

THE
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PLACE

**The Books of Hosea, Joel,
and Amos**

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CLT Bible Study

THE BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

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1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that scriptures from the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos may not have the book's name in sections dealing with them individually. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Hosea, if the Bible reference is (1:4-6), you will find these verses (4-6) in the first chapter of Hosea. Whereas, other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Psalm 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. However you do it, mark your Bible, and it will become more and more your very own.
7. Finally, reread the Bible passage to understand its meaning better. Perhaps you may benefit from listening to the reading of the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. To pronounce additional terms and their definitions, please refer to *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Eby et al, 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions:

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another read the Continuing Lay Training outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

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THE BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

OUTLINE



Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

Section 1.1 Introduction to Hosea

- A. Authorship and Date
- B. Background
- C. The Theology of Hosea

Section 1.2 Introduction to Joel

- A. Name and Occasion for the Prophecy
- B. Time and Composition
- C. The Pivotal Ideas in Joel

Section 1.3 Introduction to Amos

- A. The Author and His Historical Background
- B. The Message of Amos

Chapter 2. THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Section 2.1 Hosea's Experience and Insight (1:1 - 3:5)

- A. Hosea's Personal Life (1:1 - 2:1)
- B. Personal Tragedy and the Redemptive Love of God (2:2-23)
- C. Hosea's Dealing with Gomer: Her Redemption (3:1-5)

Section 2.2 Hosea's Prophecy and Appeal (4:1 - 13:16)

- A. Israel's Infidelity and Its Cause (4:1 - 6:3)
- B. Israel's Infidelity and Its Punishment (6:4 - 10:15)
- C. The Love of God (11:1 - 13:16)

Section 2.3 Repentance, Promise of Forgiveness, and Renewal (14:1-9)

- A. Final Appeal to Repent (14:1-3)
- B. Promise of Ultimate Blessing (14:4-8)
- C. Epilogue (14:9)

Chapter 3. THE BOOK OF JOEL

Section 3.1 The Plague of Locust and the Day of the Lord (1:1 - 2:11)

- A. Superscription (1:1)
- B. The Devastation by the Locusts (1:2-7)
- C. The Invasion as a Type of the Human Invasion of the Future (1:8-20)
- D. The Day of the Lord (2:1-11)

Section 3.2 Joel's Call to Repentance (2:12-19)

- A. External Evidence of Repentance (2:12-15)
- B. The Scope of Repentance (2:16-17)
- C. The Promise of Mercy (2:18-19)

Section 3.3 The Hope of Future Blessings (2:20-32)

- A. Destruction of the Army of Locusts (2:20)
- B. Renewal of Spiritual and Earthly Blessings (2:21-27)
- C. The Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:28-32)

Section 3.4 The Day of the Lord (3:1-21)

- A. The Judgment upon Unbelievers (3:1-17)
- B. The Millennial Triumph for Jerusalem and the Redeemed (3:18-21)

Chapter 4. THE BOOK OF AMOS

Section 4.1 The Approaching Judgment (1:1 - 2:16)

- A. Superscription and Theme (1:1-2)
- B. Oracles against Neighboring Nations (1:3 - 2:3)
- C. Oracles against Judah (2:4-5)
- D. Oracles Against Israel (2:6-16)

BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

OUTLINE



Section 4.2 Sermons on Israel's Coming Judgment (3:1 - 6:14)

- A. Israel's Relationship to God (3:1-8)
- B. Samaria's Sinfulness (3:9 - 4:3)
- C. The Depth of Israel's Guilt (4:4 - 5:3)
- D. Exhortation and Condemnation (5:4-15)
- E. The Appearance of the Lord (5:16-25)
- F. Inexorable Invasion and Exile (5:26 - 6:14)

Section 4.3 Amos' Visions and an Epilogue (7:1 - 9:15)

- A. His Visions (7:1-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4)
- B. The Conflict with Amaziah (7:10-17)
- C. The Sins of the Nation and the Judgment to Come (8:4-14)
- D. The Inexorable Judgment (9:5-7)
- E. Epilogue (9:8-15)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

NOTES

Section 1.1 Introduction to Hosea

Hosea is the earliest prophet who interpreted the work of Yahweh [YAH-way] in terms of love. He is Israel's first prophet of grace, its first evangelist.

The purpose of Hosea was to convince his countrymen of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, of the need for repentance, the reestablishment of the covenant relation, and dependence upon a forgiving God.

While his prophecy is not rated among the major prophets because of its brevity, it must be listed as one of the most important.

He is called the St. John of the Old Testament.

A. AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

Commonly acknowledged to have been a native of the Northern Kingdom, Hosea knew the entire life of Israel intimately. He writes as an eyewitness. There is very little detail given concerning his life. Outside of his marriage to Gomer and the naming of his father, almost nothing is said of him personally.

We know little about his actual ministry, but he was persecuted for his prophetic work (9:7-8). Hosea gives us the date of his prophecy at the opening of his book: "The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerī [bah-EH-ree], in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel (1:1)."

While the book represents selections from sermons delivered over a period of time, it is evident from the text that the prophecy was finished and published by 725 B.C., some thirty years after Hosea's ministry had begun.

While the actual length of Hosea's ministry may remain in doubt, we do know that he was contemporaneous with Amos in the earlier part and with Isaiah, Micah, and Obadiah in the latter part.

B. BACKGROUND

The reign of Jeroboam 2 in Israel was outwardly an era of peace, plenty, prosperity, and luxury. However, anarchy, chaos, feuds, and broken covenants followed his death. The nation was ripe for conquest. The outcome was inevitable, and its first defeat came in 733 B.C. when Tiglath-pileser captured Damascus, ravaged Israel's territory, and carried large numbers of her leaders into exile. Sargon finally captured Samaria in 722-721 B.C.



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The time of Hosea was a period of crime, corruption, and immorality. The degradation of the priesthood, the impotence of the rulers, and the folly of sin and injustice all contributed to the decline and fall of Israel. On every hand, there was class hatred. The rich became richer and the poor were made poorer. The home was no longer sacred, and the marriage vow meant very little. The nation was ripe for Hosea to fulfill the traditional role of the prophet as the champion of the poor and the pleader for social reform.

C. THE THEOLOGY OF HOSEA

Hosea's whole interpretation of Israel's history centers around divine love and knowledge of God. Behind the two figures of fatherhood and marriage are Hebrew words, both of which Hosea uses: *ahab* and *chesed*. The first is typically taken to be the Hebrew equivalent of the English word love and is used for divine love and pure and impure human affection. The second is the word usually rendered "lovingkindness" in the Authorized Version and always rendered steadfast love in the Revised Standard Version.

It was God's love that made Israel and the covenant possible. When Israel broke the covenant, only God's faithful love could offer a solution for reconciliation. The experience is graphically illustrated in Hosea's relationship to his unfaithful wife. It finds its peak of expression in 11:8 when Yahweh cried, "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah [ADD-ma]? How can I make you like Zeboiim [zeb-OY-im]? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused." The idea of love in the covenant relationship, however broken, develops into the concept of grace in the New Testament.

The second element in Hosea's theology, the knowledge of God, arises out of communion with God. With this in mind, one can understand why Hosea's cry that there was no knowledge of God in Israel was so serious. It indicates that there was no faithfulness to God, no love to God, and no communion with him. It is not an intellectual knowledge but a spiritual relationship to which Hosea refers.

Thus, in Hosea, while Israel seemed unable to repent, and God's holiness could not abide with sin, God's steadfast love would somehow find a way to bring his people back to him. While God pronounced certain doom on the sinful, he promised he would never let Israel be destroyed. Israel must meet judgment, but God, in his love, could not utterly destroy her.

Section 1.2 Introduction to Joel

A. NAME AND OCCASION FOR THE PROPHECY

The name Joel (Hebrew, Yoel) means "Yahweh is God." Though there is no proof of the theory, he may have been a priest or certainly a "Temple prophet" in Jerusalem.



NOTES

It was a time of national crisis and panic in the face of the ravages of an unparalleled plague of locusts. The prophet looked upon the plague as a solemn warning of judgment to come in the "day of the Lord," which is the pivotal idea of the prophet.

B. TIME AND COMPOSITION

The date of the prophecy is not stated, so it must be drawn from the text itself. Joel either quotes from or is quoted by several other prophets. If the latter is true, as is thought by conservative scholars, the prophecy was written about 830 B.C. during the reign of King Joash and the regency of Jehoiada, the high priest.

C. THE PIVOTAL IDEAS IN JOEL

The teaching of Joel centers around the "day of the Lord," in which Yahweh, in a great future crisis, will manifest his power and majesty in the destruction of his enemies and the deliverance of those who trust in him. Its approach is marked by great convulsions and extraordinary phenomena in the sphere of nature. The character of the day, either of terror or of blessing, will depend upon the attitude of heart and life toward God.

A second principle taught in Joel is that there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere else do we find the promise so comprehensive, the fulfillment of which would mean the realization of Moses' words: "... would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29) The Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of fulfillment; and since then it has been and is being fulfilled with ever-increasing fullness, and in a manner far beyond the expectation of the prophet.

Because of Joel's emphasis upon the externals of religion, he has sometimes been accused of neglecting the "weightier matters of the law". However, he promised deliverance, not alone on external observances, but on the basis of loving God with all of one's heart (2:12-13).

Joel can sustain a balance between the outward and inward elements in religion under divine guidance. While formal worship is given due regard, inner repentance and faith are looked upon as one's primary obligations. While the Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik] promise points to the cleansing of the outward environment, Joel's central emphasis is the presence of God in the midst of his obedient and faithful people.

Joel's most meaningful contribution is the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit of God on all believers. Because of the fulfillment of this promise at Pentecost, the truly Christian experience has been spiritual and personal rather than formal and priestly.

NOTES

Section 1.3 Introduction to Amos

Amos prophesied in the first half of the eighth century during the reign of Jeroboam 2. Perhaps 750 B.C. best fits the conditions that are reflected in the book. His teaching brought the people of Israel to the deepest of insights concerning the character of Yahweh, short of the revelation of God in Christ. It was through the teaching of Amos and the prophets who followed him that the Israelites were enabled to survive their national crisis and eventually become the vehicle of the coming of Christ.

A. THE AUTHOR AND HIS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Amos was the first of the literary prophets who set themselves to eliminate those pagan elements that had crept into Israel's religious and social life. He, with others, was to revive the Mosaic ideal—that Yahweh, their God, required holiness of life. The God in whose name they spoke was not only their God but the God and only God of the whole world.

As in the case of Joel, we can only glean from the internal evidence of the book concerning Amos's life. Apparently, his ministry fell into the second half of Jeroboam's reign since it followed a long period of prosperity.

While Amos lived in Judah, his prophetic message was delivered in and to Israel, though he did not exclude Judah.

The center of national life was to be found in Bethel, the royal sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom. It was the strategic place for a prophet to begin his ministry. His message would produce the most immediate and powerful effect there.

Amos disclaims the title of nabi (a professional prophet, 7:14). He designates himself as a man of lowly station (herdsman of Tekoa, 1:1) who belonged to the poorer classes and made his living by humble toil.

His call was from God. Yahweh took him from following the flock (7:14). "The Sovereign LORD has spoken—who can but prophesy?" (3:8). A burning fire shut up in his bones, compelled him to speak. He was the oracle of the Lord.

Amos was blunt, courageous, and dynamic. He held a deep resentment against the social evils of the wealthy and burned at injustice and dishonesty. He had keen insight into the deeper things of God as well as national and international relations. His tongue was like a whip to the oppressor and honey to the oppressed.



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B. THE MESSAGE OF AMOS

While it was true that Yahweh had chosen Israel to be his peculiar people, it did not mean that they had a monopoly on divine favor. God's favor was universal to those who served him. His realm tolerated no rivals. While Amos was not blind to the importance of rites and ceremonies, he recognized that true piety was of the inner spirit. Amos taught that the only hope of Israel was to be found in righteousness. The prophet then identifies religion absolutely with the moral law. To seek Yahweh is to seek the good. There is no other way of entering into fellowship with him.

Indeed, the righteousness of God might well be called Amos' pivotal teaching.

Amos was a man of intense passion who saw purpose everywhere. Purpose permeates the prophecy. His primary task was to assert the claims of the moral law as over against the unspiritual formalism and national pretension of his time. His message, therefore, was primarily one of doom, although he had hope that Israel might be saved. His chief significance lies in the thoroughness with which he moralized the conception of religion in his demand for national and personal righteousness.

Yahweh [YAH-way]
Beeri [bah-EH-ree]
Admah [ADD-ma]
Zeboiim [zeb-OY-im]
Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik]

CHAPTER 2. THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Section 2.1 Hosea's Experience and Insight (1:1 - 3:5)



NOTES

A. HOSEA'S PERSONAL LIFE (1:1 - 2:1)

God uses his people's experiences to reveal himself progressively in the Old Testament, looking forward to the fullest expression of himself in his Son, Jesus Christ. Such was the case with Hosea, through whom we begin to gain insight into God's love for mankind.

1. *Superscription (1:1)*

The prophecy begins with a most meaningful phrase, "The word of the LORD that came to Hosea..." (1:1). Yahweh was not speaking to Hosea, but through Hosea. He was speaking to others. Hosea was the son of Beerli, meaning "my will" or "the will of Yahweh". His father may well have been a priest. The time of Hosea's prophecy is indicated as having been during the reigns of "Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and ... Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel".

2. *Hosea's Marriage (1:2-3)*

The command given by the Lord to Hosea to take "an adulterous wife" (1:2) is a difficult passage. Yahweh would hardly command a holy man to do that which was expressly forbidden to Israel. Perhaps the best interpretation is to look upon Gomer as innocent at the time of her marriage. Hosea looked back upon his domestic tragedy and saw in it the overruling hand of God. Since her future infidelity was known to God, his word to Hosea to marry Gomer was in effect a command, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife" (1:2). God then used Hosea's tragic experience to reveal the sin of his chosen people and the character of the divine will, to woo them back to himself in love.

3. *The Children: Jezreel, Lo-'ruhamah, Lo-ammi (1:4-9)*

"Jezreel" means "God sows" or "God scatters," which is symbolical of the judgment to come on Israel. "Lo-ruhamah" (1:6) means "unfavored" or "she who is unfavored or unpitied." The name suggests that the child was illegitimate, born without a father's love. Symbolically, the daughter was named to show that the Lord would not long continue to show compassion towards a nation that was rebellious towards him.

The third child, a son, was named Lo-ammi (1:9). The name means "not my people" and indicates that Gomer has played the adulteress. Israel is designated "not my people," acknowledging that the covenant is to be set aside. No longer does their God belong to the people of Israel. The fulfillment of the prophecy is found in the tragic story of 2 Kings 17:18.



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4. Restoration and Renewal (1:10 - 2:1)

Hosea turns from tragedy to promise. The Lord remembers mercy. The promise in verse 10 identifies Israel's posterity as numerous as the sand of the sea. The final punishment is modified by the eternal "nevertheless" of the promises to Abraham in Genesis 22:17 and 32:12. The promise is graphically expressed in the assurance that those known as Lo-ammi (not my people) shall be called "the sons of the living God" (1:10).

The names of the prophet's children were omens of impending tragedy; however, the picture is suddenly reversed. In 1:11, the promise of the gathering together of the children of Judah and Israel is given as reassurance of God's concern for his people. The new names given by God for his people are Ammi and Ruhamah (2:1), which are the names of two of Hosea's children with the negations removed. Ammi means "my people" and Ruhamah means "loved with compassion".

B. PERSONAL TRAGEDY AND THE REDEMPTIVE LOVE OF GOD (2:2-23)

In chapter 2, the narrative is retold with candid oriental frankness, though the characters in the drama change. Yahweh appears as the injured Husband, indicting Israel as his adulterous wife. God is calling to the faithful remnant to plead his cause against the idolatry and iniquity of the land (2:2). Israel appears as the adulterous woman. The children (2:4) are included in the judgment for unfaithfulness. The shameless way in which Israel practiced idolatry (2:2) is spoken of as adultery.

The call to repentance is impressively emphasized by reference to the punishment: "Otherwise I will strip her naked, and make her as bare as on the day she was born. I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst." (2:3) The charge of idolatry under the figure of harlotry is spoken of again (2:5). Her lovers are the many Baals or false gods to which the infatuated people ran for help, when in reality the Lord was their Helper.

If "lovers" (2:7) in this context represents the idolatrous nations with their idols, the prophecy is that they will do Israel no service. God will raise difficulties (hedges and walls) to bring Israel to herself. It is implied that Israel would come to her senses and that God would receive her again into covenant relationship if she came in humility and repentance (2:7).

Because of Israel's deceitfulness, Hosea represents Yahweh as taking away the very resources he had given (2:9). "The days of Baalim" (2:13) or the days of the Baals were the sacred days which Israel was commanded to keep sanctified before the Lord but which she had turned into celebrations to and for the Baals (idols).

Once again, Yahweh will woo Israel back into the wilderness (2:14), a time of happy covenant relation—a marriage bond, in Hosea's great metaphor—the language of severity changes to a new tenderness in the promise of restoration. God will exchange "the valley of Achor for a door of hope" (2:15). Israel had sinned at Achor (Joshua 7:26), but Hosea sees a grace that would abound where sin had abounded before (see Romans 5:20).



NOTES

In verse 18, Hosea promises a future day of covenant. The animals that are dangerous to humans will hurt one another. God will destroy instruments of war and war itself. Hosea looks forward to that day when the Lord will make a marriage with Israel forever (2:19). Yahweh offers again his loving-kindness. Out of the proposed union, Israel shall "know the Lord" (2:20). This knowledge is a personal, living relationship - a communion of God with his people.

The last three verses of chapter 2 deal with the consummation of the marriage between Yahweh and Israel. God will act on behalf of his own. Lo-ruhamah (she that is unpitied) is now a favored people whom God will bless, protect, and provide for. "My people" (Ammi) will answer in the renewed covenant relationship, "You are my God" (2:23).

Chapter 2 becomes a satisfying symbolism of the covenant relation that man has with his God.

C. HOSEA'S DEALING WITH GOMER: HER REDEMPTION (3:1-5)

Hosea turns again to the personal domestic tragedy itself. Gomer has left Hosea for her lovers, yet Hosea loves her still. The autobiographical insight becomes the key to Hosea's understanding of Yahweh's compassion. If there is a disposition within the prophet's heart and soul to love a woman not worthy of his love, then there is a disposition in the prophet's Maker to love a nation that is not worthy of his love.

The prophet purchased his errant wife for a homer and a half of barley (twelve bushels, worth about fifteen pieces of silver) and fifteen pieces of silver - or a total of thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (3:2). His purchase was followed by the promise of chastity for a period of purification (3:3).

The parallel here is drawn with the sacred objects (3:4) kept from Israel. To be without a king was to be without God's representative, like a woman shut away from her husband. The Lord is represented as expecting the humble return of Israel after judgment and punishment (3:5).

Chapter 3, like chapter 1, closes with a promise of a coming Messiah, who will be as "David their king".

Section 2.2 Hosea's Prophecy and Appeal (4:1 - 13:16)

A. ISRAEL'S INFIDELITY AND ITS CAUSE (4:1 - 6:3)

Hosea leaves the interpretation of his personal tragedy in chapter 3 to deal with its implications for Israel in the balance of the prophecy. Though his insights revealed a God who loved Israel deeply and strongly, he saw the fatal nature of Israel's corruption and employed the most urgent persuasions for Israel to turn and be saved, while at the same time announcing her inescapable doom.



NOTES

1. *The Lord's Controversy with His People and Pronouncement of Sentence (4:1-19)*

The Israelites are called into a "controversy" with the Lord. Three key words reveal the nature of the condemnation of Israel: no truth, no mercy, and no *knowledge* of God. Other charges against Israel include: *swearing and lying, adultery, stealing, murder* (4:2). Even the religious leaders (priests) were wicked (4:4). The picture in verses 4-15 is a vivid description of a degenerate priesthood and a sinful people who will bring judgment from the hand of God.

A warning to Judah (4:15) is reinforced by giving a summary of Israel's backslidings (4:16-19). Israel is as difficult to manage as "a backsliding heifer" (4:16), a stubborn cow! God will no longer feed her. "Ephraim [Israel] is joined to idols: *let him alone*" (4:17). The nation's doom is certain, though not necessary.

2. *The Prophet's Warning to Priest, People, and King: An Indictment (5:1-15)*

Chapter 5 constitutes an address to the priests, people, and the royal court. The darkness deepens. Israel's conscience is dulled, her vision dimmed, her testimony destroyed, and her covenant with God broken.

Both priests and people are held accountable (5:1). *Mizpah and Tabor* were notorious centers of Baal worship. The coming disaster will also involve the Southern Kingdom: "Judah also stumbles in their sin" (5:5). Arrogance led to their downfall.

Verse 6 reveals the pathetic tragedy of the children of Israel going through the right actions of worship, but failing to discern the real importance of worship and the true Object of worship. Israel "gave birth to illegitimate children" (5:7) - an adulterous generation rather than children of the covenant.

Hosea gives a solemn warning in 5:8-9. *Gibeah* [GIB-ee-ah] and *Ramah* were on the hilltops near Benjamin's northern borders. The cornet (5:8) was made of the curved horn of a ram. The trumpet was straight, made of brass or silver, and used on solemn occasions. Bethaven [beth-EH-ven] was a notorious center of idol worship.

The balance of the chapter once again gives the reasons for the destruction of the kingdom (5:9-15). God is gone; no rescue is possible. God will withdraw until Israel acknowledges her offense and seeks his face (5:15).

3. *Challenge to Repentance and Healing (6:1-3)*

It was God who tore; it will be God who heals (6:1). The national revival shall come as the morning dawn and the early and late rains (6:3), giving blessings of the Lord because of obedience and wholehearted devotion.

The fulfillment of the promise will take place through the Messiah as shown in Psalm 62:6 and 2 Samuel 23:4.

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B. ISRAEL'S INFIDELITY AND ITS PUNISHMENT (6:4 - 10:15)

1. *God's Case against Israel (6:4 - 7:16)*

God desires "mercy, and not sacrifice; and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings" (6:6). He desires love, not ritual. Once again, Yahweh characterized Ephraim and Judah as transgressing the covenant and dealing treacherously (6:7-11).

The explanation in 7:1 is followed by listing the sins and crimes openly committed. The king was amused and entertained by the sins of the people (7:3). The age was utterly corrupt. King followed king in drunkenness, revelry, and intrigue (7:5). The figure of the baker's oven reveals how people's hearts burned with intrigue (7:4, 6). It seemed as though the very capacity for repentance was gone (7:7).

Many figures of speech are used to point out the degeneracy of the nation: (7:8-16) "a flat cake not turned over, gray hairs, silly dove without heart, wail upon their beds, a faulty bow". Israel was ridiculed in Egypt because they had magnified their own strength, only to fall before Assyria.

2. *Israel under Sentence (8:1 - 9:17)*

Chapter 8 opens with a declaration of the foe who is to execute divine judgment upon Israel. The urgency of the warning is seen in the blowing of the trumpet (8:1). The prophet plays the part of the "watchman," repeating the accusations against Israel in the face of the Assyrian invasion (Jeremiah 6:17).

Two charges are made in 8:1: Israel has broken the covenant, the original marriage agreement; and secondly, she has been disobedient. Intrigue and power politics had taken the place of divine selection of the king (8:4). The calf was characteristic of the usual idol, which is a poor substitute for the living God (8:5).

Verse 7 represents both the climax and the theme of chapter 8. The people have sown "the wind" and reaped "the whirlwind". Hosea is declaring the world to be a moral universe in which judgment must follow upon sin.

The balance of the chapter described Israel in exile, a despised vessel among the Gentiles. The "wild donkey" is a Hebrew pun showing that Israel bargained for her lovers (8:9) through intrigue. Her alliances secularized her people and broke her covenant with Yahweh. In 8:14, the sin of Israel is once again traced back to its source, for "Israel has forgotten his Maker" (8:14).

In chapter 9, Hosea follows the indictment of chapter 8 with a description of the penalty of exile, the withering away of the nation. Their food will not be sufficient (9:2). They will eat unclean things (9:3). Their badge of distinction is gone! Their sacrifices are not pleasing to God (9:4). Their sacred feasts are gone (9:5-6).



NOTES

Hosea, like Amos (Amos 7:14), had probably renounced the title of professional prophet. There so much hostility toward the true prophet that he was considered "a fool" and the "inspired man" was considered a "maniac" (9:7).

One of the great insights of the prophecy is found in 9:10: "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved." The Lord represents himself as a Traveler in the wilderness, delighted to find grapes to quench his thirst and the delicacy of the early fig so dear to most Orientals. He was delighted to choose Israel's fathers as his chosen people in Egypt. But, Israel became idolatrous, and became as abominable as the object of her love. Baal Peor was the god of the Moabites, in whose worship young maidens prostituted themselves.

The vanishing glory of Ephraim is continued in the descriptions of 9:13-14. In 9:15, Hosea reverts to speaking for God. Like a wronged husband, he would "drive them out of my house, I will no longer love them " (9:15). The threats in verses 11-12 are strengthened in 9:16 and concluded in 9:17: "they will be wanderers among the nations." The light of God, particularly the light of love, can either enlighten or blind. All the prophets taught that failure to obey and walk in the light would bring judgment, while obedience always brings blessing.

3. *Review and Appeal (10:1-15)*

Hosea has two burdens, Israel's sin and its punishment. These themes appear over and over again. In chapter 10 there is a fourfold repetition of Israel's sin in setting up unauthorized kings and the establishment of calf-worship.

The descriptive metaphor now turns to an empty vine (10:1). That is, Israel has harvested its fruit unto itself. The people were selfish.

Because of their divided loyalties, God will destroy their altars and images (10:2). Their rulers had entered into empty covenants (10:3-7). They had uttered mere words (10:4). Hosea observes that they have turned right (judgment) into a bitter plant (gall or hemlock). Verses 5-6 are graphic descriptions of the people's relationship to their idols.

After the threatening is repeated in 10:8, the prophet returns to the sin of Gibeah (10:9). This refers to Judges 21:25: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

In the zero hour of judgment, God once again offers his love if his people will prepare their hearts (10:12). God is to rain (pour out) righteousness (10:12). But, the nation was so ingrained in idolatry that the people were insensitive to their true God.

Verses 13-15 once again identify the result of their indifference, wickedness, and lies. War shall come upon the people. The king shall be destroyed. Hoshea was on the throne at the time of the invasion.



NOTES

C. THE LOVE OF GOD (11:1 - 13:16)

1. *God's Generosity (11:1-11)*

The eleventh chapter of Hosea is one of the great chapters of the Old Testament. God adds the figure of a "son" to that of a "bride". God loved Israel as a son (11:1). "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." (based on Exodus 4:22-23)

Verse 1 describes Yahweh's relationship to Israel when the nation was selected to be the covenant people. His love is expressed in the adoption of Israel as his son, which began in the deliverance from Egypt and was completed in the covenant at Sinai. When Israel went away to sacrifice unto Baalim and burn incense to graven images, this image of the son is used with great pathos (11:2-4). It was God who taught Ephraim to walk. "It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking him by the arms; but they did not know that it was I who healed them." (11:3)

In 11:4 the figure changes to *corde and bands of love* with which the farmer would guide his oxen and then take off the yoke to feed them. Likewise had the Lord guided and sustained his son by his love.

Verses 5-7 speak again of the rebellious character of Israel. So great is the Lord's love, however, that he cannot let her go. His holiness is revealed in his covenant-love. He is the kind Father who loves in the face of betrayal. Thus, in one of the great moving passages of the Bible, God reveals the pain which Israel has caused: "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? ... I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man - the Holy One among you." (11:8-9)

The Lord is like a lion calling his people from the corners of the earth (11:10). He will settle them in their inheritance. This is a day of Messianic promise.

2. *The Inexorable Exile of the Nation Because of Stubborn Rebellion (11:12 - 12:14)*

Hosea once again justifies the coming exile because of Israel's apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see] (11:12). The latter part of verse 12, referring to Judah, is also translated as: "And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One." This pictures both Judah and Israel as wayward.

In chapter 12, the lying and deceitfulness of Israel and Judah are more comprehensively described. The Lord reminds the nations who he is. In verse 5, "the LORD" God Almighty is given as his memorial name, meaning the everlasting, never-changing God.

Verses 12-14 speak of the punishment so well deserved. Ingratitude and blood-guiltiness characterized their sin.



NOTES

3. *Eventual Outcome of the Exile (13:1-16)*

The first eight verses of chapter 13 relate to the facts from which Hosea concludes that the conduct of Israel and Judah is suicidal. Their ingratitude, pride, haughtiness, and neglect of Yahweh make them chargeable with their own destruction. Israel was offended by accepting Baal as its god. The people worshipped the images made by their own hands (13:2). Israel must again learn the total claim of Yahweh: "You shalt acknowledge no God but me." (13:4)

As a lion, a leopard, and a bear are bereaved of their young ones (13:8), so the Lord will bring judgment upon them. "You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper." (13:9) Nothing will be forgotten by God. It shall be kept in store (hid) until the day of reckoning (13:12).

The judgments are compared with the birth pangs of a woman in travail (13:13). Israel is a foolish son. Verse 14 is a judgment without mercy. God has had enough. Ephraim must stand in the hall of judgment. He is spiritually dead. The Lord plans utter destruction (13:15-16). In the actual invasion, twelve years later, a horrible fate awaited the nation (13:16).

Section 2.3 Repentance, Promise of Forgiveness, and Renewal (14:1-9)

A. FINAL APPEAL TO REPENT (14:1-3)

After thirteen chapters of sin and judgment, the Lord makes one last appeal. If God were not God, the reader would be overwhelmed by the unremitting uselessness of it all. But "I am God, and not man" (11:9), and that makes the difference. "Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God" (14:1) is the prophet's call.

"Forgive all our sins." (14:2) Conversion must begin with a prayer for forgiveness of all iniquity and with simple trust in the mercy of God. The "fruit of our lips" are words issued from penitent hearts. Hosea once again points out that neither Assyria nor idols can save Israel (14:3). Israel was fatherless before becoming the "select" of God. Two of Gomer's children were fatherless unless Hosea took them through adoption. The point is obvious! The answer to the penitential prayer is found in verses 4-8.

B. PROMISE OF ULTIMATE BLESSING (14:4-8)

God replies with a promise of salvation: "I will heal their backsliding" (14:4). The promise of healing is both moral and physical (14:4). The Lord promises to love spontaneously. Verses 5-8 describe the promise given. "Dew" (14:5) is the gentle kiss of Yahweh's forgiveness that brings new hope and life to his beloved. Israel shall grow as a "lily" (14:5) with deep roots like the cedars. His branches (14:6, prosperity) shall abide as the sweet aroma of the cedars of Lebanon. *Rooting* indicates stability. *Spreading* indicates propagation, beauty, and duration.



NOTES

Verse 8 is both a promise and an appeal. The day of idolatry is over, and Israel will have nothing to do with idols anymore. God is like a "green fir tree" (14:8) where the nation shall find its strength and its sustenance. The fulfillment of the promise is in the Messianic age.

C. EPILOGUE (14:9)

The opening clause refers to everything the prophet has laid before the people in his warning prophecy (14:9). Hosea concludes with one great summary: "The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them."

Thus, everything is changed. *Lo-ruhamah* is now *Ruhamah*. *Lo-ammi* is *Ammi*. *Jezreel* is finally interpreted as one whom "God sows". Yahweh sows the land with a new seed. Yahweh now is the Healer. His anger is turned away from Israel. He will be as the dew to Israel, and they will return to dwell in the shade of Lebanon, for God has fully revealed his love.

Gibeah [GIB-ee-ah]
Bethaven [beth-EH-ven]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]

CHAPTER 3. THE BOOK OF JOEL



NOTES

Section 3.1 The Plague of Locust and the Day of the Lord (1:1 - 2:11)

A. SUPERScription (1:1)

"The word of the LORD that came to Joel" (1:1). It is the word of the Lord that was spoken to the prophet.

B. THE DEVASTATION BY THE LOCUSTS (1:2-7)

The occasion of Joel's prophecy was a terrible scourge of locusts invading the land. The view is generally held that the plague was real and not symbolic. Those who have observed the habits and destructive work of the locusts see in Joel's description an accurate picture of the occasion which the prophet uses to proclaim his burden.

The fourth verse contains a description of the locusts. Of the nine Old Testament Hebrew words used for locust, four are found in this verse:

Gazam, which means "cutting locusts";

Arbeh, "swarming locusts";

Yeleq or jelek, "hopping locusts"; and

Chasel or hasil, "destroying locusts."

These names do not represent four different species, but probably four different stages in the life of the locust. The Arabic language has a name for each of the six forms of locust life.

The locust plague of 1915 in Jerusalem is a vivid description of what must have happened in the time of Joel. The 1915 plague was a time when the sun was suddenly darkened by the myriads of locusts. Excrement covered the land, and all vegetable life was devoured, even to the bark of the trees. Even Arab babies left by their mothers in the shade of some tree had their faces devoured before their screams were heard. The local people accepted the plague as just judgment because of their wickedness. Joel interprets the calamity as the judgment of God and a call to repentance, a call that he makes to all people (1:5) in sin ("drunkards").

C. THE INVASION AS A TYPE OF THE HUMAN INVASION OF THE FUTURE (1:8-20)

A call to repentance is addressed to the whole nation. The people are called upon to mourn and lament, "Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth, grieving for the husband of her youth" (1:8). "Sackcloth" was worn as a sign of mourning.



NOTES

The meat and drink offerings (1:9) are cut off because the grain (1:10), oil, and new wine are destroyed. The priests (1:9) mourn for the house of the Lord. These are symbols of the suspension of the covenant relation - a sign that God has rejected his people. The people are commanded to "declare a holy fast and call a sacred assembly." (1:14)

In verse 15, Joel introduces the great pivotal idea, "the day of the LORD," which is a time of judgment upon Israel. That "day" shall come like the devastation of the locusts.

Verses 16-18 describe natural events that express divine displeasure. The people witnessed the calamity "before our very eyes" (1:16). The prophet observed that "the seeds are shriveled" (1:17), the storehouses are desolate, the pastureland is destroyed, and the cattle, sheep, and goats suffer because of the lack of pastureland. The first chapter closes with a cry from the prophet's heart for help from the Lord (1:19).

D. THE DAY OF THE LORD (2:1-11)

This phrase is used in the earliest of prophecies and probably was coined by Joel (see Amos 5:18; Isaiah 2:12). The visitation of the locusts first occasioned its use. This passage does not contain a new address but a renewed emphasis upon repentance in the face of Yahweh's great and terrible judgment day.

The priests are to blow the "trumpet" in alarm (2:1). "Zion" is called the "holy hill" because the Lord is in his holy of holies. It is to be a day of "darkness" and "gloom" (2:2). The description continues with the metaphor of fire (2:3) or wasteland.

The day of the Lord will be like the "visitation" of the locusts (2:4-6). It will be sudden, the destruction complete, and no one shall escape the judgment of God. The Lord is strong and able to execute the word which he has proclaimed (2:11).

Section 3.2 Joel's Call to Repentance (2:12-19)

Verses 12-19 again call for national repentance. Israel can avert judgment by sincere repentance and mourning when they return to Yahweh, their God.

A. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF REPENTANCE (2:12-15)

The nation was to turn to God with all its heart (2:12). The terms describing repentance are "weeping," "mourning," and "fasting—words of sorrow. However, the external evidence of repentance is balanced by the words, "and rend your heart and not your garments" (2:13). God's primary requirement was "a broken and a contrite heart" (see Psalm 51:17).



NOTES

B. THE SCOPE OF REPENTANCE (2:16-17)

The elders (2:16), children, babies, bride, and bridegroom (2:16) are all called to assemble before the Lord. No age or rank is excepted, and the priests are to weep (2:17) and entreat the Lord for mercy.

C. THE PROMISE OF MERCY (2:18-19)

The promise of mercy is given beautifully (2:18-19). The destruction of the locusts is promised, and the land will be blessed with grain, wine, and oil (2:19) because the Lord is "jealous for his land" (2:18) and pities his people. The irony of the heathen's question in verse 17, "Where is their God?" is answered - "never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations" (2:19).

Section 3.3 The Hope of Future Blessings (2:20-32)

A. DESTRUCTION OF THE ARMY OF LOCUSTS (2:20)

The prophet points to deliverance from human northern invaders under the image of the destruction of the locusts ("northern army", 2:20).

B. RENEWAL OF SPIRITUAL AND EARTHLY BLESSINGS (2:21-27)

The blessing of deliverance is promised to the wild animals (2:22), land, and people (2:23). The blessing of the Lord is given as a response to penitential prayers (2:27), and Yahweh is spoken of as the only true God.

C. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (2:28-32)

Verses 28-32 give the glorious promise quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost in his masterful sermon and identified as "spoken by the prophet Joel" (see Acts 2:16-21).

There was to be the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. The promise is an answer to Numbers 11:29 and is fulfilled, as previously observed, in Acts 2:16. Supernatural phenomena are to accompany the great event (2:28). The blessing of God comes to all regardless of station in life. The call of the Lord and the promise of deliverance are given to all those who repent (2:32).

Even as early as Joel, human response in faith complements divine selection. God chooses to deliver those who call on the name of the Lord.

NOTES

Section 3.4 The Day of the Lord (3:1-21)

In chapters 1 and 2, we saw the prophetic history of Israel. In the final chapter, the judgment of the Lord is upon all the earth, followed by the millennial triumph for Jerusalem and all the redeemed.

A. THE JUDGMENT UPON UNBELIEVERS (3:1-17)

God will bring judgment on behalf of Israel upon the nations which have divided the land (3:2). To the Philistines [FI-luh-steenz] and Phoenicians [fe-NESH-ans] – the inhabitants of the coasts of Palestine [PAL-us-tien] - Tyre and Sidon, there is the promise to "turn on your heads what you have done" (3:4). There were serious reasons for divine justice. The pagan nations had taken the Temple treasures (3:5), and the Lord's people (3:6) were sold into slavery.

God now calls the nations to meet in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The God of Israel is the Adversary of the heathen. His command to the Gentiles is the reverse of Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3: "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears" (3:10). The call to the valley of judgment is one of doom to the enemies of God.

The judgment of the multitude in the valley of decision will be accompanied by the national phenomena previously mentioned in Joel 2:31 (3:15).

While God's voice will roar out like a lion in judgment against the heathen, he is still the Hope of his people (3:16). God's judgment upon wickedness will help the Israelites know that he is the Lord, their God (3:17).

B. THE MILLENNIAL TRIUMPH FOR JERUSALEM AND THE REDEEMED (3:18-21)

With the exception of verse 19, judgment is broken off, and the millennial vision forms the conclusion of the prophecy. The glorious future of God's people is now described. "The mountains will drip new wine." (3:18; see Amos 9:13), and the dry streams in the valley of acacias will be replenished as a fountain flows from the LORD's house. "Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations" (3:20). Israel had been the battleground of all the great nations. Still, now Yahweh was promising perpetual peace in Jerusalem, the glorious city of God.

Verse 21 brings together blessing and judgment, thus summarizing the entire prophecy. It affirms, "Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon." The judgment will involve nations that have oppressed the people of God. The blessing will be the presence of the Lord, abiding among his own—"The LORD dwells in Zion!"

Philistines [FI-luh-steenz]
Phoenicians [fe-NESH-ans]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]

CHAPTER 4. THE BOOK OF AMOS



NOTES

Section 4.1 The Approaching Judgment (1:1 - 2:16)

The prophecy of Amos falls into three parts: the message of judgment spoken so skillfully against the non-Hebrew, the Judean, and the Israelite. The Israelite would listen with satisfaction while his neighbor's faults were pointed out, but would be surprised to learn that he was measured by the same standard applied to the others.

A. SUPERScription AND THEME (1:1-2)

Amos identifies himself as the herdsman of Tekoa (1:1), and a caretaker "of sycamore-fig trees" (7:14). He was active sometime before the death of Jeroboam 2 of Israel in 746 B.C. The superscription recognizes that it is God who is speaking through the prophet.

B. ORACLES AGAINST NEIGHBORING NATIONS (1:3 - 2:3)

This section brings the applause of the people only to prepare them for the deep thrust that follows. Damascus (1:3-5), the capital city of the Syrian kingdom, with which Israel was at war, was the first object of prophecy. The measure of its iniquity was full, overflowing, and beyond measure. Three, the perfect number, is followed by four, which indicates a larger number of crimes in their worst form (1:3).

The prophet hears the crack of flames (1:4) and the breaking of fortifications (bars) and sees the massacre of the inhabitants (1:5) as the final tragedy to be inflicted by Tiglath-pileser of Assyria (2 Kings 16:9).

The second nation marked for destruction was Philistia, with Gaza used as a symbol of the whole nation. The specific charge against the Philistines is that they sold an entire nation into the bondage of the Edomites [EE-duh-myts] (1:6).

The third nation that comes under the eye of God is Tyre (1:9-10), because they delivered the Israelites to Edom, remembering not the "brotherly covenant." Tyre, situated northwest of Judea on the Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un] Sea, is to be utterly destroyed.

Amos condemns Edom's hatred of Israel, its lack of piety (1:11), and its perpetual wrath. Its judgment is to be by fire (1:12). Bozrah was situated south of the Dead Sea. Ternan was probably a district. Both symbolized the whole of Edom.

Ammon (1:13-15), the fifth nation under judgment, lay across Jordan [JOHR-dihn] east of Gilead [GI-lee-uhd]. It was charged with a series of cruelties against Israel (1:13). The nation was to perish by fire (1:14).



NOTES

Moab was situated between Edom and Ammon. The specific charge was the crime of burning the bones of the king of Edom (2:1).

The prophecies following 1:6 and Ezekiel 25 were all fulfilled in the Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn] invasions of a later date. Through these prophecies, Amos affirms that Yahweh is Sovereign over all nations of the earth. While Amos said nothing new, he spoke with a disturbing accent.

C. ORACLES AGAINST JUDAH (2:4-5)

Amos turns from the neighboring nations to Judah. This is the second step of the prophet's final thrust against Israel. He condemns the rejection of "the commandments" of God (2:4). Nebuchadnezzar carried out the punishment in 586 B.C. by destroying Jerusalem.

D. ORACLES AGAINST ISRAEL (2:6-16)

Amos finally turns to Israel. One can imagine the chagrin of the people in the marketplace. Their hostility is plain. Judgment upon Israel is given in the same language and is just as irrevocable.

1. *The Rebellion of Israel (2:6-8)*

The Israelites had profited from slavery (2:6). The rich showed callous disregard for the poor and profaned the Lord's name by entering into gross immorality (2:7). They had committed acts of immorality within the house of the Lord, their God (2:8).

2. *The Revelation of God (2:9-12)*

Privilege brings corresponding responsibility. Since Yahweh has favored Israel, he will hold them responsible for their sins. In the face of divine providence (2:9-11) and against divine law (2:12), the Israelites sinned against Yahweh.

3. *The Anticipated Judgment (2:13-16)*

God then points out that no one shall escape. Israel is to feel the grinding pressure of the heavily laden cart. Try as he might, Israel cannot flee destruction. "Naked" suggests the utter helplessness of a person stripped of the resources on which one has counted (2:16).

Section 4.2 Sermons on Israel's Coming Judgment (3:1 - 6:14)

In the second section of the prophecy, Amos particularizes the charges made in the first two chapters and emphasizes the finality with which he speaks of judgment to come. The sermons begin with "Hear this word" (3:1; 4:1; 5:1), identifying the prophet and the source of his utterances.



NOTES

A. ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD (3:1-8)

He who is Almighty and Creator chose to humble himself through love and become one with Israel. It is through this people that God deigns to work out his redemptive plan for all mankind.

1. Election (3:1-2)

Since Israel is especially chosen, she bears a unique responsibility. The judgment of God must lie heavier on Israel because of her selection (3:1-2).

2. The Authority of the Prophet (3:3-8)

Despite Israel's selection, she is rebellious and arrogant. The nation will not hear the prophet (see 2:4; 7:10-13). Amos then establishes his right and duty to prophesy from a series of descriptions drawn from life itself (3:3-6). Amos vindicates his call: "The lion has roared - who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken, who can but prophesy?" (3:8) Amos can do nothing but prophesy.

B. SAMARIA'S SINFULNESS (3:9 - 4:3)

1. The Sin of Oppression (3:9-10)

God will use Ashdod and Egypt as instruments of judgment (3:9) upon Israel. "They do not know how to do right" (3:10) carries pathos as well as condemnation.

2. The Destruction to Come (3:11-12)

The enemy shall destroy both fortifications and beautiful buildings (3:11). Only a few will escape (3:12) from the sword, for Samaria is to be utterly destroyed.

3. Bethel's Fate (3:13-15)

The punishment is extended to the altars of Bethel (3:14). The fulfillment of the prophecy took place when Shalmanezar [SHAL-man-ez-er] of Assyria took Samaria (2 Kings 17:5-6).

4. The Greed of Selfish Women (4:1-3)

The sins of urban society are represented in the sleek, sophisticated ladies likened to the "cows of Bashan" (4:1). Amos accuses the women of pressuring their husbands for riches, who oppress the people to give their wives their desires. Verses 2-3 identify the judgment to be meted out because of the women's debauchery. The seriousness of the evil is indicated by the solemn oath which begins in verse 2, "The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness." The Holy One cannot tolerate the unrighteousness of the rich against the poor.



NOTES

C. THE DEPTH OF ISRAEL'S GUILT (4:4 - 5:3)

The prophecy now turns to all the nations. The irony is apparent. Carry on with your doings, knowing full well what you are doing and what it inevitably means! Even Bethel is used for idol worship (4:4-5). Five times in 4:6-11, Amos represents the Lord as saying, "...yet you have not returned to me..." (4:6-11). The phrase depicts the continuing love of God in the face of indifference. Amos enumerates a series of judgments through which the Lord endeavors to awaken the people from their deceit. The punishments are progressive in their severity. The Lord repeats his determination to chasten in the absence of national and personal repentance: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel." (4:12)

God is depicted in the glory of his majesty. He is the "LORD God Almighty" (4:13), a sovereign God. Israel is pictured as a fallen virgin (5:2). There is finality in the prophet's words, "never to rise again".

D. EXHORTATION AND CONDEMNATION (5:4-15)

1. *True Religion (5:4-6)*

Amos identifies true religion with righteousness (moral law). When the nation seeks Yahweh, it seeks what is good. "Seek me and live." (5:4) The prophet points out that rites and ceremonies are of slight value unaccompanied by righteousness. It condemns the evil represented in the shrines at Gilgal, Bethel, and Beersheba (5:5). Bethel will be destroyed, with fire becoming the instrument of judgment (5:6).

2. *The Sins of the Wealthy and a Second Doxology (5:7-13)*

The burden against social injustice practiced by the wealthy is detailed in 5:11-13. Punishment is to be meted out to the oppressor.

3. *The Penitent Spirit (5:14-15)*

Though swift judgment shall overtake Israel, nevertheless a sincere repentance will result for the remnant (5:15). The condition is observed in God's oft-recurring plea, "Seek good, not evil, that you may live." (5:14). The fulfillment of the judgment took place when northern Israel was reduced to a remnant in 734-31 B.C. by Tiglath-pileser of Assyria.

E. THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD (5:16-25)

The passage begins with a lamentation (5:16-17): "There will be wailing." Amos makes very clear that Israel's selection as a chosen nation does not free it from judgment for sin (5:18). "The day of the LORD" is not a day of privilege but of judgment ("darkness," 5:18-20).



NOTES

In 5:21-25, the Lord repudiates feast and ceremony again: "I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand assemblies." (5:21) Since the covenant is broken, the Lord takes no pleasure in their worship.

F. INEXORABLE INVASION AND EXILE (5:26 - 6:14)

Because of gross apostasy, the nation will be taken beyond Damascus. This punishment is more certain because of the self-sufficiency of Israel's leaders concerning their covenant relation to the Lord. The rich forgot life's simple pieties and disciplines in their flamboyant display of riches. They "do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph" (6:6); therefore, the wealthy shall be the first of the captives (6:7).

The Lord again swears by himself that he will "deliver up the city" because of the "pride of Jacob". The nation has depended upon its own self-sufficiency rather than on its God.

Section 4.3 Amos' Visions and an Epilogue (7:1 - 9:15)

A. HIS VISIONS (7:1-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4)

The account of the visions of Amos is found in chapters 7-9. The first is found in 7:1-3, and the second in 7:4-6. The third and fourth visions are described in 7:7-9 and 8:1-3. The fifth vision (9:1-4) is decidedly different.

1. *Locusts* (7:1-3)

The vision sees the judgment of famine (7:2) resulting from the plague of the locusts. Amos speaks for God and assures the nation (7:3) that the threat will be avoided.

2. *Fire* (7:4-6)

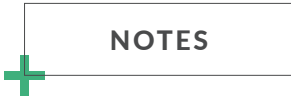
The devouring fire (7:4) represents the second judgment. Again, Amos intercedes and the Lord repents (7:6).

3. *Plumb Line* (7:7-9)

The form changes to a question put to Amos, "What do you see?" (7:8). The Lord and Amos survey a sagging wall without intercession. The wall was not of God but of humans! If the wall buckles, there is no appeal. Amos stands before the judgment of God. There was nothing to say. Verse 9 describes the judgment to come.

4. *Basket of Summer Fruit* (8:1-3)

The message of the fourth vision confirms the first three. The basket points to a nation ripe for judgment. "The time is ripe for my people." (8:2)



5. *The Lord Standing upon the Altar (9:1-4)*

The fifth vision (9:1-4) views the "Lord standing by the altar" (9:1) with the final word: "Strike." The finality of judgment is given before the whole nation.

B. THE CONFLICT WITH AMAZIAH (7:10-17)

Amaziah (the priest of Bethel) resents the announcement of judgment against the king and the priest. He responds by informing Jeroboam 2 of Amos' supposed conspiracy and says, "The land cannot bear all his words." (7:10) The dramatic confrontation between priest and prophet (7:11-17) represents the debate between state and Church, institution and vocation.

The dramatic scene continues with Amaziah charging Amos with treason and appealing to him to leave (7:13). Amos replies that he is no professional prophet (nabi), but a herdsman; and dramatically prophesies against Amaziah, and his family; against Bethel, and the nation (7:16-17).

C. THE SINS OF THE NATION AND THE JUDGMENT TO COME (8:4-14)

God once again speaks of the oppression of the poor and observes that his anger is shared by nature herself through earthquakes, darkness, and mourning. Verses 11-14 point out the famine and thirst that will arise for God's words.

D. THE INEXORABLE JUDGMENT (9:5-7)

The majesty and power of God are lifted up (9:5-6). There is no other God. All others so named are false. While Amos insisted it was Yahweh who had redeemed Israel from Egypt, he was equally insistent that God dealt with and used the heathen nations to accomplish his purposes. He even places the Ethiopians on a similar plane as the children of Israel (9:7). This completely undercuts Israel's carnal security in reliance upon its standing as the chosen people.

The famous seventh verse climaxes Amos' teachings on the universality of God.

E. EPILOGUE (9:8-15)

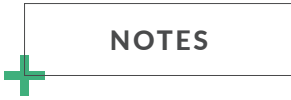
In 9:8, the distinction is made between the evil nation and the faithful persons who will make up the righteous remnant. The prophecy closes with the promise of restoring the faithful remnant and establishing the kingdom of God. The rule of "David" (9:11) is the rule of the Messiah.

The faithful remnant shall enjoy the blessings of continuing peace and prosperity (9:11-14), for out of prophetic judgment comes prophetic hope (9:15). It is in this confidence that we leave Amos of Tekoa. The passing days only authenticated his word! The coming days will only validate his promises!



NOTES

Edomites [EE-duh-myts]
Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Gilead [GI-lee-uhd]
Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn]
Shalmanezzer [SHAL-man-ez-er]



The Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos Study Questions

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF HOSEA, JOEL, AND AMOS

Section 1.1 Introduction to Hosea

1. Who is the earliest prophet who interpreted the work of Yahweh in terms of love?
 - A. Hosea
 - B. Joel
 - C. Amos
 - D. Daniel

2. Who was Israel's first prophet of grace, its first evangelist?
 - A. Hosea
 - B. Joel
 - C. Amos
 - D. Daniel

3. What is true of the purpose of Hosea?
 - A. to convince his countrymen of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, of the need for repentance
 - B. to convince his countrymen of the need to reestablish the covenant relation
 - C. to convince his countrymen of the need for dependence on a forgiving God
 - D. all of these are true

4. Who is called the St. John of the Old Testament?
 - A. Hosea
 - B. Joel
 - C. Amos
 - D. Daniel

5. Hosea was not one of the persecuted prophets.
 - A. true
 - B. false

6. The word of the Lord came unto Hosea during the reign of which kings?
 - A. Uzziah and Jotham
 - B. Ahaz and Hezekiah
 - C. Jereboam son of Joash
 - D. all of these

7. How many years did Hosea prophesy?
 - A. 10
 - B. 20
 - C. 30



NOTES

8. Hosea was a contemporary with which other prophets?
- A. Amos and Isaiah
 - B. Amos and Micah
 - C. Amos and Obadiah
 - D. all of these
9. The time of Hosea was a period of ____ ?
- A. crime
 - B. corruption
 - C. immorality
 - D. all of these
10. Hosea's whole interpretation of Israel's history centers around the ideas of divine love and knowledge of God.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 1.2 Introduction to Joel

11. The name Joel means ____ ?
- A. Friend of God
 - B. Yahweh is God
 - C. Servant of God
 - D. God of Justice
12. Besides being a prophet, Joel may also have been a _____?
- A. teacher
 - B. prince
 - C. priest
 - D. statesman
13. Joel prophesied during a time of national crisis and panic in the face of the ravages of an unparalleled plague of _____ ?
- A. flies
 - B. locusts
 - C. gnats
 - D. birds
14. Joel either quotes from or is quoted by several other prophets.
- A. true
 - B. false



NOTES

15. The teaching of Joel centers around _____ ?
- A. the day of the Lord
 - B. the end times
 - C. new beginnings
 - D. eternal life
16. A second principal teaching in Joel is _____ ?
- A. the end times
 - B. new beginnings
 - C. an outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - D. life everlasting
17. In Numbers 11:29, Moses desired that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.
- A. true
 - B. false
18. The Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the fulfillment of which prophecy of Joel?
- A. the end times
 - B. new beginnings
 - C. an outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - D. life everlasting
19. Because of Joel's emphasis upon the externals of religion, he has sometimes been accused of neglecting _____ ?
- A. the lesser matters of the law
 - B. the weightier matters of the law
 - C. the lesser matters of grace
 - D. the lesser matters of love
20. Joel's most meaningful contribution is the promise of defeating all of God's enemies.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 1.3 Introduction to Amos

21. Amos prophesied in the first half of which century B.C.?
- A. second
 - B. fourth
 - C. sixth
 - D. eighth



NOTES

22. Did Amos' teaching bring the people of Israel to the deepest insights concerning the character of Yahweh, short of the revelation of God in ____?
- A. John the Baptist
 - B. the Apostle John
 - C. Christ
 - D. the Apostle Paul
23. Amos was the last of the literary prophets who set themselves to eliminate those pagan elements which had crept into Israel's religious and social life.
- A. true
 - B. false
24. The teaching of Amos and the prophets who followed him enabled the Israelites to survive their national crisis.
- A. true
 - B. false
25. Amos was able to help revive the Mosaic ideal that Yahweh, their God, required holiness of life.
- A. true
 - B. false
26. While Amos lived in the Northern Kingdom, his prophetic message was delivered in and primarily to Judah.
- A. true
 - B. false
27. Bethel was the strategic place for Amos to begin his ministry.
- A. true
 - B. false
28. Amos disclaimed the title of "nabi" (a professional prophet).
- A. true
 - B. false
29. Since Yahweh had chosen Israel to be his peculiar people, it meant that they had a monopoly on divine favor.
- A. true
 - B. false
30. Amos' primary task was to assert the claims of the moral law against the unspiritual formalism and national pretension of his time.
- A. true
 - B. false



Chapter 2. THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Section 2.1 Hosea's Experience and Insight (1:1 - 3:5)

31. God uses the experiences of his people to reveal himself progressively in the Old Testament.
- A. true
 - B. false
32. According to 1:1, Yahweh was not speaking through Hosea, but to Hosea.
- A. true
 - B. false
33. What is true of God's command for Hosea to take "an adulterous wife"?
- A. The best interpretation is to look upon Gomer as innocent at the time of her marriage.
 - B. Hosea looked back upon his domestic tragedy and saw in it the overruling hand of God.
 - C. God used Hosea's tragic experience to reveal the sin of his chosen people.
 - D. all of these are true
34. What does the name of Hosea's child, "Jezreel," mean?
- A. not my people
 - B. unfavored
 - C. God sows
 - D. God loves
35. What is the meaning of the name of Hosea's child, "Lo-ruhamah"?
- A. not my people
 - B. unfavored
 - C. God sows
 - D. God loves
36. What is the meaning of the name of Hosea's child, "Lo-ammi"?
- A. not my people
 - B. unfavored
 - C. God sows
 - D. God loves
37. When Hosea's domestic failure is used to illustrate Israel's relationship to God, Israel appears as the adulterous woman.
- A. true
 - B. false



NOTES

38. When Hosea's domestic failure is used to illustrate Israel's relationship to God, God appears as the pleased husband.

- A. true
- B. false

Section 2.2 Hosea's Prophecy and Appeal (4:1 - 13:16)

39. How does Hosea express the nature of the condemnation of Israel in chapter 4?

- A. no truth
- B. no mercy
- C. no knowledge of God
- D. all of these

40. What does Hosea compare the degeneracy of the nation to in Chapter 7?

- A. a flat cake
- B. gray hairs
- C. a silly dove without a heart
- D. all of these

Section 2.3 Repentance, Promise of Forgiveness, and Renewal (14:1-9)

41. After God brings salvation to Israel, what is their name "Lo-ruhamah" changed to?

- A. not my people
- B. God sows
- C. Ruhamah "favored"
- D. God loves

42. After God brings salvation to Israel, what is their name "Lo-ammi" changed to?

- A. unfavored
- B. God sows
- C. God loves
- D. Ammi "my people"

Chapter 3. THE BOOK OF JOEL

Section 3.1 The Plague of Locust and the Day of the Lord (1:1 - 2:11)

43. The occasion of Joel's prophecy was a terrible scourge of locusts invading the land.

- A. true
- B. false



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44. Of the nine Old Testament Hebrew words used for locust, Joel 1:4 uses ___ ?

- A. Gazam, which means "cutting locusts"
- B. Arbeh, "swarming locusts"
- C. Yeleq or jelek, "hopping locusts"
- D. all of these

45. What is true of the day of the Lord in Chapter 2?

- A. This phrase is in use in the earliest of prophecies and probably was coined by Joel.
- B. It is to be a day of "darkness" and "gloom".
- C. It is described using the metaphor of fire and wasteland.
- D. all of these are true

Section 3.2 Joel's Call to Repentance (2:12-19)

46. Joel affirmed that Israel could avert judgment by a sincere return to Yahweh, their God, in repentance and mourning.

- A. true
- B. false

47. Joel balanced the internal and external evidence of repentance by telling them, " Rend your heart and not your garments."

- A. true
- B. false

48. What is God's response in chapter 2 to the heathen nations' question: "Where is their God?"

- A. My people have gone far away.
- B. I am who I am.
- C. Never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.
- D. I have allowed your sins to destroy you.

Section 3.3 The Hope of Future Blessings (2:20-32)

49. Which passage in Joel is the glorious promise quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost?

- A. 1:1-5
- B. 1:28-32
- C. 2:28-32
- D. 3:1-5

50. What promise in answer to Numbers 11:29 is fulfilled in Acts 2:16?

- A. the return of exiles to Jerusalem
- B. the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh
- C. the giving of tithes and offerings at the temple
- D. the reading of the Torah at the temple

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Section 3.4 The Day of the Lord (3:1-21)

51. What is true of God's judgment upon unbelievers in chapter 3?
- A. God will bring judgment on behalf of Israel upon the nations that have divided the land.
 - B. There is the promise to "turn on your heads what you have done".
 - C. The Adversary of the heathen is the God of Israel.
 - D. all of these are true
52. The judgment of God upon wickedness will help the Israelites to know that he is the Lord, their God.
- A. True
 - B. False

Chapter 4. THE BOOK OF AMOS

Section 4.1 The Approaching Judgment (1:1 - 2:16)

53. The prophecy of Amos falls into 4 parts, the message of judgment spoken so skillfully against the Romans, the Greeks, the Judeans, and the Israelites.
- A. true
 - B. false
54. What is true of the prophet Amos?
- A. He identifies himself as the herdsman of Tekoa.
 - B. He was a caretaker of sycamore-fig trees.
 - C. He was active sometime before the death of Jeroboam 2 of Israel in 746 B.C.
 - D. all of these are true
55. What is true of Amos' oracles against neighboring nations?
- A. Damascus - with which Israel was at war - was the first object of Amos' prophecy.
 - B. The second nation marked for destruction was Philistia because they sold an entire nation into the bondage of the Edomites.
 - C. The third nation that comes under the eye of God is Tyre because they delivered the Israelites to Edom.
 - D. all of these are true
56. What is not true of Amos' oracles against neighboring nations in chapters 1 and 2?
- A. Amos condemns Edom's hatred of Israel.
 - B. Ammon was charged with a series of cruelties against Israel.
 - C. Egypt's charge was enslaving the Israelites.
 - D. Moab's specific charge was the crime of burning the bones of the king of Edom.



NOTES

57. What is true of Amos' oracle against Judah in chapter 2?
- A. He condemns Judah for its alliance with Edom.
 - B. He condemns Judah for its alliance with Assyria.
 - C. He condemns Judah for its rejection of the commandments of God.
 - D. He condemns Judah for its alliance with Babylon.
58. What is true of Amos' oracle against Israel in chapter 2?
- A. The Israelites had profited from slavery.
 - B. The Israelites had profaned the Lord's name by entering into gross immorality.
 - C. The rich Israelites showed callous disregard for the poor.
 - D. all of these are true
59. Privilege brings corresponding responsibility. Since Yahweh has favored Israel, he will hold them responsible for their sins.
- A. True
 - B. False

Section 4.2 Sermons on Israel's Coming Judgment (3:1 - 6:14)

60. In the second section of the prophecy, Amos particularizes the charges made in the first two chapters and emphasizes the finality with which he speaks of judgment to come.
- A. true
 - B. false
61. What is true of Israel's relationship to God in chapter 3?
- A. Through the people of Israel, God deigns to work out his redemptive plan for all mankind.
 - B. He who is Almighty and Creator chose to humble himself through love and become one with Israel.
 - C. Since Israel is especially chosen, she bears a unique responsibility.
 - D. all of these are true
62. What is true of the authority of the prophet in chapter 3?
- A. Israel is rebellious and arrogant, and will not hear the prophet.
 - B. Amos then establishes his right and duty to prophesy with a series of letters.
 - C. Amos vindicates his call: "The bear has roared – who will not fear?"
 - D. Amos insists: "I have spoken clearly – you must listen carefully."
63. What is true of Samaria's sinfulness in chapters 3 and 4?
- A. "They do not know how to do right" (3:10) carries pathos as well a condemnation.
 - B. Only a few will escape from the sword, for Samaria is to be utterly destroyed.
 - C. The sins of urban society are represented in the sleek, sophisticated ladies who are likened to the "cows of Bashan".
 - D. all of these are true



NOTES

64. What is true of the depth of Israel's guilt in chapters 4 and 5?
- A. Israel knew full well what they were doing and what it inevitably meant.
 - B. Only Bethel was used for true Yahweh worship.
 - C. There was much personal repentance.
 - D. There was much national repentance.
65. In chapter 5, Amos identifies true religion with righteousness (moral law).
- A. true
 - B. false
66. Amos affirmed that when the nation seeks Yahweh, it seeks what is good.
- A. true
 - B. false
67. Though swift judgment shall overtake Israel, a sincere repentance will result for the ____?
- A. poorest people
 - B. richest people
 - C. royal people
 - D. remnant people
68. In Chapter 5, Amos makes it very clear that Israel's selection as a chosen nation frees it from judgment for sin.
- A. True
 - B. False
69. Even though the covenant is broken, the Lord takes great pleasure in their worship.
- A. True
 - B. False
70. Because of Israel's gross apostasy, the nation will be taken to Egypt.
- A. True
 - B. False

Section 4.3 Amos' Visions and an Epilogue (7:1 - 9:15)

71. What is true of Amos' vision in 7:1-3?
- A. The vision sees the judgment of famine.
 - B. Judgment coming from a plague of locusts.
 - C. Amos speaks for God and assures the nation that the threat will be avoided.
 - D. all of these are true



NOTES

72. What is true of Amos' vision in 7:4-6?
- A. It is about a devouring fire.
 - B. It is about a raging river.
 - C. It is about a brilliant light.
 - D. It is about a fine gold.
73. What is true of Amos' vision in 7:7-9?
- A. It is about a plumb line.
 - B. It comes in the form of a question to Amos.
 - C. The Lord and Amos survey a sagging wall.
 - D. all of these are true
74. What is true of Amos' vision in 8:1-3?
- A. The basket points to the nation ripe for judgment.
 - B. It confirms the first three visions.
 - C. It is about a basket of summer fruit.
 - D. all of these are true
75. Amos' vision of the Lord standing upon the Altar in Chapter 9 indicates the finality of God's judgment on Israel.
- A. true
 - B. false



NOTES

Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Examine the authorship of the Book of Hosea.
2. Examine the authorship of the Book of Joel.
3. Examine the authorship of the Book of Amos.
4. Compare the kings mentioned in the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos with those in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.
5. Examine the use of symbolism in the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos.
6. Contrast Hosea, Joel, and Amos with the professional prophets.

Allow God to examine your concept of prophecy as you study the Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos!



NOTES

Pronunciation Guide

Admah [ADD-ma]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Beeri [bah-EH-ree]
Bethaven [beth-EH-ven]
Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn]
Edomites [EE-duh-myts]
Gibeah [GIB-ee-ah]
Gilead [GI-lee-uhd]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un]
Messianic [mes-ee-AN-ik]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Philistines [FI-luh-steenz]
Phoenicians [fe-NESH-ans]
Shalmanezzer [SHAL-man-ez-er]
Yahweh [YAH-way]
Zeboiim [zeb-OY-im]