

Hosea and Joel

STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

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Minor Prophets: Hosea and Joel

West End Church (Oct. – Dec. 2022)

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The Minor Prophets

This phrase is used to describe 12 books in a section of scripture that is generally shorter in length than the Major Prophets. It is important to note that the books of the Old Testament are arranged by category and not necessarily in chronological order.

1. **Law** (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
2. **History** (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
3. **Poetry and Wisdom** (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
4. **Major Prophets** (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
5. **Minor Prophets** (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Thus, for instance, some books of Poetry and Wisdom (Psalms to Song of Solomon) deal with events found in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings even though they are placed well after those books in sequence. The same is true with the literary prophets (those who wrote out their prophecies). While their writings addressed times and events referenced in 1-2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, these prophets are listed in a much later category in the Bible and are not even placed chronologically in their category. The key is to link the events of each prophet with the corresponding kings and nations mentioned in the book. If we were to list each of the prophets by approximate dates, we would reference them as follows (all in dates of BC):

- A. **Pre-Captivity:** Joel (830?), Obadiah? Jonah (780), Amos (760-750), Hosea (750-725), Isaiah (740-690), Micah (735-700)
- B. **Captivity:** Zephaniah (630-625), Nahum (630-612), Habakkuk (612-606), Jeremiah (627-586), Daniel (606-536), Ezekiel (592-570), Lamentations (586)
- C. **Post-Captivity:** Haggai (520), Zechariah (520-518), Malachi (445-432)

For better or worse, we decided to begin this series by teaching the books in the same order they are given in the Bible, which should help us learn how to decipher each book on its own.

The Literary Prophets of the Old Testament

MINOR (in length)

MAJOR (in length)

930-722 BC DIVIDED KINGDOM

- Israel forms Northern Kingdom with ten tribes in 930 BC (1 Kings 12:20).
- Israel is taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:6).

Joel

Jonah

Hosea

Amos

Isaiah

Micah

722-606 BC PERIOD BETWEEN CAPTIVITIES

- Assyria is defeated by the Babylonians in 612 BC.
- Judah is taken captive by Babylon in 606, 597, 586 BC (2 Kings 24-25).

Obadiah

Nahum

Zephaniah

Jeremiah

Habakkuk

Lamentations

606-536 BC EXILED NATION

- Babylon is defeated by Cyrus of Medo-Persia in 536 BC.

Ezekiel

Daniel

536-432 BC RESTORATION

- Cyrus of Persia orders reconstruction of Temple in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:22-23).
- Artaxerxes of Persia permits a return to Jerusalem for worship (Ezra 7:12-13).
- Artaxerxes of Persia orders reconstruction of Jerusalem wall (Neh. 2:1-10).

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

To Whom the Prophets Were Sent

(Approximate dates of work)

During the DIVIDED KINGDOM (930-722 BC)

Sent to Ninevah

Jonah (790-780)

Sent to Israel

Amos (760-750)

Hosea (750-725)

Sent to Judah

Joel (830?)

Isaiah (740-690)

Micah (735-700)

During the PERIOD BETWEEN CAPTIVITIES (722-606 BC)

Sent to Edom

Obadiah (?)

Sent to Ninevah

Nahum (630-612)

Sent to Judah

Zephaniah (630-625)

Jeremiah (627-586)

Habakkuk (612-606)

Key Events:

- 722 Fall of Israel to Assyria
- 606 First exiles of Judah to Babylon
- 597 Second group to Babylon
- 586 Third group to Babylon
 - Jerusalem Destroyed
 - Temple Destroyed
- 536 1st remnant returns with Zerubbabel
 - Begin rebuilding Temple
- 516 Temple rebuilt
- 457 2nd remnant returns with Ezra
- 444 3rd remnant returns with Nehemiah
 - Wall rebuilt

During the YEARS IN EXILE (605-536 BC)

Among the Captives in Babylon

Daniel (606-536)

Ezekiel (592-570)

Lamentations (586)

During the PERIOD OF RESTORATION (536-432 BC)

First Remnant returns with Zerubbabel (*Ezra 1-6*)

Haggai (520)

Zechariah (520-518)

Second Remnant returns with Ezra (*Ezra 6-12*)

Third Remnant returns with Nehemiah

Malachi (445-432)

Background to Hosea

- A. The northern kingdom of Israel became independent in 930 BC (1 Kings 12:16-21).
 - 1. They were soon led away from the Law of Moses through the influence of their first king: Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33).
 - 2. The people eventually followed other kings in practicing idolatry (16:25-34).
 - 3. The Assyrian Empire was gaining power in the world and would eventually take Israel captive in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:5-18) – roughly 30 years from when Hosea began prophesying to them (Hosea 1:1).
- B. Israel was referred to as Ephraim (at least 30 times by Hosea) because of its size as the largest tribe in the northern kingdom and as the region of its capital.
- C. Hosea meant “salvation, deliverance, or help.” It was the same name shared by Moses’ great successor before his name was changed to Joshua (Num. 13:8, 16).

Understanding the Book (from Hoyt Houchen’s, “What is in the Book?”)

- A. Hosea’s Message
 - 1. The righteousness of Jehovah: God is love (Hos. 2:19).
 - 2. The doom of Israel—he warned of the impending divine judgment (1:4).
- B. Some Predictions
 - 1. The downfall of Samaria (5:5-7)
 - 2. The deliverance of Judah (1:7; see 2 Kings 19:35)
 - 3. The punishment of Judah and her cities (Hos. 5:10; 8:14)
- C. Steps in Israel’s National Downfall
 - 1. Lack of knowledge (4:6)
 - 2. Pride (5:5)
 - 3. Instability (6:4)
 - 4. Worldliness (7:8)
 - 5. Corruption (9:9)
 - 6. Backbiting (11:2)
 - 7. Idolatry (13:2)
- D. Outline of the book
 - 1. Israel’s adultery (Hos. 1-3)
 - 2. The prophetic discourses: Israel’s sins (ch. 4-8), Israel’s approaching punishment (ch. 9-11), Israel is entreated to repent and return to Jehovah (ch. 12-14).

Kings Reigning During Hosea's work

Reference: 2 Kings

JUDAH

Uzziah (52 yrs., 15:1-4)

Jotham (16 yrs., 15:32-33)

Ahaz (16 yrs., 16:1-2)

Hezekiah (29 yrs., 18:1-2)

6th year (18:10-11)

ISRAEL

Jeroboam II (41 yrs., 14:23-25)

Zechariah (6 mos., 15:8)

Shallum (1 m., 15:13)

Menahim (10 yrs., 15:17)

Pekahiah (2 yrs., 15:23)

Pekah (20 yrs., 15:27)

Hoshea (9 yrs., 17:1)

Assyrian Captivity, 722 BC (17:6)

Hosea 1:1 "The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, 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."

It is obvious that Hosea prophesied in parts of the reigns of the kings of Israel that followed Jeroboam II even though they are not listed in this verse. There is no other way for him to have worked in the days of the kings of Judah (listed) without doing so. However, since he gave no record of the Israelites being taken into Assyrian Captivity, he most likely ended his work before that event.

"Briefly we may say that, though there is uncertainty as to the precise dates of the beginning and end of his activity, he began his work before the middle of the 8th cent., and that he saw the rise and fall of several kings. He would thus be a younger contemporary of Amos whose activity seems to have been confined to the reign of Jeroboam." (*The International Bible Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 1425)

"The date for Hosea's prophecy is probably from 750-725 BC. This time period is derived from the kings listed in 1:1. If he began his ministry in the last days of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and continued his work until the early days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, these dates would fit...Whereas Amos and Hosea prophesied to Israel, the northern kingdom, Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries who prophesied in Judah, the southern kingdom." (*Minor Prophets* by Robert Harkrider, p. 41)



HOSEA

("salvation")

750 – 725

Prophet to Israel

BACKGROUND

1. Which kings of Israel and Judah reigned during Hosea's work?
2. Which significant event occurs in Israel near this timeframe? (2 Kings 17:1-6)

CONTEXT

3. What kind of woman did God tell Hosea to marry? (1:2)
4. Who did Hosea marry and how did she compare to the kingdom of Israel?
5. What were the names of the children born to Hosea, and why were they given? (1:4-9)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. Which name is used synonymously with Israel and what was its significance? (4:16-18; 1 Kings 12:25)

7. What was the character of Israel while practicing idolatry? (Hos. 4:11-13, 16-18)
8. What did God say would lead to Israel's harlotry? (Exo. 34:11-17; Hos. 2:8-13)
9. What was the calf of Samaria and where did it come from? (8:4-6; 1 Ki. 12:25-33)
10. What was God going to do to Israel for playing the harlot? (Hos. 10:5-6; 11:5-7)
11. Why was God going to judge Israel? (see 2 Kings 17:7-18)
 - a. (Hos. 8:11-14)
 - b. (Hos. 14:8)
12. Who could save Israel from God's judgment? (5:13-15; 14:2-3)
13. Despite Israel's betrayal, what did God want for them? (3:1-5; 6:1-3; 14:1-2)
14. What compels God to extend mercy to sinners? (14:4; 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:6-8)
15. What did God want Judah to learn from Israel's judgment? (Hos. 6:11; 12:2)
16. What lessons can we learn from God's prophecy through Hosea?

Background to Joel

- A. There is great debate on the date of Joel's work and when it occurred.
 - 1. Those who believe it was an early date (900 BC) reach their conclusion on Joel's lack of references to Assyria and Babylon (as the enemies of God's people), but instead mention Philistia (3:4), Egypt and Edom (4:19).
 - 2. Those who believe it was a later date (400 BC) reach their conclusion on Joel's lack of reference to the kingdom of Israel, but only to the kingdom of Judah; as well as the promised return of "captives of Judah and Jerusalem" (3:1).
 - 3. "Many believe that 830 BC is the date of the book (during the reign of Athaliah)." (*What is in the Book?*, Hoyt Houchen, p. 114)

- B. Its message
 - 1. Joel warned Judah of their need to repent before the "day of the Lord" occurred (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14).
 - 2. God judged Judah with locusts that acted as the Lord's "army" (2:11, 25).
 - 3. The promise of restoration after repentance.

- C. Joel in the New Testament
 - 1. Peter said the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 fulfilled one of Joel's prophecies (Acts 2:17-21; Joel 2:28-32).
 - 2. Paul used the phrase "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (2:32; Rom. 10:13).
 - 3. The book of Revelation uses similar imagery as Joel:
 - a. moon turned to blood (2:31; Rev. 6:12)
 - b. judgment as a harvest and winepress (3:13; Rev. 14:17-20)
 - c. judgment from locusts (2:1-11; Rev. 9:3-11)



JOEL

(“Jehovah is God”)

Date uncertain

Prophet to Judah?

BACKGROUND

1. Though Joel does not state any kings by name, it is likely he wrote to the kingdom of Judah. How can the following references support this conclusion?
 - a. 1:13-14
 - b. 2:15-17
 - c. 3:1
2. How severe would the destruction be on the people Joel was writing to? (1:2-3)

CONTEXT

3. What picture is described regarding locusts? (1:4)
4. What would the aftermath of the locusts cause the people to do? (1:5, 8-10)

5. Was this a literal destruction from locusts or was it a figurative description of the invading nation of Judah? (1:6-7)
6. What was the Day of the Lord referring to? (1:15; 2:1)
7. If Joel is writing to Judah, and history shows them being taken into Babylonian captivity, what is said of the invading army? (2:2-11) Explain briefly.
8. What was Joel pleading with the people of God to do in their relationship with Him? (2:12-14)
9. What does the phrase “rend your heart, not your garments” mean? (2:13)
10. What would God do to the nation that invaded Judah? (2:20)
11. What would eventually become of the land of Judah? (2:23-24)
12. Why would God cause the blessings of the land to return? (2:27)
13. How does Peter apply Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:14-21?
14. What was God going to do to the captives of Judah and Jerusalem? (3:1)
15. Why was God going to judge Tyre and Sidon? (3:4-6)
16. What would become evident from God’s judgment of the nations? (3:17)