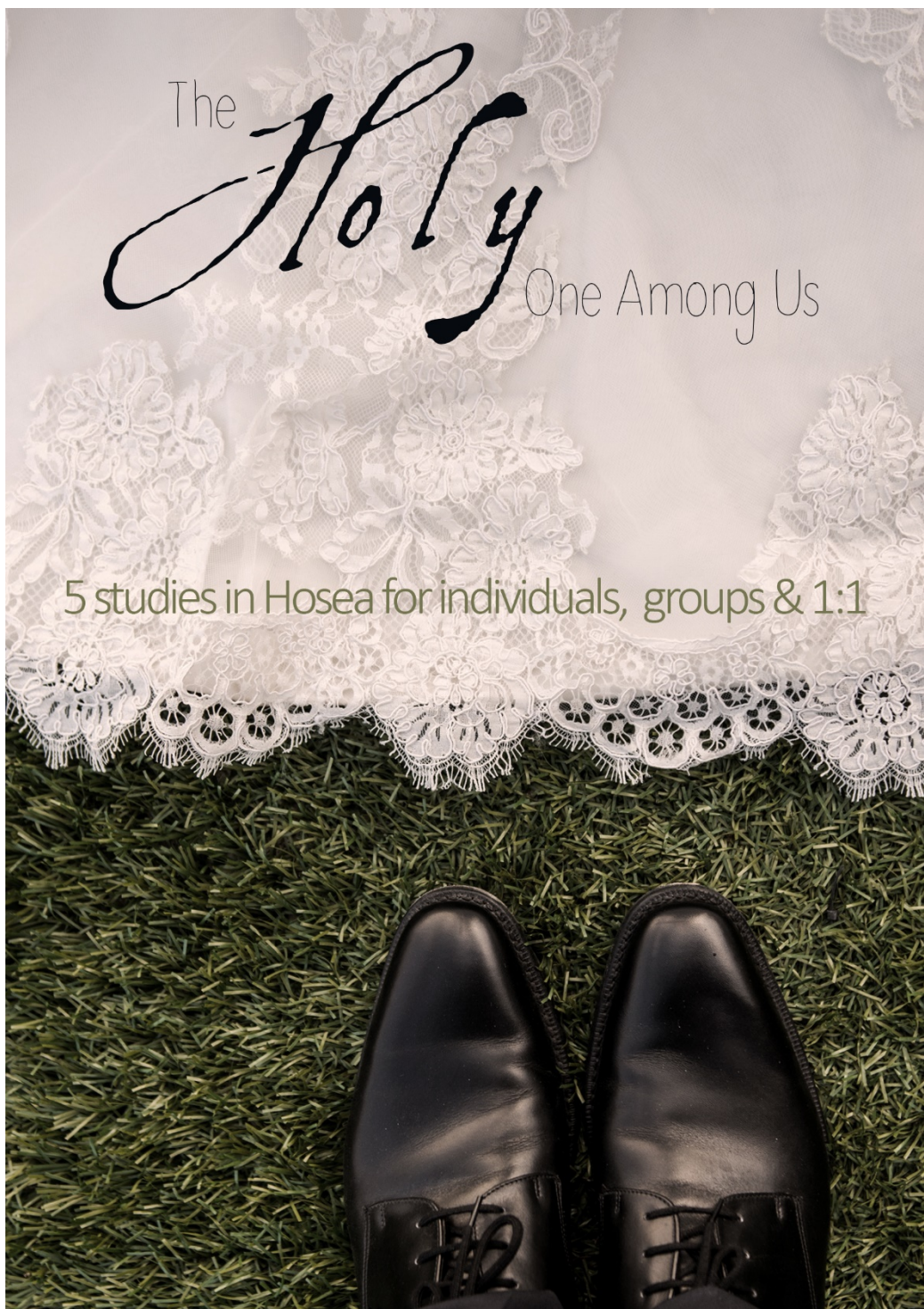


The
Holy

One Among Us

5 studies in Hosea for individuals, groups & 1:1



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Hosea in 5 Studies

A Brief Note on Hosea

The Book of Hosea is confronting. It comes at point in history where the northern Kingdom of Israel (as opposed to Judah, the Southern Kingdom) has reached the very depths of its depravity and is about to be obliterated by Assyria. Hosea, as the last prophet to the Northern Kingdom, offers the most dire warning to the unfaithful people of God, and uses exceptionally vivid pictures to do so – both from Hosea’s own life and in his prophetic message.

But the Book of Hosea is also beautiful. Remember that alongside the brutally shocking imagery in Hosea is an equally powerful message of God’s love and mercy to his people, for whom he goes to astounding lengths in order to win them back to himself.

As such, please be aware that it can be an uncomfortable book to study. The powerful imagery of Israel as the adulterous wife of God is shocking by design. Be especially aware that this could be a very difficult series for both yourself and others in your group, all the more so if you or others have been or currently are being affected by adultery, unfaithfulness or prostitution. This is a series for leaders to be particularly pastorally-minded as you care for your group members and each other.

Philip Lock, May 2015

Resources

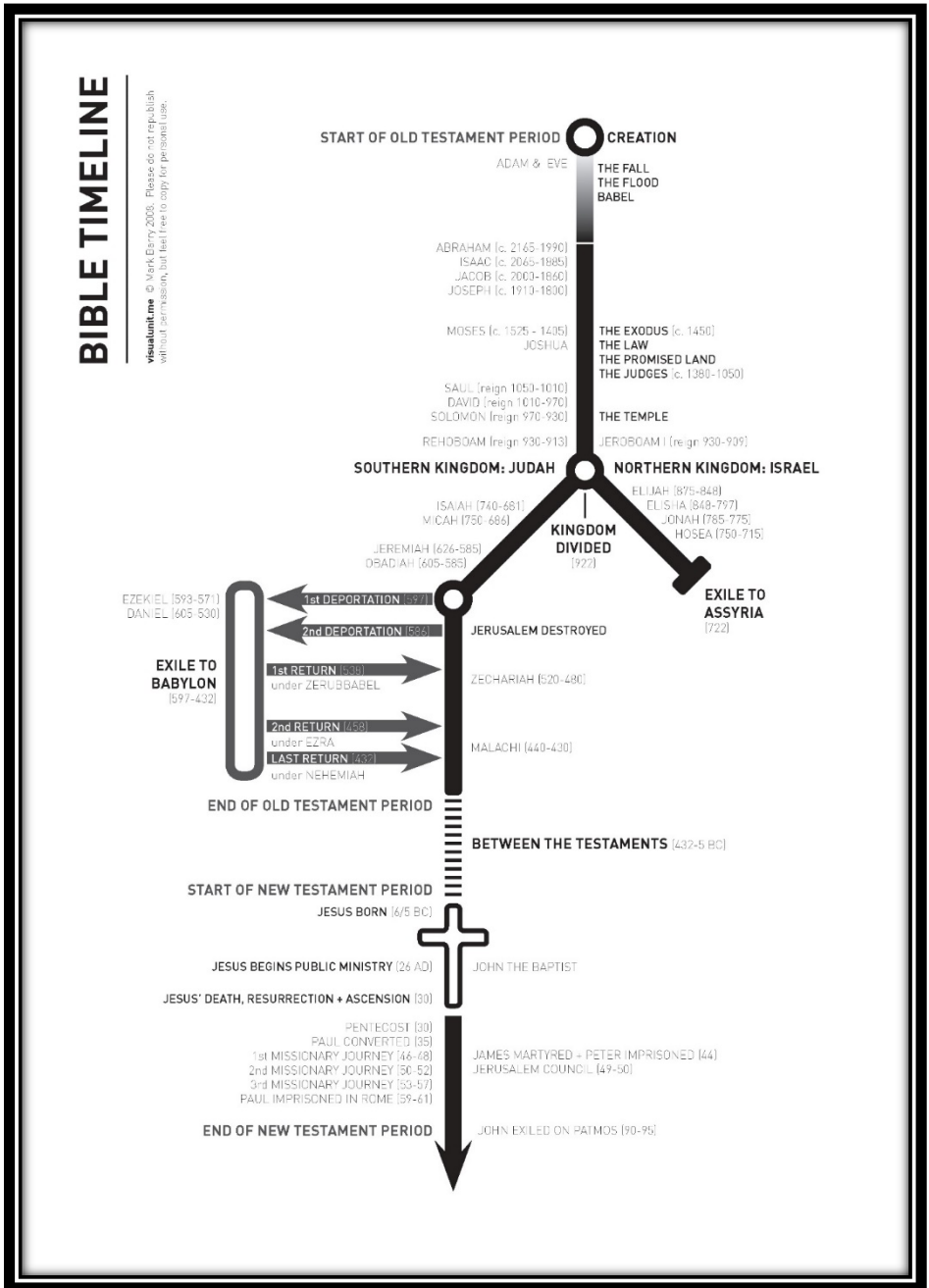
Israel and Judah in the time of Hosea:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_\(Samaria\)#/media/File:Kingdoms_of_Israel_and_Judah_map_830.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)#/media/File:Kingdoms_of_Israel_and_Judah_map_830.svg)



A timeline of the Bible: (<http://visualunit.me/2010/03/18/bible-timeline/>)

(See Hosea at the end of the right-hand fork)



Study 1: An Introduction to Hosea

1. Introduction

- 1.1. How do you react emotionally to betrayal or being hurt by a loved one?

- 1.2. How about disobedience or rebellion by a child?

- 1.3. How do you think God *feels* about sin?

2. Background

2.1. Historical Context

- Read Hosea 1:1
- Historical overview:
 - The book of Hosea is set during the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Try as a group to form a summary of where this places Hosea in the big picture of Israel's history. (Consult the timeline and map)

2.2. Covenantal Context

Hosea is about covenant... mostly covenant failure.

- What is the covenant?

- What are the ramifications of Israel keeping it or failing to keep it?
 - Genesis 12:1-3
 - Leviticus 26:1-5, 9-13

3. Hosea 1-3

3.1. Read Hosea 1

- What is God's command to Hosea?
- How does this play out?
- What is the significance of the three children and their names?
- Hosea 1:9 is scandalous! Why?

3.2. Read Hosea 2:1-13

- Who is being spoken to?
- What is the message and the result?

- How does this mirror chapter 1?

3.3. Read Hosea 2:14-23

- What is the second part of the message?

3.4. Read Hosea 3

- What is the outcome for Hosea and for Israel?

4. Hosea 4-14

4.1. Read Hosea 4-5, 6-8 & 12-13

- Report back to the group with a brief overview of the chapters you have read. (The idea is to get the vibe rather than detailed analysis)
 - Who is involved, what are they doing, and what is God's response?
 - Are there any particular verses or ideas that stand out to you?
 - What questions does it raise that you want answers to?

4.2. Read Hosea 11:1-11

- What emotions do we see expressed by God?

- How does this fit with the overall message of Hosea?

4.3. Read Hosea 14

- What is the final message of Hosea?

4.4. What would you say is the overall message of Hosea?

5. Role in the Bible

5.1. What role does Hosea play in the history of Israel and God's covenant with her?

5.2. How do we see Hosea in the New Testament?

- God desires mercy, not sacrifice (ie. true worship, not just going through the motions.)

- Picture of God's holiness and compassion in interplay that points squarely at the cross

6. Relevance for us

6.1. Where do we see ourselves in Hosea?

- Our adulterous hearts

- God's astounding love

7. Pray

- 7.1. Praise God for his holiness and thank him for his mercy
- 7.2. Ask for wisdom and insight as we study Hosea in more detail.

Study 2: Hosea 1-3

1. Intro

1.1. Reflect on the Sermon from Sunday.

- Are there any questions that were raised?

- Were there any points that you found personally challenging?

1.2. A warm-up question: What are some of the ways in which 21st Century Australia thinks about sin?

2. Hosea's life

2.1. Read Hosea 1 and summarise the narrative together

2.2. Why did God ask Hosea to do that?

2.3. Thinking about the three children, it seems that the second and third weren't even Hosea's (compare v3, v6, v8 – only Jezreel is said to be Hosea's, the other two are Gomer's).

- What is the significance of the names of these latter two children? (See Exodus 6:7)

2.4. Read Hosea 3 and summarise the narrative together

2.5. Why did Hosea go back to Gomer and pay her bride-price again to get her back?

- Is there any indication that Gomer herself had anything to do with it?

2.6. What is the overall picture being presented to Israel through Hosea's life

3. Hosea 2 – A passionate relationship

3.1. Read Hosea 2: 1-8.

- How is Israel described, and what is she being rebuked for?

- How does the language and imagery contribute to the weight of the passage?

3.2. Read Hosea 2:9-13

- What is God going to do in response to Israel's adulterous relationship with Baal?

3.3. Read Hosea 2:14-23

- What will the final outcome be?

- How will God achieve this? (Look at v14-15 – what element of Israel’s history is going to be repeated?)

3.4. Reflect on Hosea 2.

- What impression do you get of the way that God feels about his people and his relationship with them?

- How does Hosea communicate the nature of sin?

4. Thinking Biblically – Where do we fit?

4.1. God spoke to Israel by both direct message through Hosea in chapter 2, and through the illustration of Hosea’s marriage to Gomer. But where do we fit it? Do we identify with Gomer and Israel? At what stage of their progression from adulterous sin to redemption? Think about this together briefly before continuing.

- Read and consider these passages:
 - 1 Peter 2:9-10, where Peter alludes to Hosea 2:23.
 - Romans 5:10

- So where do we now stand as 21st Century gentile believers?

5. Responding to Hosea

5.1. Hosea gives us a rich, emotive understanding of God's relationship with his people. Reflect together on these things:

- The nature of our sin
- God's grace to us through the work of Jesus Christ
- Our standing before God

5.2. How should we respond?

5.3. Spend some time discussing how you have personally been challenged (from both this study and from the sermon)

5.4. Pray about these things

Study 3: Hosea 4-10

1. Intro

1.1. Reflect on the Sermon from Sunday.

- Are there any questions that were raised?

- Were there any points that you found personally challenging?

1.2. Recap from last week:

- What happened in Hosea 1-3?

- What was the message for Israel?

- Where do we stand in relation to this, as 21st Century believers?

2. A Cross-section of Hosea 4-10.

2.1. Read the following passages and summarise what God is saying to Israel.

- Hosea 4:1-6
- Hosea 7:11-16
- Hosea 5:13-15
- Hosea 9:7-9
- Hosea 10:13-15

2.2. What would you say is the general sense of Hosea 4-10?

3. The Ongoing Effect of Sin

3.1. Read Hosea 4:12-13

- What is Israel doing?

- What is the result? (v13b)

- Why do you think this is the case?

3.2. Read Hosea 5:4-6

- Why are the Israelites unable to worship God?

- Taken together with Hosea 4:12-13, this looks like a vicious cycle. How could this cycle been seen today?

3.3. What is to stop us from falling into the same trap?

- Read Romans 6:11-14 for help.

4. Sin in Masquerade

4.1. Read Hosea 6:1-6.

- From v1-3, what appears to be happening?
- But what is revealed in v4?
- Together with v5-6, what does this passage teach about how God sees religious devotion?

4.2. Read Hosea 8:11-13

- How has the same problem become even worse? Why?

4.3. Considering both of these passages, what warning can we ourselves take about how God wants to be worshipped?

- Spend some time sharing examples of where this might be a current or potential problem for you.

4.4. Read Matthew 9:1—13

- How does Jesus apply this same idea, quoting Hosea 6:6?

- Thinking again of our own circumstances, how are we in danger of being like the Pharisees?

5. Reflect

5.1. Spend some time thinking as either a large group or small groups of 2-3 people, what we can do, both individually and together as the gathered people of God, to keep both ourselves and our Christian brothers and sisters from these sins.

As part of this process, read Galatians 5:13-26 together, and remember that we are far from being alone in this battle against sin.

6. Pray for these things that you have identified.

Study 4: Hosea 11:1-11

1. Intro

1.1. Reflect on the Sermon from Sunday.

- Are there any questions that were raised?

- Were there any points that you found personally challenging?

1.2. A warm-up question: What image speaks to you most of God's love for us?

2. The Tender-hearted and Patient Father

2.1. Read Hosea 11:1-4

- What imagery does this passage use to describe God's love for his people?

- What was Israel's response to that love?

- The God of the Old Testament is often accused of being cold, distant, and bloodthirsty. How would you respond to this from Hosea 11?

3. V5-7 – The Exasperated and Judging Father

3.1. Read Hosea 11:5-7

- This speaks again of God's judgement on his people for their ongoing, stubborn rebellion and rejection of him. Does this sound the same as previous chapters, or is the tone a little different? Why?

4. V8-11 – The Compassionate and Redeeming Father

4.1. Read Hosea 11:8-11

- What is God now saying to Israel?
- Is the tone used one of exasperation and relenting in spite of himself, or something else?
- From v.8-9a, what has God declared that he will not do? Has he changed his mind about judging them, after all of the previous chapters? (See Deut. 29:23-24 for background on Admah and Zeboyim.)
 - Rather than complete destruction, what is in view, as indicated in v. 10b-11?
- What is the reason God gives for his compassion?

- What does this say of the character of God?

5. Our Father

5.1. Reading Hosea can shed a fresh light on NT passages that we are very familiar with.

- Read John 3:16-17. Reflect together on these verses, in light of Hosea 11.

- Read Romans 8:14-17. Again, reflect on this in light of Hosea 11.

5.2. What does it mean to you that God is your heavenly father? How should this reflect in your life?

6. Pray

6.1. Pray together, spending time especially praising God for his unsurpassed love for us, his children.

Study 5: Hosea 11:12 – 14:9

1. Intro

1.1. Reflect on the Sermon from Sunday.

- Are there any questions that were raised?

- Were there any points that you found personally challenging?

2. A Final Message of Judgement

2.1. Read Hosea 13:4-16

- What is the general thrust of this final message of condemnation and coming judgement?

- V15-16 is the last word of judgement on Israel. What do these verse refer to?

2.2. Look again at verse 14, this time in the ESV translation, which portrays the sense of it better:

Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol?

Shall I redeem them from Death?

O Death, where are your plagues?

O Sheol, where is your sting?

Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

- (Does it look familiar? It is quoted in 1 Corinthians 15, which we will look at later.)
- What do these verses mean? (In their own context here – don't try to import 1 Corinthians into Hosea!)
- How does this fit with the compassion we saw in Hosea 11 last week?

3. A Final Call to Repentance

3.1. Read Hosea 14:1-3

- What are Hosea's final words of warning to Israel?

4. A Final Promise of Future Restoration

4.1. Read Hosea 14:4-9

- What are God's final promises to Israel?
- What is the imagery used for this future restoration of God's people? Is this significant?
- From the point of Hosea speaking these words to Israel, what is going to occur before this future restoration? Why?

5. Where, O Death, is Your Victory?

5.1. Hosea's message to Israel was that before repentance and restoration, judgement must first occur. Where does that leave us?

5.2. Read 1 Peter 2:24-25 and Mark 10:45

- In the light of the work of Jesus, where do we stand compared to the Israelites of Hosea's day?

5.3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, where Paul is reflecting on our future glory with God, and our new resurrection bodies.

- In what sense is v55 used? How is it different to how it is different in Hosea 13?

- What has changed?

6. Hosea in retrospect

6.1. Having studied through Hosea, formulate together a brief summary of the message of the book, both for Israel in Hosea's day, and for us.

6.2. Read Hosea 14:9 again. Spend some time reflecting together on the things you have learned or been challenged by through Hosea, and how you are going to incorporate them into your life.

7. Pray

7.1. Spend some time praying about these things, both praising God for who he is and praying for anything that you have identified that you need to change.



TRINITY MOUNT BARKER

A TRINITY NETWORK CHURCH

Office: 9 Hampden Rd
Mount Barker
South Australia 5251
08 8398 2827

info@tmb.church

facebook.com/TrinityMountBarker
www.tmb.church