



My Drift

Title: Bible – Books of Hosea and Joel

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Book of Hosea



The Prophet and the Prostitute

Main idea

This book is an illustration of God's love for His adulterous people as He calls Hosea to marry a harlot and have children with her (Hosea 1:2), and then to buy her out of slavery (Hosea 3:2), in order for Israel to see the danger of their situation (Hosea 9:7) and come back to Him (Hosea 14:1-2).

Explanation of Main Idea

Israel had been unfaithful to the Lord (Hosea 1:2). God claims that they had “a spirit of prostitution in their heart” (Hosea 5:4), not even acknowledging Him. He raises up Hosea to live out a marriage to a harlot named Gomer (Hosea 1:3) in front of their eyes so that they can see the foolishness of their ways and eventual danger that they will face.

This “living picture” plays itself out in the names given to Hosea and Gomer’s children. The first is named Jezreel after the massacre at Jezreel (2 Kings 9-10) which the Lord vows to punish. Lo-Ruhamah, the second, means “not loved” (Hosea 1:6). The third, Lo-Ammi, has a name which signifies “not my people” (Hosea 1:9).

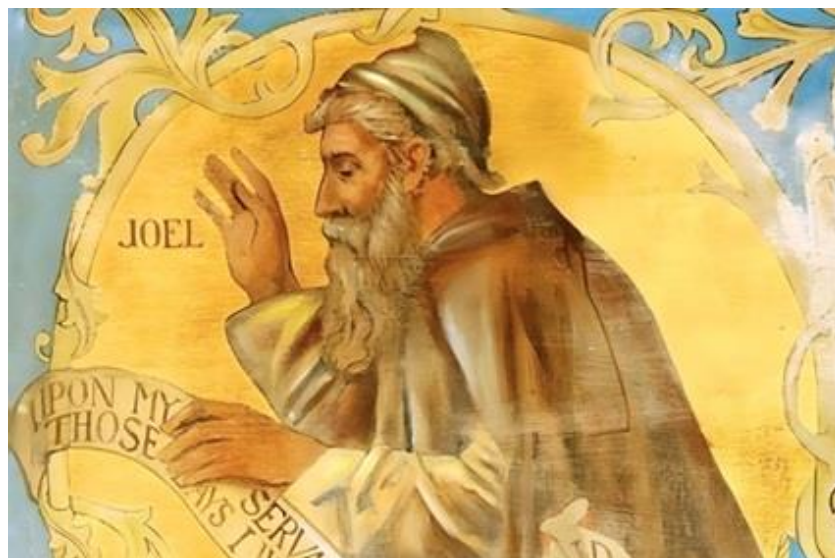
Hosea loves his wife as God loves Israel (Hosea 3:1). He buys her out of slavery after she committed adultery with another lover (Hosea 3:1-2). Israel is guilty of “cursing, lying..., murder, and adultery” (Hosea 4:2). They are stubborn (Hosea 4:16), arrogant (Hosea 5:5, 6:10), idolatrous (Hosea 5:7, 8:6), independent with no regard for the Lord (Hosea 8:4) and incapable of purity (Hosea 8:5). Because of this, judgment is assured (Hosea 5:1, 8:10).

Like Hosea’s faithfulness to his adulterous wife, God will be faithful to Israel. God promises that one day they will “return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days” (Hosea 3:5).

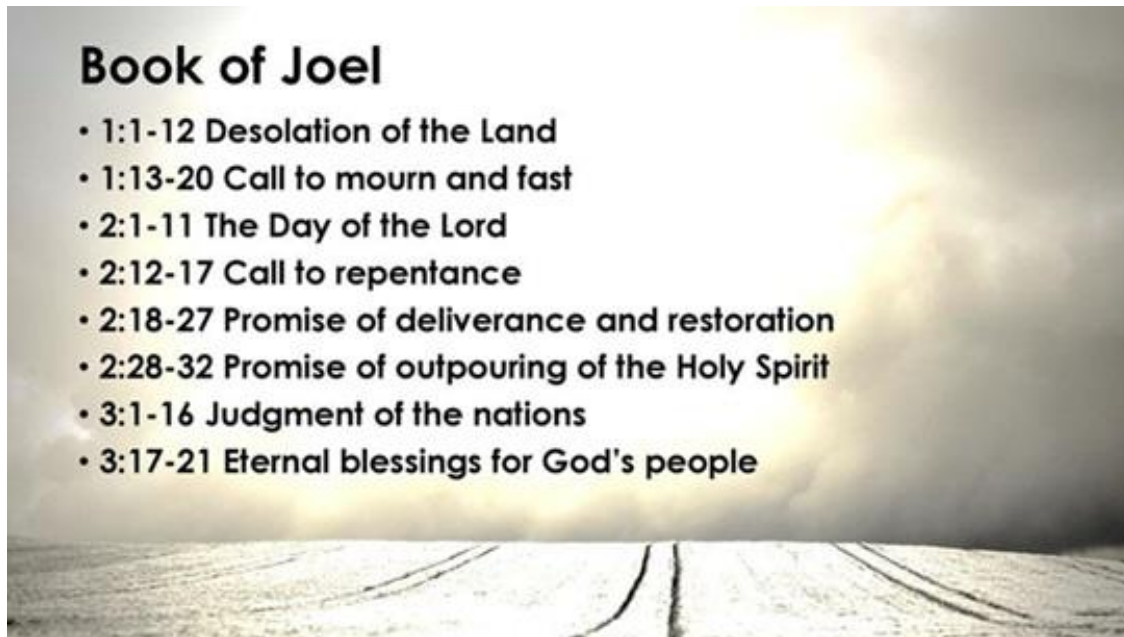
Purpose

The purpose of the book of Hosea is to display the almost unbelievable faithful love of God to a disobedient, obstinate, and adulterous people. Who would love, marry, and have children with a prostitute? Who would buy back someone who left you for another? God’s love pursues and is not dependent on the actions of the beloved.

Book of Joel



Summary



TaNaKh: The 24 Books of the Hebrew Bible

To Christians, the Bible is sacred. It's divided into two big sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And a good deal of Bible geeks know that the Old Testament books are sacred to the Jewish faith, too. In fact, when Peter, Paul, and Jesus talk about "Scripture" in the New Testament, they're referring to the books of the Old Testament—most of which had been considered sacred for a while.

But since there was no "New Testament," (and there still isn't in Judaism today), nobody called it the "Old Testament." Instead, through the ages, the Rabbis have called this group of texts the Tanakh.

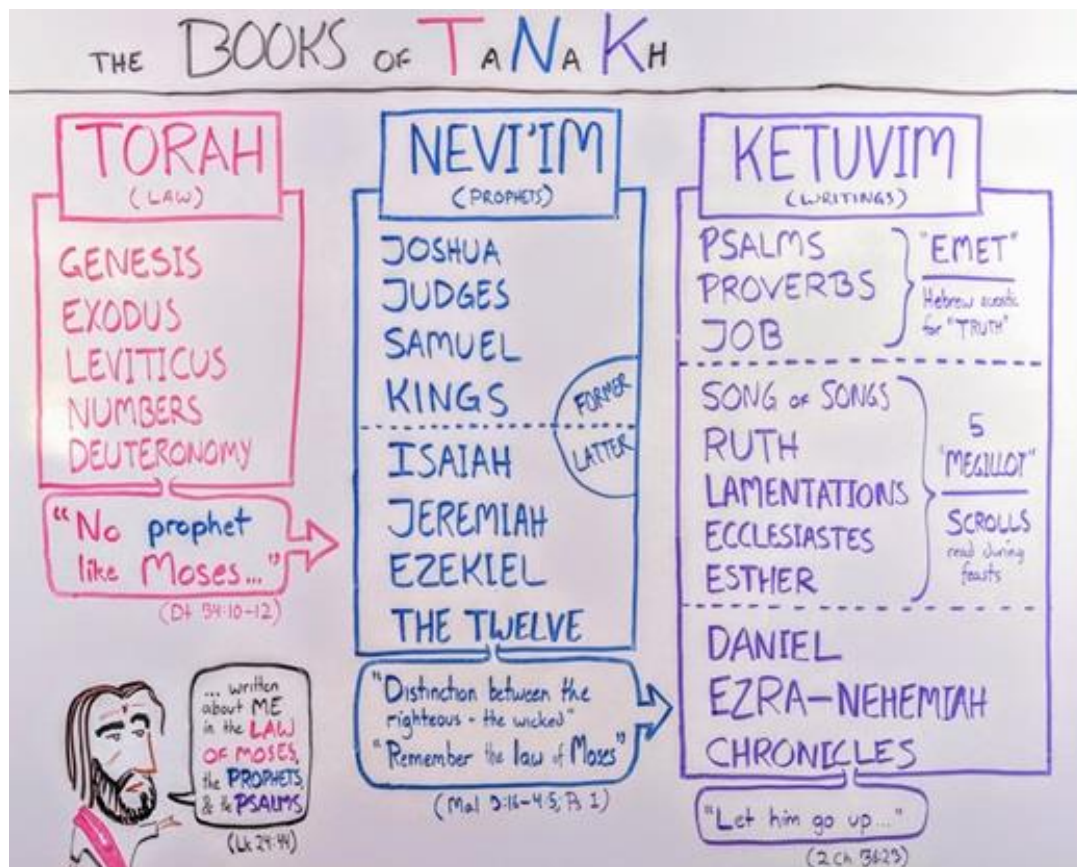
But there's a twist: although the text of the Tanakh is pretty much the same as the Old Testament, the books are in a different order. The order of these books is fascinating (and quite artful).

One important aspect of the ancient TaNaKh order of the Hebrew Bible is that the 12 prophetic works of Hosea through Malachi, sometimes referred to as the Minor Prophets, were designed as a single book called The Twelve. Joel is the second book of The Twelve.

Twelve Minor Prophets

The Twelve, book of the Hebrew Bible that contains the books of 12 minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The following chart shows how the Tanakh arranges these books and how they all fit together.



Summary

The book of Joel is a short collection of prophetic poems that are both powerful and puzzling. This book is unique among the books of the prophets for a few reasons, starting with the fact that there's no explicit indication of when it was written. It's most likely set during the time period of Ezra-Nehemiah, after the return from the exile, because he mentions Jerusalem and the temple but not a kingdom. Another aspect that sets this book apart is that Joel is clearly familiar with many other scriptural books, as he alludes to or quotes from the prophets Isaiah, Amos, Zephaniah, Nahum, Obadiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi, as well as the book of Exodus. Finally, Joel never accuses Israel of any specific sin. Like the other prophets, he announces that God's justice is coming to confront

Israel's sin, but he never says why. This is because Joel assumes that, like him, you've been reading the books of the prophets and already know all about Israel's rebellion.

Now, all together, these three features help us understand this fascinating little book a bit better. Joel is a biblical author who was himself immersed in earlier biblical writings. His reflection on them helped him to make sense of the tragedies of his day and gave him hope for the future.

Structure

Joel is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-2a focus on the Day of the Lord, and chapters 2b-3 detail the empowering Spirit and the renewal of creation.

Joel 1-2b: A Past and Future Day of the Lord

Chapter 1 is about a past Day of the Lord, and it begins by recalling a recent disaster in which a locust swarm devastated Israel. The description calls back to the Day of the Lord against Egypt, specifically the eighth plague from Exodus, except now the locusts are sent against Israel! Joel calls upon the elders and priests to lead the people in repentance and prayer. And he joins in the prayer himself, "To you, O Lord, I call"

Chapter 2 begins by announcing another Day of the Lord, except this time it is a future event, an imminent disaster coming for Jerusalem. Joel begins describing what at first seems like another wave of locusts, but the attackers change into a different kind of threat as Joel starts using metaphors about military ranks and cosmic catastrophe. The locusts become an army, with its cavalry and soldiers marching and destroying everything in their path. The sun is darkened and there are earthquakes. Joel sums it up appropriately, "The Day of the Lord. It's dreadful, who can endure it?"

Once more, Joel calls on the people to pray and repent, this time elaborating on how: "Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to your God" In other words, repentance can't just be a show you put on to get out of trouble. God is interested in genuine change when his people stop their selfishness and evil. Joel then goes on to say why Israel should repent: "God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, full of love" when God forgave Israel after they made the golden calf. Joel knows from Scripture that God's mercy and love are more powerful than his wrath and judgment, so once more he leads the priests in acts of repentance and prayer, asking God to "spare your people, O Lord".



All of a sudden, the scene shifts, and we find a short narrative about God's response to the repentance of Joel and the people. "So, God was filled with passion for his land and had pity on his people" God says that he will reverse the Day of the Lord, turning it from judgment into salvation. He will defeat the threatening invaders and turn them all away. He will restore the devastated land and make it abundant and full of life once more. Finally, God says that his divine presence will once again become accessible and real among his people.

Up to this point, the poems have told a powerful story, in which Joel leads Israel to see how their sin has led to disaster and divine judgment. And yet because of God's mercy, there's always hope. Joel sees, in all these past events of disaster and restoration, an image of the future Day of the Lord.

This unique little book explores profound ideas, like how human sin and failure wreak such destruction in our world, how God longs to show mercy to those who will own up and confess their sin, and how all of this leads us to hope that

one day God will defeat evil, both in our world and inside ourselves, bringing his healing presence to make all things new. Joel's message is ultimately one of hope.



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