

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

Today we pick up in the Minor Prophet and since we did the book of **Hosea** last week, we will start with the book of **Joel**. We talked briefly that the book of Joel was apocalyptic and was full of symbols and parallels. It discussed the Day of the Lord. We talked about what that was, insofar as scripture goes.

In a larger perspective, the book of Joel tells us also about the Gospel Era to come. It tells of the Holy Spirit being poured out on all people, and that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. It also speaks of judgment and the valley of decision. These themes are popular in hymns of the time to come.

The Day of the LORD

JOEL 2:28-32

²⁸ *“And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
³⁰ I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
³² And everyone who calls
on the name of the LORD will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the LORD has said,
even among the survivors
whom the LORD calls.*

The Nations Judged

³ *“In those days and at that time,
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
² I will gather all nations
and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
There I will put them on trial
for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel,
because they scattered my people among the nations*

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

and divided up my land.

³ *They cast lots for my people
and traded boys for prostitutes;
they sold girls for wine to drink.*

⁴ *“Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. ⁵ For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. ⁶ You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.*

⁷ *“See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. ⁸ I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.” The LORD has spoken.*

⁹ *Proclaim this among the nations:*

Prepare for war!

Rouse the warriors!

Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.

¹⁰ *Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning hooks into spears.*

Let the weakling say,

“I am strong!”

¹¹ *Come quickly, all you nations from every side,
and assemble there.*

Bring down your warriors, LORD!

¹² *“Let the nations be roused;
let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
for there I will sit
to judge all the nations on every side.*

¹³ *Swing the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, trample the grapes,
for the winepress is full
and the vats overflow—
so great is their wickedness!”*

¹⁴ *Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near*

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

in the valley of decision.

***¹⁵ The sun and moon will be darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.***

***¹⁶ The LORD will roar from Zion
and thunder from Jerusalem;
the earth and the heavens will tremble.***

***But the LORD will be a refuge for his people,
a stronghold for the people of Israel.***

Blessings for God's People

***¹⁷ "Then you will know that I, the LORD your God,
dwell in Zion, my holy hill.***

***Jerusalem will be holy;
never again will foreigners invade her.***

***¹⁸ "In that day the mountains will drip new wine,
and the hills will flow with milk;
all the ravines of Judah will run with water.***

***A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house
and will water the valley of acacias.^[d]***

***¹⁹ But Egypt will be desolate,
Edom a desert waste,
because of violence done to the people of Judah,
in whose land they shed innocent blood.***

***²⁰ Judah will be inhabited forever
and Jerusalem through all generations.***

***²¹ Shall I leave their innocent blood unavenged?
No, I will not."***

The LORD dwells in Zion!

These verses are not easy to interpret directly so it is best to focus on the overarching meaning, not the individual verses. As we progress toward the Day of Judgment, many of these items will become clearer.

Several things are quite clear however. God will pour out His Spirit on the land and people and those that call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Certainly in this Gospel Era, or Church Age, we not only saw the coming of the Holy Spirit, but the conversion, salvation, and prophetic writings of His People. Today, even though the Apostles are gone ahead, we see the Spirit working and God transforming lives and generations of people. A great worldwide evangelism is happening alongside a falling away of the "church". Both of these are prophesied and are happening now.

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

We are also seeing Israel calling home its scattered people and the nation preparing not only to live and thrive, but also for war. Storm clouds are gathering all around, and the nations are competing to come against Israel in both military force and worldwide pressure and condemnation. Anti Semitism is a growing trend across Europe and even in the US with the Jewish organizations, the support of Israel is low and getting lower.

Each nation and people will be in the Valley of Decision and make their own decision about the Jews and Israel. Large numbers will oppose and come at Israel and God will take His vengeance on them. He declares:

- The Heavens will be darkened, the moon red, and signs all around us
- Israel and God will be a refuge for His People
- Jerusalem will be “holy” or set apart for the Lord’s use
- Never will she be invaded again
- The land will prosper, with water, rivers, new wine, milk and honey
- The Lord will avenge the innocent blood of His people
- Egypt and Edom will be desolate
- He will dwell in Zion

We can leave the details to the Lord, because we know enough to understand what is going to happen at this pivotal time. Joel predicts all this in his small 3 chapter book.

Prophecy in the book of Amos

In Amos we see that David’s fallen tent and throne will rise again. Amos was a shepherd in a town called Tekoa, about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. Not only was Amos a shepherd, but the word used for shepherd indicates one with special status, like a supervisor or lead Shepherd.

Amos lived in about 760BC, due to an earthquake mentioned that scientists confirm was about then. This was before the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities and dispersion of the Jews. Both the Northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah) were financially prosperous, but were morally bankrupt and disobedience to God was rampant.

Amos prophesied against both Israel and Judah, but also against the countries that surrounded Israel.

Edom, Tyre, Philistia, Ammon, Damascus all would be judged because of sins laid out against Israel and its people. These corroborate and add emphasis to similar prophecies in other books we have discussed.

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

Amos also lays out not only the punishment on Israel and Judah, but provides specific reasons for the judgments. See Amos 3:1-15.

3 Hear this word, people of Israel, the word the LORD has spoken against you—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt:

***2 “You only have I chosen
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your sins.”***

***3 Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?***

***4 Does a lion roar in the thicket
when it has no prey?***

***Does it growl in its den
when it has caught nothing?***

***5 Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground
when no bait is there?***

***Does a trap spring up from the ground
if it has not caught anything?***

***6 When a trumpet sounds in a city,
do not the people tremble?***

***When disaster comes to a city,
has not the LORD caused it?***

***7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing
without revealing his plan
to his servants the prophets.***

***8 The lion has roared—
who will not fear?***

***The Sovereign LORD has spoken—
who can but prophesy?***

***9 Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod
and to the fortresses of Egypt:***

***“Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria;
see the great unrest within her
and the oppression among her people.”***

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

¹⁰ *“They do not know how to do right,” declares the LORD,
“who store up in their fortresses
what they have plundered and looted.”*

¹¹ *Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:*

*“An enemy will overrun your land,
pull down your strongholds
and plunder your fortresses.”*

¹² *This is what the LORD says:*

*“As a shepherd rescues from the lion’s mouth
only two leg bones or a piece of an ear,
so will the Israelites living in Samaria be rescued,
with only the head of a bed
and a piece of fabric from a couch”*

¹³ *“Hear this and testify against the descendants of Jacob,” declares the Lord, the LORD God Almighty.*

¹⁴ *“On the day I punish Israel for her sins,
I will destroy the altars of Bethel;
the horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.*

¹⁵ *I will tear down the winter house
along with the summer house;
the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed
and the mansions will be demolished,”
declares the LORD*

Amos asks a series of Questions to which there are pretty simple answers, but then he compares them to the Lord speaking, and judgment is visible. When the Lion roars, people listen and are afraid because danger is all around, but shouldn't the same be true if the Lord speaks to us.

The shepherd can only save a piece of the lamb from the Lions mouth, and so it will be for God's people. Only a remnant will be saved by the Lord because Israel has not listened and heeded the warnings and directions of the Lord.

Amos also predicts the destruction and restoration of Israel. He was very unpopular with the Jewish leaders, and synagogue officials but he persisted to follow the Lord's commands.

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

Amos Ch 5 through Ch 9 v10 we see the destruction of Israel laid out in detail, but then the scene shifts to a future date where Israel will be restored. This time is yet to come.

Amos 9:11-15

Israel's Restoration

¹¹ *"In that day*

*"I will restore David's fallen shelter—
I will repair its broken walls
and restore its ruins—
and will rebuild it as it used to be,*

¹² *so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,^[e]"*
declares the LORD, who will do these things.

¹³ *"The days are coming," declares the LORD,*

*"when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman
and the planter by the one treading grapes.*

*New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills,*

¹⁴ *and I will bring my people Israel back from exile.^[f]*

"They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.

*They will plant vineyards and drink their wine;
they will make gardens and eat their fruit.*

¹⁵ *I will plant Israel in their own land,
never again to be uprooted
from the land I have given them,"*

says the LORD your God.

Israel is living in the days now where this is beginning. The land is being restored, the people are returning from Exile all over the world. Indeed this is causing strain on Israel and a need for new towns and housing for them to live. The so called "settlements" are an attempt to provide housing for the Jews doing Aliyah, or returning to the land. Originally this meant the "honor to stand and read the Torah", but today it takes on the meaning of being honored to be coming back to Israel.

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

Like much in prophecy and prophetic writing, some of the descriptions and punishment, as well as the restorations are not totally understood. But like other writings that are some things that are crystal clear.

God is a God that keeps His Word. Whether that is in judgment or in grace we see both in Amos. God punishes them because He is Just and they deserve the punishment, but He also loves them and will save a remnant with His Grace and restoration. Some of this prophecy for restoration for the Jews will take place in the time of Jacob's trouble, or what we call the Tribulation period, which comes after the Rapture of the Church.

Likewise it is for us...His Children from the Church or Gospel Age. We can read and hear the Word of the Lord to us through the scripture, through the Holy Spirit, or through others ministering to us. We can understand the punishments for our disobedience to His Word. We can even receive and feel the punishment we receive for these actions in disobedience, but God loves us and gives us many chances to come back to Him. Even in the chaotic world we live in presently, our duty is to be obedient to Him and follow where He leads us. ***Are we listening, and understanding, and taking action?***

Prophecy in the book of Obadiah

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Bible and we had a recorded lesson on it which you can listen to for the fuller discussion. The book is largely concerned with the nation of Edom, the descendants of Esau, who are traditional enemies of Israel and the Jews. Today they are known as Palestinians. I will simply read the text and comment.

Obadiah's Vision

¹ The vision of Obadiah.

This is what the Sovereign LORD says about Edom—

We have heard a message from the LORD:

*An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
"Rise, let us go against her for battle"—*

*² "See, I will make you small among the nations;
you will be utterly despised.*

*³ The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks^[a]
and make your home on the heights,
you who say to yourself,*

'Who can bring me down to the ground?'

⁴ Though you soar like the eagle

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

*and make your nest among the stars,
from there I will bring you down,”
declares the LORD.*

⁵*“If thieves came to you,
if robbers in the night—
oh, what a disaster awaits you!—
would they not steal only as much as they wanted?
If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?
⁶But how Esau will be ransacked,
his hidden treasures pillaged!
⁷All your allies will force you to the border;
your friends will deceive and overpower you;
those who eat your bread will set a trap for you,^[b]
but you will not detect it.*

⁸*“In that day,” declares the LORD,
“will I not destroy the wise men of Edom,
those of understanding in the mountains of Esau?
⁹Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified,
and everyone in Esau’s mountains
will be cut down in the slaughter.
¹⁰Because of the violence against your brother Jacob,
you will be covered with shame;
you will be destroyed forever.
¹¹On the day you stood aloof
while strangers carried off his wealth
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them.
¹²You should not gloat over your brother
in the day of his misfortune,
nor rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction,
nor boast so much
in the day of their trouble.
¹³You should not march through the gates of my people
in the day of their disaster,
nor gloat over them in their calamity
in the day of their disaster,
nor seize their wealth
in the day of their disaster.*

Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

¹⁴ *You should not wait at the crossroads
to cut down their fugitives,
nor hand over their survivors
in the day of their trouble.*

¹⁵ *“The day of the LORD is near
for all nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you;
your deeds will return upon your own head.*

¹⁶ *Just as you drank on my holy hill,
so all the nations will drink continually;
they will drink and drink
and be as if they had never been.*

¹⁷ *But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
it will be holy,
and Jacob will possess his inheritance.*

¹⁸ *Jacob will be a fire
and Joseph a flame;
Esau will be stubble,
and they will set him on fire and destroy him.
There will be no survivors
from Esau.”
The LORD has spoken.*

¹⁹ *People from the Negev will occupy
the mountains of Esau,
and people from the foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.*

*They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.*

²⁰ *This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan
will possess the land as far as Zarephath;
the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negev.*

²¹ *Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion
to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the LORD’s.*