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### Key Themes

- Yahweh as Husband, King and Father
  - o Throughout the Twelve, Yahweh's relationship with Israel is depicted in three primary ways. Hosea introduces all three.
    - Husband: Hos. 1-3
    - King: Hos. 3:5; 5:1; 8:4
    - Father: Hos. 1:10; 11:1-3;
- Idolatry as Spiritual Adultery
  - o Throughout Hosea, Israel's pursuit of other Gods is described as whoredom, prostitution, and breaking the marriage covenant with Yahweh (e.g., 4:12-14) building on the Hosea-Gomer imagery the sign-act in chapters 1-3.
    - Prominence of the "calf" of Samaria

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### Key Themes

- Reversal of the Exodus
  - Nevertheless, Yahweh will not let them remain in "Egypt" and eventually, they will return (cf. 11:11).
- Failure of the Priesthood
  - o Hosea repeatedly criticizes the priesthood for not teaching the people and for leading them astray (4:4-6—translation is disputed, 9; 5:1, 6:9; 10:5)
- *Hesed* and *Shuv*
  - o Occurring more than 246 times in the OT (with about half occurring in the Psalms), *hesed* has no direct English equivalent, but is generally understood and translated as "steadfast love." It is a love that has loyalty and faithfulness as central components and is the love Yahweh has for his people and expects of them.

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## Prophetic Element Spotlight | Sign-Acts

- Sign-acts were a form of non-verbal prophetic communication in which a message was communicated by performing certain symbolic actions that were often bizarre and violated cultural norms. Sign-acts were theatrical and visual prophecy that demanded attention.
  - Hosea's call to marry Gomer is likely the most well-known sign-act in Scripture, but certainly not the only.
  - Isaiah walks around naked for three years (Isa. 20:1-4)
  - Jeremiah buys and buries a loincloth (Jer. 13:1-11), refrains from marriage, attending funerals and attending feasts (Jer. 16:1-9), shatters pottery (Jer. 19:1-13), wears a yoke (Jer. 27-28), and purchased a parcel of land during a siege (Jer. 32:6-15) among other sign-acts.

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## Prophetic Element Spotlight | Sign-Acts

- Ezekiel (who remains speechless until receiving news of the fall of Jerusalem (Ez. 33:22-22), lays siege to a brick (Ez. 4:1-3), lies on his left and right sides for extended periods of time (Ez. 4:4-6), eats bread cooked over dung (Ez. 4:9-17) and imitates the exile by packing a bag, digging a hole in the wall and leaving in the sight of the people (Ez. 12:1-16) among other sign-acts.
- Zechariah crowns a priest anticipating the "Branch" to come who will rule (Zech. 6:9-15).
- Agabus binds himself with Paul's belt (Acts. 21:10-11).

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## Role in the Twelve

- Hosea serves as the introduction to the Book of the Twelve by presenting the initial problem of Israel's sinfulness (which will be expanded in Joel), introducing Yahweh as the offended Husband, King and Father, indicating the underlying problem of lack of steadfast love (Hb. *hesed*) and calling the people to return (Hb. *shuv*). All of these themes are expanded on later in the Twelve.
  - Hosea 3:4-5 summarizes one of the major messages of the Twelve which will be repeated multiple times.
  - Hosea 14:9 stands apart from the rest of the book in terms of both feel and content (wisdom literature-esque) and serves as a plea for careful listening to both Hosea and what follows in the Twelve.
    - Note the thematic connection to the beginning of Joel (Hos. 14:9; Joel 1:2)

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### Application in Light of Christ

- The Dangers of Spiritual Adultery
  - o Idolatry as spiritually sleeping around on the bridegroom—Christ.
- God as Husband, King and Father
  - o The New Testament reiterates all the images for Yahweh used in the Twelve, despite different nuance in light of the person and work of Christ and fuller revelation of the Trinity.
- God's *Head* for His People
  - o God's "steadfast love" for his people reaches its culmination in Christ, who both redeems us through his self-sacrificial death and unites us to himself in his resurrection (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 6:5-11), with the result that we can never be cast off (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Pet. 1:3-10) as we eagerly await the Bridegroom (Matt. 25:1-3; Rev. 19:6-10).
    - *Shun!*

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### Joel – Critical Information

- With no superscription, ambiguous historical references, no autobiographical information and no biblical record of a "Joel" or a "Pethuel," the date and historical background of Joel is difficult to determine and vehemently debated.
  - o Though a post-exilic date is popular trend in *current* scholarship, our approach here will assume a pre-exilic date due primarily to the prophecy of an army coming upon the people in judgment. Also, Zephaniah uses extremely similar language, including "the day of the Lord," to describe the Babylonian crisis (Zeph. 1:14-18).
    - Thus, we will tentatively assume that Joel's prophecy occurred either prior to the Assyrian destruction of Samaria (722/721 BC) or the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (586/597 BC), with the second option being more likely.

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