

EZEKIEL 16:1-63 – “GOD’S LOVE FOR JERUSALEM; ITS HARLOTRY; ADULTERY; LOVERS WILL ABUSE HER; MORE WICKED THAN SAMARIA AND SODOM”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:30pm, H 106 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by doughnut/vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell # 714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column.

THE REALIZATION THAT GOD’S JUDGMENTS

CANNOT BE STOPPED. (vs. 1-63) *This is the second of three messages to the elders:*

1 - *The Worthless Vine* (Ez. 15:1-8); 2 - *the Unfaithful Wife* (Ez. 16:1-63); 3 - *Two Eagles and Three Shoots* (Ez. 17:1-24)

Eze 16:1 *Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

Eze 16:2 *"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.*

Eze 16:3 *and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.*

Eze 16:4 *As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.*

Eze 16:5 *No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.*

Eze 16:6 *"And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!'"*

Eze 16:7 *I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.*

Eze 16:8 *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.*

Eze 16:9 *"Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.*

Eze 16:10 *I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

Eze 16:11 *I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.*

Eze 16:12 *And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.*

Eze 16:13 *Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty.*

Eze 16:14 *Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.*

INTERPRETATION

THE POLLUTION OF JERUSALEM: (vs. 1-14 – The loving relationship that Israel had with the LORD)

Eze 16:1-5 - Ezekiel is now among the captives in Babylon; but, as Jeremiah at Jerusalem wrote for the use of the captives though they had Ezekiel with them (ch. 29), so Ezekiel wrote for the use of Jerusalem, though Jeremiah himself was resident there; and yet they were far from looking upon it as an affront to one another's help both by preaching and writing. Jeremiah wrote to the captives for their consolation, which was the thing they needed; Ezekiel here is directed to write to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for their conviction and humiliation, which was the thing they needed.

2 *to know her abominations:* What follows is an animated development of the dreary story, designed to teach errant Jerusalem the real nature of her character in the eyes of God. The word *abomination* describes that which makes one physically ill.

3 *Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite:* These shocking words refer to the cultural and moral origins of Jerusalem. Ancient Canaan was inhabited by Semitic and non-Semitic peoples. The Amorites and Hittites are associated in Scripture with the south hill country, where Jerusalem is (*Num. 13:29*). The point is that non-Israelites founded this city. Jebusites controlled it when the Israelites entered the land under Joshua (*Josh. 15:8, 6:63*). Israel did not fully control the city until David conquered it (*2 Sam. 5:6,7*). The land of Canaan was the place of Israel's beginnings. His compassion for Israel was always there! (*Lam. 3:22*). It was the Canaanites there in the land when they came it, **NOT THE PALSTINIANS!** (*Dt. 20:17-18*)

4-5 God reminds Jerusalem that He had rescued them from being like an abandoned newborn child, unwashed, unsanitary (*not rubbed with salt*), and exposed to the element to die. God alone had given her glory.

6 In contrast to Israel's apathetic disdain—which led to disobedience including idolatry (*Judg. 1:2*) God had wanted Israel to *live*, having purposed and planned to impart His life and glory to them.

7-9 *breasts were formed:* The city is compared to a young woman, mature and lovely. Yet the city was *naked and bare* until God covered it with a relationship of covenantal love. This began when David moved the ark of the covenant there and God established the covenant with David (*2 Sam. 6:1-7:17; Ps. 132*). Jerusalem became God's dwelling place (*1 Kin. 5:6*). *Her body developed into a beautiful woman because of the LORD's compassion.* His covenant with Israel *revealed His great love for her.* He looked upon her. He loved her! He spread His wing over her! He lavished His love and honor upon her! "You're Mine!!!!!! He washed away the blood and anointed her with oil!!

10-14 The adornments listed here are gifts from a groom to his bride. Figuratively they express the beauty and bounty God gave to Jerusalem under Solomon. *Badger skin:* The exact meaning of this Hebrew term is unknown, but refers to a kind of fine leather. One suggestion is "dolphin skin." The idea is that God clothed Jerusalem in the finest materials available. During the reigns of David and Solomon, Jerusalem achieved significant status as the capital of a nation rich in wisdom and wealth (*1 Kin. 10:23*). But this was only because God *bestowed* it. *Perfect:* This does not mean perfect in a moral sense, but complete, finished. We may apply this spiritually. Sanctified souls are truly beautiful; they are so in God's sight, and they themselves may take the comfort of it. But God must have all the glory, for they were by nature deformed and polluted, and, whatever comeliness they have, it is that which God has put upon them and beautified them with, and he will be well pleased with the work of his own hands. *His clothing made Israel very special! Her jewelry was expensive! Her garments were wonderful! Her diet was exceptional. Her beauty was the best! Her fame was well known!* (*1 Kings 10:1, 21*)

APPLICATION

We must listen to the LORD as He speaks to us!

The indictment, condemnation and reproach by the LORD of Israel's idolatry, harlotry and abominations is seldom more strongly stated than here. My we, the church, the USA, and all nations of the world pay attention to what is said here! Nevertheless we see Your faithfulness continually-where sin abounds, grace does much more abound! We need you! We need to repent! We need to come back to Your loving arms! Oh how we need brokenness!

We need to see the compassion of the LORD in His concern for Jerusalem from birth and in developing her into a beautiful woman, fit for marriage!

Can you see the intimacy the LORD wants to have with us? Like the love of a husband for his wife!! A covenant of a man's love for his woman!!

God has not forsaken Israel!!!!

Note how God demonstrated his love and compassion for her. Her clothing, her jewelry, her garments, her diet, her beauty and her fame.

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OBSERVATION

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Eze 16:15 *"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry(idolatry-spiritual prostitution) on everyone passing by who would have it.*

Eze 16:16 *You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be.*

Eze 16:17 *You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them.*

Eze 16:18 *You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them.*

Eze 16:19 *Also My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey which I fed you—you set it before them as sweet incense; and so it was," says the Lord GOD.*

Eze 16:20 *"Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter,*

Eze 16:21 *that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?*

Eze 16:22 *And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.*

Eze 16:23 *"Then it was so, after all your wickedness—'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD—*

Eze 16:24 *that you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street.*

Eze 16:25 *You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry.*

Eze 16:26 *You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.*

Eze 16:27 *"Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.*

Eze 16:28 *You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied.*

Eze 16:29 *Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.*

Eze 16:30 *"How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.*

(vs. 15-34 – **Their constant and continual rebellion defiled the loving relationship with the LORD) – Why do rebel instead of responding to His love?**

In these verses we have an account of the great wickedness of the people of Israel, especially in worshipping idols, notwithstanding the great favors that God had conferred upon them, by which, one would think, they should have been for ever engaged to him. This wickedness of theirs is here represented by the lewd and scandalous conversation of that beautiful maid which was rescued from ruin, brought up and well provided for by a kind friend and benefactor, that had been in all respects as a father and a husband to her. Their idolatry was the great provoking sin that they were guilty of; it began in the latter end of Solomon's. They not only worshipped the true God by images, as the ten tribes by the calves at Dan and Bethel, but they worshipped false gods, Baal and Moloch, and all the senseless rabble of the pagan deities.

15 **trusted in your own beauty:** These words indict God's people for forgetting that their fame and fortune were God's gifts and not their own doing (v. 14). **They relied on themselves and their gifts instead of on God.** They came to believe that their material health and wealth as a nation absolutely demonstrated God's approval of their spiritual life, even though they were becoming spiritually corrupt.

Solomon, who was king when Israel reached its zenith of power and prosperity, is a conspicuous example (*Eccl 2:1-11*), **played the harlot:** This phrase refers to spiritual prostitution—idolatry, trusting in false gods. The metaphor works in a powerful way, however, because the worship of these gods often involved literal sexual misconduct (v. 16; *Hos. 4:11-19*) and other immoral acts (vv. 20-22). **They worshipped the idols of every nation which prevailed over them!**

16-21 These verses list the particular acts of idolatry engaged in by the spiritually unfaithful in Jerusalem and Judah. Mesopotamian and Canaanite pagan rituals are featured. The people's unfaithfulness to God consisted of building altars to idols and decorating the **high places** with their **garments** (*1Kin. 11:7,8*); Also fashioning **male images** (phallic or sexually perverse statues) from **gold** and **silver** that God had provided; also giving what belonged to the true God to these false gods; and practicing human sacrifice to appease these gods (*2 Kin. 16:1-4*). Note the extent of Israel's rebellion!

22 The Israelites **did not remember** how much God had done for them since rescuing them from a dirty, destitute, and dying condition (vs. 1-14)

26 Egypt is called a **fleshly** neighbor because that nation wanted alliances with Israel, who **committed harlotry** by eventually reciprocating. They **made alliances** and deals with the Egyptians-Israel hired the armies of other countries!! (*2 Chron. 16:2-3*).

27-29 Jerusalem's kings had sought political alliances with Assyria (*2 Kin. 15:17-20*) and Babylon (*2 Kin. 20:12-19*) instead of relying on their God for security. Probably a part of the treaty-making ceremonies was to worship the other nation's gods. For Israel to do this would be a violation of the First Commandment. In fact, King Ahaz dared to replace the bronze altar of the temple at Jerusalem with a copy of an Assyrian altar (*2 Kin. 16:5-18*.) In this way, foreign alliances led the Israelites away from God. The Lord judged the city for this. He allowed Sennacherib to give some of Jerusalem's lands to the Philistines (*2 Chron. 21:16,17*) They demonstrated deceit with the Assyrians.

Note the extraordinary harsh response from the LORD in sending His judgment regarding their ritual of sacrificing their children to pagan idols. How about our “Roe v. Wade” – the abortions in the USA since 1963 mount to the tens of millions of abortions!

What are the consequences of abortion?

Because so many people may be psychologically, emotionally and spiritually scarred by abortion, it is not possible here to give a complete list of the potential effects of abortion. The following are given to help you to understand that abortion always has consequences for the survivors: Mourning - grief - sense of loss or unfulfillment - loss of self-esteem - self hatred - suicidal thoughts or preoccupation with death - insomnia or nightmares - anger - hostility - physical aggression - inability to bond with own children - child abuse or over protectiveness - discomfort around babies or obsession with babies - despair - helplessness - hopelessness - depression - drug and alcohol abuse - promiscuity - frigidity or impotence.

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OBSERVATION

Eze 16:31 *"You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment.*

Eze 16:32 *You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.*

Eze 16:33 *Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry.*

Eze 16:34 *You are the opposite of other women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."*

Eze 16:35 *'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD!*

Eze 16:36 *Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them,*

Eze 16:37 *surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, and all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.*

Eze 16:38 *And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy.*

Eze 16:39 *I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.*

Eze 16:40 *"They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords.*

Eze 16:41 *They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers.*

Eze 16:42 *So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more.*

Eze 16:43 *Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me with all these things, surely I will also recompense your deeds on your own head," says the Lord GOD. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.*

Eze 16:44 *Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!'*

Eze 16:45 *You are your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.*

Eze 16:46 *"Your elder sister is Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, is Sodom and her daughters.*

Eze 16:47 *You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.*

INTERPRETATION

31- 34 Jerusalem was denounced as being less like a prostitute **and more like an adulterous wife**. She was worse than the typical prostitute because instead of receiving payment for her services, she sought out strangers, foreign nations, and hired them for the privilege. They gave donations to pagan nations.

(vs. 35-43 – The actions of the LORD in response to their rebellion)

35-36 Jerusalem was filthy spiritually because the city had soiled itself by worshiping foreign idols and practicing infanticide (vs. 20,21; Dt. 12:29-32)

37 – 43 As a result of its sin, compared to harlotry (vv. 25-30) , Jerusalem would be punished. God would use her foreign lovers to expose Jerusalem's hypocrisy and bring international shame (**uncover your nakedness**).

According to the Law, adultery was punishable by death (**Gen. 38:24; Lev.18:21; 20:10; 21:9; Dt. 13:12-18**). The people deserved death because they had committed spiritual adultery and had murdered their own children through child sacrifice. The city would be looted and burned, and its people slain. The tangible material riches gained as a result of God's favor (v. 8) would be lost. All this would culminate in the Babylonian invasion of 586 B.C. led by Nebuchadnezzar. During the ensuing captivity, Israel would abandon idolatry and polytheism, as Ezekiel predicted. God's anger over the people's sin would be satisfied. **My jealousy:** Their filthiness and nakedness with be exposed. God's covenantal love and loyalty to His people would continue even though they had been unfaithful and forgetful of God's grace in their lives.

(vs. 44-59 – The abominations of Jerusalem exceeded those of their wicked relatives)

44 – 47 This allegory describes Jerusalem as the sister of two cities – **Samaria and Sodom**. All three were presented as the characteristic offspring of the religiously and morally corrupt cultures in Canaan. (v. 3). Thus the proverb, **like mother, like daughter** applied to Jerusalem. The condemnation of the mother – that is, the Hittites—and the sisters—Samaria and Sodom –for **loathing husband and children** is difficult to explain. It probably refers to idolatry—God being the hated husband (**Hos. 2:16**)— and infanticide. Sodom no longer existed at this time—its evil had been so great that God had wiped the city off the face of the earth (**Gen. 19:24,25**). Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, had already faced destruction and exile (**2 Kings 17:5,6**). Jerusalem, the very city of God, had become “more corrupt” than even Sodom and Samaria. Clearly this passage emphasized the people's great sinfulness and the certainty of their punishment. **Sister of your sisters:** This superlative statement like “King of Kings” meaning “the greatest King.” Thus with this phrase, Jerusalem is described as the “sister” most conformed to Canaanite corruption.

APPLICATION

We see that Israel was more wicked than Samaria and Sodom!! Their corruption was worse! Could not that be said about the United States (also Tel Aviv) today? How about the church in general?- Professed Christians involved in lawsuits, divorces, immorality, familyfeuds, crooked business deals, financial scandals and many other worldly activities.

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OBSERVATION

Eze 16:48 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done.

Eze 16:49 Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Eze 16:50 And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

Eze 16:51 "Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done.

Eze 16:52 You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

Eze 16:53 "When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then I will also bring back the captives of your captivity among them,

Eze 16:54 that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them.

Eze 16:55 When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state.

Eze 16:56 For your sister Sodom was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride,

Eze 16:57 before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere.

Eze 16:58 You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the LORD.

Eze 16:59 For thus says the Lord GOD: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

Eze 16:60 "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

Eze 16:61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you.

Eze 16:62 And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.

Eze 16:63 that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord GOD.' "

INTERPRETATION

48-52 Ezekiel name the sins for which the cities of Sodom and Samaria were renowned. Jerusalem was pronounced even more guilty—the other evil cities did not commit half of Jerusalem’s sins. Spiritual, moral, and social sins are all listed. Jerusalem justified the other cities because when they compared themselves to Jerusalem they were more righteous.

"Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they.

53-59 As Jerusalem had arrogantly poked fun at Sodom, so Jerusalem would be despised by Syria and Philistia. Hope and humiliation would be hers because when the people returned from captivity, they would return alongside others whom they considered horribly wicked. Although restoration was promised, the people still had to pay for their sins by living in exile. This punishment was consistent with God’s past and persistent promised to repay disobedience with specific curses (see 4:16, 17; 5:8-17). Syria is translated Edom in some translations because this alternative exists in the Syriac version and in many Hebrew manuscripts. Historically Syria, or more literally the ancient nation of Aram, no longer existed. Therefore that nation could not ridicule the exiles in Ezekiel’s day. The people had despised the oath by breaking the covenant that God had made with Moses; thus they would receive the punishments for disobedience that were written in that covenant (see Ex. 24; Lev. 26; Deut. 28; 29). Blessings or curses were dependent on Israel’s obedience or disobedience.

(vs. 60-63 – The LORD remembers His covenant and will bring forgiveness and cleansing)

60-63 *Nevertheless:* Despite Jerusalem’s disobedience to the Mosaic covenant and the resulting punishment (v. 59), the covenant with Abraham – *My covenant*—would still be honored: *I will remember*. Fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham did not depend on the people’s faithfulness; God had made the promise and He would keep it (*Gen 15; 17:7,8; Lev. 26:40-45; Ps. 145:13; Phil. 1:6*) The everlasting covenant had been made with Abraham before the Hebrew nation even existed. This covenant would be remembered and reestablished with the exiled Judeans. At that time God’s people would be ashamed by the contrast between their faithlessness and God’s faithfulness and the fact that they were being exalted over those who were less sinful—Sodom and Samaria. The people of these other sinful nations would also inherit land, but only by God’s grace, because no such covenant was made with them. Further, God would provide *atonement* through the New Covenant (*Jer.31:31-40*), which pointed ultimately to the Cross of Christ.

APPLICATION

We have seen a shocking detail the unfaithfulness that God is talking about in the message of “the unfaithful wife”. We will also see His grace and His mercy in that where “where sin abounds, grace does much more abound”!!

Do you see your sins as an abomination to the LORD, that they are abhorrent, loathsome, extremely disgusting, detestable, and shamefully vile?

God loves Israel and He loves us with a compassion that is beyond understanding –“I love you”, says the LORD!!!! (Jer. 31:3; Mt. 11:28-29)