

Notes & Outlines

HOSEA
JOEL

J. Vernon McGee

HOSEA

Beginning with Hosea and concluding with Malachi, there are twelve short prophecies called the Minor Prophets. They are so called because of the size of the books and not because of their content. The Minor Prophets all deal with the same major issues of the Major Prophets. They are actually quoted by the Major Prophets (Jeremiah 26:18). The writers of the Minor Prophets were exceedingly nationalistic, but they were not isolationists. There were to be no godless alliances with other nations, but they were warned of an isolationism from God. They were extremely patriotic and denounced political and moral corruption. This has given rise to the modern emphasis on the social message of the prophets.

It is a striking fact that there is scant material on the Minor Prophets. A cursory inspection of any religious library will corroborate this. There is a wealth of material on most of the books of the Bible, but when you leave Daniel and pass over to Hosea, it is like going from a fertile valley to a sterile desert.

WRITER: Hosea

All that is known of him is what he reveals in his prophecy.

TIME:

The word of the LORD that came unto 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. (Hosea 1:1)

In spite of the fact that Hosea mentions the four kings of Judah first and the one king of Israel last, he was a prophet to the northern kingdom, as the content of the book reveals. He was contemporary with Amos, another prophet to Israel, and also contemporary with Micah and Isaiah, prophets to Judah. His ministry extended over half a century, and he lived to see the fulfillment of his prophecy in the captivity of Israel.

THEME: "Return unto the LORD."

Come, and let us return unto the LORD; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. (Hosea 6:1)

"Return" occurs fifteen times.

“Ephraim” occurs thirty-six times.

“Backsliding” occurs three times. Hosea and Jeremiah are the two prophets who talk about backsliding and the cure for it.

What Jeremiah was to Judah at the time of the captivity of the southern kingdom, Hosea was to Israel, over a century before, at the time of the captivity of the northern kingdom. Both spoke out of a heartbreaking personal experience.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:

Hosea’s experience was in the home; Jeremiah’s was in the nation. Jeremiah was commanded not to marry; Hosea was commanded to marry a harlot or, as he brutally stated the case, “a wife of whoredoms” (Hosea 1:2, KJV). He married Gomer, and she bore him two sons and a daughter. Afterward she played the harlot again, and Hosea put her out of his home. But God commanded him to take again this unfaithful harlot, to bring her back into his home, and to love her again. In effect, God said to Hosea, “Now you are prepared to speak for Me to Israel — Israel has played the harlot, but I love her and will yet bring her back into her homeland.”

OUTLINE:

- I. PERSONAL — The prophet and his faithless wife, Gomer,**
Chapters 1 — 3
 - A. Marriage of Hosea and Gomer, the harlot,** Chapter 1
 - B. Gomer proves faithless; Israel proves faithless; God proves faithful,** Chapter 2
 - C. Hosea commanded to take Gomer again,** Chapter 3
- II. PROPHETIC — The Lord and the faithless nation Israel,**
Chapters 4 — 14
 - A. Israel plays the harlot,** Chapters 4, 5
 1. Israel guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s Word, and idolatry, Chapter 4
 2. Israel turns from God; God turns from Israel; deterioration within follows, Chapter 5
 - B. Israel (Ephraim) will return in the last days; presently to be judged for current sins,** Chapter 6

C. Israel (Ephraim) could escape judgment by turning to God who loves her (key, 11:8), Chapters 7 — 12

1. Israel (silly dove) turns to Egypt and Assyria, Chapter 7
2. Israel turns to golden calves and altars of sin, Chapter 8
3. Israel (backsliding heifer) turns to land productivity; will be driven from the land, Chapters 9, 10
4. Israel turns from God — must be judged; God will not give her up, Chapters 11, 12

D. Israel (Ephraim) will turn from idols to God in the last days, Chapters 13, 14

1. Israel will be judged in the present, Chapter 13
2. Israel will be saved in the future, Chapter 14

COMMENT:

(Also see author's booklet, "The Greatest Sin in All the World.")

I. PERSONAL — The prophet and his faithless wife, Gomer, Chapters 1 — 3

A. Marriage of Hosea and Gomer, the harlot, Chapter 1

v. 1 — See TIME, first page.

vv. 2, 3 — Hosea gives us more of his personal and intimate experiences than does any other of the prophets. Most are reluctant to intrude their own personal experience into their prophecies, but the experience of Hosea parallels the experience of the nation Israel. He will know how God feels when the nation plays the harlot by departing from the Lord.

vv. 4, 5 — Jezreel is the name of a city and also of a famous plain, the plain of Armageddon where the last war will end. It has an infamous history. Read 2 Kings 10 for the historical background.

vv. 6-9 — Three children are born to Hosea and Gomer:

- (1) Jezreel (a son), meaning *God will scatter* — God will avenge the blood of Jezreel.
- (2) Lo-ruhamah (a daughter), meaning *unpitied* — God will

no longer show mercy upon the house of Israel.

- (3) Lo-ammi (a son), meaning *not my people* — Israel was called “my people.” At this time God had repudiated the northern kingdom but not the southern kingdom.

vv. 10, 11 — The ten tribes in the north are not utterly and finally repudiated because God promises that He will regather both the northern and southern kingdoms under one head.

B. Gomer proves faithless; Israel proves faithless; God proves faithful, Chapter 2

vv. 1-3 — Hosea loves Gomer, and when she plays the harlot again, he sends their son and daughter to plead with her to return.

vv. 4-7 — Hosea even threatens her if she will not return.

vv. 8-23 — Here the record merges into God’s love for the nation Israel. God will judge Israel, but ultimately He will restore her, and she will give up the worship of Baal. Hosea understands the attitude and action of God because of his own love for Gomer.

C. Hosea commanded to take Gomer again, Chapter 3

vv. 1-3 — God commands Hosea to break the Mosaic Law:

And the man who committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he who committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10)

Gomer should be stoned, not restored. Hosea loves her and hesitates to go that far. Note what the New Testament says:

What? Know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
(1 Corinthians 6:16)

vv. 4, 5 — The application is for the nation Israel. Israel is to be restored, though she is no better than a harlot.

This (v. 4) is one prophecy that has had continual fulfillment for over 1900 years:

“Without a king” since the Davidic line ended with Zedekiah

(2500 years). They rejected Jesus as king.

“Without a prince” — they have no one to succeed to the throne. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not their Messiah, they have none and have no prospect for one.

“Without a sacrifice” — the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and there has been no sacrifice since then.

“Without an image” means “without pillars.”

“Without an ephod” — the ephod was the sacred garment worn by the high priest.

“Without teraphim” — teraphim were small images or good luck charms.

The people of Israel will not only return to the land, but they will seek the Lord their God (v. 5). This they have not yet done.

“Latter days” refer to the latter days of Israel, after the church has been removed by the Rapture.

II. PROPHETIC — The Lord and the faithless nation Israel, Chapters 4 — 14

A. Israel plays the harlot, Chapters 4, 5

1. Israel guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s Word, and idolatry, Chapter 4

Now the private life of Hosea fades into the background, and the emphasis is upon the Lord and Israel.

v. 1 — The Lord confronts Israel with the fact that they have no knowledge of God.

v. 2 — The Lord spells out their specific sins; they are breaking the Ten Commandments.

vv. 3-5 — Judgment will be meted out to the people and the land.

vv. 6-11 — Israel’s ignorance of the Word of God leads to their destruction. They turn from God to sin, which He must judge.

“Either the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.”

vv. 12-15 — They turn to idolatry, which God must judge. Idolatry leads to immorality.

v. 16 — Israel is guilty of backsliding. It is mentioned three times

in the remainder of the book. Jeremiah and Hosea are the two prophets who emphasize the backsliding of God's people. Hosea was the prophet to the northern kingdom at the time of captivity, as Jeremiah was the prophet to the southern kingdom at the time of its captivity.

v. 17 — “Ephraim” occurs thirty-six times and refers to the northern kingdom of Israel — a part of the kingdom represents the whole. Israel has gone into idolatry. God says to keep hands off.

2. Israel turns from God; God turns from Israel; deterioration within follows, Chapter 5

v. 1 — God condemns the leadership — priest and king.

vv. 5, 6 — When the nation falls, they will cry to God, but He will not respond.

vv. 7-15 — Israel turns in desperation to her enemies for help, but there is no help. Judah is in the same plight. Assyria could not and would not assist.

B. Israel (Ephraim) will return in the last days; presently to be judged for current sins, Chapter 6

vv. 1-3 — Hosea looks to the last days when Israel will return to the Lord. The Lord has judged; He will save them (v. 1).

“In the third day he will raise us up” (v. 2) is interesting in light of the resurrection of Christ on the third day. He “was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25) will be applicable to the nation Israel in the last days.

“Rain” (v. 3) could be literal rain (see Leviticus 26:4; Deuteronomy 11:14; Joel 2:23; Amos 4:7), or it could be figurative (see Hosea 10:12; Job 20:23).

Knowledge leads to spiritual growth.

v. 4 — “Ephraim” at times seems to be a term of endearment, again it seems to be used in biting sarcasm. Here the Lord expresses His deep love for His people by His reluctance to judge them. He seems frustrated as to the course of action to pursue — shall He drive them out of the land or restore them? Their goodness is like the morning mist on the mountainside: it is temporary and soon disappears.

v. 5 — God uses strong language in warning them.

v. 6 — God is more concerned with the heart relationship with Himself than with the externalities of religion (see 1 Samuel 15:22, 23).

vv. 9-11 — The priesthood is corrupt.

C. Israel (Ephraim) could escape judgment by turning to God who loves her (key, 11:8), Chapters 7 — 12

1. Israel (silly dove) turns to Egypt and Assyria, Chapter 7

v. 1 — The Lord would forgive their iniquity, but they persist in their wickedness.

vv. 2-7 — Their gross immorality is approved by the king.

v. 8 — Ephraim is like a pancake fried on top of the stove — burned on one side and raw on the other. The people blow hot and cold toward God.

v. 11 — Ephraim is like a silly dove that endangers its own life by pretending to be wounded in order to draw an intruder from its nest. Also, it walks into a trap. Ephraim turns to Egypt and Assyria for help — these destroyers of their nation.

2. Israel turns to golden calves and altars of sin, Chapter 8

vv. 1-4 — Having turned from God, they look to their king and their wealth to deliver them.

v. 5 — The golden calf that Jeroboam had set up had not helped them.

v. 9 — Assyria will finally take them into captivity, yet they turn foolishly to their enemy. They try to buy off Assyria.

v. 11 — An altar was a place of worship and a place to find forgiveness for sin. Altars became sin to Israel. Religion can be a curse and not a blessing.

3. Israel (backsliding heifer) turns to land productivity; will be driven from the land, Chapters 9, 10

Chapter 9

vv. 1, 2 — Prosperity had blinded them.

v. 3 — The land is the Lord's, and He demands a return.

v. 8 — The prophets deceive them.

vv. 11-13 — Although the people and the land look good, all is passing away.

Chapter 10

v. 1 — Israel will become an empty vine (cf. John 15:1).

v. 6 — Assyrian captivity is announced.

v. 11 — A heifer stiffens her front feet and refuses to budge. Then she begins to slip backward. God will judge the nation.

4. Israel turns from God — must be judged; God will not give her up, Chapters 11, 12

Chapter 11

v. 1 — God loves Israel (see v. 8). Verse 1 is quoted in connection with the birth of Christ (see Matthew 2:15).

v. 7 — This is the second occurrence of “backsliding” (see Hosea 4:16).

v. 8 — This explains the seeming frustration, indecision, and vacillation in attitude and action toward Israel. Although God loves them, He must judge them. God seems to be on the horns of a dilemma.

Chapter 12

v. 1 — Ephraim is trusting the word of Assyria and doubting God.

v. 8 — God seems to be judging Israel with prosperity. Riches deceive them, for they think they can buy peace. (What a lesson for the United States!)

D. Israel (Ephraim) will turn from idols to God in the last

days, Chapters 13, 14

1. Israel will be judged in the present, Chapter 13

vv. 7, 8 — Judgment is inevitable. God will come upon them like a lion, leopard, and bear.

v. 11 — This is a reference to Saul.

v. 13 — Judgment is coming.

v. 14 — This is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:55.

2. Israel will be saved in the future, Chapter 14

v. 4 — God's love for them cannot be changed. He will heal their backsliding. This is the third mention of backsliding (see Hosea 4:16 and 11:7).

v. 8 — Love will triumph. Ephraim was joined to idols, and God let her alone. But there will come a day when Ephraim will turn from idolatry. God's love will prevail.

Any sinner may turn to God. God always will receive sinners — because He loves them.

JOEL

WRITER: Joel

Nothing is known of this prophet except what is given in the opening verse. His name means *Jehovah is God*.

TIME:

Considered by many to be the earliest of the writing prophets, he was a prophet to Judah probably about the time of the reign of Joash, king of Judah. He probably knew Elijah and Elisha. The critical school, adopting their usual custom, have placed this book at the other extreme, even after the captivity.

THEME:

“The day of the LORD” (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2, 10, 11, 30, 31; 3:14-16)

FEATURES:

1. “The day of the LORD” or “the day of Jehovah” is an expression introduced by Joel (if he is the first of the writing prophets — there are about fifty prophets in all). From the mountaintop of the beginning of written prophecy, he saw the farthest into the future. “The day of the LORD” is an expression that is fraught with meaning. It seems to include not only the coming Millennial Kingdom, but also to include all the judgments which precede the setting up of the Kingdom and the return of Christ.

2. His description of a literal plague of locusts and its comparison with future judgments is a dramatic and literary gem.

3. He is the prophet who mentioned the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was referred to by Peter on the Day of Pentecost.

OUTLINE:

I. Literal and local plague of locusts, Chapter 1:1-14

II. Looking to the day of the LORD (prelude), Chapters 1:15 — 2:32

III. Looking at the day of the LORD (postlude), Chapter 3

A. The Great Tribulation, vv. 1-15

B. The Millennial Kingdom, vv. 16-21

COMMENT:

I. Literal and local plague of locusts, Chapter 1:1-14

vv. 1, 2 — There is nothing like this locust plague in the memory of man.

v. 3 — There is nothing like the locust plague in the future. It is unprecedented and will be remembered as something that cannot be compared to any other similar experience in the history of the nation.

The Great Tribulation is just such an experience according to the Lord Jesus (see Matthew 24:21).

- v. 4** — “Palmer worm” (*gazam*) means *to gnaw off*.
- “Locust” (*arbeh*) means *to be many; migratory*.
- “Cankerworm” (*yeleq*) means *to lick off*.
- “Caterpillar” (*chasil*) means *to devour; consume*.

Some expositors interpret these words as describing four stages of the development of the caterpillar, while others consider them to be four different kinds of insects. On many occasions, locusts devastated large portions of the earth. The island of Cyprus was stripped by locusts for 250 years. The Israelite was permitted to eat locusts (Leviticus 11:22). Locusts were sent as a judgment from God (see Deuteronomy 28:38-42; 1 Kings 8:37). In Revelation 9:1-12 is the final fulfillment of locusts.

v. 5 — “Drunkards” — drunkenness is the national sin which prophets condemn (especially Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos). The drunkards are addressed because the locusts had destroyed the vine that produces the grapes from which the wine is made.

vv. 6, 7 — Locusts are compared to an invading army — indeed they were just as destructive.

v. 8 — The drunkard is to mourn like a young bride for a departed husband. This is the first group called to mourn.

v. 9 — The priests are to mourn because no longer will there be meal and wine for the offerings.

Evidently Joel is a prophet to Judah, as he makes several references to the house of the Lord (see also vv. 13, 14).

v. 10 — This total devastation of the land is the result of the plague of locusts. The nation has become a disaster area. The Lord calls ten times upon different segments of the population to mourn and repent (vv. 8, 11, 13, 14) by doing ten things.

vv. 11, 12 — Second group called to mourn — the farmers.
Third group called to mourn — the fruitgrowers.

v. 13 — Fourth group called to mourn — the priests.
Fifth group called to mourn — ministers of the altar (to lie all night in sackcloth).
Sixth group called to mourn — ministers of God (to lie all night in sackcloth).

v. 14 — Seventh group — sanctify a fast.
Eighth group — call a solemn assembly.
Ninth group — gather elders together in the Lord's house.
Tenth group — elders and inhabitants to cry aloud to God.

II. Looking to the day of the LORD (prelude), Chapters 1:15 — 2:32

Chapter 1

v. 15 — “The day of the LORD” is first mentioned. (This is not the Lord's day. There is a vast difference of meaning, and they are no more alike than a chestnut horse and a horse chestnut.) Simply stated, the day of the LORD is in contrast to man's day or Satan's day. The day of the LORD begins with the Great Tribulation and extends through the Millennial Kingdom (see FEATURES in introduction).

The plague of locusts was in a real sense a miniature day of the LORD. The plague was an adumbration of the Great Tribulation.

vv. 16-20 — These are the results of the locust plague.

Chapter 2

v. 1 — See Numbers 10:9 for the sounding of an alarm with the trumpet.

The prophet now looks to the Great Tribulation Period. The coming invasion of the Assyrian army is a foretaste of it.

v. 2 — The Hebrew day begins with sundown — the evening and morning are the day. The day of the LORD opens with the Great Tribulation, not with the coming of Christ to set up the Kingdom (see Amos 5:18).

vv. 2-10 — This is a description of the Great Tribulation.

v. 11 — This is the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom.

vv. 12-17 — His last call to repent reveals the Lord's graciousness even in judgment. A remnant will repent and return to God (see Ezekiel 20:37, 38).

vv. 18, 19 — “Then” is a great prophetic word (see Matthew 24:9, 16, 21, 23, 30). Up to this point there is judgment, disaster, and tragedy. From this point through chapter 2 there are blessings and benefits. These prophecies have not been fulfilled.

v. 20 — The northern army of Assyria will be driven back, but there is coming another great army from the north (see Ezekiel 38, 39).

v. 23 — Literal rain is referred to here. The “former rain” came in October, the “latter rain” in April. See other references to literal rain (Leviticus 26:3, 4; Deuteronomy 11:14-17; 1 Kings 8:35, 36; Jeremiah 3:3; Hosea 6:3). These references make it clear that this passage cannot be spiritualized, but refers to literal rain.

v. 25 — This could have been a beautiful application to men today, but it also is literal — a literal reference to the restoration of the land to plenty and blessing.

vv. 26, 27 — These verses continue to make clear the literal interpretation of this entire section which has not yet been fulfilled.

vv. 28-32 — Peter quoted this on the Day of Pentecost as an explanation for the conduct of the believers. They were filled with the Spirit, not filled with wine. Peter did not say that the experience was a fulfillment of Joel. He did not say, “*That it might be fulfilled* which was spoken through the prophet Joel,” but rather, “*This is that* which was spoken through the prophet, Joel.” (See Acts 2:15-21 and author's notes on Acts.) Joel's prophecy was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The Spirit filled only the believers, not “all flesh” (v. 28) as Joel predicts. The “wonders” (v. 30) that Joel said would appear in the heavens were not in evidence on the Day of

Pentecost. The prophecy of Joel awaits “the great and the terrible day of the LORD” (v. 31) which is yet future (see Joel 3:2 and Zechariah 2:10, 11).

III. Looking at the day of the LORD (postlude), Chapter 3

A. The Great Tribulation, vv. 1-15

v. 1 — The regathering of Israel in the land will probably take place in the first part of the Great Tribulation Period (the first 3 1/2 years). See Ezekiel 37:12-18 and Acts 15:15-18.

v. 2 — Gentile nations will come against the little nation of Israel (Daniel 11:40-45). This is the campaign of Armageddon, which ends with the coming of Christ to deliver His people and establish His Kingdom.

vv. 3-8 — The nations will be judged because of their unjust treatment of Israel in the past.

vv. 9-15 — This is a picture of the Great Tribulation Period. Joel, the first of the writing prophets, projects himself into the future and looks back upon the Great Tribulation Period, “the day of the LORD.”

B. The Millennial Kingdom, vv. 16-21

Neither today nor during the Great Tribulation is the time to beat swords into ploughshares; rather the opposite is true (v. 10).

vv. 16-21 — The coming of Christ ends the Great Tribulation Period and brings in the Kingdom.

v. 17 — The Lord Jesus Christ shall reign in person.

v. 18 — The land will become the land of milk and honey.

v. 19 — Judgment of the lands of Egypt and Assyria continues into the Kingdom Age (see Isaiah 19:22-25).

v. 20 — Note the permanency of the land of Israel.

v. 21 — See Zechariah 12:10; 13:1.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Cohen, Gary C. and H. Ronald Vandervev. *Hosea and Amos*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. 1917. Reprint, Neptune, New Jersey; Loizeaux Brothers, 1971.
- Ironside, H. A. *The Minor Prophets*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Minor Prophets of Judah*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1975. (Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1982.

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