

Return to your God

HOSEA 11-14

Study 1: Hosea 11:1-11

This chapter is one of the boldest in the New Testament in exposing to us the mind and heart of God in human terms. Here we see the title Father in terms of accepted cost and anguish.

Israel has a broken relationship with God. The priests who were supposed to lead the people in obeying God had led them into idolatry and immorality. Chapter 11 boldly exposes to us the mind and heart of God in human terms.

Read Hosea 11:1-4

1.
 - a. Note the elements of Israel's history referred to in these verses. See also Jeremiah 2:2-3; Deuteronomy 4:37 & Exodus 4:22

 - b. What can we learn from verses 1-4 about the relationship of the Israelites with God?

2. Express in your own words your response to the terms used to describe the fatherhood of God.

Read Hosea 11:5-9

3.
 - a. What is it that is particularly causing God to grieve over his people?

 - b. Discuss the internal argument expressed by God in vs.8-9

c. What does this reveal about the character of God?

Read Hosea 11:10-11

4. Describe the significance of God being pictured like a roaring lion? (See also Isaiah 42:13 & 31:4-5)

5. In verse 11 note the contrast between the actions of the people and of God. What does this reveal about the relationship between God and his people?

6. Summarise 3 reasons given in this chapter why Israel should have served God faithfully?

7. **Reflect** on the ups and downs of your own relationship with God and discuss how we can avoid the mistakes made by the people of Israel?

Share and pray for one another.

Study 2: Hosea 11:12 - 12:14

In this week's study we will see centuries of the history of God's people compressed into a single sketch. Fragmentary glimpses of decisive moments in Israel's past are linked with the nation's present predicament.

Read Hosea 11:12-12:2

1. **Discuss:** How do you respond when people treat you badly and/or lie to you?

2. Note the changes that had taken the place in the people's attitude to God and how God is depicted in this scenario. (See also Hosea 7:11, Ezekiel 17:10 & 2 Kings 17:4)

Read Hosea 12:3-6

3. a. In your own words briefly explain the nature of Jacob's relationship with God. See also Genesis 28:12-15; 32:24-29, 28:12-15 and 35:15.

b. What is God calling on his people to do? (See also Micah 6:8 & 7:7, Hosea 6:1-3 & 10:12.)

4. **Reflect:** What things in our lives do we need to put aside and what qualities should replace those things as we seek to draw closer to God?

Read Hosea 12:7-9

5. Instead of being merciful and just as God required in 12:6, what had the people done? (See also Amos 8:4-6.)
6. a. To what events does God refer in v.9? (See also Leviticus 23:42-43 & Hosea 2:14)
- b. Why is God now referring to these events?

Read Hosea 12:10-14

7. What methods does God say he has used to speak to the prophets?
8. Note the specific charges God laid against the people in v.11 and consider the reason for these specific charges.
9. a. What is the significance of the reference to a 'prophet' bringing Israel up from Egypt? (See also Numbers 12:6-8, Deuteronomy 18:15 & 34:10)

- b. How has Ephraim aroused God's bitter anger?
(See also Hosea 4:1-2, 5:2-3 & 6:4-10)

10. **Reflect:** If someone looked at your life, what evidence would show them that your safety and security are found in God alone?

Study 3: Hosea 13:1-15

This chapter contains the climax of Hosea's prophecies of doom, but not the climax of the book. Only in verse 14 is there an indication of hope for the future. God has warned Israel about future judgement – the end of the nation is at hand.

1. **Reflect and discuss:** What lessons have you learned from your past and how have you changed because of them?

Read Hosea 13:1-3

2. a. Draw a diagram showing the stages in the downfall of Ephraim. Refer also to Hosea 8:5 & 1 Kings 12:28.

b. What impact did this have on the nation? (See also Hosea 4:12 & 8:5-6.)

Read Hosea 13:4-13

3. What picture of God is given in verses 4-6? (See also Exodus 20:1 and compare 1 Kings 12:26-33.)
4. a. Identify the images used by Hosea in verses 7-8 to show the intensity of God's love and concern for his people.

b. Compare this picture of God in verses 4-8 with how you think about God. Discuss any differences in the two pictures.

5. Refer to 1 Samuel 8:1-5 and contrast the reasons why Israel demanded a king with the reality of their present circumstances described by Hosea.
6. Describe the effects of unforgiven sin expressed in verses 12-13.

Read Hosea 13:14-16

Hosea's ultimate message is one of hope for the future.

7. What promises does God make to his people?
8. Note the warnings given in verses 15-16.
9. **Think about it:** What can you pray for one another this week that will support you all in your desire to be faithful in your Christian walk? Identify 2-3 things that would be of value to everyone in the group and take them as prayer points for the week.

Study 4: Hosea 14:1-9

This final chapter in Hosea leads us back through the main areas of this book. It is quiet and gentle in contrast to the tumultuous earlier chapters. Israel is being beckoned, and the way is signposted with the landmarks which she passed on her spiritual journey into the far country.

1. **Reflect:** What do think today's society would say makes a person wise? Would you personally add or change anything in that definition?

Read Hosea 14:1-3

2. **a.** Hosea makes another appeal for repentance. Identify the steps that Israel needs to take to restore their relationship with God. See also Hosea 10:12 and 12:6.

b. How is this call for repentance different from the repentance expressed by Israel in Hosea 6:1-3?

Read Hosea 14:4-8

3. **a.** List the promises made by God to Israel if they repent.

b. What would be the outcome of these promises made by God?

4. How do the images used in v.7 emphasise the changed situation in which the Israelites would find themselves if they repented?
5. **Reflect:** Are you able to share a time in your life when you have been particularly aware of God acting in your life in one of the ways mentioned in this section.

Read Hosea 14:9

6. **a.** What is the challenge put to us in this concluding verse of Hosea?

b. How does this challenge tie in with the following verses? (See Psalm 107:43; Proverbs 10:29 & Acts 13:10.)

As we come to the end:

Hosea is the prophet who sought to call Israel back from its failure into a restored relationship with God. As a prophet he clearly showed the tenderness and power coexisting with justice in the character of God.

7. Share with one another something you have learned in these studies on Hosea 11-14 that has impacted on the way you think about who God is and your relationship Him.