

# Guided Bible Study

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Hosea 4 v. 1 - 19

A modified Version of Scripture Union's  
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by  
Dale & Sandy Larsen



# About These Bible Studies

These Bible studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. We will be looking at the book of Hosea, that is found in the Old Testament. The studies were originally written by Dale & Sandy Larsen, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study during this time of lockdown.

Hope that you enjoy it!

**Pastor Ian**

# Context

God never gives up on us. When we stray or make a mistake, God continues to pursue us with a relentless love. In Hosea's unfailing love for his wayward wife, he lived out the way God loves his people. His story is a reminder that God will never abandon us.

In choosing to study Hosea, we venture into a turbulent place of love and justice, promise and pain, close to the heart of God. The prophecy of Hosea does not progress logically from beginning to conclusion. Its writing is circular, going back and forth between judgment and mercy. We get a sense of God arguing with himself about Israel – not that God has trouble deciding what to do, but he feels the pain of conflict between what he wants for Israel and what he must do because of their sin.

Hosea shares God's conflict when at God's command he marries – and stays married to – the immoral woman Gomer. It is the conflict of anyone who cares deeply about a wayward person. God condemns Israel's sin and knows Israel deserves to be written off; yet he hangs on, unwilling to give up on them. God eventually let Israel be defeated in the Assyrian conquest, but he did not ultimately abandon his people whom he loved.

# Study 3 -

# Back to the

# Present

Dale and Sandy Larsen in the study writes: When we arrived to teach English in Kharkov, Ukraine, two students took us sightseeing. Oleg proudly showed off the beauties of his city. Slava followed behind, bad – mouthing every building and monument, saying how terrible life was since the fall of communism. Finally we asked, ‘Slava, are you a pessimist?’

‘No’, he answered, ‘I am a realist’.

Slava turned out to be a pessimist above all pessimists but a great friend too. On the other hand, a person who is upbeat about *everything* becomes tiresome, then irritating. The time comes when we have to admit how bad some things really are.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** *What have you read in or heard on the news lately that has given you hope? What have you read or heard that has discouraged you?*

Immediately after the vision of reconciliation in Hosea 3, the Lord led Hosea to prophesy about the terrible consequences of Israel's sin.

### Read Hosea 4 v. 1 – 19

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#### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What generalizations can you make about Israelite society in Hosea's time?
- How close do you feel is Hosea's description of the state of our own society as compared to Israel's?
- Although many sins are mentioned in the passage, which one does God repeatedly condemn (*refer to v. 10 – 14*)?
- Why is prostitution an apt symbol of worshipping false gods (*besides a literal part of Baal worship*)?
- Christians are sometimes accused of 'selling out' the gospel of Christ. What examples of this accusation have you heard?
- Why does God choose to show mercy to the 'daughters' and 'daughters-in-law' (Hosea 4 v. 14)?

- How does this passage, that you have just read, answer a person who says: *'It doesn't matter what you worship as long as you have something to believe in'*?
- What does Hosea 4 v. 16 tell you about the heart of God?
- Hosea 4 reveals that Israel was in a sad state during the time of Hosea. If you had lived then, how well would you have fitted into Israelite society? Would you have blended in and gone with the flow, or would you have dared to be different? Why do you answer the way that you have?
- Where do you think you need to change in order to stand out as a worshipper of the Lord?

# Now

# or

# Later

- Pray that you will live in faithfulness, love and acknowledgment of God no matter whether your society approves or not.
- Consider how your life will change in order that you don't just conform to what society expects you to be like.



# To help you in your study

The studies purpose is: To examine how unfaithfulness to God brings destruction to a society.

**Hosea 1 v. 1** provides the reason that Israelite society had become corrupt: there was 'no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land'. **Gilgal** (v. 15) was the site of the first shrine built to the Lord in Canaan, immediately after Israel crossed the Jordan River. There Joshua set up stones as a memorial to what God had done (**Joshua 4 v. 19 – 24**). Ironically Gilgal had been degraded to a place for sin, as Amos also pointed out (**Amos 4 v. 4**).

**Beth Aven** (v. 15) 'house of idolatry', refers to Bethel, which means 'House of God', but was a city where Jeroboam had set up a golden calf idol.

As you read **Hosea 4 v. 10 – 14**, the word prostitution keeps hitting us between the eyes. The references are tied to idol worship, it appears that Israelite women engaged in religious prostitution in or near temples devoted to Canaanite gods.

When the Israelites sold themselves to the Canaanite god Baal, they took the reverence that rightly belonged to God and threw it away on an idol.

The gain does not have to be financial. We may compromise our faith in order to gain or keep social status, to avoid risk, to stay comfortable or to insulate ourselves from rejection.

God could not reward Israel while they were set on idolatry; it would have only affirmed and encouraged their idolatry since they attributed their prosperity to Baal. Yet it is clear that God wanted to '*pasture them like lambs in a meadow*'. (For another example of how Israel's sin restricted God's blessings, look back to **Hosea 2 v. 8 – 9**).

# Contact

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At present, our church email addresses have been shut down while we set up new addresses.

We are working as hard as we can to get these sorted. In the mean time, if you need to contact us, please use the contact form on our website - or [click here](#)

