lord's promised blessings?
- What blessings has the Lord promised to those who follow him in the latter days?