



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

HOSEA,  
JOEL, AMOS

Week 3

## The Way Home

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Hosea 14

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever been lost and had someone give you directions? What emotions did you experience when you finally reached your destination?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** What did God want Israel to say to him, and what did he want Israel to admit to him (vs. 2-3)?

**2.** God wanted certain promises from Israel before he relented on allowing them to suffer the consequences they had brought on themselves. What were those two promises (v. 3)?

**3.** What did God promise to do to Israel if they would repent (v. 4)?

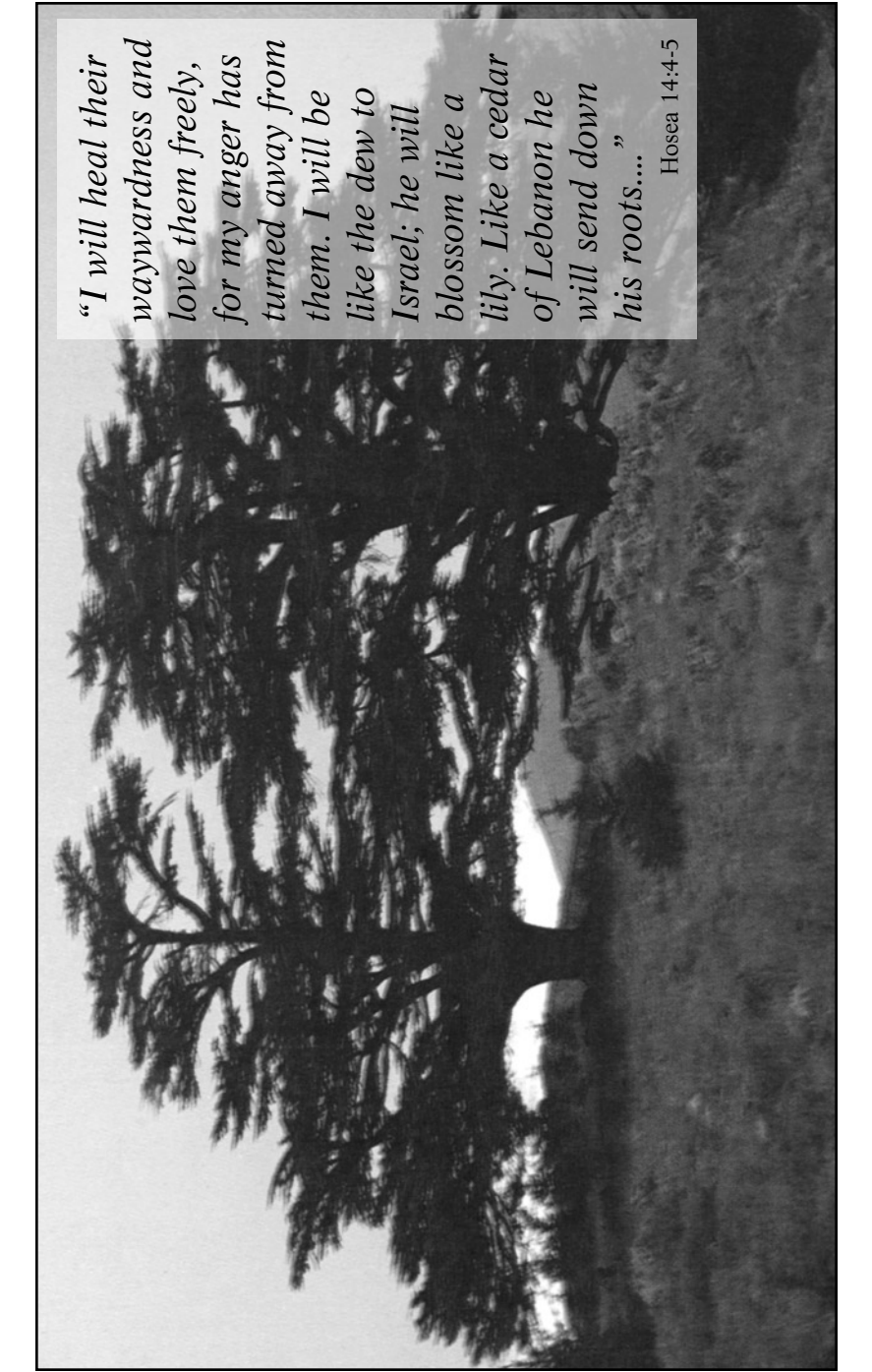
**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** Despite Israel's stubborn and flagrant sin, God still offers them a way to avoid the consequences of their actions. How have you experienced God's grace when you have sinned?

**2.** In what way has God helped you to recognize un-Christ-like behaviors in you life and how has he helped you to overcome them?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

Hosea talks about **"the fruit of our lips"** (v. 2). A more literal translation is "that we offer our lips as bullocks." The idea was that instead of offering a bull as a sacrifice, they should offer up their lips, which speak praise to God. Words that convey a genuine love of God are the best sacrifice and the one God wants the most. **"Blossom like a lily," "cedar of Lebanon"** (v. 5-6). These pictures of luxuriant green growth and aromatic pleasure were especially attractive to those who lived in semi-arid lands like Palestine.



*“I will heal their  
waywardness and  
love them freely,  
for my anger has  
turned away from  
them. I will be  
like the dew to  
Israel; he will  
blossom like a  
lily. Like a cedar  
of Lebanon he  
will send down  
his roots....”*

Hosea 14:4-5

# *Introduction to Joel*

**Authorship:** Joel's name means "Yahweh is God." He lived in and prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah, probably in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

**Date:** There is great debate as to the dating of the book of Joel. A conservative estimate would place the writing of the book about 835 B.C., but many scholars place that date much later—even after the exile.

**Setting and purpose:** Joel began his prophetic ministry after a terrible plague of locusts had destroyed almost everything in Judah. The economy was ruined, and it affected all levels of society. The agricultural disaster affected their ability to make offerings to the Lord. This plague was meant as a warning, Joel says. Though God had blessed his people, they had continually been unfaithful to him. If they would repent, God would restore their fortunes, but if they did not, worse judgment awaited them.

The ceremonial system of offerings depended on the grain offerings. But now, due to the shortage of grain, it was in danger of being discontinued. The ceremonial system was designed to express the Israelites' relationship to their God. They had kept the ritual, but lacked real worship.

## **Outline:**

### **I. THE COMING LOCUST PLAGUE, 1:1-20**

A. A Bug's Life, 1:1-20

### **II. SOUNDING THE ALARM, 2:1-32**

A. Storm Warning, 2:1-17

B. A Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow, 2:18-27

C. Signs of Things to Come, 2:28-32

### **III. JUDGMENT UPON THE NATIONS, 3:1-21**

A. Payback! 3:1-21

Joel 1

Have you ever had to deal with an insect invasion?  
What kind of damage did it do?

1. From reading verse 4, how many swarms of locusts appeared to have invaded Judah?
2. Why would drunkards and wine drinkers weep because of the locust invasion (v. 5)?
3. Why would grain and drink offerings be cut off from the Temple (v. 9)?
4. Why would priests be mourning?
5. What was drawing near to the people of Judah (v. 15)?

1. Have you ever been the victim of a natural disaster such as flood, storm, hurricane, tornado or earthquake? What did that experience confirm to you about the nature of God? What questions did it raise?
2. When a natural disaster occurs, are you most likely to: (a) attribute it to God, (b) attribute it to nature, (c) attribute it to Satan?
3. Have you ever felt God was trying to get your attention through some disaster in your life? What effect did that experience have on your relationship with God?

***“Locust swarm...great locusts...young locusts...other locusts”*** (v. 4). *There has been much debate as to why Joel uses four different Hebrew words for locusts. It could indicate four successive swarms of locusts, each in turn doing more damage until the destruction was complete. The locusts had destroyed all the **grapevines**, so no more wine could be made (v. 5). Since Israel’s worship system included daily grain offerings and drink offerings, the **priests were “in mourning”** because they had nothing to offer to God (v. 9). This locust swarm was a symbol of an even greater destruction coming upon Judah for her unfaithfulness, “the day of the Lord” (v. 15).*

## **OPENING**

up to the Word

## **DIGGING**

into the Word

## **LIVING**

out the Word

## **WINDOW**

on the Word



*“...for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.”*

Joel 2:1-2

# Storm Warning

DAY 17

Joel 2:1-17

Have you ever received a warning about a storm, tornado, hurricane, volcano or earthquake? What were the signs of imminent danger?

1. What did blowing the trumpet in Zion indicate (v. 1)?
2. Was Joel talking about a locust swarm or a military invasion? Could this description refer to both?
3. Whose army does verse 11 say this was, and what did that indicate?
4. What could Judah do to stop this horrible judgment (v. 12)?
5. What hope did Judah have in the character of God (v. 13)?

1. Can you think of a time in your life when your actions deserved God's discipline—but he brought healing instead of pain?

2. Is it ever too late to start doing the right thing?

3. When you have sinned before God, what do you perceive his attitude to be toward you (see Joel 2:13; Ro 8:1)? What is God's attitude toward us now? (a) frustrated, (b) angry, (c) disappointed, (d) bitter, (e) gracious, compassionate and slow to anger.

*Some commentators feel this section is describing a **human army, and likening it to a locust swarm** Judah had recently experienced. The heads of locusts and horses are similar. Both human armies and locust swarms move quickly, and the sound of locusts might be likened to the sound of speeding chariots.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## A Great Big, Beautiful Tomorrow

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Joel 2:18-27

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

What great event are you eagerly looking forward to, but which has not yet come? Will things be different than they are now?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. What did the Lord promise to send Israel one day (v. 19)? Why these specific things?
2. What might God be referring to by “the northern army” (v. 20)?
3. In verses 26 and 27 God says a day is coming when Israel will never again feel a specific emotion. Which emotion is that?


**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you ever had to do without certain things in life that other people had? Was that a good experience for you, or a bad one? What did you learn from it (Php 4:11-13)?
2. What lesson do you think God might be teaching you through having too little at certain times, and abundance at others? (a) “If you don’t obey me, I’ll punish you!” (b) “I want you to know who’s in charge!” (c) “I want to teach you to lean on me and learn to be content in all your life experiences;” (d) “I want to keep you desperate, so you’ll learn faith and build character;” e) another lesson you might perceive—expressed in your own words.
3. Have you ever experienced God’s restoration of your life after you had sinned against him? What meant the most to you in that moment?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

The “**autumn and spring rains**” (v. 23) were to come in September-October (autumn) and March-April (spring). These were promised by God in Deuteronomy 11:14, dependent on Israel’s faithfulness. They were withheld as a sign of his displeasure. “**The autumn rains in righteousness**” (v. 23) means that as a result of Israel’s doing right and turning again to her God, the promised rains would come on schedule.





*“Be not afraid, O wild  
animals, for the open  
pastures are becoming  
green. The trees are bearing  
their fruit; the fig tree and  
the vine yield their riches.”*

Joel 2:22

## Signs of Things to Come

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Joel 2:28-32

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

List three things that you are eagerly looking forward to. List three things that you would dread.

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** On whom did God promise to pour out his Spirit (vs. 28-29)? Does this promise appear to be restricted to Israel?

**2.** What kind of signs will appear (vs. 30-31)?

**3.** Do these signs indicate something good is going to happen, or something bad (vs. 30-31)?

**4.** Who will escape from this dreadful day (v. 32)?

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**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** When you hear about wonders and miracles being done, do you believe what you hear or are you skeptical? Why?

**2.** When did you first call on “the name of the Lord,” (v. 32) and what change did that bring about in your life?

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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*On the day of **Pentecost**, Peter quoted this section of Scripture as an explanation of what was occurring in Jerusalem with the new church (Ac 2:16-21).*

# Payback!

DAY 20

Joel 3

How do you feel when you see someone do something immoral or illegal and escape punishment?

1. Where is the Valley of Jehoshaphat (v. 2)?
2. What terrible things does God accuse many nations of doing to the people of Israel (vs. 2-3)?
3. Who were the Sabeans (v. 8)?
4. What is the Valley of Decision (v. 14)?
5. How can mountains drip with new wine (v. 18) and hills flow with milk? To what might this imagery refer?

1. Has anyone ever wronged you, and yet seemed to have gotten off without being penalized?
2. When someone wrongs you, what is your typical reaction? (a) get angry, (b) become sad, (c) forgive them, (d) ignore it, (e) forget it.

*“Valley of Jehoshaphat” (v. 2). This is the only place in the Bible that such a valley is mentioned. Some feel it may have been a place known by that specific name at that time. Others suggest it is a future valley to be formed by the splitting of the Mount of Olives at the Messiah’s return (Zec 14:4).*

*Jehoshaphat means “the Lord judges.” **Sabeans** (v. 7) were an Arabian people noted for their commercial activities. **Tyre and Sidon** were Phoenician cities, who along with the Philistines would profit when Judah was destroyed. Both these countries were associated with the slave trade, and here, with Jewish slaves. The people of Sidon were sold into slavery by Antiochus III, in 345 B.C. Citizens of Tyre and Gaza were enslaved by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. **“Mountains will drip new wine, hills will flow with milk.”** Both of these images typify prosperity and abundance.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

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# *Introduction to Amos*

**Authorship:** Amos did not count himself among those who were “vocational” prophets. He was a shepherd and grower of sycamore fruit from Tekoa, a town in the hill country of Judah. It is apparent that Amos was respected in his community.

**Date:** Amos prophesied approximately 760-753 B.C to the northern kingdom of Israel, and preceded the prophet Hosea, although their ministries may have overlapped at some point.

**Setting and purpose:** Amos lived in a time of prosperity. The long reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel had brought stability, prosperity and new territory to the two kingdoms. Not since Solomon had these two kingdoms ruled this much territory. These were the “good times,” economically and politically. An upper class had developed who unfortunately had gotten much of their prosperity at the expense of the poor, and often took from the poor what little they had. While the rich got richer, the poor were turned into slaves when they were unable to pay back their debts to the rich. While prosperity was at its highest, morality was at its lowest point. The Israelites clung to the rituals of their faith, but did not have a heart for God. Idolatry was rampant.

The message of the Lord through Amos was that God was not with them as they had assumed he was. Though they had been ritually faithful, their hearts had betrayed the Lord. He heard the cry of the poor and destitute, and he would bring judgment. In the midst of prosperity, Amos brought a message of warning of impending judgment, one that the people found incredible.

**Outline:**

**I. WARNING OF IMPENDING DISASTER, 1:1-2:16**

- A. There Goes the Neighborhood!, 1:1-15
- B. The Painful Truth, 2:1-16

**II. GOD'S CASE AGAINST HIS PEOPLE, 3:1-6:14**

- A. An Inevitable Conclusion, 3:1-15
- B. Prone to Wander, 4:1-13
- C. The Justice of a Nation, 5:1-17
- D. A Nasty Surprise, 5:18-27
- E. The Death of the Good Life, 6:1-14

**III. SCENES OF FINAL JUDGEMENT, 7:1-9:15**

- A. Three Strikes, You're Out!, 7:1-17
- B. Ripe for the Picking, 8:1-14
- C. You Can Run, but You Can't Hide! 9:1-15

## There Goes the Neighborhood

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Amos 1

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever had bad experiences with any of your neighbors? What was the cause?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

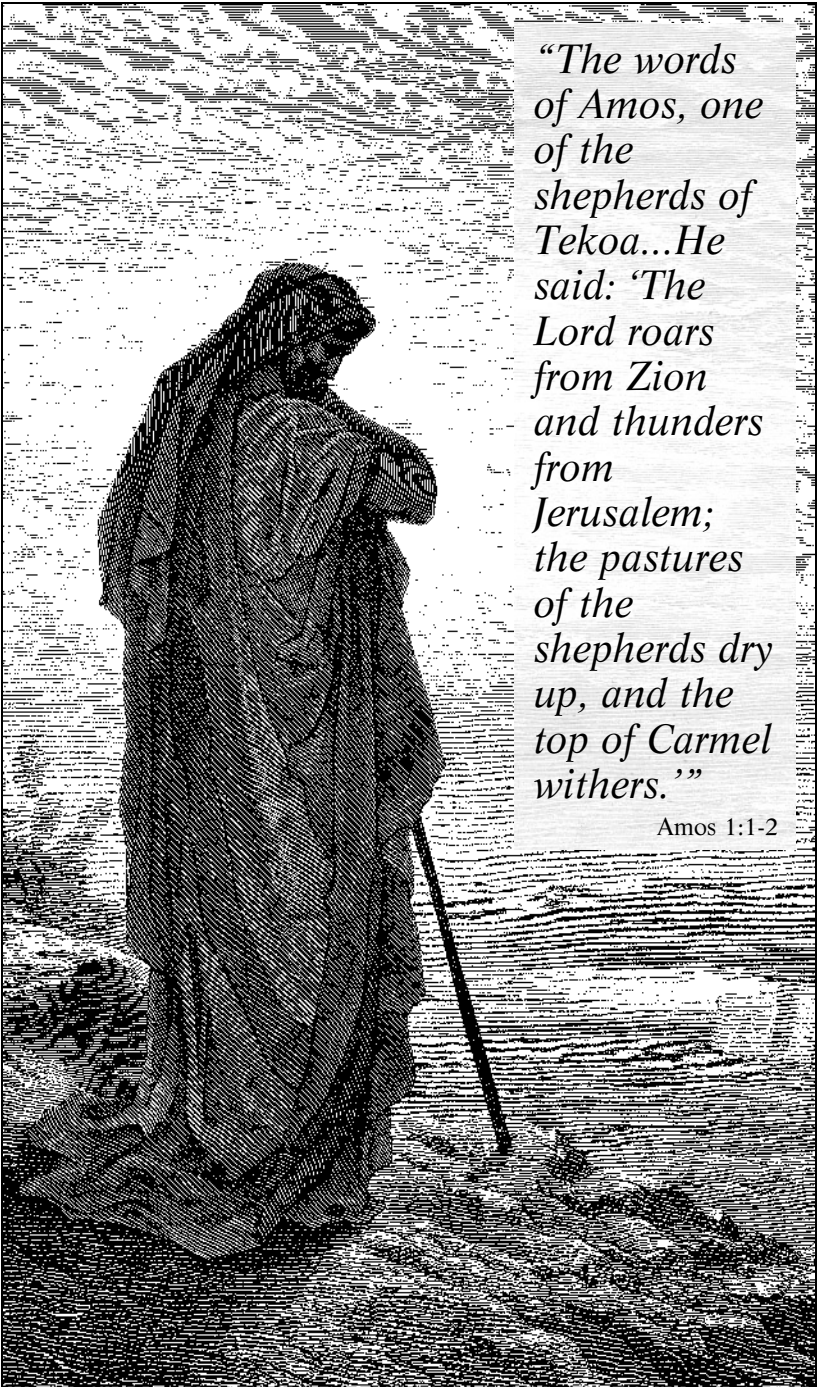
1. What earthquake is mentioned here, and how bad was it (v. 1)?
  2. The formula of “three and four” (vs. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6) seems to be a formula that sometimes involves a literal interpretation and at other times refers to an indefinite number.
  3. Why did God decide to judge the people of Damascus, Gaza, Tyre and Ammon (vs. 3, 6, 9, 13)?
  4. What method of punishment was the same for all the neighboring countries (vs. 4, 7, 10, 14)?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you ever had a friend or neighbor take advantage of you in some way that you were helpless to stop?
  2. What kind of neighborhood feuds have you witnessed and what was the result?
  3. Have you ever been guilty of “stifling all compassion” (v. 11) toward a friend or neighbor?
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

***Tekoa** was a town ten miles south of Jerusalem in the Judean mountains. The town had a commanding view of the wilderness and the Mount of Olives. Josephus connects the **earthquake** mentioned here with the events of 2 Chronicles 26:16-20. Archaeological excavations at Hazor and Samaria have uncovered evidence of a violent earthquake in Israel about 760 B.C. **Damascus**, (v. 3) the capital city of Syria, represented the entire nation of Syria (Aram).*



*“The words  
of Amos, one  
of the  
shepherds of  
Tekoa...He  
said: ‘The  
Lord roars  
from Zion  
and thunders  
from  
Jerusalem;  
the pastures  
of the  
shepherds dry  
up, and the  
top of Carmel  
withers.’”*

Amos 1:1-2