

# Guided Bible Study

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Hosea 8 v. 1 - 9 v. 9

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 7 -

# Substitute

# Gods

We naturally want the best out of life: prosperity, health, security and enjoyment. In his book *Idols of our Time*, Bob Goudzwaard warns that sooner or later such goals turn into gods on which we become dependent. He writes: *'Because people put themselves in a position of dependence on their gods, invariably the moment comes when those things or forces gain the upper hand'*. It takes courage for us to identify and admit our own idols.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** *How would you define the good life? How will you know (or how do you know) when you have achieved it? When have you trusted in something that you later realised was an idol? How did God show you that the idol had replaced him in your heart?*

Though Israel claimed to 'acknowledge' or 'know' God, God did not accept their self – congratulatory claims.

## Read Hosea 8 v. 1 – 14

### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What evidence did the Lord offer that Israel did not really acknowledge him as Lord?
- Do you think you can tell if people are worshipping sincerely or insincerely? How?
- Even though Israel worshipped other gods, why did they feel confident that they were still good Israelites, committed to God (**Hosea 8 v. 11 – 13**)?
- What would be the tragic results of Israel's insincerity (**Hosea 8 v. 7, 10, 13 – 14**)?
- What do you think are some of the common idols that people today trust in instead of God?
- Which of these idols that you have identified, are, or have been particularly attractive to you?

## Read Hosea 9 v. 1 – 9

- Apparently this passage describes a harvest festival. what warning does God give to Israel concerning their harvest?
- What would eventually happen to Israel's sacrifices, and why (**Hosea 9 v. 1 – 4**)?
- What part does God play in your particular view of what it means to prosper?
- In your own words, try and describe the contrast between how God viewed the Prophet and how the people viewed the Prophet (**Hosea 9 v. 7 – 8**)?
- In the situations that you find yourself in, where do you detect the same scornful attitude towards God's messengers today?
- Where do you think you need to have stricter guidelines in order to steer you away from idolatry and to keep God first in your life?

# Now or Later

*Write out your goals for this week, this year and five years from now. (Choose other lengths of time if you prefer and as they fit your circumstances).*

**Circle goals that you feel confident the Lord approves of and is with you on.**

**Draw a rectangle around goals that are not yet clearly in accordance with what God wants for you.**

**Put a question mark next to goals that you think you need to modify to bring them in line with God's will as you discern it.**

**Put an X by goals that you will put on hold until the Lord shows you whether or not you should pursue them.**

# To help you in your study

The studies purpose is: To contrast idolatry with true worship of God.

Take note especially of the Lord's condemnation of a calf – idol (**Hosea 8 v. 5 – 6**).

*'The calf could mean a calf idol in the city of Samaria or the royal sanctuary at Bethel. Jeroboam 1 erected calf images at Bethel and identified them not only as gods but confused them with Yahweh'.*  
(Communicator's Commentary. p. 122)

**First Kings 12 v. 26 – 33** tells how Jeroboam 1 set up his own idols and system of worship to rival Jerusalem; we know from **2 Kings 10 v. 28 – 29** that the images were still standing not long before Hosea's time.

The Israelites had altars, they made sacrifices, and they know God's law. **Hosea 8 v. 11 – 13** gives God's response to Israel's self – congratulation.

Idols may be material things, people, ambitions, causes or anything else that takes the place of God. We need to consider both the things people depend on daily and the things they depend on in crisis.

God called the Prophet a watchman over Ephraim. The people saw him as out of touch with reality and even dangerous. The Prophet deserved honour but drew hostility. Similar charges were made in **Amos 7 v. 10 & Jeremiah 29 v. 25 – 28.**

*'There is too often a real difference between the God we worship and the gods we serve. but the gods we serve are those in which we really believe, for they direct the course of our lives and by them we pattern our conduct. The most cursory examination of our lives will show that the goals for which we strive are vastly more in keeping with 'the God of this world' than with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We worship the God of Jesus; but we serve our own gods. This too is a form of idolatry'. (Harold Cooke Phillips, 'The Book of Hosea', in The Interpreter's Bible . . . 1956)*

# Contact

## Address

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Moor Hill Road

Salendine Nook

Huddersfield

West Yorkshire

HD3 3SF

**Telephone** - 01484 651845

**Facebook** - @SalendineNookBaptistChurch

**Website** - [www.snbch.org.uk](http://www.snbch.org.uk)

**Minister** - [minister@snbch.org.uk](mailto:minister@snbch.org.uk)

**Secretary** - [church.secretary@snbch.org.uk](mailto:church.secretary@snbch.org.uk)

**Treasurer** - [treasurer@snbch.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@snbch.org.uk)

**Web Administrator** - [web.administrator@snbch.org.uk](mailto:web.administrator@snbch.org.uk)

**Graphics and Media** - [snbch.media@snbch.org.uk](mailto:snbch.media@snbch.org.uk)

