Interpretation and Structure in Joel

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ABSTRACT: Despite renewed interest in the book of Joel and its relationship to the "Book of the Twelve," scholarly opinions still significantly diverge on the structure of the book of Joel itself. This article surveys recent significant and representative proposals for Joel's structure before arguing for an alternative unified structure based upon grammar, literary markers or "catchwords," and structural relationships (as described by David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina in *Inductive Bible Study*).

INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years, it has been suggested that Old Testament scholarship has found a new object of study: The Book of the Twelve.[1] At the thematic center of the Twelve is the book of Joel. Joel has been described as "the writing through which all major themes of the Twelve must travel."[2] One scholar has suggested the book of Joel, along with an emphasis on judgment and cultic confessions like Exod 34:6-7, were the three essential theological influences on the editors of the Twelve.[3]

Unfortunately, scholarship is largely undecided on foundational issues in the interpretation of Joel like the structure of the text. Most major volumes treating the Twelve as a whole in the last decade have devoted an entire article to Joel, each by a different author with a different approach.[4] The purpose of this paper is to discern a comprehensive structure for the book of Joel; because of the essential role structure plays in interpretation, such an examination is critical to understand Joel's unified composition.[5]

This study will proceed in four sections. The first section will establish definitions and address issues of methodology. The second section will survey various representational structural understandings of Joel. The third section will propose an alternative structure by first

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1. The discussion regarding the shape and form of the Twelve as a single text is both lively and engaging. Paul Redditt describes the running thesis for a unified book is that "The Twelve underwent a process of growth that resulted in a coherent collection every bit as deserving to be called a book as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel" from "The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Review of Research" in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (eds. Paul L. Redditt and Aaron Schart; Berlin: Walter de Guyter, 2003), 3. It is argued that it exhibits a theme, plot, and direction greater than the sum of its individual parts. Even those endorsing this thesis have variable positions. James D. Nogalski suggests the Twelve is a unified literary composition where each book is essentially a chapter and they are bound together through allusion and intertextuality. David L. Peterson instead approaches the Twelve as a "thematized anthology;" see "A Book of the Twelve?," in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (eds. James Nogalski and Marvin Sweeney, Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 10. This thesis is not uncontested and major critics of it include Ehud Ben Zvi who views these texts as twelve separate books. For additional discussions on the formation and existence of the Twelve, see James Nogalski and Ben Zvi, *Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting the Book of the Twelve/the Twelve Prophetic Books* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2009); Ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books,"

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in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (eds. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1996), 102-24; Rolf Rendtorff, "How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity," in Nogalski and Sweeney, *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 75-86. For the quoted claim, see Jakob Wöhrle, "So Many Cross-References! Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Intertextual Relationships and their Significance for Redaction Critical Analysis," in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve* (eds. Rainer Albertz, James D. Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle; Berlin: Walter de Guyter, 2012), 3.

2. James Nogalski, "Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the book of the Twelve," in Nogalski and Sweeney, *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 105

3. Paul L. Redditt, "The Production and Reading of the Twelve," in Nogalski and Sweeney, *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 16-24.

4. For examples, see Nogalski, "Literary Anchor," 3-10; Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Place and Function of Joel in the Book of the Twelve," in Redditt and Schart, *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 133-54; Jörg Jeremias, "The Function of the Book of Joel for Reading the Twelve," in Albertz, Nogalski, and Wöhrle, *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve,* 21-34.

5. The term "unified whole" means a lot of different things to different people. By using this term, I am not definitively suggesting that it was the work of a single author but rather that the final form was at least the composition of a single redactor and as a whole is intelligently arranged. This position is similar to the one held by James Nogalski. See James Nogalski, *Book of the Twelve: Hosea-Jonah* (SHBC; Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), 201-53 and Nogalski, "Literary Anchor," 91-109.

identifying synchronic textual linguistic features that support the proposed structure and then suggest structural relationships that describe the semantic movement of the text based on those presented by Robert A. Traina and David R. Bauer in *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*.[6] The final section will explore the implications of the proposed structure for the study of Joel itself and Joel's role in the book of the Twelve as a whole.

DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This section will briefly establish definitions and address issues of methodology. The Hebrew text used in this study is the *BHQ* and the four-chapter arrangement therein will be used when referring to Joel.[7] When LXX is used in this study, it refers to the critical Göttingen edition.[8]

A number of technical terms will be used throughout the study and each must be defined. Book structure refers to the arrangement of materials ordered such that they form a book. The exact definition of what entails a book is debated.[9] For the purposes of this study, a prophetic book will be defined as:

> A text characterized by a clear beginning and a conclusion, by a substantial level of textual coherence and of textually inscribed distinctiveness vis-à-vis other prophetic books, and that, accordingly, leads its intended primary readers (and rereaders) to approach it in a manner that takes into account this distinctiveness, is *by necessity* socially and historically dependent.[10]

6. David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

7. Anthony Gelston, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: The Twelve Minor Prophets* (Stuttgart: Hendrickson, 2011).

8. Joseph Ziegler, *Septuaginta. Band 13: Duodecim Prophetae* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

9. Ehud Ben Zvi offers an excellent survey of this topic both generally and also specifically for prophetic books. See Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (eds. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 276-97.

10. Ben Zvi, "Prophetic Book," 281 (emphasis original).

Ben Zvi identifies three consistent structural elements found in prophetic texts: introduction, conclusion, and the body of the book that consists of a series of "prophetic readings."[11] These elements will be described using language of units, sub-units, and segments. Units are portions of text that share similar content, themes, and grammatical structures, and should always be as broad as the material allows.[12] Divisions between units should mark shifts in emphasis or material. Divisions between materials within a unit are marked by subunits. Similarly, pericopes mark divisions within subunits. The purpose of these identifications is not to portion or atomize a text but rather to identify shifts in content in order to identify synchronic semantic transitions or diachronic text critical concerns. Relationships between units and subunits will be described as semantic movement and specific structural relationships (especially those described in Bauer and Traina, which reflect the structural analysis developed throughout the history of Inductive Bible Study) will be used to articulate the activity of these

11. Ben Zvi, "Prophetic Book," 286. An *Introduction* will identify the prophet and often the context. Sometimes the introduction will serve as the title of the book. *Conclusions* set the boundary of a book. They often included "markedly unique expressions" that captured the unique character of the book and conveyed a sense of hope to the reader and readers of a book. Ben Zvi cites Isa 66:24; Ezek 48:35; Hos 14:10 [Eng 9]; Mic 7:20; Jonah 4:11; and Mal 3:24 [Eng. 4:6] as clear examples of this phenomenon. These are not to be confused with colophons. Conclusions, contrary to expectations associated with colophons, "contain no information about the actual or fictive author of the book, nor about any scribal aspect of the production of the book such as the name of the scribe making the copy, or the purpose of producing the copy;" see Ehud Ben Zvi, *Micah* (v. XXIB, FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 184. For examples of colophons, see Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 172, 178, 180. *Prophetic readings* are "literary units within a prophetic book that shows textually inscribed, discursive markers that were likely to suggest its intended and primary readership that they were supposed—or were at least invited –to read and reread these sections as cohesive subunits within the frame of the prophetic book as a whole." See Ben Zvi, "Prophetic Book," 286-287; also Ben Zvi, *Micah*, 188.

12. One of the dangers of analyzing a text's structure is the atomization of the text into small isolated elements that will often result in missing the overarching movement of the composition. Units, as the highest tier of a survey's structure, should describe large sweeps of similar material and divisions between units should correspondingly mark major shifts in the content of the text as a whole. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 88-89.

movements.[13]

Due to the focus on text structure, this study will involve predominately a synchronic analysis.[14] Underlying this focus on structure is a commitment to *Inductive Bible Study* methodology and a close reading of the final form of the text as represented in *BHQ*.[15] The focus of this study will be based on primary observations of the text of Joel as an individual text first. It is my contention that assumptions cannot be made regarding Joel's relationship to surrounding books until a thorough understanding of its internal structure is understood.[16]

At the heart of this study's approach is a commitment to the importance of structure in interpretation. A strong structural understanding will not assure a good interpretation but a bad structural

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13. Structural relationships may include but are not restricted to any of the following movements: *Contrast* (association of opposites or of things whose differences the writer wishes to stress), *Comparison* (association of like things, or of things whose similarities are emphasized by the writer), *Climax* (movement from lesser to greater, toward a high point of culmination), *Particularization* (movement from general to particular), *Generalization* (movement from particular to general), *Causation* (movement from cause to effect), *Substantiation* (movement from effect to cause), *Cruciality* (movement involves a change of direction around a pivot), *Summarization* (an abridgment that sums up either preceding or following a unit of material), *Interrogation* (employment of a question or problem followed by answer or solution), *Preparation/Realization* (an introduction that provides background for setting or events), *Instrumentation* (movement from means to end). See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 94-116.

14. This is not to say that diachronic observations or analysis will not come into play at various points but rather the starting point is a synchronic analysis. This approach does suggest that not all things difficult to understand or explain are to be attributed to redactors.

15. While familiarity with this methodology is not pertinent to understanding the contents of this study, knowledge of it would potentially further inform readers regarding methods and presuppositions. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study.*

16. The various orders found between the LXX and MT are perfect examples of this. Sweeney has compellingly defended the LXX priority over the MT order; see Marvin Sweeney, "Sequence and Interpretation in the Book of the Twelve," in Nogalski and Sweeney *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 49-64. See also Sweeney, "Synchronic and Diachronic Concerns in Reading the Book of the Twelve Prophets," in Albertz, Nogalski, and Wöhrle, *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve*, 21-34. If Sweeney's proposed LXX priority is accurate, it calls into question the "dovetailing" of the text with Joel's neighbors,

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understanding can obscure meaning and hinder interpretation. A proper structural study should accurately identify the pericopes within a text in a sensible way such that semantic movements in a text may be accurately explained. This study will now survey scholarly proposals for the structure of Joel.

STRUCTURE SURVEY

The structure and unity of Joel has been contested for over a century since concerns over the book's unity were advanced by M. Vernes, and soon followed by J. W. Rothstein and B. Duhm.[17] This section will survey representative examples of current structural understandings of the book of Joel. The perspectives of the following individuals will be surveyed: Hans Walter Wolff (1975), Willem S. Prinsloo (1985), Duane A. Garrett (1985), John Barton (2001), Marvin A. Sweeney (2005), David A. Bauer and Robert R. Traina (2011), and James D. Nogalski (2011). While this list is not exhaustive, each individual serves as a representative example of a major structural understanding of the book of Joel. We will examine each structural proposal, and then offer a brief response and critique.

Hans Walter Wolff

Similar to the arguments of H. Müller before him,[18] Hans Walter Wolff argues for a unified text and claims there is a symmetrical structure to Joel that is centered at the junction between 2:17 and 2:18. He suggests,

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as Nogalski would defend. What (largely) cannot be argued are the contents of the book of Joel itself given the mostly consistent character of the text in MT, LXX, and other traditions. Given our definition of units and subunits, Joel could still be understood as a unit within the Twelve with coherent subunits and segments within itself.

17. For these sources see, Maurice Vernes, *Le Peuple d'Israël et ses espèrances relatives à son avenir depuis les origins jusqu'a l'èpoque persane (Ve siècle avant J.C.)* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1872); Samuel Rolles Driver, *Einleitung in die Literatur des Alten Testaments*, translated and annotated by Johann Wilhelm Rothestein (Berlin: Reuther, 1896), 333-34; Bernhard Duhm, "Anmerkungen zu den Zwölf Propheten," *ZAW* 31 (1911): 161-204. For surveys of this issue see L.C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 25-28 and more recently, John Barton, *Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 5-14.

18. See H. Müller, "Prophetie und Apokalyptik bei Joel," *Theologia Viatorum* 10 (1966): 231-52.

"When the book's entire message is taken into consideration, a decisive turning point—not only for the second chapter but for the book as a whole—becomes apparent at the junction between 2:17 and 18 .... The portions of book on either side of this midpoint forms an almost perfect symmetry."[19]
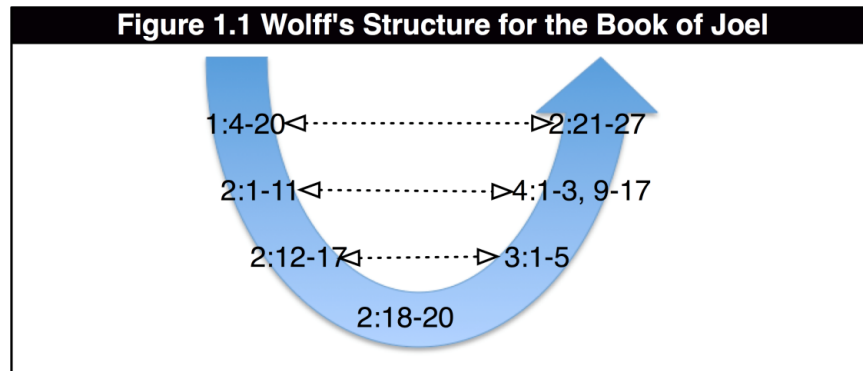

Figure 1.1 Wolff's Structure for the Book of Joel

Figure 1.1 displays Wolff's understanding and the coordinating relationships Wolff is proposing. Wolff suggests that the lament regarding the current scarcity of provision in 1:4-20 is balanced against the promise of abundant provision in 2:21-27. Similarly, the announcement of eschatological catastrophe for Jerusalem in 2:1-11 is balanced against the reversal of Jerusalem's fortune in 4:1-3 and 4:9-17. Finally, Wolff suggests the call to return to Yahweh of 2:12-17 is balanced against the pouring out of the spirit and the deliverance of those repentant in 3:1-5.

In Wolff's analysis, his observations regarding the sharp turn from judgment to provision between 2:17 and 2:18 are astute. The flow of the text certainly does experience a dramatic reversal at this point. Historically Wolff is not alone in this position.[20] Despite this canny observation, the issues with his structure of Joel are numerous. First and foremost, Wolff's observation of "almost perfect symmetry" is misleading because, to make such an observation, a reorganization of the text is required in order to achieve either a sequential or inverted symmetry. Additionally, the relationship between some of these "balanced" units is questionable at best. It is not clear in what ways 2:12-
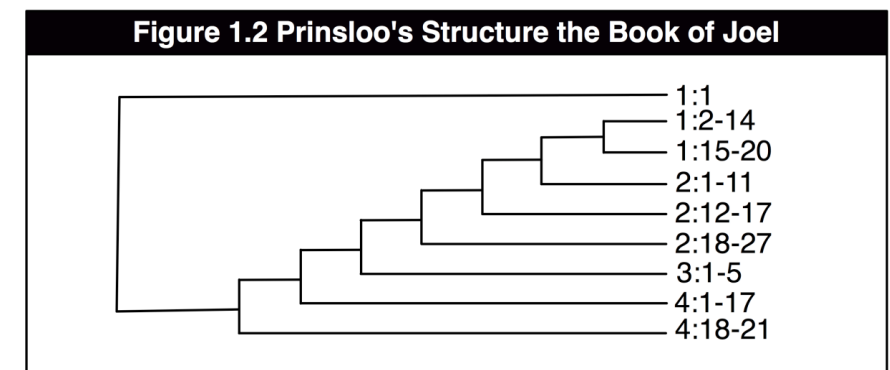
19. Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 7.

20. See C. F. Keil, *Joel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 171 and S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian, 1956), 307. More recently, Allen has advanced such a position in *Books* (NICOT), 39-43.

17 and 3:1-5 correspond. Wolff appears to balance the "necessity of the moment" against "eschatological necessity," as noted by Barton, but such associations are linguistically tenuous at best.[21] Wolff would have a stronger case associating the calls to repentance in these units but this is a connection that he does not make. Finally, Wolff does not address all of the text, as both 4:4-8 and 4:18-21 are notably missing. For an individual arguing for the unity of the text, all the text must be accounted for. This is a distinct weakness in his position. While his observations regarding the critical nature of 2:18 are significant, the "almost perfect symmetry" advanced by Wolff is lacking and insufficient to explain the overall structure of Joel.

Willem S. Prinsloo

Departing from the linear symmetrical division of Wolff, Willem S. Prinsloo instead suggests that the structure of Joel should be understood as a step-by-step progression where each step represents an expansion upon the previous step.[22] Prinsloo suggests that each pericope, through word and phrase repetition, links to previous pericopes in an ascending pattern. Because of this ascending expansive progression, Prinsloo views the final unit, 4:18-21, as the climax of the book. Figure 1.2 illustrates Prinsloo's understanding of this structure.[23]

Figure 1.2 Prinsloo's Structure the Book of Joel

| 1:1 |
| 1:2-14 |
| 1:15-20 |
| 2:1-11 |
| 2:12-17 |
| 2:18-27 |
| 3:1-5 |
| 4:1-17 |
| 4:18-21 |

Overall, Prinsloo makes a compelling case for the unity of the text through demonstrating the essential relatedness of each of the various pericopes with one another. Prinsloo has an accurate grasp of the

21. Barton, *Joel* (OTL), 11.

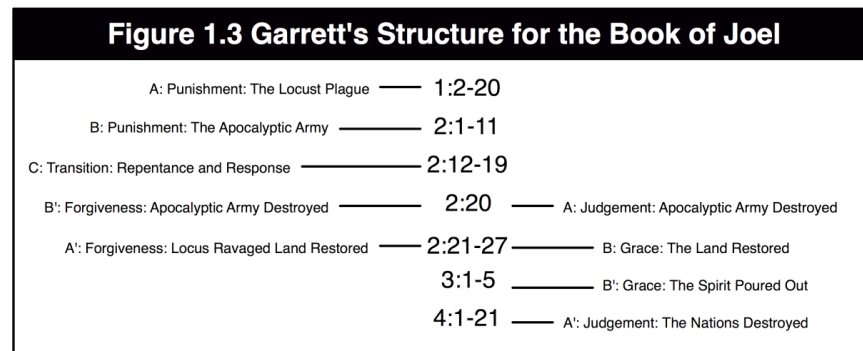22. Willem S. Prinsloo, *The Theology of the Book of Joel* (Berlin: Walter de Guyter, 1985), 122-127.

23. The structural diagram is reproduced from Prinsloo, *Theology,* 123.

grammatical divisions between subunits in the text and I agree with his divisions. Additionally, Prinsloo appears to be identifying a significant movement in the text, specifically the expansion in the understanding of הוהי םוי as the text progresses.

Unfortunately, Prinsloo's structure fails to account for the dramatic shift in the direction of the text at 2:18. His model, though accounting for one movement in the text, neglects this essential transition. Similarly, by identifying 4:18-21 as the climax of the book, Prinsloo neglects the climax of sorrow reflected in the rhetorical questions of Joel in the first half of the book. Prinsloo's model has compelling features but lacks the explanatory power needed to nuance the various currents throughout the text.

Duane Garrett

In an approach very different from his predecessors, Duane Garrett claims the structure of Joel should be understood through a pair of overlapping, interlocking chiasms that span the entire book.[24] Observe his structure in figure 1.3:

Figure 1.3 Garrett's Structure for the Book of Joel

A: Punishment: The Locust Plague — 1:2-20
B: Punishment: The Apocalyptic Army — 2:1-11
C: Transition: Repentance and Response — 2:12-19
B': Forgiveness: Apocalyptic Army Destroyed — 2:20 — A: Judgement: Apocalyptic Army Destroyed
A': Forgiveness: Locus Ravaged Land Restored — 2:21-27 — B: Grace: The Land Restored
3:1-5 — B': Grace: The Spirit Poured Out
4:1-21 — A': Judgement: The Nations Destroyed

This structure, while novel, suffers at a number of junctures. The first concern is regarding unit breaks. In some instances, clear transitions in the grammar and materials are ignored in the service of creating corresponding chiastic units. As noted in Prinsloo's structure, vss. 1:15-20 and 4:18-21 are grammatically their own units but Garrett recognizes no such distinction. The opposite appears to be true in the sectioning off of small material (2:20) from other units in order to better

create chiastic units.[25]

Additionally, Garrett links the apocalyptic army of 2:1-11 with the northern army of 2:20 when there is neither clear conception nor linguistic links between these entities. Finally, the disjunctive nature of this dual-chiastic model unnecessarily bifurcates the material of the text from itself, as if implying the material of 3:1-4:21 has nothing to do with 1:2-2:27. The literary markers that will be examined in the next section will clearly demonstrate this is not the case.

John Barton

John Barton's position is representative of those who struggle with identifying any overall unifying structure for the book of Joel. Consumed with the diachronic concerns of compositional history and proposed socio-historical settings, his position treats the final form of Joel as little more than a historical accident with little overall structure or unity.[26] He does not suggest that no structure is observed in the text, as presented in figure 1.4; but he relegates the second half of the text to isolated pericopes that have been grafted onto the main body of Joel.[27]

Figure 1.4 Barton's Book of Joel Structure

Superscription	I. First Lament Cycle			II. Second Lament Cycle			III. Divine Response					IV. Miscellaneous Oracles of Salvation									
	1:2----------------1:20			2:1----------------2:17			2:18-----------2:27					3:1-------------------------------4:21									
	A. Details Of Disaster	B. Call to Lament	C. The Lament	A. Details Of Disaster	B. Call to Lament	C. The Lament	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1:1	1:2-4	1:5-1:14	1:15-20	2:1----2:11	2:12-17a	2:17bc	2:18-19	2:20	2:21-24	2:25	2:26-27	3:1-2	3:3-5	4:1-3	4:4-8	4:9-13	4:14-15	4:16	4:17	4:18	4:19-21

Barton suggests that 1:2-2:17 has been clearly organized into two parallel lament cycles followed by a divine response in 2:18-27. Barton claims that the material in 3:1 and following is a "miscellaneous collection of oracles, assembled in no particular order at all."[28] Correspondingly, he treats each pericope as its own self-contained subunit.

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24. Duane Garrett, "The Structure of Joel," *JETS* 28 (1985): 289-97.

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25. The irony with this charge against Garrett is that Garrett critiques Allen for doing a similar thing in defense of chiastic structures Allen had suggested were in the text. See Garrett, "Structure," 294 n.33.

26. This position is not unusual in the interpretation of Joel. See Marvin Sweeney, "The Place and Function of Joel," 136.

27. Barton, *Joel* (OTL), 14.

28. Barton, *Joel* (OTL), 14.

Figure 1.5 Sweeney's Book of Joel Structure

Superscription	I. Prophet's Call to Communal Complaint concerning the Threat of the Locust Plague			II. Prophet's Call to Communal Complaint concerning the Threat of Invasion	III. Prophet's Announcement of YHWH's Response to Protect People from Threats		
	1:2----------1:20			2:1----------2:14	2:15----------4:21		
	A B C D	E		A	B	A	B	C
1:1		1:13-----1:20	2:1---------2:11	2:12-14	2:15--2:20	2:21------------4:8	4:9------------4:21

Barton's interpretation of chapters 1 and 2 is compelling, though the final subunit in the second lament cycle (2:17bc) does appear forced.[29] It is significant that Barton correctly identifies 2:18 as a divine response where others seek to explain away the verbal conjugations in this verse as future rather than past narrative. Ultimately, Barton's suggested structure (or lack of structure) is problematic if it can be demonstrated that the later oracles are bound to the prior material in an organic and cohesive way. These connections and the divine response of 2:18 will be the focus of the next section.

Marvin A. Sweeney

In a radical shift from those before him, Sweeney ignores many common standard unit divisions for the book of Joel and instead suggests that the entire structure of the text is formulated around imperatival addresses.[30] Sweeney dismisses a two-part division of Joel because,

> The standard two-part division of Joel is not based on a full assessment of its synchronic textual linguistic form, including its syntactic and semantic forms of expression; rather, it is based largely upon the book's most basic thematic motifs, i.e. judgment and restoration, which are conveyed by its linguistic form.[31]

Instead, Sweeney is interested in identifying the linguistic features in the commands to "hear this, O elders" in Joel 1:2 and "blow

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29. Barton apparently sees the structure of the first cycle of lament (1:2-20) as a template for the second lament cycle (2:1-17) he identifies. I suggest it is forced given that he corresponds 1:15-20 to a very minor portion of 2:17bc, which itself is an expansion of indirect speech by those being called to lament. Barton's identified "lament" in 2:17bc is quite different than the first person cries of the prophet in 1:15-20. For Barton's treatment of this passage, see Barton, *Joel* (OTL), 82-84.

30. Sweeney, "Place and Function of Joel," 139.

31. Sweeney, "Place and Function of Joel," 137.

Figure 1.6 Bauer and Traina's Book of Joel Structure

General Heading	I. The day of the Lord reflected in present historical events in Judah and Jerusalem			II. The day of the Lord as future cosmic judgment and salvation	
	1:2----------------------------------2:27			3:1----------------------------4:21	
	A. Devastation of Judah and Jerusalem (pointing to the day of the Lord), with consequent call to repentance		B. Deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem from devastation of locusts and draught	A. Deliverance and Blessing for the righteous (repenting) remnant of Judah	B. Vindication of righteous Judah/Jerusalem in the midst of judgment upon the wicked and exploitive nations
	1. Ruination of Judah and Jerusalem		2. Call to return to the Lord		
	a. Call to Lamentation	b. Call to Alarm			
1:1	1:2----------------------1:20	2:1---------2:11	2:12--17	2:18----------------2:27	3:1---------3:5	4:1----------------4:21

the *shofar* in Zion" in Joel 2:1 and 2:15 as addresses to the audience (hearers or readers) and rhetorical markers for the structure of the text. As such, he desires to make these markers the beginning of each of the major units.[32]

In Sweeney's assessment, the imperative to "blow the *shofar* in Zion" in Joel 2:15 parallels that same command in 2:1, thus marking the start of a unit.[33] Unfortunately, quite the opposite appears to be at work in the structure of the text. Rather than each *shofar* blast marking the start of a unit, the second *shofar* command is part of a summarizing series of commands that collectively reiterate key commands throughout the first half of the text.[34] Sweeney is right to identify the essential role commands serve in this text; but unfortunately his entire structural analysis is based on a reiterated command in a summary statement in 2:15. The precise relationship of these imperatives to one another will be explored in the following section.

Robert A. Traina and David R. Bauer

Another structure for the book of Joel was recently advanced by Robert A. Traina and David R. Bauer in *Inductive Bible Study*.[35] While this volume is primarily a guide for hermeneutics, one of the foundational

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32. Sweeney, "Place and Function of Joel," 138. See also 7.2.12 on p. 48.

33. Sweeney, "Place and Function of Joel," 140.

34. Briefly note that where the command to blow the shofar in 2:15 parallels the command in 2:1, the other commands to "call," "consecrate," and "gather" in 2:15 parallel similar commands in 1:14. This collective series of commands in 2:15 instead appears to be a summative statement tying together the exhortations (in 1:14 and 2:1) that have come previously as the lament climaxes in this subunit. These concerns will be examined in the next section.

35. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*.

tasks adopted by Bauer and Traina is to instruct readers to discern the structure and movement within a text. Bauer and Traina use the structure of Joel as an example for displaying main units and subunits in surveys of books-as-wholes. [36]

This assessment of the structure of Joel accurately captures most of the major shifts in the text, identifying many of the same divisions as Prinsloo, but missing the shifts of emphasis at 1:15 and 4:18. Traina and Bauer place the major turning point of the text at 3:1 and suggest this major division is marked by the shift from historic concerns to future cosmic judgment and salvation.

Traina and Bauer are right to identify the future character of 3:1 but the distinct transition to future begins much earlier at 2:18 and is advanced by parallel sequential perfect plus *waw*-consecutive וְהָיָה clauses in 3:1 and 4:18.[37] Some have argued that the Hebrew phrase וְהָיָה וְכֵי־יֵרְחָא and similar constructions are particular markers of an eschatological future but Marvin Sweeney has demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case. [38] In fairness to their position, Traina and Bauer do not explicitly endorse an "eschatological" framework for this text but rather an unrealized future reality of cosmic proportions. Much of our disagreement centers on their choice to place the major shifting point at the cosmic expansion of the Day of the Lord in 3:1 rather than the more general shift to the future in 2:18. Overall, Traina and Bauer offer a strong understanding of the implicitly advancing temporal character of the text and of the book as a whole but arguably miss the significance of the shift to the future in 2:18.

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36. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 93.

37. For this construction, see Bill Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: University, 2003), 87-88.

38. Sweeney notes on a similar phrase, "Comparison with the usage of the Akkadian cognate of the phrase, *ana ahrat umi*, literally, 'in the back of days,' and examination of היהו סימיה תירחאב in context demonstrates that it simply refers to the future, not to an eschatological scenario as has been presumed by so many interpreters working under the influence of the LXX rendition of the phrase and its understanding in relation to NT concerns" ("Synchronic and Diachronic Concerns," 24). If this explicit of a phrase does not carry an eschatological subtext, it is hard to conceptualize how the more generic וְכֵי־יֵרְחָא הָיָה might.

James D. Nogalski

An overwhelmingly prolific writer on the Book of the Twelve, James Nogalski has taken a special interest in Joel and its role within the Twelve. Nogalski suggests that Joel was compiled by a final redactor specifically for the Book of the Twelve and subsequently serves as the 'literary anchor' for the Twelve by serving as the "interpretive key for unifying major literary threads in the Twelve."[39] Nogalski's understandings of Joel and the rest of the Twelve are most recently displayed in his two-volume Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary *The Book of the Twelve*.[40] Figure 1.7 displays Nogalski's understanding of Joel's structure.

Figure 1.7 Nogalski's Book of Joel Structure

Superscription	I. A Summons to Communal Repentance	II. A Warning and a Prayer	III. YHWH's Attacking Army	IV. A Renewed Call to Repentance	V. First Promise: Restoration of the Land	VI. Second Promise: A Different Day of YHWH	VII. Third Promise: Two Sides of the Day of YHWH 4:1----------------------------4:21			
							A. Thematic Introduction	B. Slave Traders Become Slaves	C. Judgment in the Valley	D. Fertility Beyond Measure
1:1	1:2---------1:14	1:15---20	2:1---------2:11	2:12----17	2:18---------------2:27	3:1----3:5	4:1-3	4:4-4:8	4:9-17	4:18-21

Overall, Nogalski's understanding of the individual subunits within the text corresponds closely with my own. Nogalski identifies all of the major transitions within the text and seems to have a solid grasp of the movement throughout the book. There is some confusion on how Nogalski understands the macrostructure of the book given that at different points in his commentary he suggests two different verses serve as the major turning point within the text.[41] I will expand upon Nogalski's basic structure by defending the cohesion of these sub-units and identifying the larger units they are a part of through grammatical and linguistic markers in the text.

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39. Nogalski, "Literary Anchor," 92.

40. James Nogalski, *Book of the Twelve: Hosea and Jonah* (2 vol., SHBC; Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2011)

41. He divides the book into two parts at 2:18 initially in his commentary and later suggests 2:12 similarly represents a major turning point. While these suggestions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, given the proximity of these passages to one another such a claim is difficult to resolve; see Nogalski, *Book of the Twelve*, 203 and 234.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

In this section an alternative structure from those previously analyzed will be suggested and defended. This argument will proceed in two parts. The first part will seek to establish a two-part division of Joel based on an analysis of the synchronic textual linguistic form rather than simply identifying the book's "most basic thematic motifs, i.e. judgment and restoration."[42] The second part will propose structural relationships between the various units and subunits in order to describe the semantic movement within the text. These structures will ideally reinforce the identified units and assist in understanding Joel as a unified whole.

Synchronic Analysis

The first part of this analysis will focus on distinctive markers within the text that will inform our understanding of the unity and structure of Joel. The specific literary markers within the text to be analyzed are the Day of YHWH, the strategic use of voice and imperatives, and a sequential framework.

Day of YHWH

It is widely recognized that the "Day of the Lord" is a foundational concept within the text of Joel.[43] Jörge Jeremias correctly surmises that it is the "one and only subject of the book of Joel."[44] In the Hebrew Bible, יום יהוה appears 15 times with 13 of those in the Book of the Twelve and five of these within Joel.[45] Beyond these five specific occurrences in 1:15;

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42. This approach and quotation refers to Sweeney's previously noted claim, "The standard two-part division of Joel is not based on a full assessment of its synchronic textual linguistic form, including its syntactic and semantic forms of expression; rather, it is based largely upon the book's most basic thematic motifs, i.e. judgment and restoration, which are conveyed by its linguistic form" ("Place and Function of Joel," 137).

43. See Nogalski, "The Day(s) of YHWH in the Book of the Twelve," in Redditt and Schart, *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 200-203. Also James L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB, New York: Doubleday, 1995), 47-50.

44. Jeremias, "Function of the Book of Joel," 78.

45. These texts are Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14 (x2); Mal 3:23. Other variants of this term are abundant. The "day of the wrath of YHWH," occurs three times total, twice in the twelve (Zeph 2:2, 3; Lam 2:22). Similarly, "the day belonging (using a *lamed*) to YHWH" occurs Isa 2:12; Ezek 30:3; 46:13; Zech 14:1. A similar form with the definite article occurs in narrative texts and refers specifically to a day of ritual

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2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14, Joel specifically contains six other *yôm* texts referring to divine interventions in varying phrases: the day (1:15), day of darkness and gloom (2:2), day of clouds and thick darkness (2:2), in those days (3:2, 4:1), and on that day (4:18).

The distribution, not just the frequency, of this language throughout Joel is noteworthy. While these phrases span the entire book, observe how the usage of these terms also align with the basic subunits proposed by Nogalski:

Figure 2.1 Basic Subunits
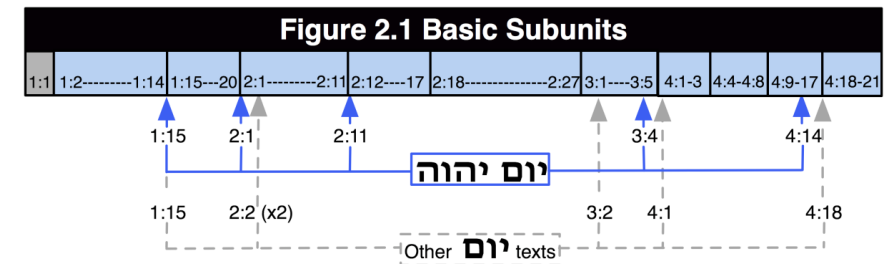
It is clear that not all of these occurrences correspond exclusively to shifts in the material. The concentrations in 1:15 and then again in 2:1-2 appear to be dramatic restatements of one another. The occurrences at 2:1 and 2:11 form a clear *inclusio* marking off the subunit on the invading "army." The concentrations in 3:1-4:1 are all inter-related regarding the sequential temporal shift that appears to take place at 3:1. The *yôm* occurrence at 4:18 is part of sequential וְהָיָה clause that parallels the similar sequential וְהָיָה in 3:1. The occurrence at 4:14 could be marking the end of the proclamation to the nations that began in 4:9; but the definite ending to this proclamation is not obvious.

Beyond the frequency and strategic references to the "Day of the Lord," the content of this day changes between the first and second half of Joel. In 1:2-2:17, the *yôm* is marked by judgment and destruction. In the second half of the text when the subject is picked up again in 3:1-5, this *yôm* is expanded to include salvation along with judgment and the remarkable outpouring of God's Spirit. It is this expansion of the concept

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celebration: Exod 16:25; 32:29; Lev 23:34; Deut 26:3; 1 Chr 29:5. For a much more thorough exploration of these occurrences, their cognates, and similar themes, see Nogalski, "Day(s) of YHWH," 192-213.

of *yôm* that Prinsloo's suggested structure attempts to capture.[46] Given this division, one might describe this expansion as a redefinition of what the *yôm* entails for the readers or hearers.

It is clear that the סוי הוהי is a central unifying, yet nuanced, topic in the book of Joel. From these observations one cannot conclusively suggest that these phrases are a sole organizing feature of the text; but they do seem to correspond to many of the places where the content and the focus of the text shifts. Additionally, the expansion of the meaning of *yôm* is a central movement in the book, since the expansion takes place after 2:18.

Voice

It has long been noted that a dramatic shift appears to happen in the text at 2:18. In Wolff's understanding, this passage serves as the fulcrum around which his entire structure pivoted.[47] Conceptually, it is clear that prior to 2:18 the סוי הוהי is strictly associated with judgment where after 2:18 judgment is held in tension with deliverance. While much work has been done analyzing this shift, little attention has been paid to the grammatical change of voice and tone that appears to shift in the text around this point.

Figure 2.2 Imperative Distribution in 1:1-2:17
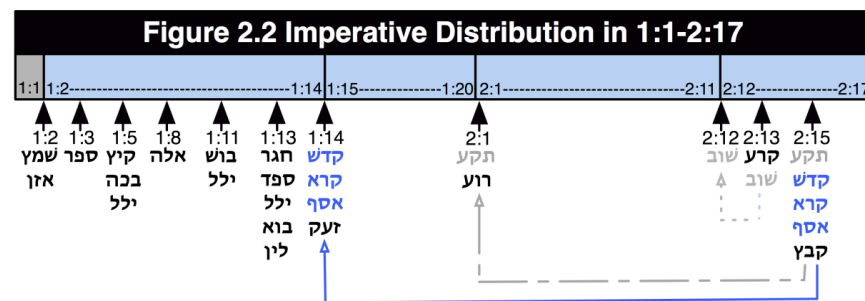
Prior to 2:18, the text is littered with imperative commands. There are 30 instances of imperative address in the first 37 verses (1:1-2:17) contrasted with just 13 in the last 36 (2:18-4:21). See Figure 2.2 for

46. I suggest that his model only "attempts" to get at this phenomenon because there appears to be an interlude in this discussion of the *yôm*, specifically 2:19b-27. Many would suggest that this is a salvation oracle regarding the *yôm*; but contextually the subject of the *yôm* is not again picked up until after 3:1. The deliverance of 2:19b-27 is YHWH being merciful to his people and to the land. The *yôm* will arguably come after these mercies.

47. Wolff, *Joel*, 7.

this distribution. The structure of the first half of the text is organized around these imperatives. Joel 1:2-14 has the highest concentration of imperatives; here the prophet calls the people to lament what has happened. Joel 1:15-20 switches from corporate imperative to personal lament. The use of first person in this subunit is the only instance of the first person voice in the first half of the book. From the context, it is clear that this is the prophet crying out, not the use of divine first person.[48]

A pair of commands divides the personal lament from the description of the army in 2:1-11. An imperative command to repent follows in 2:12. Beginning in 2:13 and continuing in 2:15, a series of imperative commands are offered in inverted order that reiterate prior concluding commands from the command lists that concludes each prior sub-unit. Note how a majority of the commands in 2:13 and 2:15 correspond to commands at each of the prior sub-unit breaks in an inverted sequence: שוב in 2:13 corresponds to the usage in 2:12; עקת in 2:15 corresponds to the usage in 2:1; ארק, דקש, and יסא in 2:15 correspond to their usage in 1:14. This inverted order of commands is reiterating and summarizing what the prophet has said up until this point. Interspersed among these final commands is a series of three rhetorical questions in 2:11, 2:14 and 2:17 that serve as the culmination of this lament.

The usage of the imperative abruptly stops at 2:18 and for the rest of the book reoccurs in only two isolated blocks of material.[49] Instead, directly following the last rhetorical question in 2:17, the text reads:

אנּקַיַו הוָהי וצרִאַל למוחְיַו ומעַ־לע וַעַיַ הוָהי רמֶאיֹו ומעַל

There is much debate on how to translate this passage. The morphology suggests it could be read as either future or past narrative.[50] Nogalski is sure that this passage should be translated as a future reality contingent on Israel's repentance rather than serving as "a chronological island" in a sea of prophetic text.[51] In contrast with Nogalski's critique, other scholars instead read this as a narrative interlude interrupting the

48. For more on the use of the divine first person, see Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 90-98.

49. The final 13 imperatives are in two blocks of material: 2:21-23 and 4:9-13. The specific occurrences are: 2:21 (x2), 2:23 (x2), 4:9 (x3), 4:10, 4:11 (x2), and 4:13 (x3).

50. Translation committees are similarly divided on this issue with RSV, NRSV, and ESV translating it as narrated past and NIV, KJV, NASB, and NLT suggesting this is future.

51. Nogalski, *Book of the Twelve*, 235.

text. [52] Of those who do see this as narrative breaking into the prophetic oracle, some suggest the contents of this response are the rest of the book while others suggest God's response is limited to 2:19b-20. It is my position that this passage should be read as narrative, since this would make sense of the dramatic shift in voice that follows.

Returning to the discussion of voice, from 2:19b through 4:21, the voice of the speaker that frames most of the units in this section of the book is first person. This is observable in 2:19b-20, 25-27; 3:1-5; 4:1-8, 17-21.[53] The only exceptions to this 1st person speech are two subunits: 2:21-24 and 4:9-16. These two passages, the same ones that contain the only imperatives of this section, are unique. The first, 2:21-24, could be read as an interjection in the ongoing declaration of blessing and salvation in 2:19b-27 by the prophet. Similarly, 4:9b-16 could be the contents of the command from 4:9a and concluded in 4:17. Thus even these passages could be understood within the framework of the larger first person response that characterizes the second half of Joel.[54]

This dramatic shift in voice from modal imperatives and jussives in the first half of the book to the first person declarative statements of the future in the second half of the book are significant. Beyond the contrast between the general materials in these two major units, the very syntactic texture of the book varies amongst the two halves.

Sequential Framing

While the first half of the text is organized around imperative commands, the second half of the text is organized by parallel sequential perfect plus *waw*-consecutive וְהָיָה clauses in 3:1 and 4:18. These clauses organize the divine response into three units: immediate future (2:19b-27), further future (3:1-4:17), and result within that further future (4:18-21). Each of these subunits concludes with reiterated statements of God dwelling or being in the midst of his people. Observe Figure 2.3:

The first subunit 2:19b-27 focuses on the deliverance and restoration of God's people from the hardships they are currently

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52. Scholars who read this as a *waw*-consecutive imperfect include Barton, Wolff, Crenshaw, and even Sweeney, although Sweeney interprets the response being limited to vss. 19b-20.

53. It should be noted that the last clause of 2:20 and 4:8 speaks of God in the 3rd person. This is one area of investigation that deserves more attention.

54. I well recognize that this is speculation and more thorough diachronic study of the redactional layers of Joel would be needed before anything definitive could be determined.

Figure 2.3 Sequential Framing in 2:18-4:21

suffering. The sequential וְהָיָה clause in 3:1 advances the next subunit of 3:1-4:17 into the future and marks the return to the subject of the סוֹי הוהי. This new discussion of סוֹי הוהי is significantly expanded from its portrayal in the first half of the book: where previously only judgment and destruction was mentioned, now salvation is offered to those who would repent; where the recipient of the *yôm* appeared to be restricted to Jerusalem and Israel, now it is "all flesh." To those who do not repent, they are addressed regarding their sins (4:1-8) and sent a prophet who is to proclaim an oracle of judgment over them (4:9-17). Finally, a sequential וְהָיָה clause in 4:18 advances the final subunit of 4:18-21 that describes the results of this *yôm*.[55]

These observations stand against the claims of individuals like Barton who fail to see any structure in the second half of the text, since they demonstrate that the material of 2:18-4:21 has been organized into cohesive subunits with similar phrases and concepts serving to mark boundaries in content by the author. This is not to suggest that this material necessarily originates with the author or final redactor; but it does suggest that it has been organized in an intentional way for a specific purpose.

Figure 2.4 Proposed Structure for the Book of Joel

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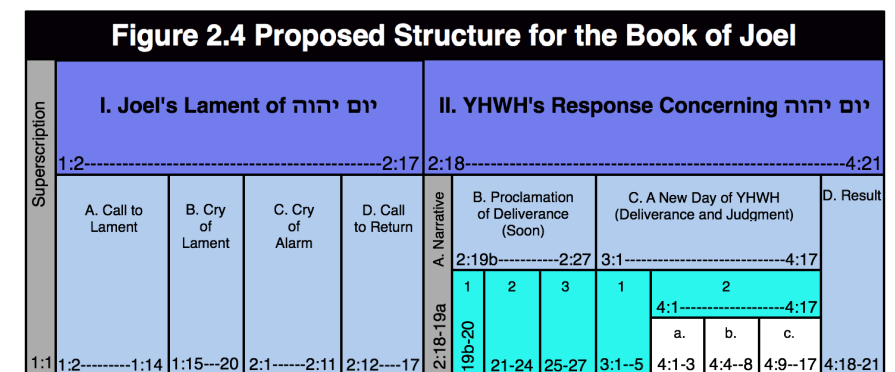
55. This sequential וְהָיָה might be better described as a consequential וְהָיָה. The interrelationship of these two verbal ideas is virtually interchangeable for this material given that result implies sequence. See Arnold and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew*, 88.

Structural Relationships

In this second part, I will propose a structure based on previous observations and the semantic movement within the text will be described by employing structural relationships described in *Inductive Bible Study*.[56]

Based on the various positions surveyed on the structure of Joel and this study's observations regarding the grammatical and linguistic features of the text, a two-part division for Joel with the following unit and sub-unit divisions is warranted:

Similar to Wolff, the major division of the text happens at 2:18 with the main units of the text being 1:2-2:17 and 2:18-4:21. Most of the subunits correspond to those observed by Prinsloo and Nogalski with a few significant changes: a) 2:18-19a serves as a narrative interlude to the material that follows as it introduces the second half of the text, b) 3:1-4:17 is a subunit with two segments 3:1-5 (deliverance) and 4:1-17 (judgment), and c) 4:18-21 is a separate subunit that describes the result of the סוי הוהי.[57] The divisions that Sweeney, Barton, and Garrett identified are consequently rendered questionable by the grammatical and linguistic observations made in part one of this section. Finally, differences in the macrostructure between Traina and Bauer and the assessment presented here are predominately due to the priority of 2:18-19a and suggested structural relationships governing the semantic movement within the text as a whole. These proposed structural relationships will be considered next.

Based on the observations made thus far, it is my contention that the primary governing semantic structure for Joel is positive *cruciality.* *Cruciality* is defined as involving a "change of direction" centered on a pivot where elements on each side of the pivot differ from elements on the opposite side.[58] In Joel, this is observed in the negative direction of Joel's lament in 1:2-2:17 followed by the pivot point at 2:18-19a and the ensuing positive expansion and redefinition of the סוי הוהי throughout 2:19b-4:21.

While *cruciality* is the primary structure of the book, there are additional implicit structures operating in the same material. Implicit in this *cruciality* movement is a *contrast* between how the סוי הוהי is portrayed by Joel in 1:2-2:17 and how it is expanded in 2:19b-4:21.[59] In 1:2-2:17, the *yôm* is exclusively portrayed as destruction and judgment. In 2:19b-4:21, the *yôm* includes destruction and judgment for others while also declaring deliverance for those who repent. Additionally, there appears to also be some *causation* implicit in the pivot at 2:18.[60] It is the lament of Joel in 1:2-2:17 and the corresponding suffering of both the people and the land that evokes YHWH's zeal and pity in 2:18-19a and the ensuing mercy of 19b-27.

Finally, *climax* appears to be governing the subunits within the first and second halves of Joel.[61] In the first major unit, 1:2-2:17, the lament builds in intensity moving from current conditions to future destruction and climaxing in the three rhetorical questions in 2:11, 2:14 and 2:17. As noted previously, in the midst of these questions is a series of imperatives in 2:13 and 2:15 that summarizes the calls throughout this unit. In the second major unit, 2:19b-4:21, the divine response builds from immediate deliverance, to future deliverance and blessing, and climaxes at 4:18-21. To this extent, Prinsloo was right to observe 4:18-21 as a climax.

OBSERVATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This final section will explore the implications that derive from observations made and identify corresponding areas to continue further research. One implication from the evidence observed is the significance of the implicit narrative order of the text that derives from the proposed structure. While it would be inaccurate to suggest Joel is a narrative prophetic book like Jonah, a structure like the one defended in this paper portrays the book of Joel as possessing a fundamental narrative movement. As Barton notes, the only other parallel of narrative breaking into prophetic material similar to Joel 2:18-19a is Mal 3:16-17.[62] It is widely accepted that Joel, like Jonah and Malachi, are dated late amongst the Twelve. One possible task of future research would be to explore whether the narrative character of these texts may assist diachronic text critical inquiries so as to identify later redactional layers in the formation of the Twelve.

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56. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study.*

57. Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka similarly view 4:18 as clear example of future subsequent action. See Paul Jouon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2nd ed.; Rome: Biblical Institute, 2009), §119c.

58. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study,* 108.

59. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study,* 97.

60. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study,* 105-107.

61. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 99-100.

62. For a brief comparison, see Barton, *Joel*, 87.

If Joel is to be considered a narrative prophetic text in some broad sense, Joel's introduction might more rightly be identified as an incipit rather than a superscription. While there can be significant differences between superscriptions and incipits in other parts of the Hebrew Bible, the differences between these two concepts in the Twelve is more a difference in function rather than form.[63] Similarly, Sweeney has argued that 1:2-4:21 must uniformly be treated as the word that came to Joel because "at no point in the rest of the book is there a clear indication that the narrator of the book appears once again."[64] Contrary to the claims of Sweeney, the findings of this paper suggest quite the opposite, specifically that the narrator of the book does appear again in 2:18-19a. In light of these observations, the relationship between the body of the text and its superscription should be reexamined. Thus, another possible area of research would be to explore the text critical relationship between the superscription (or incipit) and the rest of the text.

Another implication from the change in voice and perspective between the two halves of the book is the theophanic character added to the book of Joel. If the second half of the text is God's response to the lament of Joel, one could suggest that the contrast between the two portrayals of the הוהי םוי in the book presents the prophet Joel in a less than positive light. Specifically, God's portrayal of the *yôm* could be viewed as a corrective to Joel's understanding of the *yôm*. In a similar study, Margaret S. Odell has argued that the Twelve collectively have a negative perspective towards the cult prophets of eighth-century Israel.[65] She argues, "What Hosea, and the Book of the Twelve suggests, is that

there is something greater than Jonah—and all the prophets."[66] Redditt takes this one step further by noting that this perspective is not limited to Hosea and Jonah but is also present in Amos and Zechariah.[67] This implicit contrast between the laments of Joel and the reality of the *yôm* articulated by YHWH in Joel 2:18-4:21 may similarly serve as a critique of Joel and these eighth-century prophets. Further research is required in order to suggest anything more conclusive.[68]

Similarly, observations made regarding the expansion of the concept of the *yôm* within Joel to include both judgment and salvation further reinforce the key role Joel plays within the Twelve. This theme of the *yôm* spans the range of the Twelve[69] and many, including both Jeremias and Nogalski, have posited the essential hermeneutical role Joel is playing in the Book of the Twelve.[70] Jeremias has even suggested the "position of the book of Joel in front of the first mention of the Day of the Lord in Amos thus changes the character of the Day of the Lord completely; moreover it changes the essence of Old Testament eschatology."[71] One potential investigation is exploring how these observations weigh into the diachronic concerns regarding variant text orders of the Twelve in MT and LXX traditions.[72] For example, Sweeney champions LXX priority; but changing the order would change the hermeneutical understanding of the *yôm* in each canon.[73] Each order could be assessed and the various hermeneutical roles Joel plays in each could assist in the discussion of

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63. John D. W. Watts suggests, "An *incipit* is a sentence which begins a narrative or a narrative book. A *superscription* is a title, sometimes expanded, over a book, a portion of a book, or a poem. Incipits and superscriptions share similar functions and literary elements" (emphasis is original) in "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve," in Nogalski and Sweeney, *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 111-12. The similarity of content and the contextual dependency on what follows of incipits and superscriptions can be seen by comparing Joel 1:1 with Jonah 1:1. While the content of these verses are nearly identical, Joel 1:1 is considered a superscription and Jonah 1:1 an incipit. The nature of the text that follows is the primary determinant in these instances and, if Joel is to be considered a narrative text in some sense, an evaluation of its superscription is warranted.

64. Sweeney "Place and Function of Joel," 138.

65. Margaret S. Odell, "The Prophets and the End of Hosea" in Watts and House, *Forming Prophetic Literature*, 158-70.

66. Odell, "The Prophets," 170.

67. Paul L. Redditt, "Formation of the Book of the Twelve," 6.

68. One might even suggest this theophany etiologically serves to explain the expansion of the הוהי םוי concept in the prophetic cult to include both salvation and judgment. But these are simply speculations at this point in the absence of further research.

69. See Jeremias, "Function of the Book of Joel," 21-34 and Nogalski, "Day(s) of YHWH," 192-213.

70. See Jeremias, "Function of the Book of Joel," 77-87 and Nogalski, "Literary Anchor."

71. Jeremias, "Function of the Book of Joel," 78.

72. Masoretic Order: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; Septuagint Order: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

73. Sweeney, "Sequence and Interpretation in the Book of the Twelve," 49-64. Also Sweeney, "Synchronic and Diachronic Concerns," 21-34.

priority.[74] These are just a few of the ways in which this study could be expanded and built upon from the basis of the observations made.

CONCLUSION

The role and impact of structure in the book of Joel was examined throughout this study and evidence for a unified two-part structure of Joel was presented. The first section defined terms, nuanced methodology, and identified philosophical commitments. The second section surveyed various representational structures and noted the strengths and weaknesses of each. The third section proposed an alternative structure for Joel and supported it through identifying synchronic linguistic features of the text and semantic structural relationships. The final section examined implications based on the observations of the study and suggested further avenues of study. It is clear from this study that this discussion of structure is only a starting point in exploring the significance of structure in the interpretation of Joel and the Book of the Twelve.

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74. For a discussion of *yôm* in the different books, see Nogalski, "Day(s) of YHWH," 204-7.