

Old Testament 35
God Reveals His Secrets unto His Prophets
(Amos and Joel)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(This material contains inspirational background **and supportive true accounts**).

I. There has never been a time when man did not need the Lord's guidance. **Only when men's faith has failed has He ceased to send prophets to give them that guidance.**

A. Through Amos, the Lord teaches that because of wickedness and lack of faith there would be a time when there *would* cease to be prophets. But this would occur, **not because The Lord had nothing more to say, but because of wickedness of the people.** After telling the Israelites of their wickedness in previous verses, (8-10), He says, "... I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).

II. The Lord affirmed, however, that prophets are still vital for His work of salvation, and that *He would cause them to speak again when He had works to do in the Latter Days.*

- A. Joel (2:21-27) and Amos (9:11-15) testify that after a time of spiritual famine, there would be a re-gathering of God's people and a resumption of God's spiritual works.
- B. All prophets testified of His re-gathering of Israel in the Last Days. And it is made clear, "Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth His secrets unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). **This means there would be prophets in the Last Days.**
- C. In fact, in the Last Days, not only would there be prophets, but **the spirit of prophecy would be poured out in abundance upon all the house of the faithful.**
- D. This outpouring of the Spirit would be very extensive. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and **also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit**" (Joel 2:28-29). (Emphasis added).

III. In truth, **today's prophecies and miracles are more abundant than ever before.**

- A. In the beginning of the Restoration, there were great miracles, such as the First Vision, Moroni's visitations, the coming of ancient prophets to restore priesthoods and keys, other spiritual outpourings such as at the Kirtland Temple, etc.
- B. And these continued through the Exodus and the settlement of the Saints in the West, such as the coming of the Seagulls to destroy masses of crickets.
- C. Today prophecies and miracles still continue. In fact, **they may be much more widespread, and they occur not only among the many living prophets [General Authorities] of the Church, but in the lives of multitudes of the most humble.**
- D. Note that the Lord told Joel, "**and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**" This shows that the Lord would respond to the faith of His humblest saints. In fact, He has blessed His servants and His handmaids, particularly **as they are doing missionary work and temple work and in serving others.**
- E. The examples are myriad, in every category! In fact, one could select any church magazine and likely find examples. I share an example, first, however, which has not been published, **as most examples are never published.**

Temple Work: One temple missionary, Sister Leslie Rees, working in the Ghana Temple, had trouble teaching a particular ordinance worker the words she must remember. Most of the problem was that the new ordinance worker could not read. The temple missionary worked and worked with her, but almost no progress was being made, to her great discouragement. She even began to question whether the priesthood had erred in calling her to serve. Then, all of a sudden, this new worker began learning. Surprised at the sudden change, Sister Rees asked how this progress had come about. **The sister said that during the night a voice had begun speaking into her ear, repeating the words that she must learn.** The Spirit was being poured out upon her, as ancient prophets had testified. Through that Spirit, in spite of her lack of opportunity to learn to read, she was able to learn the ordinances and fulfill her call to serve in the holy temple.

Spirit blesses member in Cambodia in Family History work

“During the Pol Pot era in Cambodia, many records were destroyed, presenting a great challenge for Cambodian members interested in researching their family history. . . . [But] one church member was determined to at least have his four generations recorded. When he failed to find any documents, the man went into a room and prayed for guidance. A little while later, he came out with his four generations, received by pure inspiration.” [From *Deseret News, Thursday, July 31 on two new stakes in Cambodia*].

For *many* additional examples regarding spiritual help in doing temple work, see Boyd K. Packer, “Help From Beyond”, *The Holy Temple*, pp. 241-255.

Missionary Work: Eight native missionaries in Liberia found themselves trapped, and separated, in their houses, unable to serve due to Civil War in 1990. After fasting and prayer, the Spirit caused them to feel the Lord would bless them to get to Sierre Leone so they could continue to serve missions. But this meant He would have to help them find each other. He would have to help them get past soldiers who would kill at least one of them for his ethnic background. It meant nine adult men would have to travel 370 miles jammed together in a small sedan. It meant that they would have to travel most of those 370 miles on 5 ½ gallons of gasoline. It meant they would have to get past border guards without all the required documents. It meant they would have to travel roads which had gaps so large their small sedan had to be pushed across or lifted over. **But the Lord blessed them to overcome all those impossible odds. And when they arrived, they had gasoline still left in the tank!**

Because of their faith and acknowledgement of the Hand of the Lord in getting to Sierre Leone, they blessed their new field of labor with strong testimony, and the rate of baptisms greatly increased and the number of branches soon doubled.

As one Senior missionary said, “[They] brought a powerful spirit of faith and devotion . . .” (“The Lord Provided A Way,” June 2014 *Ensign*).

We really don’t have to look far to find many such incidents. **Truly the Lord has “poured out his spirit,” and even upon “his servants and his handmaids” as they seek to do His Missionary, Temple, Personal Service and other work in building up His Church upon the earth in these the Last Days.**

II. Prophets from all ages have revealed two of the **prime sins that would bring on the destructions of the Last Days**, just as those sins brought on the destruction of ancient Israel. These sins are repeatedly delineated as: Materialism and Immorality.

Amos is one of the many prophets speaking of these evils. Those who have covenanted with the Lord will be judged the most harshly. The Lord says through Amos.

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). Again, **destructions came to ancient Israel because of:**

A. The Sin of Materialism

“they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes” (Amos 2:6-7).

“ye kine of Basham ... which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, ... (Amos 4:1).

“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right” (Amos 5: 12).

1. A modern prophet gave wise counsel in April 2014 Conference. After speaking of the great needs of other faithful members, and of how involved others of us can become in getting resources to sustain our families, he said, “There is no end to what the world has to offer, so it is critical that we learn to recognize when we have enough. If we are not careful, we will begin to chase after the temporal more than the spiritual... Sadly, there appears to be a strong inclination to acquire more and more...” (Elder Michael John U. Teh).
2. It is obviously very important to avoid the sin of materialism and the neglect of the needy. **Through the Church, many opportunities are given to meet the needs of others, and in the best ways. But we need to seek them out and to respond.**
3. For good ideas see BYU Devotional Address by Sheri Palmer, July 31, 2014.

This writer is deeply impressed by the sacrifices made by so many members of the Church out of love for their Savior and for their fellow men. It is generally understood that a major reason why the Saints have generally been so blessed financially is so that they *can use their means to help build up Christ’s Church, and to bless others.*

B. The Sin of Immorality

The prophets, both anciently and today, have earnestly warned that great calamities will come upon the earth when the people fall into great and gross immoralities.

A major role of prophets is to help the people adhere to God’s never-changing commandments, particularly in regard to morality, especially when many false voices are clouding the issues and leading many astray. Our prophets speak clearly and unerringly.

It is truly the voice of prophecy which caused the **First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles to make its “Proclamation To The World”** saying, **“We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity ... will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations *the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.*”**

(Emphasis added).

Among such ancient prophets were Amos and Joel.