

Minor prophets were smaller books not less important prophets – the 12 minor prophets formed one scroll

HOSEA

Theme: God’s persevering love – God will not let go of Israel in spite of her spiritual unfaithfulness

Prophet to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) – a contemporary of Amos, though he prophesied someone later when the situation had further deteriorated – in spite of this his prophesy was more mild than that of Amos

Dating: 760-720 BC (1:1)

Did the events described in Hosea actually happen or are they an allegory (1:2)? 3 possibilities:

1. An allegory rather than historical narrative – would God command someone to marry someone who they knew was going to break the law?
2. Historical narrative – in all likelihood she would have been a pagan Temple prostitute – God told Hosea to marry her and so he did
3. Allegory based on historical narrative: a combination of #1 and #2 – after Hosea married Gomer, she turned out to be a harlot like Israel – their first child (Jezreel) was evidently his seed and her name had no symbolic meaning – the other two children were not his seed, and they were named “not pitied” and “not my son” (1:4, 6, 8-9)

This book flies in the face of our interpretation that adultery ends the marriage! I know many couples where adultery has occurred and the relationship has been repaired – adultery is not the most destructive thing that can happen to a marriage!

Story line of Hosea 1-3:

1. Narrative – Betrothed to Gomer (1:2), marriage (1:3), adultery (1:6-9), divorce (1:9), purchase of Gomer (3:1) – evidently Gomer deserts Hosea, has a liaison with another lover, he abandons Gomer, to survive she sells herself to someone, and Hosea purchases her back for 15 shekels of silver and 1½ homers of barley – there was celibacy at the first of their remarriage until Gomer proved herself (3:3)
2. Allegory – God decrees divorce with Israel because of her unfaithfulness (2:2), but there is hope of remarriage (1:10-11; 2:15-23) – God practices “tough love” in order to create a desire in Israel to repent (1:6-7)

New Testament parallels:

1. Church as “the bride of Christ” image (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17)
2. Redemption: Christ purchasing our salvation (I Cor. 6:20; 7:23)

Hosea’s messages in Chapters 4-14:

- 4:1-10 God’s charges against Israel – no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery (vs. 1b-2) – v.6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Matt. 23:34 “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do”) – v.9 “like people, like priests”
- 5:10 “The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark” (Deut. 19:14; 27:17) – problem of thieves
- 6:1 “Come and let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, but he will heal us, he has stricken, but he will bind us up” – call to repentance
- 6:6 “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the (intimate) knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” – God is interested in more than religious externals
- 7:8-9 Israel is like a half-baked cake, guilty of syncretism
- 7:11-12 Israel is like a silly dove, turning to political alliances with Egypt and Assyria rather than to the Lord – God is like a net
- 8:7 “They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind”
- 11:8 “How can I give up?” – God’s pursuing, relentless love
- 11:9b “...I am God not a human being, the Holy One in your midst...”
- 13:4b “... There is no savior but me...”
- 13:8 “I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs...” – feminine image of God

14:1-9 Another call to repent and the hope of forgiveness, restoration, and healing – but only if Israel opts to live righteously (v.9b)

JOEL

Theme: God’s coming judgment

Joel means “Jehovah is God” – “el”

Joel is a prophet to the Southern Kingdom (Judah) – he has an interest in Zion, Judea, Jerusalem (2:1, 23; 3:1, 6) – he is very familiar with Jerusalem (2:1, 9, 15, 23, 32; 3:1, 6, 17, 20) and the Temple (1:9, 13, 14, 16; 2:14, 17) – he was not a priest (1:9)

Dating: 840-830 BC

He is quoted by other Old Testament prophets (3:10; Is. 2:4)

Historical event that led to the prophesy: the coming of a swarm of locust (1:4) – when this occurred the air was so thick with the creatures that it blocked out the sun – it also destroyed all vegetation – this plague was avoided by the children of Israel when they were in Egyptian bondage (Ex. 10:1-20) – the fact that it was coming now was a sign of God’s judgment (Deut. 28:38-39; I Kings 8:37) – it is also a hint that invading armies will come one day like locust (1:6)

Amos called the nation to fasting and solemn assembly to mourn over sin (1:13-14; 2:12-17) – he warned that the “Day of the Lord,” a day of judgment, was near (1:15; 2:1, 2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18; 5:18-20)

Words of good news and hope:

2:25 “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten...”

2:28-29 (Acts 2:17-21)

2:30-31 (Matt. 24:29)

2:32 (Rom. 10:13)

3:2 (II Cor. 5:10)

AMOS

Theme: Nations are accountable for their sins – increased privilege brings increased responsibility – Israel has been especially privileged and so will be severely judged (3:2; Deut. 7:6)

Amos means “burden bearer”

Contemporary of Hosea – both prophesied to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) but Amos was from the Southern Kingdom (Judea) – his home town was Tekoa (1:1), 10 miles South of Jerusalem

Dating: 760-739 BC

Amos was a layperson, not from a prophetic tradition (7:14) – he was a shepherd and a tree surgeon (1:1; 7:14)

The situation:

1. Political – they paid tribute to Egypt and Syria to achieve security
2. Socio-Economic – 2 classes of people: the very rich (3:11-15) and the very poor (4:1)
3. Religions – people worshipped and offered sacrifices and tithes at various pagan temples (4:4; 5:5; 7:13)

Prophetic formula: “thus says the Lord” or “Hear this word” (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 7:16)

God’s accusations against Israel (2:6-8): selling their sisters and brothers into slavery (v.6), oppressing the poor (v.7a), incest (v.7b), false worship (v.8)

Important verses:

3:2 “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?”

3:7 “Surely the Lord God does nothing unless he reveals his secret to his servants the prophets.”

3:18-20 “Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord?...”

3:21-24 “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” – superficial religion does not buy God off!

7:7-9 Vision of plumb line

8:11 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land... a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.” – spiritual famine

9:11-15 Prophecy of a restored nation and Davidic dynasty

Next week: Obadiah, Jonah, Micah

Schedule of Daily readings:

	<u>Option One</u>	<u>Option Two</u>
Sunday	Obadiah 1	1
Tuesday	Jonah 1-2	1
Wednesday	Jonah 3-4	4
Thursday	Micah 1-2	2
Friday	Micah 3-4	4
Saturday	Micah 5	5
Sunday	Micah 6-7	6