November 16–22: Hosea 1–6; 10–14; Joel, "I Will Love Them Freely"

Preview

Joel was a prophet who served in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He prophesied about 50 years before Isaiah and, like Isaiah, delivered a message of warning to the people.

Hosea appears to have been one of the last prophets to serve in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) before its people were taken captive by Assyria. He warned the people that they would be destroyed if they did not repent. Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah, who served in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

In this lesson, we'll focus primarily on the conditions and events leading up to the Battle of Armageddon.

A Warning to Israel

Joel uses the metaphor of a husbandman neglecting his crops, which are his source of livelihood, to illustrate how Judah has forgotten the Lord, their source of spiritual sustenance.

Joel 1:9-13
9 The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD's ministers, mourn.
10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.
11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.
12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.
13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

What blessings and privileges would Judah lose as a result of neglecting their covenants with the Lord?

(The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD
the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God)

"One of the consequences of Judah's destruction and scattering as a nation was the loss of her temple worship, the source of joy and gladness. Their field was wasted; they were no longer a fruitful people unto the Lord." (Old

Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi, pg.84)

Hosea also warns Ephraim that they will lose the ability to perform temple ordinances.

Hos 4:1,6-10
1 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

6 ¶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.
7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.
8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.
9 And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.
10 For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

What would the people lose the ability to do in the temple when the Lord declared that they would "be no priest" to Him?

(there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge)

Hos 6:6-7
6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
7 But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

What does the Lord desire more than sacrifices and burnt offerings?

(mercy
the knowledge of God
there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land)

Marion D. Hanks
"Hundreds of years before Christ, God confronted the willful ignorance of Israel in these words: 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee … seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God. …'

"The knowledge for lack of which they suffered is plainly explained by

Hosea:

'… the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

'For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.'" (CR, April 1972)

Approaching Armageddon

Joel describes the army that will come against Israel in the last days.

Joel 2:2-10
2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.
3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.
4 The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.
5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.
6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.
7 They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:
8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.
9 They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.
10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

What warning does Joel's description of this terrible army teach us, and how can we respond to that warning?

Joseph Fielding Smith
"Here we have a great, terrible army, marching with unbroken ranks and crushing everything before it, finding the garden like Eden before them, leaving the wilderness behind, causing mourning, causing suffering; and so the prophet raises the warning voice, and that voice is to us, if you please, that we might turn unto the Lord and rend our hearts." (The Signs of the Times, pg. 160)

This will also be the time when Zion is restored.

Joel 2:1,11
1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

What do these verses teach us about the Lord's army and the power of those who carry out His word?

D&C 105:31-32
30) … I will hold the armies of Israel guiltless... scattering their watchmen, and avenging me of mine enemies unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.
31) But first let my army become very great, and let it be sanctified before me, that it may become fair as the sun, and clear as the moon, and that her banners may be terrible unto all nations;
32) That the kingdoms of this world may be constrained to acknowledge that the kingdom of Zion is in very deed the kingdom of our God and his Christ...

John Taylor
"We will stretch out further and further. Zion's cords shall be lengthened and her stakes shall be strengthened until her armies shall become mighty and numerous and until God shall say to the Gentiles, it is enough." (JD, 21:111)

Hos 11:10-11
10 They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.
11 They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

What effect will the gathering of the army of Zion have on the rest of the world?

(then the children shall tremble from the west)

Joel describes the events leading up to this great battle.

Joel 3:1-2,9-12
1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,
2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage

Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

9 ¶ Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:
10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.
11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.
12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

What do these verses teach us about the spiritual battle that will take place in the latter days and the need to be spiritually prepared?

(Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near
let the weak say, I am strong
for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about)

Dean L. Larsen
"The Savior himself said that conditions toward the end of this dispensation would very much resemble those that existed just before the Flood. 'As the days of Noe were,' he said, 'so shall also the coming of the Son of man be' (Matt 24:37).

"Joel saw the period of time in which we live as a great battleground for the souls of men….

"Joel saw that this great battle would not be regarded in a casual way. It would be no time for weakness nor weaklings." (CR, April 1983)

Joel 3:13-17
13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.
14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.
16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.
17 So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

What does the Lord admonish His people to recognize about the coming day of judgment?

(for their wickedness is great
the LORD is near in the valley of decision
the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel)

Wilford Woodruff
"He has... called upon the inhabitants of the world to prepare themselves for the great day of his second advent and coming, which is at hand. He is calling upon them loudly today; and, as I have said to some of my brethren lately, the Lord now wants to know whether the Latter-day Saints are willing to work with him or not. It is a day of decision." (JD, 18:109)

Our actions will show what whether or not we have made that decision

Joel 2:12-16
12 ¶ Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:
13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.
14 Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?
15 ¶ Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:
16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

What does the Lord admonish His people to do to demonstrate sincere repentance and have turned their hearts to Him?

(turn ye even to me with all your heart
And rend your heart, and not your garments
Gather the people, sanctify the congregation)

The Lord promises to "pour out [His] Spirit upon all flesh." Moroni quoted Joel 2:28 through the end of the chapter to Joseph Smith, explaining that these prophecies had not yet been fulfilled but would soon be (JSH 1:41).

Joel 2:28-32
28 ¶ 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:
29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.
30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great

and the terrible day of the Lord come.
32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

What evidence do we see that the Lord is fulfilling these promises to His people in the latter days?

Gordon B. Hinckley
"The vision of Joel has been fulfilled….

"There has been more of scientific discovery during these years than during all of the previous history of mankind. Transportation, communication, medicine, public hygiene, the unlocking of the atom, the miracle of the computer, with all of its ramifications, have blossomed forth, particularly in our own era. During my own lifetime, I have witnessed miracle after wondrous miracle come to pass. We take it for granted.

"And, with all of this, the Lord has restored His ancient priesthood. He has organized His Church and kingdom during the past century and a half. He has led His people. They have been tempered in the crucible of terrible persecution. He has brought to pass the wondrous time in which we now live.

"We have seen only the foreshadowing of the mighty force for good that this Church will become. And yet I marvel at what has been accomplished." (CR, Oct. 2001)

After Armageddon

After the Battle of Armageddon, Israel will be cleansed.

Joel 3:18-21
18 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.
19 Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.
20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21 For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

Hosea 14:5-8
5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as

Lebanon.
6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.
7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.
8 Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him

How will Israel be cleansed and spiritually renewed after the Battle of Armageddon?

(Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem
I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed
Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him)