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Interpreting the Bible Literally?

- What does it mean to interpret the Bible "literally?" Three potential ideas:
 - A) To interpret the Bible according to the "face value" of the meaning of the words
 - B) To interpret the Bible as referring to a physical, concrete reality
 - C) To interpret the Bible according to the historical and linguistic situation of the original hearers

Test Cases

- You have transgressed the covenant!
- You have turned away from the LORD.
- It is raining cats and dogs!
- Strong right arm of the Lord
- "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes."

2

Main Characters in the Twelve

- Yahweh
 - o Covenant husband
 - o Sovereign king
 - o Holy Father
 - o The one who brings judgment/destruction and blessing/restoration
 - o One who cares for the nations
- Israel/Judah¹ (rebel)
 - o Idolatrous
 - o Unjust
 - o Religiously superficial
 - o Hatred of the nations—but no better themselves
 - o Ripe for judgment
- Israel/Judah² (remnant)
 - o Faithful
 - o Worship from the heart
 - o Blessed and blessing—the key to cosmic restoration

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Main Characters in the Twelve

- The nations
 - o Utterly sinful
 - o Hatred of Israel
 - o Ripe for judgment
 - o Included in Yahweh's plan for restoration
- The prophets
 - o Part of Israel¹ and Israel² themselves
 - Remember, Israel¹ is a corporate character, not a description of every single individual as if there were not a single faithful person in Israel¹ whatsoever. Israel² is a corporate entity as well, but one comprised of the *faithful* from Israel¹. Israel² *emerges* from and is *preserved* within Israel¹, but not all of Israel¹ is a part of Israel².
 - Thus, the prophets are not promised deliverance from the coming national judgment simply because they are personally faithful.
 - Finally, while the prophetic oracles of both condemnation and hope are *announced* to Israel¹ (rebel), *the fulfillment of those promises is found in and through Israel²* (remnant) as it emerges from Israel¹.
 - o Covenant prosecutors
 - o Nation-condemners
 - o Hope-givers—Israel and the nations

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Perspective and Audience of the Twelve

- Narration
 - o Omniscient narration
 - Author does not appear to themselves be a character, thus distancing themselves from what is narrated (e.g., Hosea 1, where Hosea is just a "him," the book of Jonah). This is sometimes called omniscient narration because the narrator stands "outside" the story itself, which is told in the third-person.
 - o Direct narration
 - Most prominent form of narration in the Twelve. The prophet speaks as someone watching things unfold (e.g., Hosea 2).
 - This kind of narration doesn't "allow" third-person intrusion. Only the characters reveal who they are and what they are doing.
 - o Autobiographic narration
 - The narrator identifies as a character in the story he is narrating. This allows the reader to feel the emotions of the prophet as a real, historical person. (e.g., Hosea 3).
- Audience
 - o Because the final form of the Twelve includes Zechariah-Malachi (post-exilic prophets), the implied audience seems to be the remnant that is addressed so often in the Twelve, both covenant (i.e., those who returned under Ezra-Nehemiah and onward) and cosmic (i.e., a message for those among the nations who are called out and preserved by God).

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Perspective and Audience Cont.

- Of course, each individual prophet also has their own particular audience within the Twelve.

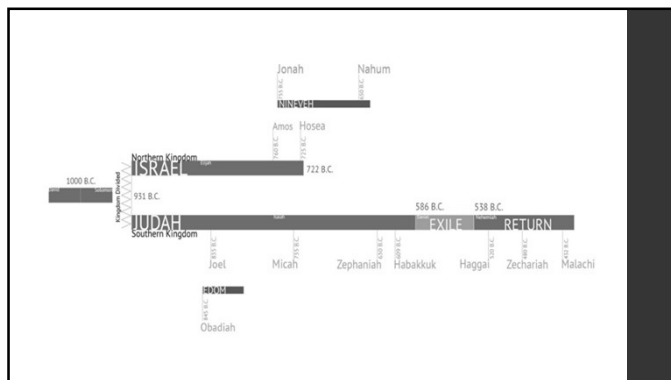
Narration, Characterization and Audience of the Twelve	
Narration	Characterization
The Implied Author	Yahweh
The Narrator	The Prophet
The Implied Audience	Covenant and Cosmic Remnant (post-exilic)

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Critical Material and Historical Background

- Date, Author, Audience
 - o Hosea's extended ministry spanned multiple kings and (presumably) multiple regions (i.e., northern and southern kingdoms). The historical indicators in 1:1 place Hosea's ministry as beginning at some point during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 BC) until some point during the reign of Hezekiah (716-687 BC).
 - o Hosea is the presumed author, but like with other prophets, it's likely that Hosea had a scribe over whom he maintained oversight (e.g., Baruch with Jeremiah) and who wrote down his words at some point in time.
- Historical Background
 - Syro-Ephraimite War

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