



# Book of Ezekiel

## Chapter 16

*Theme: Jerusalem Linked to an  
Abandoned Baby Adopted by God*

**Michael Fronczak**  
**Bible Study Resource Center**  
**Beit-Lechem Ministries**  
**564 Schaeffer Dr.**  
**Coldwater, Michigan 49036**  
**[www.biblestudyresourcecenter.com](http://www.biblestudyresourcecenter.com)**

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**Theme:** Jerusalem linked to an abandon baby adopted by God.

### **Missler Introduction**

Chapter 16 of Ezekiel is a strange chapter. The subject in this chapter is Israel, as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah.

Those of you who have been in prophecy studies for some time are familiar with this very peculiar concept that is all through the Scriptures. Isaiah dealt with Israel this way, and the whole book of Hosea is from the same point of view. Ezekiel chapter 16 makes a particular issue of this idiom.

There is no passage in Scripture that is more forceful or more vivid regarding the despicableness of sin. This chapter is the longest chapter in Ezekiel; but what is probably even more provocative is that Rabbi Eliezar ben Hyracanus in the Jewish Mishna indicates that this chapter was not to ever be read or translated in public!<sup>1</sup>

### **Missler; The Issue of Sin**

In this whole issue of sin and the issue of our responsibility to God we should recognize that repentance does not come as a response to the thunderings of the Law of Sinai, or to the purity or righteousness of God. What draws you and me to God is His grace, not His righteousness. It is His love and grace that attracts us to Him, not the pronouncement of cosmic judgment for having violated a law.

God's grace is not just a New Testament idea. It is the basis all the way through the Scriptures. It is the same God yesterday, today, and forever.

For example, Moses in the wilderness. One day he looks up and sees a burning bush, and is so intrigued that he climbs up to go see it. He was intrigued due to the fact that the bush was burning but it was not being consumed by the fire. The bush was an acacia, the thornbush of the desert. The thorn was a Levitical symbol of the curse. From Gen 3, where God established it as a symbol of the curse, all the way through to Matthew where our Lord Himself bore the crown of thorns on His Head, it symbolized the curse. Our Lord bore the curse.

Fire, of course, is judgment. But this thornbush of the desert was burning, it was in the hands of the Living God, but it was not consumed. In the Rabbinical mind this would equate to grace. Everything in the Old Testament points to Jesus Christ.

When Joshua was ready to fight the Battle of Jericho, he wandered out the night before and encountered a stranger there with his sword drawn. He challenged him like a sentry, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" And the strange person with the sword drawn said, "Take off your shoes, you are on holy ground," and Joshua bowed down and worshiped Him.

This stranger could not have been an angel because angels will not allow themselves to be worshiped. Yet, this person encouraged worship. Furthermore, He used the strange phrase, "Take off your shoes, you are on Holy Ground." Prior to this episode, this same phrase was used when Moses encountered the burning bush!

So Moses was drawn to God by His grace, His love, and His tender mercy. That is what draws us too, and we need to understand that as we get into Chapter 16 of Ezekiel.

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

**Adam Clarke Introduction:** In this chapter the mercy of God to Jerusalem, (or the Jewish Church and nation), is set forth by the emblem of a person that should take up an exposed infant, bring her up with great tenderness, and afterwards marry her, vv. 1-14. She is then upbraided with her monstrous ingratitude in departing from the worship of God, and polluting herself with the idolatries of the nations around her, under the figure of a woman that proves false to a tender and indulgent husband, vv. 15-52. But, notwithstanding these her heinous provocations, God promises, after she should suffer due correction, to restore her again to his favor, vv. 53-63. The mode of describing apostasy from the true religion to the worship of idols under the emblem of adultery, (a figure very frequent in the sacred canon), is pursued with great force, and at considerable length, both in this and the twenty-third chapter; and is excellently calculated to excite in the Church of God the highest detestation of all false worship.<sup>2</sup>

**Wycliffe Introduction:** This allegory, like that in chapter 23, depicts the connection between the Lord and his people in terms of a husband-wife relationship (cf. Hos 2; Jer 2:1-3; 3:1-5). The OT seldom uses this figure or the father-son motif, whereas in Canaanite and other polytheistic religions, the marriage of divinities and mortals, and the physical birth of gods and demi-gods is prominent. After idolatry had been extirpated from Israel, the NT writers could effectively portray the relationship between God and the redeemed, Christ and his Church, under the symbols of fatherhood and husbandhood (Eph 5:25, 26; I Jn 3:1-3).

Possibly Ezekiel took a familiar tale and developed it as an allegory, in keeping with Oriental tastes. A foundling child of dubious origin, Jerusalem, is exposed by the roadside to die. But she is rescued by the Lord, who becomes her benefactor (vv. 1-7). Having grown up to beautiful maidenhood, she is taken in marriage by her benefactor and becomes his royal consort (vv. 8-14). The proud queen proves utterly unfaithful and plays the harlot with Canaanites and other pagans (vv. 15-34). The punishment for this conduct, which is described in verses 35-43, is justified, since her depravity is worse than that of her two sisters, Sodom and Samaria (vv. 44-52). Nevertheless, the Lord makes glorious promises of restoration for the three sisters (vv. 53-58), foretelling that penitent Jerusalem will experience a glorious reconciliation through an everlasting covenant (vv. 59-63).<sup>3</sup>

**McGee Introduction:** Chapter 16 contains yet another parable—the parable of an abandoned little orphan, a dirty and filthy little child, for whom it would seem there is nothing that can be done.<sup>4</sup>

**ESV 16:1–63:** The Faithless Bride. This is both the most infamous passage in the book and also its longest single oracle. The infamy rests not only on the brutal violence it depicts but also on Ezekiel's shocking use of sexual language. On a general level, the meaning of the passage is clear: the infidelity of Jerusalem has brought upon it the just punishment of God. However, at the level of detail it is very complex, and the boundary between the metaphorical and the literal is sometimes difficult to discern. Some interpreters have also voiced concerns about the legitimization that might be given by this

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<sup>2</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>3</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:1). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>4</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 15:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

metaphorical description of the violent attacks by the adulteress's husband (vv. 37–42). Yet it must be remembered that this is an extended metaphor portraying God's judgment on the nation, and it is by no means intended as a pattern for any human punishment of adultery. Structurally, the passage divides into two large sections, plus a conclusion: vv. 1–43 follow the story of the abandoned child who became a bride; vv. 44–58 broaden the “family” to include two “sisters,” Samaria and Sodom; and vv. 59–63 conclude both parts.

**ESV 16:1–43:** Jerusalem, the Foundling Bride. This oracle is an extended metaphor, and so its details cannot simply be equated with certain aspects of literal history. It moves through three phases as God speaks through the prophet: (1) The story of the abandoned girl (v. 6) who becomes a queen (v. 13) is told in the first person through the actions of the king (by implication) who found her (vv. 1–14). (2) Verses 15–34 describe in the third person the sexual promiscuity of the “queen” despite her husband's generosity. (3) The first-person account resumes to announce the impending judgment on the faithless bride (vv. 35–43).

**ESV 16:1–14:** As in ch. 15, the oracle focuses on the city of Jerusalem, and not “Israel” *per se*. This accounts for the seemingly unusual account of origins given in 16:3 and is the reason why the “sisters” in the second half of the chapter are also both cities. The first stage of the oracle depicts Jerusalem's helpless and hopeless state—except for the intervention of the passerby (who is God).

### **Ezekiel 16:1**

**Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**LAN:** This message reminded Jerusalem of its former despised status among the Canaanite nations. Using the imagery of a young baby growing to mature womanhood, God reminded Jerusalem that he raised her from a lowly state to great glory as his bride. However, she betrayed God's trust and prostituted herself by seeking alliances with pagan nations and adopting their customs. If we push God aside for anything, even education, family, career, or pleasure, we are abandoning him in the same way.<sup>5</sup>

**1-5.** In this parable on Jerusalem's unfaithfulness Ezekiel pictured her as an unwanted child of a mixed union. Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite (cf. v. 45). While Ezekiel had the *people* of Jerusalem in mind through most of this parable, this beginning seems to allude to the *city* of Jerusalem itself. Israel, of course, descended from Shem (Gen. 10:21-31); by contrast Jerusalem, before it was conquered by David (1 Chron. 11:4-9), was a Canaanite city (Canaan descended from Ham, not Shem, Gen. 10:6-20). The city's early inhabitants were called Jebusites (Jud. 19:10-12).

Why then did Ezekiel say that Jerusalem's father was an Amorite and mother a Hittite? Perhaps the pagan Jebusites were associated with and were apparently like the

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<sup>5</sup> Life Application Bible Notes

Amorites and Hittites. This association may be suggested in the Table of Nations, which lists the Jebusites *between* the Hittites and Amorites (Gen. 10:15-16; see comments on the Amorites in Gen. 14:13-16). A similar point of association but not actual blood relationship is evident in the reference to Sodom as a “sister” of Jerusalem (Ezek. 16:46).

The early beginnings of Jerusalem were like those of an unwanted child. Normally after a baby is born the umbilical cord is cut. In biblical times a newborn was then washed to remove the blood and vernix and was rubbed with salt to dry and firm the skin. Then the infant was wrapped in cloth for warmth and covering. But for Jerusalem these things were not done. No one looked on her with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for her.

Also the baby (Jerusalem) was thrown out into the open field, for she was despised. The cruel practice of infanticide was prevalent in the ancient world. Unwanted and deformed children were cast out at birth and left to die.<sup>6</sup>

Ezekiel is not going to let us forget that he is giving us the Word of the Lord. We may not accept it, but it is still His Word.<sup>7</sup>

**Constable:** The Lord instructed Ezekiel to make the detestable practices of the people of Jerusalem known to them. He prophesied to the exiles, but his message presented the people of Jerusalem as the primary object of his attention.<sup>8</sup>

## **Ezekiel 16:2**

### **Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,**

**Missler:** “Abomination” - through the Scriptures we understand that abomination is obviously something undesirable to the extreme. And it tends to have a double meaning, on the one hand it is something that offends the Lord and gets all linked up with idolatry in the theological sense. But it is also all linked up with unfaithfulness in the sexual sense.

If you have done some background study on the ancient cultures and the religious practices of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and Phoenicians, you see they all had slight variations, but they were all obscene to the extreme. In Bible studies where we might have occasion to dig into these kind of things, we are usually in a context which is quite polite, and we utilize some broad, abstract terms. We do not get down into the nitty gritty details, nor do I intend to in this study.

But we should be sensitive to the reality that idolatry was not simply some ancient tribal people bowing down to some stone image or carving. That in itself is shocking enough, when man chooses to worship the creation rather than the Creator. But also what was involved in those cultural practices and rites and commitments of people who were caught up in idolatry, involved all kinds of behavior which we would consider

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<sup>6</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:1–5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>7</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 16:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, 2010 Edition,

obscene and deviant to the extreme. It was grime stuff. I do not think it would serve any purpose to go any further into it than that.

**Dake: [Jerusalem to know her abominations]** Jerusalem is the subject of the chapter, wherein God exposes her sins and abominations (Ezekiel 16:1-2). Her birth or nativity was in Canaan; her father was an Amorite and her mother a Hittite (Ezekiel 16:3). This refers to the founders of Jerusalem, not to Abraham and his seed. Jebus was a Canaanite city. Satan occupied it and the promised land in advance of Abraham for the purpose of thwarting God's purpose with the chosen race.<sup>9</sup>

**Wycliffe: Her abominations.** Especially the worship of Baal and Moloch (vv. 15-22) and alliances with heathen nations (vv. 23-34). 3. The Canaanites. Referred to in the stele of Amenhotep II (1447–1421), in the El Amarna Letters of about 1370 B.C., and in an ancient Hittite incantation (see ANET, pp. 246, 352, 483, 484). Amorite (*Westerner*). Or the Amurru, a powerful Semitic people who invaded the Fertile Crescent about 2000 B.C. Cf. Gen 14:7; 15:16; Num 21:21-30; Josh 24:15. Hammurabi (1728–1686), of the first dynasty of Babylon, was an Amorite. (See G. E. Mendenhall, “Mari,” BA, XI (1948), 1-19.) Hittite. A non-Semitic people, resident in Asia Minor in the second millennium B.C., with contacts in Canaan from patriarchal to Solomonian times (Gen 23:10-20; 26:34; Josh 1:4; I Sam 26:6; I Kgs 11:1). On Hittite bestiality, consult G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, pp. 423-426. Ezekiel was stressing the heathenism in Israel's background.<sup>10</sup>

Who is the little orphan? Who is the little dirty, filthy child who has been thrown out? Who is this illegitimate child? It is the city of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

The instruction to deliver the oracle comes in quasi-legal language: make known carries overtones of “arraign” (cf. 20:4; also Job 13:23). On abominations, see note on Ezek. 7:3.

**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 *abominations* describes that which makes one physically ill.<sup>12</sup>

**Chuck Smith:** So God is speaking out against Jerusalem. But, of course, a city is always made up of inhabitants. A city as itself is not good or evil. It all depends on what the people are that live within that city. So it is against those who are inhabiting Jerusalem that God speaks.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dakes Study Bible

<sup>10</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:2). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>11</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 16:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>12</sup> The Nelson Study bible

<sup>13</sup> Chuck Smith, Pastor Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA, Notes on Ezekiel

### **Ezekiel 16:3**

**And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.**

“Thus saith the Lord,” the phrase which Ezekiel continues to use, by which he is declaring these words are directly from God, which is under the death penalty if it proves untrue.

**Missler:** “Thy birth and thy nativity...Amorite..Hittite” - now this was speaking of the origin of Israel. Here the Prophet, trained as a priest talking to Jerusalem, was highlighting not that they were the sons of Abraham; he was not speaking of their role as a proud, chosen, spiritually blessed people, but rather he goes in a different direction and speaks of Jerusalem’s parentage as being in the Amorites and the Hitties.

Ezekiel was not dealing with their national lineage, but their spiritual condition. He was speaking of them spiritually, and morally. Jesus Christ does the same thing in John 8:40-41, 44 where they imply that he is a bastard and He replies by attributing their father as the Devil. He was speaking to them spiritually.

Like this verse, where Ezekiel speaks of their lineage, not geographically or nationally, but spiritually; they were Canaanite!

**LAN:** This message reminded Jerusalem of its former despised status among the Canaanite nations. Using the imagery of a young baby growing to mature womanhood, God reminded Jerusalem that he raised her from a lowly state to great glory as his bride. However, she betrayed God’s trust and prostituted herself by seeking alliances with pagan nations and adopting their customs. If we push God aside for anything, even education, family, career, or pleasure, we are abandoning him in the same way.

This does not speak of the origin of the *nation* Israel; it is not speaking of Abraham and Sarah. The origin of the *city* of Jerusalem is in view here. The history of Jerusalem is that it was an Amorite city. We read in Genesis 15:16, “But in the fourth generation they [that is, the children of Israel] shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” Jerusalem was a Hittite city also. The Hittites were a great nation, and they controlled that land at one time. This is the background of Jerusalem, and it is nothing to brag about at all.<sup>14</sup>

**ESV: land of the Canaanites.** Jerusalem's recorded history predates its takeover by David (2 Sam. 5:6–10) by centuries. The parentage of Amorite and Hittite joins together two of the pagan peoples inhabiting Canaan in pre-Israelite times (cf. Ex. 3:8, and the close joining of these names in Neh. 9:8).

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<sup>14</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 16:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**The unwanted foundling (16:3–6).** Ezekiel pictured Jerusalem as a baby born in the land of Canaan. The father of the child was the Amorite; the mother, the Hittite. Though the Israelites had lived there for centuries, Jerusalem had been influenced from the very beginning by Canaanite culture (16:3).

From the moment of birth Jerusalem was an unwanted child. No one showed any compassion to perform customary hygienic and medical procedures for the infant. She was not washed, salted nor wrapped.<sup>2</sup> She was cast out upon the surface of the ground to become the victim of infanticide. She was abhorred on the day of her birth. Yet the Lord passed by and saw the infant squirming in the blood of birth. Though repulsive to look upon, God decreed that this baby should “live” (16:4–6).<sup>15</sup>

The Amorites, a western Semitic culture existent in the Near East from the second millennium B.C., and the Hittites, Indo-Europeans who had immigrated to the land of Canaan, are two of the groups that were in Canaan when the Hebrews entered the land after the Egyptian captivity.

**Chuck Smith:** Now, before the children of Israel came to dwell in the land, the first inhabitants of the land of Palestine were the Hittites and then also the Amorites. And so Jerusalem... well, first of all, rather the Amorites followed by the Hittites. But thy father was an Amorite, thy mother a Hittite, referring to the nations that inhabited the land prior to the coming in of Abraham.

**Constable 3-4:** Yahweh personified Jerusalem as a woman (cf. Isa. 1:21), and he related her history as a parable (allegory). In this parable Jerusalem represents the people of Jerusalem (a metonymy), but it is the people of Jerusalem throughout Israel's history that are particularly in view. Some interpreters take Jerusalem as representing Israel as a nation.<sup>250</sup> Others believe Jerusalem identifies the city that is only similar to the nation in its history and conduct.<sup>251</sup> I think it is best to take Jerusalem as describing the city for three reasons. First, the Lord compared Jerusalem to two other cities, Samaria and Sodom (vv. 44-56, 61). Second, everything the prophet said about Jerusalem fits the city, its history and inhabitants. Third, the purpose of the parable was to convince the Jews in exile that the city of Jerusalem, specifically, would experience destruction because of the sins of its people. The purpose of the story was to show the exiles that the destruction of Jerusalem that Ezekiel predicted was well deserved so they would believe that God would destroy it.

Canaan was the place of Jerusalem's origin and birth, a land notorious for its depravity. Thus it was understandable that the Israelites would tend toward idolatry. Jerusalem's founders, in pre-patriarchal days, were Amorites and Hittites, not Hebrews. Amorites and Hittites were two of the Canaanite peoples, and they often represent all the Canaanites in the Old Testament (Gen. 10:15-16; 15:16; Num. 13:29; Josh. 1:4; 5:1; 7:7; 24:15, 18; Amos 2:10). The Jebusites, who occupied Jerusalem from its earliest mention in Scripture, were another Canaanite tribe. The Table of Nations lists the Jebusites between the Hittites and the Amorites (Gen. 10:15-16). When Jerusalem came into existence, she received no special treatment, not even normal care.

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<sup>15</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:3–43). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.



It was the custom in the ancient Near East to wash a newborn child, rub it with salt for antiseptic reasons, and wrap it in cloths, changing these twice by the fortieth day after the umbilical cord was cut.

Jerusalem was not an outstanding city from its founding. Many other cities in Canaan had better situations geographically, had better physical resources, and were more easily defensible militarily.

### **Ezekiel 16:4**

**And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.**

**Missler:** We are not familiar with that, but in the ancient tribes they would often, when a baby was born, obviously they cut the umbilical cord, then they would rub the skin with salt to firm it and cleanse it. It was one way of cleansing.

The Lord, through Ezekiel, comments on the whole history of Israel in somewhat the style of an editor, not literally, but figuratively; how Israel was born. While Israel was alone when it was born, God has been taking care of it.

**Dake:** [day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee] Sevenfold state at birth:

1. Your navel was not cut.
2. You were not washed in water to supple (cleanse) you.
3. You were not salted (rubbed or washed with salt—the custom in Palestine).
4. You were not swaddled (wrapped) at all.
5. No one pitied you to do any of these things to you (Ezekiel 16:5).
6. No one had compassion on you.
7. You were cast out into an open field, to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born.

**Dake:** [salted] In ancient times newborn babies were rubbed with salt in order to harden their skin; this operation was supposed to make it dry, tight, and firm. It may have also been applied as an emblem of purity and incorruption.

**Wycliffe:** Salting made the skin drier and firmer, and aided in cleansing. **To cleanse,** (AV, *supple*) **you** (*lfmish.î* is an unknown expression, but it is suggested by the Akkadian and the Targum. 5. This baby girl, however, was **cast out in the open field.** Child exposure was practiced at the time of Christ's birth (W. H. Davis, *Greek Papyri of the First Century*, pp. 1-7). 6. **Polluted;** i.e., "kicking about." Five manuscripts, the LXX, the Old Latin, and the Syriac omit the second, "and I said ..., Live," as dittography.

**ESV 4–5: cast out.** Exposure clearly implies an unwanted birth and certain death. Ezekiel also describes the usual practice for welcoming a newborn. The reason for rubbing with salt is not understood, although the custom persists in some traditional cultures, in the belief that it is beneficial.

Customarily, when a child was born, the midwife cut the umbilical cord, rubbed the newborn child with salt, water, and oil, and then wrapped it in swaddling cloth for seven days. This was repeated every seven days for 40 days. The picture here is of a child abandoned by its mother and neglected by all from its birth. The identification of Israel with pagan parents was a most impressive way to mark their depraved and sinful nature.

**Chuck Smith:** Evidently in those days when a child was born, of course, the first thing you do is you wash the child, and then evidently they salted the child. This, no doubt, would be to kill bacteria, because salt is a tremendous antiseptic as far as killing bacteria.

We were out in a group that were exploring for the lost Virgin Guadalupe mine, and we were blasting away some boulders. And one of the fellows that was with us, working with us, got hit by a piece of rock that had cut off from the boulder when we were blasting it out, and cut his hand. And the old miner that was with us reached in and got out a little pack of salt and poured it all over. Of course, the guy winced like everything. But he said, "I never go out without my bag of salt." He said, "It's the great antiseptic and it'll cause it to heal faster and it'll keep it from any infection from setting up."

And so they, no doubt, in those days salted the baby as an antiseptic to kill the bacteria that might be upon the child. So speaks about salting and the swaddling it, wrapping it up in this blanket kind of thing to swaddle the baby. But when Jerusalem was born, none of this was done. The umbilical chord was not cut. "You were not washed in water; you were not salted nor swaddled."

### **Ezekiel 16:5**

**None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.**

Incidentally, this is another allusion to the old ancient tribes. Unwanted children were left in the field and abandoned. In ancient days the Arabs would bury it alive if it was a female. Unwanted children were not a commodity to be praised.

She was an illegitimate orphan child who was just thrown out—abandoned and not cared for.

**Constable:** No one had compassion on Jerusalem but abandoned her because she was an unwanted child. A common method of disposing of unwanted children in the ancient Near East, especially girls, was to abandon them to the elements. When the Israelites entered the land in Joshua's day, they did not take Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63).

## **Ezekiel 16:6**

**And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast in thy blood, Live.****

Note that he said it twice. By speaking it happens. (Twice. Isa 11:11.) They got their life from God.

**Dake: [I passed by thee ...]** Jehovah reveals His part in the continuation of Jerusalem, pictured here as a castoff newborn babe and left to die by itself. He passed by and saw it polluted in its own blood and said to it, "Live." This makes it clear that from the beginning God had planned to have this place as the capital of His kingdom on earth, as well as the capital of His chosen people through whom the Messiah and the written Word of God would come.

**[polluted in thine own blood]** Canaanite cities were founded in blood by the offering of human sacrifices, so this could be the reference here.

**Dake: [I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live]** Twenty things that God did for Jerusalem:

1. He found her like a castoff babe and said, Live (Ezekiel 16:6).
2. He caused her to grow up to be a well-developed young woman (Ezekiel 16:7).
3. He courted and married her and she became His wife by covenant relationship (Ezekiel 16:8).
4. He washed away her blood and anointed her with perfumes and oil (Ezekiel 16:9).
5. He clothed her with brodered work (Ezekiel 16:10).
6. He gave her beautiful badger skin shoes.
7. He girded her with fine linen.
8. He covered her with silk.
9. He decked her with ornaments (Ezekiel 16:11).
10. He put bracelets on her hands.
11. He put a chain on her neck.
12. He put a jewel on her forehead (Ezekiel 16:12).
13. He put earrings in her ears.
14. He put a beautiful crown on her head and made her His queen.
15. He decked her with gold and silver (Ezekiel 16:13).
16. He clothed her with the finest of clothes.
17. He fed her with the best of food.
18. He made her exceedingly beautiful.
19. He made her a prosperous kingdom.
20. He made her famous and perfect in beauty among all the nations (Ezekiel 16:14).

**6-7.** As God noticed the struggling infant wallowing helplessly (kicking about in her blood), He came to her aid. The life of the infant was hanging in the balance till God ordained her survival: I said to you, Live!

The child lived and grew to maturity like a plant of the field. The modern equivalent of that comparison is “She grew like a weed.” As time went by, this baby grew into a young woman. Yet she was still naked and bare, in a destitute state.<sup>16</sup>

God says to Jerusalem, “I adopted you and made you My child.” Israel is portrayed as a helpless child, cast out as worthless and polluted, which certainly would have perished if God had not passed by and reached out to her in grace and mercy.

**ESV: Blood** is an important motif throughout Ezekiel's book. Usually it refers to violence, but here to life (cf. Gen. 9:4) and the discharge of birthing.

**Chuck Smith:** So God is saying that you were an outcast and there was no one to care for you. But I came by and I saw you polluted there in your blood and I said unto you, "Live."

Now verse 6, interestingly enough, from old times was used as a verse to stop hemorrhaging or stop the flow of blood. It is a verse that people have used for years when someone is bleeding. To stop the bleeding they would quote this verse. Now, I don't think the verse does it, but their faith to believe that God is going to do it does stop the bleeding. But people for years have used this almost as a charm kind of a thing to stop bleeding. But, of course, it's out of context. God is talking about when He first saw the nation of Israel, Jerusalem, the people of Jerusalem. Called them unto Himself.

**Constable:** The Lord had compassion on Jerusalem in her helpless and undesirable condition and took care of her so she survived. The city remained as an unwanted child until, at the Lord's direction, David captured it from the Jebusites and made it the capital of his kingdom (2 Sam. 5:6-10).

### **Ezekiel 16:7**

**I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare.**

**Missler:** The model here is of the abandoned baby that God came by and took and saved. It prospered and grew to a young maiden, obviously speaking by analogy, the young maiden representing Israel.

In Rev 12 the woman is also representing Israel. Israel in the sense that she started with Eve, the seed of the woman, and brings forth a man child.

**Wycliffe: To multiply.** The LXX and the Syriac read *grow up* in place of MT *and a myriad ... I made thee*. Art come to excellent ornaments. *Arrived at full maidenhood*. The Syriac *in the menses*, or verse 8, in the time of love, suggests the meaning, *full maidenhood*. Thou *wast* naked and bare; i.e., “unmarried.”

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<sup>16</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:6–7). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The narrative quickly moves from infancy to puberty. Still naked, she is vulnerable and in need of resources.

**The beautiful marriage (16:7–9).** The Lord nurtured the child in her growth. She flourished “like plants of the field.” She grew tall. Her hair grew long. Her breasts developed. Yet this beautiful young lady was still “naked and bare,” i.e., insufficiently clad, just like a poor desert girl. Again the Lord passed by and observed that the young lady had come to “the time for love,” i.e., she was of marriageable age. Performing an ancient marriage custom, the Lord spread his skirt over her and covered her nakedness, i.e., he provided all her material needs. Following the pattern of true marriage God “swore,” i.e., pledged his fidelity, to her. He entered into a “covenant” with her, i.e., the two exchanged vows of commitment and obligation. Thus did Jerusalem, i.e., the Israelites, become the people of the Lord. He then performed for his bride the ritual purification which accompanied marriage, and anointed her with the oil of gladness.<sup>17</sup>

**BSB: 7-14** The babe, Israel, was next described as a young woman who had reached marriageable age. The act described (v. 8) was symbolic of a completed marriage (cf. Ruth 3:9). God cleansed and purified her to prepare her for marriage (v. 9). Her nakedness was covered by the Lord, who took her to be His own. The dress of the bride (cf. Ex. 28; 39) symbolized the ritual and worship of Judaism (v. 10). Her diet was a festive one, including delicacies of the land (v. 13). All this was symbolic of the formal covenant or espousal between the bride, Israel, and her Bridegroom, YAHWEH.<sup>18</sup>

**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; see Ps. 132). Jerusalem became God’s dwelling place (2 Sam. 7:12–17; 1 Kin. 5; 6).<sup>19</sup>

**Constable:** The Lord enabled Jerusalem to thrive. Her inhabitants became numerous. She eventually developed into a fine city even though she had gotten a bad start in life. During the reigns of David and Solomon, Jerusalem was one of the most highly respected cities in the ancient Near East.

### **Ezekiel 16:8**

**Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.**

**Missler:** “Spread my skirt over thee” - see Ruth 3:9. An idiom, a way of betrothing, or being espoused.

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:3–43). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

<sup>18</sup> Believer’s Study Bible Notes

<sup>19</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

In the Book of Ruth she requests this of Boaz in 3:9. That scene was not a sort of solicitation. He is a kinsman, so Ruth asks him to be her kinsman-redeemer. Under the laws of Leviticus and elsewhere, he was to take her to wife and redeem the land (a voluntary action).

The whole model in Ruth is Boaz, by redeeming the land as the kinsman-redeemer, fulfilled those requirements. It is also a model of Jesus Christ. Ruth, being a Gentile, was a model of the Church.

The idea of “putting the skirt over thee” was an idiom, a way of betrothing, or being espoused. What God was saying here was in the idiom of the betrothal that before he passed by as an infant as saw it needed help, he took care of it, brought it life, and it grew and prospered. “And entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.”

Now despite all the failures and the judgments, Israel belongs to Jehovah. Israel has a special relationship with Jehovah.

**Dake: [I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness]** This was a symbolic act signifying that one was taking another under his own protection. It was a common symbol in the East for marriage.

**[entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine]** This is the only way God married Israel, and it is the only way the church is now married to Christ and God (Romans 7:4).

**Wycliffe: I spread my skirt over thee.** Symbolic of marriage (Ruth 3:9; Deut 22:30). **And entered into a covenant with thee.** Cf. Mal 2:14; Prov 2:17. 9. Washed I thee. Preparatory ceremonies for the nuptials. Cf. Ruth 3:3. Purification from heathenism and consecration to the Lord. 10. I shod you with leather (RSV). *Tahh* (used as a covering for the Tabernacle, Ex 25:5; 26:14), is either an Egyptian loan-word, “leather,” or the Arabic *dugong*, a kind of porpoise, whose skin was used for sandals.<sup>20</sup>

God again passed by Jerusalem and noticed that she was old enough for love, that is, of marriageable age. God then entered into a covenant of marriage with her. I spread the corner of My garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you My solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you ... and you became Mine. The symbolic act of spreading the lower part of one’s garment over another signified protection and betrothal (cf. Ruth 3:9). God pledged His fidelity to Jerusalem and took her as His own. The historical event to which this alludes could be the appointment of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and God’s dwelling place.<sup>21</sup>

**ESV:** Now at a marriageable age, she is taken as a wife; spread ... my garment signals intent to marry (cf. Ruth 3:9), and the **covenant** signifies the formal commitment (Mal. 2:14). The bonds are formed before the cleansing of Ezek. 16:9.

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<sup>20</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:8). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>21</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**Family, Symbolic Nature**—Marital intimacy offers appropriate language to symbolize God’s relationship to His people. Ezekiel used the sexual union to symbolize God’s establishment of covenant with Judah. In the remainder of the chapter he symbolized the infidelity of Judah by using marital and family terms. In spite of her infidelity, the covenant love of God would never be totally lost (16:59-63).<sup>22</sup>

So as the nation developed, the time came for love, and God came to the nation to receive the love, entered into a covenant, married them in that sense. Entering into that covenant relationship where God claimed them as His own, as His bride.

**Constable:** When she was mature enough, the Lord made a commitment to take care of her forever (cf. Ps. 132:13-17). Spreading a skirt over someone was a customary way of committing to marry and to provide for someone in that culture (Ruth 3:9).

### **Ezekiel 16:9**

**Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.**

**Missler:** The idea of marriage being idiomatic of the covenant can be seen in Jer 2:2 and 3:1; but perhaps the most specific example is the entire Book of Hosea, in particular 2:2-3 where Hosea is instructed to act out a model analogous to Israel being portrayed as the adulterous wife. But the message in Hosea is nevertheless, one of hope. See Hosea 2:14-20; Mal 2:14.

**9-14.** God **clothed** His betrothed in splendor befitting a queen. The waif who had the stench of blood was **washed** and anointed with ointments, or expensive perfumes. The girl who was naked now received an embroidered dress ... leather sandals... fine linen, and ... costly garments. God put jewelry on her, including bracelets ... a necklace, a ring on her nose, earrings, and a crown. The “ring” was clipped to the outer part of a nostril and was worn as jewelry with bracelets and earrings (cf. Gen. 24:47; Isa. 3:21). All this suggests that under God’s blessing during the reigns of David and Solomon Jerusalem became a magnificent city (cf. 1 Kings 10:4-5).

Besides receiving expensive jewelry and fine clothes Jerusalem also was given the choicest foods: fine flour, honey, and olive oil. Everything she could possibly need or want was lavished on her by her gracious, generous “Husband.” Being beautiful, she became a queen, and her beauty was known throughout the nations.

Had Ezekiel’s parable ended here, it would have been a beautiful rags-to-riches love story. But he added a bizarre twist to make the story correspond to the remainder of Jerusalem’s history. He pictured the unfaithfulness of this woman who was made a queen (Ezek. 16:15-34).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Disciple’s Study Bible Notes

<sup>23</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:9–14). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**McGee:** He says, “This is what I did for Jerusalem.”

I think the application to our lives is quite obvious: you and I have a pretty bad background. Adam and Eve became sinners, and you and I were born in iniquity. David said, “... in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5), and David is no different from you and me. What do you have to boast about? Even if your ancestors *did* come over on the Mayflower, they were just a bunch of sinners saved by the grace of God. That is our origin, our background—we were dead in trespasses and sin.

What did God do for Jerusalem? God said to her, “Live” (v. 6). To us He has said, “... Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). He has made a covenant that if you will trust Christ, He will save you. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The Lord took that little illegitimate child, dirty and filthy in its own blood, and He said, “Then washed I thee with water.” Likewise, we can know the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. “I thoroughly washed away the blood from thee”—the Lord Jesus bore my guilt on the cross; there is no blood guilt on a child of God today. “And I anointed thee with oil”—He anoints the child of God today with the oil of the Holy Spirit. “I girded thee about with fine linen”—we can be covered with the righteousness of Christ in order that we might stand in the presence of God.

What happened to this city? God says that when she became grown, a beautiful young lady, she played the harlot. She went over into idolatry and turned her back on Him. God have mercy on the Christian who will sell himself to the world for a bowl of pottage. Yes, Esau *did* sell out cheap, but many Christians also sell out cheap to the world today. The Devil could buy a lot of us, my friend. We so easily find ourselves going off again and again away from God and away from fellowship with Him. Oh, to be true to God in this hour in which we live!<sup>24</sup>

**ESV:** The cleansing actions here mirror those of v. 4, though now of an adult; blood therefore is menstrual issue.

**Constable 9-12:** The Lord also prepared her for a special relationship with Himself. He cleansed and anointed her and clothed her with beautiful, expensive clothing including fine shoes. He also gave her jewelry to make her even more beautiful with bracelets, a necklace, a ring, earrings, and a crown (cf. Gen. 24:53; Ps. 45:13-15; Isa. 61:10). These were Jerusalem's glory days under Solomon's rule (cf. 1 Kings 10:4-5).

### **Ezekiel 16:10**

**I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.**

Incidentally, all those things were mentioned in the Tabernacle. It was an allusion to the 40 years in the wilderness.

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<sup>24</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 16:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



**The adornment of the bride (16:10–14).** The Lord clothed his wife with the finest garments—with linen, silk, embroidered cloth, and shoes of porpoise skin. He bestowed on her jewelry of all kinds. He set before her the finest foods. Israel, God’s bride, became exceedingly beautiful. She even “advanced to royalty,” i.e., developed into a monarchy. Her reputation for beauty spread among the nations because she in reality reflected the splendor of God. What made Israel truly attractive was her faith in the true and living God.<sup>25</sup>

**ESV 10–13:** Only after the covenant has been entered are the beautifying gifts given. This culminates in status as royalty (v. 13).

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 it 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.<sup>26</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:11**

**I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.**

**Wycliffe: 11-13.** For the bride’s finery, see Isa 3:18-24; Gen 24:22, 30, 47. 12. **A ring on your nose** (RSV; AV, *forehead*). See also Judges 8:24; Isa 3:21. 13. Bountiful food. Cf. Deut 32:13, 14; Hos 2:10. 14. The splendor of Jerusalem in Solomon’s time (cf. I Kgs 10; Lam 2:15).<sup>27</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:12**

**And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.**

**[jewel on thy forehead]** This most likely is in the nose.

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<sup>25</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:3–43). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

<sup>26</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

<sup>27</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:11). Chicago: Moody Press.

### **Ezekiel 16:13**

**Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.***

This was painting a picture from the wilderness wanderings all the way through to the monarchy under David and Solomon, where they prospered. Even Queen of Sheba came to visit to see if the rumors were true (2 Kgs 10).

**[didst prosper into a kingdom]** This refers to the great kingdom of David and Solomon when Israel was respected among the nations (Ezekiel 16:13-14; 2 Samuel 5-8; 1 Kings 1-11).

**Constable 13-14:** She had the best jewelry and clothes. She also ate the best food. In other words, the love of her husband knew no bounds. She became very beautiful and even qualified as royalty; she became a royal city that was home to the Davidic dynasty of kings. Other nations even commented on her beauty since it was so extraordinary because of the grace the Lord had bestowed on her (1 Kings 10; 1 Chron. 14:17; Lam. 2:15).

### **Ezekiel 16:14**

**And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.***

**Missler:** Up until here has been the good news; how the Lord took this infant, prospered it as it blossomed. In effect God took it to wife. It is in that sense that Ezekiel and Hosea and some other passages speak of Israel as the wife of Jehovah. However, her response to this grace, provision was to become worse than a harlot!

The classic model of the harlot is someone who gets paid to give of herself. We will discover that the Harlot Israel pays others, and bribes her own par-amours.

We are going to see here the response of this wife. In contrast to bearing fruit, she becomes worse than the harlot. There is no rebuke in the Scripture more vivid, more vehement, more sordid, or more penetrating than what God says here to Israel.

**ESV:** The first-person verbs in the preceding verses find their summation here, as God asserts that Jerusalem's renown (Hb. *shem*, "name") and beauty were entirely of his making (that I had bestowed).

**Chuck Smith:** Now God speaks of His work for the nation Israel, and that work of God's Spirit in making them great, making them beautiful, making them desirable, perfect in beauty. Now, this is all a foreshadowing of the relationship of Jesus Christ to His church. How that when the Lord first came to us, we were polluted because of our sins. As Paul writes in Ephesians 2, "And you hath He made alive, who were dead in your trespasses and sins. Who in times past you walked according to the course of this world."

The word walked there is meandered, which means you were walking without any purpose or direction. You were meandering through life. Your life was aimless before the Lord met you. "As you meandered according to the course of this world." The word *course* comes from the Greek word *weathervane*. Whichever way the world was flowing, that's the way you were going. Flowing in that way of the world. Just the fashions of the world. "And you were by nature," Paul said, "the children of wrath, because you were obeying the lust of your flesh, the lust of your mind." And thus we were when Christ came, but He washed us. "Now ye are clean," Jesus said, "through the words that I have spoken unto you." The washing of the regeneration of the Word of God. The washing of our lives through the blood of Jesus Christ.

"I washed you from your pollution, and then," the Lord said, "I anointed thee with oil." And so He anointed our life with the Holy Spirit. And then the Lord goes on to declare, "I clothed thee with brodered work." Not just throwing an old gunnysack at you and saying, "Dress up." Brodered work speaks of care; it speaks of skill. And so God took so much care and so much skill to clothe us with the righteousness which is of Jesus Christ through faith.

"I shod thee with badger skins." Or, "I gave you shoes of badger skins." Now the badger of the scripture, what that Hebrew word is today we don't know. The King James translators guessed badger. But it was a soft leather that was usually dyed purple and was the favorite of the young girls for their slippers. And they were, because soft leather, they were worn for parties and for luxuries. Really not for hard labor or hard work out in the fields. Sandals were more the dress for that, but these were luxurious leather slippers.

"And I girded thee about with fine linen." In Revelation 19, verse 6, He speaks about, "And the bride hath made herself ready and she was adorned in fine linen, pure and clean." And the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. That righteousness that is ours is that which God has imputed to us through our faith in Jesus Christ. I am clothed tonight not in my own righteousness; I do not dare to stand before God pleading my own goodness before Him. And I don't care how moral, how honest, how sincere, and how good a person you are. You're a fool if you seek to stand before God in your own goodness and in your own righteousness.

You know, there are so many people that are just sort of good-natured people. Like you have dogs that are good natured and dogs that are bad natured. There are some dogs that are just mean; you don't want to be around them. There are some people that are just mean; you don't want to be around them. They have peptic type of dispositions, like their stomach is constantly upset or something. They're always growling, always on edge. And that person, as far as standing before God, is no worse off than the person who has by nature a very pleasant disposition, who's easy going, and calm. We have phlegmatic, and we have different types of temperaments, and none of them really have any acceptance before God. The only way that I can be accepted before God is to be clothed in that linen, pure and clean, which He has given to me. The righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Now, the difficulty is when a person does have more of a problem with his disposition, he is usually more conscious and aware of his need for help. And he usually is coming to the Lord more readily. He's a sinner, he knows he's a sinner, and he knows he needs help. And he comes to the Lord quite readily. Whereas that person who is morally good, he's honest, he's sincere, you know, he has all of these qualities, so often that person does not

feel a need of coming to Jesus Christ. And thus, is oftentimes much further from the Lord than the person who has a naturally miserable disposition. Which, of course, is a very interesting thing. A lot of good men go to hell and a lot of bad men go to heaven. Because when you have that kind of a nature, you know, "Oh God, I need help," and you're coming to God for help. And the only way any of us could ever stand before God, surely not in our own righteousness, because our righteousness is as filthy rags in the eyes of God.

So God takes, washes, anoints with oil, clothes, and then He said in verse 11, "I decked thee also with ornaments, put bracelets on thy hands, a chain on your neck, a jewel in your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful tiara, a crown upon your head." I see these as the fruit of the Spirit, whose adorning, Peter said, "let it not be the outward adorning by the wearing of fancy clothes and the putting on of jewelry and the fixing up of your hair, but that inward adornment of the meek and quite spirit, which in the eyes of the Lord is very, very valuable" (I Peter 3:3). And he speaks about the true beauty is not outward, but inward. True beauty of a person is in the character of their lives and the fruit of the Spirit as God places His glorious jewels of meekness, temperance, longsuffering, goodness, love, joy, peace.

And then God said, "I've given you to eat the fine flour and honey and oil. And you were exceedingly beautiful and you prospered into a kingdom. And your fame, your renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty." Throughout the world they were talking of the beauty of the nation of the people. The queen of Sheba came from the south to see and to hear. And when she had been there with Solomon, she said, "Oh, I heard, but I did not believe. But now I have seen and it was not told to me half of the glory of your kingdom."

"I blessed you, I honored you, I prospered you. You became famous, became renown throughout among the heathen. They all heard of your beauty." For the Lord declared, "For it was perfect," that is your beauty. "Through My comeliness which I had put on thee," saith the Lord.

And so God works in us His work of the Spirit. And as God works in us by His Spirit, the purpose is to conform us into the image of Christ. And as God works in us by His Spirit, and as we are changed into the image of Christ, God looks at us and says, "Oh, you're perfectly beautiful." God sees you in Christ, and in Christ there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. God sees you complete in Christ, He sees you perfected in Christ, and He declares that you are perfect in beauty.

Now, after all of this, God now charges them,

### **Ezekiel 16:15**

**But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.**

We are going to encounter a passage in Ezekiel 28 that will correlate with Isa 14. Both chapters are famous because they deal with the origin of Satan. Satan fell due to his pride in his own beauty. Israel fell due to pride. The source of and the root of all sin is really pride. That is exactly what brings Israel down.

**Dake: [didst trust in thine own beauty ...]** Twenty-five sins of Israel:

1. She trusted in her own beauty (Ezekiel 16:15).
2. She played the harlot because of her fame.
3. She poured out fornications on everyone that passed by—a lover to all.
4. She decked high places of idol worship with different colors (Ezekiel 16:16).
5. She played the harlot upon high places by all kinds of immoralities in worship to idols.
6. She made images of her riches that God had blessed her with (Ezekiel 16:17).
7. She committed whoredom with them, or in worship of them.
8. She covered the idols with broidered garments (Ezekiel 16:18).
9. She set God's holy oil and incense before their idols.
10. She set before their idols, in sweet savor offerings, the best of food which God had blessed them with (Ezekiel 16:19).
11. She sacrificed their sons and daughters in fire to their idols (Ezekiel 16:20).
12. She considered their whoredoms a small matter and not sinful.
13. She committed murders on God's children (Ezekiel 16:21).
14. She forgot the days when she was naked, bare, and polluted in her own blood and did not remember how God rescued her and made her what she was (Ezekiel 16:22).
15. She built a brothel or an idol temple (Ezekiel 16:24).
16. She made high places in every street.
17. She built high places in every road (Ezekiel 16:25).
18. She made her beauty to be abhorred.
19. She opened her feet to all who passed by, and multiplied her whoredoms.
20. She committed fornication with the Egyptians and other nations (Ezekiel 16:26).
21. She increased whoredoms to provoke God to anger.
22. She played the whore with the Assyrians because of unsatisfied lusts (Ezekiel 16:28).
23. She multiplied fornication from Canaan to Chaldea, and was yet unsatisfied (Ezekiel 16:29).
24. She lived untrue to her husband (Ezekiel 16:32).
25. She hired lovers to be with her (Ezekiel 16:31-34).

**[playedst the harlot]** All the expressions that follow are to be interpreted of idolatry and immoral practices in such worship.

**LAN:** God cared for and loved Judah, only to have it turn away to other nations and their false gods. The nation had grown to maturity and became famous, but it forgot who had given them their life (Ezekiel 16:22). This is a picture of spiritual adultery (called apostasy—turning from the one true God). As you become wise and more mature, don't turn away from the One who truly loves you.

Her idolatries with the Canaanites (vv. 15-22), and with foreign peoples (vv. 23-29): Egyptians (vv.26, 27), Assyrians (v. 28), and Chaldeans (v. 29). 15. After settling in Canaan, Israel frequented the Canaanite sanctuaries (cf. 20:28; Jer 2:5-7; 3:1-3). 16. Gaily-colored tents on the high places (cf. II Kgs 23:7). 17. **Images.** Of Baals? Or phallic symbols? (May, IB) 18, 19. Cf. Jer 10:9; Hos 2:8. 20, 21. Child sacrifice. Cf. 20:26;

23:37-39. Cf Ex 22:29; Judges 11:39; II Kgs 16:3; 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35. 24. Objects erected for unlawful worship. 25. Cf. 23:8, 17, 30, 40.<sup>28</sup>

**15-19.** Jerusalem's gaze turned from her Benefactor to her beauty, and she became proud (she used her fame to become a prostitute). Jerusalem forgot the One who had supplied her with her wealth, and turned away from Him (cf. Deut. 6:10-12; 8:10-20). Instead she basked in her beauty and prostituted herself to other gods. Beginning in Solomon's reign (1 Kings 11:7-13), and continuing till her fall to Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem turned from God to idolatry. She had times of revival, but her general trend was downward.

The very blessings God had bestowed on the city were used to worship the false gods. She took some of her garments to make gaudy high places, false worship centers usually situated on high hills (see comments on Ezek. 6:3). God said, You also took the fine jewelry I gave you (cf. 16:11-13) and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them. Ezekiel used vivid imagery to drive home the truth of the vileness of Jerusalem's sin. He pictured her taking her jewelry to make a phallic image with which she engaged in sex. Similarly the people of Jerusalem took the material benefits given by God to make idols of false gods and committed spiritual adultery with them.<sup>29</sup>

***The infidelity of the bride (16:15–34).*** In the indictment against God's bride eight charges were made. First, God's bride came to trust in her beauty, i.e., her material prosperity (16:15). Second, in her association with other nations she "played the harlot," i.e., she was unfaithful to God. She had an affair with every willing passer-by. Ezekiel vividly depicted Israel's involvement with every idolatrous cult of the ancient Near East (16:15).

Third, the bride of the Lord misused everything with which he had blessed her. She used her garments to make and decorate high places where she committed harlotry with Canaanite gods. Gold, silver and jewels were fashioned into idols which became objects of harlotry. She gave her clothing and food as gifts to her gods (16:16–19). Fourth, God's bride even took sons and daughters whom she had borne to the Lord and offered them as sacrifices to their idols. Jerusalem's harlotries were no light matter. She actually slaughtered God's children and caused them to "pass through the fire" (16:20f.).

Fifth, in addition to all her abominations, Israel was guilty of the worst sort of ingratitude. She did not remember the days of her youth when God in his grace had taken pity on that naked, bloody and unwanted infant (16:22). Sixth, platforms and high places were built on every street in Jerusalem (16:23–24a).

Seventh, Jerusalem made herself sexually available to every suitor who passed by. First the sensuous Egyptians, then the Assyrians and finally the Chaldeans were Israel's lovers. Even the godless Philistines were shocked at the conduct of Jerusalem. Because of her conduct the unfaithful wife of Yahweh was under a double "woe." God had stretched out his hand against her. He had delivered her into the hand of her enemies (16:25b–29). Finally, Jerusalem was a brazen, wanton harlot. She was willing to sleep with anyone

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<sup>28</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:15). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>29</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:15–19). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

except her husband. She did not commit harlotry for payment like a prostitute. In fact she paid her lovers to come in unto her! (16:30–34).<sup>30</sup>

**ESV: played the whore.** This language in the OT (Hb. *zanah*) usually refers to wanton sexual immorality. When used metaphorically of one's relationship with God, it brings connotations of depraved worship.

**ESV 15–34:** God's address switches now to focus on the actions of his bride in response to his life-giving gifts. The passage is marked by inversions, initially signaled by the phrasing but you ... beauty ... renown in v. 15, literally reversing the terms of v. 14. Throughout these verses, the gifts given in vv. 10–13, which enhanced and beautified, successively become the means of Jerusalem diminishing and debasing herself. She thus alienates herself from her husband. Structurally, vv. 15–22 present the initial indictment, vv. 23–29 develop the political aspects of the metaphor, and vv. 30–34 summarize the inversions of Jerusalem's behavior.

The harlotries of the bride are similar to those described in Hos 2:5-13.

**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 through 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).<sup>31</sup>

**Chuck Smith:** That is, they turned away from God and they began to worship every god of all of the people that were round about. God said, "You are Mine. I am the one that made this covenant with you. I purchased you. I'm the one that saved you. You were nothing; you were perishing. You were cast out. But I'm the one that rescued you and saved you and put My beauty on you. And now you've prostituted yourselves. And you've turned after every god, played the harlot, poured out your fornications on every one that passed by. His it was."

**Constable:** However, Jerusalem became self-centered and unfaithful to the Lord; she forgot Him when she became preoccupied with His blessings (cf. Deut. 6:10-12; 8). She went after every people that passed by rather than remaining faithful to Yahweh. Under King Solomon, Jerusalem became the greatest city of her day, but Solomon led the Jerusalemites into spiritual adultery by making alliances (covenants) with other nations and by establishing idolatry in the land (1 Kings. 11:1-13; cf. Deut. 17:14-20).

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:3–43). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

<sup>31</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

## **Ezekiel 16:16**

**And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: *the like things* shall not come, neither shall it be so.**

**Missler:** “High places” - the Old Testament has many allusions to altars in the high places. They usually refer to altars having to do with idolatry. ‘Groves’ - are also associated with these high places as they would trim the trees to make in effect phallic symbols out of them. Along with pagan altars and phallic symbols these places became the scene of sensually intensive pagan rites that accompanied their idol worship. They were not just worshipping idols; they were indulging in all kinds of devious practices. They decked these high places in various colors, and with carpets, and thus these locations became a part of the idol worship.

**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: (1) building altars to idols and decorating the high places with their garments (1 Kin. 11:7, 8); (2) fashioning male images (phallic or sexually perverse statues) from gold and silver that God had provided; (3) giving what belonged to the true God to these false gods; and (4) practicing human sacrifice to appease these gods (2 Kin. 16:1–4).<sup>32</sup>

**Chuck Smith:** I have prospered you; I gave you gold and silver. What did you do? You used it to make little images and idols, and you began to worship the gold and silver that I had blessed you with and prospered you with.

How tragic it is when a person's life has been blessed of God and then they turn away from God and they begin to worship the gold and the silver that God has given to them, the possessions that God has given to them.

**Constable 16-19:** Jerusalem used the gifts that God had given her to make idols and to worship them rather than her Lord (2 Kings 23:7; Jer. 10:9). The people made phallic images out of God's gifts with which they engaged in sex (v. 17; cf. Isa 57:8), or perhaps full human figures are in view.

## **Ezekiel 16:17**

**Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,**

Note that it was God’s gold and silver.

**BSB:** Since Jerusalem is portrayed as a wife who was unfaithful to her husband, to be consistent with the allegory any false god she might worship would be called a “male image” (a phallic symbol). The beloved wife, so greatly honored and showered with

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<sup>32</sup> The Nelson Study Bible



costly gifts, took those very ornaments given to her and used them to feed her own sinful desires.

### **Ezekiel 16:18**

**And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.**

Note that it was God's oil and incense that was set before these idols. Worse than false worship, as Deuteronomy notes that when you worship an idol you are really worshipping demons. (Deut 29:17)

Notice in this verse that he emphasizes 2x "mine": "mine oil" and "mine incense."

This business of clothing the idols may seem strange to you, but it is also referred to in Jeremiah 10:9.

You've taken those things that I have given and you've profaned them.

### **Ezekiel 16:19**

**My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, *wherewith* I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and *thus* it was, saith the Lord GOD.**

[**sweet savour**] A term used of Mosaic sacrifices. It is not found outside the Pentateuch except in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 6:13; Ezekiel 16:19; Ezekiel 20:28,41). See Leviticus 1-3.

### **Ezekiel 16:20**

**Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. *Is this* of thy whoredoms a small matter,**

**Missler:** Up until verse 20, it was talking about variations of what would be classified as "Baal Worship." Here we come to a change. Now we are talking about Molech, which had to do with human sacrifices where children were burned before Molech. Lev 18:21 and 20:2-5 attached the penalty for doing so as stoning.

In spite of all our problems as a society, it is hard for us to imagine an organized cultural sanction of this kind of practice.

"Thou has taken thy sons and thy daughters whom thou has born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed them to be devoured." These sons and daughters belong to God.

**20-22.** Jerusalem also offered up her own **sons and daughters** as human sacrifices (**as food**) to these false **idols**. The Canaanite practice of child sacrifice was forbidden to the Israelites (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31). In Ammon, parents killed their **children** and offered them in fires to entreat the god Molech's favor. The practice crept into the nation of Israel, and by Ezekiel's time child sacrifice was practiced openly in Jerusalem

(cf. 2 Kings 21:6; Jer. 7:30-31; 32:35). Jerusalem had strayed far from her “Husband”; she had forgotten all His blessings. In her pride she forgot who had saved her from her destitute state as a neglected newborn and had elevated her to her exalted position.<sup>33</sup>

**ESV20–22: took your sons and your daughters ... these you sacrificed.** Cf. the accusation against Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:6 (cf. Jer. 7:31).

**BSB:** The most hideous and deplorable aspect of idolatry was the practice of human sacrifices, which was widely practiced among the Canaanites and finally extended into the Hebrew community (cf. Judg 11:39; 2 Kin 16:3; 21:6), even the unthinkable abomination of offering human life to the Lord (cf. Mic 6:7). Though Josiah abolished the practice, it seemingly was revived during the last days of Jerusalem (cf. Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35). Upon consideration of the slaughter of a helpless child and the offering of the child’s body as a sacrifice, one can understand Ezekiel’s call for the destruction of these despicable people who had forgotten that their children were a blessing from God. There is a parallel to the present day when parents long for a child, and then ignore the responsibility for the nurture and training of the child (cf. Eph 6:1, note). This may be especially tragic for the mother, who has the responsibility for physical nurture of the child during its formation in the womb, and an awesome task spiritually in teaching the child in his early years (cf. 2 Tim 1:5; Titus 2:4). Certainly God gives no greater challenge and opportunity than that of molding a life in the way of the Lord, rearing up a new generation dedicated to godliness (cf. Deut 6:7, note). Such responsibility is not to be treated lightly.

**Chuck Smith 20-22:** Now, of course, the people of Israel had turned to all of these pagan gods, but worst of all, they began to follow the practice of the pagans of the land in offering their own children as sacrifices unto the pagan gods. Burning them in the fire, casting them into the fire, or putting them into the arms of the little outstretched iron gods of Baal that were heated in the fire till they were red hot and then they would place their babies in those red hot arms and burn them as an offering unto the gods. And here are God's people committing this horrible sacrilege. And so God's indictment against them. No wonder God destroyed them. No wonder God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to drive them out of the land. They had forgotten the condition that they were in when God first came to them. "You haven't remembered how you were naked and had nothing."

**Constable:** Jerusalem went so far as slaying her own children as sacrifices to idols disregarding the fact that they were also the Lord's children (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; Jer. 32:35; cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:1-5; Deut. 12:30-32). Evidently the idolaters first slew the children and then burned their dead bodies as sacrifices.

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<sup>33</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:20–22). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Ezekiel 16:21**

**That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through *the fire* for them?**

**LAN: 20-21** Child sacrifice had been practiced by the Canaanites long before Israel invaded their land. But it was strictly forbidden by God (Leviticus 20:1-3). By Ezekiel's time, however, the people were openly sacrificing their own children (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Kings 21:6). Jeremiah confirmed that this was a common practice (Jeremiah 7:31; Jeremiah 32:35). Because of such vile acts among the people and priesthood, the temple became unfit for God to inhabit. When God left the temple, he was no longer Judah's guide and protector.

### **Ezekiel 16:22**

**And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, *and* wast polluted in thy blood.**

**ESV: did not remember the days of your youth.** The failed memory refers both to infancy (v. 4) and puberty (vv. 7, 9). This theme reappears later in the chapter: vv. 43, 60 (cf. 23:19; Eccles. 12:1).

**Constable:** Furthermore, Jerusalem forgot about her humble origins and that she owed her very existence to Yahweh. Many believers today tend to forget what Christ has done for them on the cross and all the blessings he has poured out on them (Eph 1:3).

### **Ezekiel 16:23**

**And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)**

**23-29.** Jerusalem developed an ever-deepening lust for idols. Her harlotry moved from the "high places" to the highways as shrines to foreign gods were erected at every intersection (in every public square) and on every street. Her desire for idolatry drove her to seek out "lovers" promiscuously to satisfy her lust. Her whoredoms included Egypt (v. 26), Assyria (v. 28), and Babylon (v. 29). Mentioning these nations implies not only Jerusalem's desire for new foreign gods to worship but also her foreign intrigues and alliances.

God did not stand quietly by while His "wife" debased herself. He tried to curb her appetite by imposing judgment. He reduced her territory (i.e., land governed by Jerusalem) and gave her over to ... the Philistines. The Philistines attacked Judah and Jerusalem in the reigns of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17) and Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:16-19). Yet even the Philistines were shocked by Jerusalem's lewd conduct. The Philistines worshiped idols, but at least they remained faithful to their own gods.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:23–29). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**ESV23–29:** Jerusalem's “whorings” included multiple partners, each involving a turn away from God. The Egyptians (v. 26) had been involved in Judean politics (2 Kings 23:31–35) and proved a perennial temptation for illicit political alliance (cf. Isa. 31:1), as did the Assyrians (Ezek. 16:28) at this point in Judah's history (see Jer. 2:18).

**Constable 23-25:** On top of all this wickedness, Jerusalem multiplied shrines to idols everywhere. For this Yahweh pronounced a lament of horror on her (cf. 1 Sam. 4:8; Prov. 23:29; Isa. 3:9). She became a militant advocate of idolatry, not just a practitioner of it. She also made her beauty abominable by prostituting herself to every passerby. She pursued foreign alliances as well as foreign gods.

### **Ezekiel 16:24**

***That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.***

Both Ahaz and Manasseh caused their sons to pass through the fire. King Josiah abolished those practices at least for a time. Jeremiah refers to it also in Jer 7:30-31 and 19:5.

The high places were the places of pagan worship where every kind of licentious practice went on in their worship of these pagan gods.

### **Ezekiel 16:25**

***Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.***

### **Ezekiel 16:26**

***Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.***

**Missler:** Israel was attracted to the gods and practices first of all of Egypt (Isaiah 30 and 31). There was this flirtation or courtship between Israel and Egypt in adopting the practices of Egypt which of course were an abomination to God. It got so bad that even the Philistines were embarrassed by them. They, too, were idol worshiper, but they confined their idol worship to their own traditions and did not run around and get everybody else's to mix into it.

After they flirted with Egypt and Assyria, then even Babylon was embraced in 2 Kings 20:12-19. In each of these cases they were looking to them for protection, and also taking on the worship of their strange practices.

**26, 27.** Alliance with Egypt. Cf. Isa 30:1ff.; 31:1ff.; II Kgs 18:21. Lustful neighbors (RSV); cf. 23:20, euphemism for power of Egypt. 27. Philistine harassment of Judah in

the time of Sennacherib (see ANET, p. 288). 28. With the Assyrians. Ahaz' and Manasseh's pro-Assyria policy (II Kgs 16:7ff.; 21:1ff.; II Chr 33:1ff.). 29. The trading land of Chaldea (RSV). Literally, *in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea*. Here the word *Canaan* is used in the sense of "a trader, merchant"; i.e., unto the merchants' land, even Chaldea (cf. 17:4; Hos 12:7; Zeph 1:11; Zech 14:21).<sup>35</sup>

**Constable 26-27:** She committed adultery with her lustful neighbor, the Egyptians, and multiplied the instances of her harlotry thus angering the Lord further (2 Kings 17:4; 18:21; Isa. 30:7; 36:1). As punishment, the Lord diminished her support. He also gave her into the hands of the Philistines, pagan people who nonetheless were repulsed by her lewd behavior (2 Chron. 21:16-17; 28:16-19; Isa. 1:7-8).

### **Ezekiel 16:27**

**Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.**

The one group they did not try to copy were the Philistines. They hated them from way back. But even the Philistines, with all their indulgences were embarrassed by the degree to which Israel embraced those sexual forms of false worship.

This was God's punishment of Israel and Jerusalem for their many sins—the only reference to punishment in this description and accusation down to Ezekiel 16:35.

The conduct of the Jews was so lewd that even those who worshiped other gods, including their great enemy the Philistines, would have been ashamed to behave that way. The Jews outdid them in doing evil.

So God said, "I've begun to turn you over to your enemies."

### **Ezekiel 16:28**

**Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.**

[unsatiable] Unsatisfied.

**Constable 28-29:** She committed adultery with the distant Assyrians as well, but they did not satisfy her lust (2 Kings 15:19-20; 16:7-18). Neither did adultery with the merchant Chaldeans or the Egyptians satiate her (2 Kings 20:12-19; Isa. 20:5-6; 30:1-5; 31:1).

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<sup>35</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:26). Chicago: Moody Press.

## **Ezekiel 16:29**

**Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.**

You're even worse than a prostitute. You've scorn the payment.

**Constable:** Jerusalem was a spiritual nymphomaniac. Political alliances normally involved the weaker party taking the gods of the stronger ally into its religious system. This is how much idolatry entered Jerusalem.

## **Ezekiel 16:30**

**How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these *things*, the work of an imperious whorish woman;**

[**weak is thine heart**] Israel is here compared to an extremely weak-willing woman who has given herself over to anyone who suggests committing sin with her.

[**imperious**] Domineering, arrogant, exacting.

**How weak is thine heart.** “How lovesick is your heart,” seems to be the idea. In Aramaic and Akkadian the phrase occurs, “How am I filled with wrath against thee” (Cook, ICC). The deeds of a **brazen harlot** (RSV). Literally, *the work of a woman, an imperious harlot*. 31. Compare verses 24, 25. **Scornest** or “mocked” hire (cf. H. G. May, “The Fertility Cult in Hosea,” *AJSL*, 48 (1932) 89-93). 32-34. Other harlots take hire; she was different in that she gave hire to strangers (cf. Deut 23:18; Hos 2:19; 9:1). 33. The words *nēdeh*, “gift” (AV **gifts**), and *nādān*, “marriage gifts” (AV, **gifts**), are *hapax legomena*.<sup>36</sup>

**30-34.** Jerusalem was like a brazen prostitute, but with one major difference. A prostitute gets paid for her services, but Jerusalem scorned payment. She was an adulterous wife as well as a prostitute because she preferred strangers to her own husband. Jerusalem was a spiritual nymphomaniac. She had even resorted to paying bribes (rather than receiving a fee) to get the attention that earlier had been lavishly bestowed on her. Such a reversal was remarkably unusual, thus showing her debased commitment to idolatry and foreign alliances. As she departed from God, He then withheld His blessings that He had so freely given (cf. Deut. 28:15-23). Instead of realizing her sin and returning to the true God, she sought out still more gods and offered larger “bribes” to induce these other gods to bless her. Jerusalem was squandering her wealth on things that could not bless.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:30). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>37</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:30–34). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**ESV 30–34:** The summary pointedly accuses Jerusalem of being uniquely (v. 34) promiscuous, drawing together the two preceding metaphors. The marriage metaphor relates to infidelity and adultery, offending against exclusive loyalty at the heart of the covenant relationship. The prostitution metaphor relates to the multiplicity of partners, secured by inverting the client relationship. Both metaphors, then, represent reversals, with the second intensifying the offense of the first.

**Constable 30-34:** All her brazen adulteries had left Jerusalem with a sick heart; she could no longer feel true love. She was worse than a common prostitute in that she practiced adultery not because she needed money from her lovers but simply because it made her feel good. She took strangers to bed with her instead of her husband. She even gave gifts to her lovers to bribe them to come to her (paying tribute to make alliances) rather than giving them what they wanted in payment for the bribes they would normally have offered her. Her adulteries were worse than those of common prostitutes in that she paid her lovers rather than receiving payment from them (cf. Hos. 8:9).

Ezekiel enumerated at least eight reasons for the exile: pride (v. 15a), spiritual prostitution (vv. 15b-19), materialistic idolatry (vv. 16-19), human sacrifices (vv. 20-21), forgetting God (v. 22), propagating her prostitution (vv. 23-25), trusting relations with pagan nations (vv. 26-29), and a weak will that cast off all moral restraints (vv. 30-4).

### **Ezekiel 16:31**

**In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;**

### **Ezekiel 16:32**

***But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!***

**[wife that committeth adultery]** God considered Israel as His covenant wife (Ezekiel 16:8,32; Isaiah 54:5).

**Chuck Smith 32-33:** So Israel has so turned away from the worship of God in their worshipping of these false gods. That God is just speaking here of the horrible relationship that they would forsake God who had done so much for them. You say, "But oh, could a people really do that?" Well, I ask you to look at the United States today. A nation that in its beginning understood its dependency upon God; a nation that was framed with a Constitution guaranteeing the freedom of worship of the people, a freedom to worship; a nation that placed upon its coins, "In God we trust"; A nation that placed within its national anthem the recognition of God and in its pledge to the flag acknowledged it to be one nation under God. But look how the nation today has turned its back upon God.

On the Lord's day, it has become a day where people go out and worship their idols. As they run up and down a lined field throwing balls to the cries and the cheers of their devoted followers. A day for pleasure, a day for seeking after the flesh, a day of

attempting to satiate the flesh in pleasure. How far we have fallen when Superman replaces the Word of God on television on Sunday mornings. How tragic that a nation turns from the God who made them great, the God who made them strong, the God who clothed them, fed them, made them prosperous, and they forget their beginnings. They forget it was God who made us strong. They forget how that God watched over the early colonists. And they begin to attribute the strength to such foolish things as free enterprise, the democratic system. "America, America, God shed His grace on thee," but you've turned your back on God, even as did Israel. We did not have the wisdom to learn from history, and the Christians by their inactivity have allowed these to be.

We're soon going to be electing school boards and other officials in our community. How many of you have really planned to vote? Probably not very many. Did you know that there are some outstanding Christians that are running for the school boards? That if all of the Christians got out and voted for those Christians that are running for these offices, they could be elected to these offices and we could actually perhaps help guide the curriculum of our schools. There is a Dr. Peterson, there is a George Rhoda, both of them outstanding born again Christians running for school board. Now every Christian ought to be out voting. I'm not going to tell you who to vote for, that's illegal. But I'll just tell you there's a couple Christians.

So God speaks about Israel, their folly, and about the judgment that is going to come. He was first their lover. He had created them, took them when they were nothing, made them great, made them beautiful. And they turned against Him.

### **Ezekiel 16:33**

**They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.**

This shows how contrary to nature and custom Israel was in all her sins (Ezekiel 16:33-34).

### **Ezekiel 16:34**

**And the contrary is in thee from *other* women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.**

[thou art contrary] You are contrary to custom (Ezekiel 16:33-34).

### **Ezekiel 16:35**

**Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:**

Now that was the indictment. Now we get to judgment. In the judgment Israel is not only viewed as an harlot, but as a murderess as well through the Molech practices.



**Dake: Twenty-four Predictions—Fulfilled:**

1. I will gather your lovers, all that you have loved, with all that you have hated (Ezekiel 16:37).
2. I will gather them around about against you.
3. I will discover your nakedness unto them, that they may see your nakedness.
4. I will judge you, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged (Ezekiel 16:38).
5. I will give you blood in fury and jealousy.
6. I will also give you into their hand (Ezekiel 16:39).
7. They will throw down your eminent place.
8. They will break down your high places.
9. They will strip you also of your clothes.
10. They will take away your fair jewels.
11. They will leave you naked and bare.
12. They will also bring up a company against you (Ezekiel 16:40).
13. They will stone you with stones.
14. They will thrust you through with swords.
15. They will burn your houses with fire (Ezekiel 16:41).
16. They will execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women.
17. I will cause you to cease from playing the harlot.
18. You will give no hire anymore.
19. So will I make My fury toward you to rest (Ezekiel 16:42).
20. My jealousy will depart from you.
21. I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.
22. I will recompense your way upon your head (Ezekiel 16:43).
23. You will not commit this lewdness above all your abominations.
24. Everyone that uses proverbs will use this against you, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter (Ezekiel 16:44).

**35-43.** Jerusalem had degenerated from a queen to a tramp. Her beauty was gone; so she used her few remaining resources to try to bribe others into illicit relationships. God tried to stop her mad rush to destruction but she refused to heed His warnings. It was now time for Him to judge.

God's judgment on Jerusalem would fit her crime. She had exposed herself to all her lovers; now God would use her lovers to destroy her. He would bring the nations against her and strip her in front of them, so that they would all see her nakedness. Jerusalem would again be as defenseless before her enemies as she was before being espoused to the Lord (v. 8).

God said He would punish Jerusalem as women were punished who commit adultery and who shed blood. The sentence for adultery in the Old Testament was stoning (Lev. 20:10; cf. John 8:4-5). Jerusalem's "adultery" was her idolatry, and the punishment for idolatry was the sword (Deut. 13:12-15). God actually employed both means of judgment—stoning and the sword—in Jerusalem's fall. They will bring a mob against you, who will stone you and hack you to pieces with their swords (cf. Ezek. 23:47). God had said that if a city in Israel became involved in idolatry its people were to be killed by the sword and the city was to be burned (Deut. 13:15-16). After Jerusalem's fall Babylon

did in fact burn down her houses and inflict punishment ... in the sight of many women (Ezek. 16:41).

God's judgment on Jerusalem would finally put a stop to her prostitution. Only after her destruction would His wrath ... subside. God's jealous anger does not indicate pettiness or vindictiveness; instead it is an essential display of His holiness.

The root cause of Jerusalem's sin was her failure to remember the days of her youth (v. 43; cf. "you will remember" in vv. 61, 63). All her grandeur came as a result of the Lord's gracious favor. So when she turned from Him she was cutting herself off from the only true source of blessing and enraging the One who had raised her to greatness.<sup>38</sup>

**The punishment of the harlot (16:35–43).** Jerusalem was deserving of divine punishment. She had "poured out" her lewdness and "uncovered her nakedness." She had been involved in harlotries with her lovers (foreign nations) and idols. She had given the blood of her sons to her idols. For these reasons God would gather all her lovers—those she had loved, i.e., the Egyptians, and those she had hated, i.e., the Chaldeans. These would come against Jerusalem from every direction. God would expose Jerusalem's "nakedness," i.e., her deprivation and need. Jerusalem would be as harshly punished as women who commit adultery or shed blood. She would experience a violent bloodshed such as one might experience who was punished in "wrath and jealousy" (16:35–38).

The executioners of the harlot would be her former lovers. They would destroy Jerusalem's pagan shrines. They would confiscate the clothing and jewels which the harlot had misused in pagan worship. The harlot would be left naked and bare. Then a "crowd," i.e., a great throng, would stone the harlot and thrust her through with swords. The daughters of the harlot, i.e., satellite cities, would be burned. "Many women," i.e., neighboring nations, would observe this execution. No longer could Jerusalem play the harlot. No longer could she "pay her lovers" (16:39–41).

By the execution of this sentence God's "fury" and righteous "jealousy" would depart from his people. Once the problem of unfaithfulness had been corrected, God would be angry with his people no more. Whatever he would do to them, however, they would deserve. Their failure to remember their youthful association with the Lord and consequent infidelity had "enraged" the Lord. They had added "lewdness" to their "abominations." His justice demanded that he repay them in accordance with their sin (16:42f.).<sup>39</sup>

**ESV 35–43:** An important question for interpretation turns on how far the metaphors are carried into the punishments announced, and where literal razing of Jerusalem shapes this language. The because ... therefore terms in vv. 36–37 (Hb. *ya'an ... laken*) and v. 43 (Hb. *ya'an ... gam*) structure the grounds and outcome of the accusation in two unequally weighted parts (vv. 36–42, 43). Adultery, along with other illicit sexual relationships, was one of a number of capital crimes in Israel's law, and so the announcement of execution here is not surprising. Other aspects of the punishments listed do not fit Israelite law so simply. It is unclear how stripping the culprit (v. 37) relates to adultery law. It seems rather to be a case of "poetic justice," returning Jerusalem to the naked estate in which

<sup>38</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:35–43). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:3–43). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

she was found (vv. 4, 7–8). Nor does entrusting punishment to the illicit partners (vv. 39b–42) or dismemberment (v. 40) appear in biblical law. Here Ezekiel crosses over into the language of city destruction, made explicit in the mention of houses in v. 41. In all this, the supreme element in view is the offense against God, who remains responsible for judgment (vv. 37–39a, 43).

**Constable 35-37:** Yahweh announced the judgment that He would mete out to Jerusalem because of all her unnatural and rebellious unfaithfulness, idolatry, and bloodshed. He would bring all the nations that Jerusalem had opened her legs to against her, and they would abuse and destroy her.

### **Ezekiel 16:36**

**Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;**

The murderous part.

**Dake:** Five basic sins bringing judgment:

1. Filthiness of fornication
2. Abandonment to whoredoms with many men
3. Abominations of idolatry
4. Sacrificing children to idols
5. Not remembering the early days of God's dealings, but fretting Him in all things (Ezekiel 16:43)

The Hebrew word rendered **thy nakedness** elsewhere means “copper” or “bronze.” It may be an Akkadian loan-word—“excess, prodigality.” The last part of the verse echoes verses 20, 21. 37. **All thy lovers.** The nations with which she had become allied; **and all those you loathed** (RSV). Those with whom no alliances had been formed, e.g., the Philistines.<sup>40</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:37**

**Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all *them* that thou hast loved, with all *them* that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.**

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

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<sup>40</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:36). Chicago: Moody Press.

death (Lev. 20:10). 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:** 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.<sup>41</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:38**

**And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.**

**Break wedlock.** Cf. Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22; Jn 8:5-7. Shed blood. Cf. verses 20, 36; Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17. Blood in fury. With a minute change, the reading is, "I will lay on you wrath and jealousy," as in 23:25. 39. Strip ... thy clothes. This signifies the exposure of the adulteress. See also 23:26; Hos 2:3, 10.<sup>42</sup>

**Constable 38-41:** The Lord would deal with Jerusalem as people dealt with adulteresses and murderers. The punishment that the Mosaic Law prescribed for a city that practiced idolatry (spiritual adultery) was the sword (Deut. 13:15), and the punishment for adultery was stoning (Lev. 20:10; cf. John 8:4-5). Yahweh would punish Jerusalem severely in His wrath and jealousy. He would turn her over to her lovers who would take from her everything she had leaving her naked and bare, her original condition (cf. vv. 7, 22; Hos. 2:12; Nah. 3:5). "Naked" and "exile" are basically the same word in Hebrew. Exile meant for the Judahites collectively what nakedness meant to them personally. Thus the idea of nakedness became an apt description of the exile.

The public exposure of the naked body was a symbolic act of legal punishment for adulterers . . . : it reversed the husband's provision of clothing (v 10) and took away the wife's married identity [cf. Jer. 13:26; Hos. 2:10; Nah. 3:5].

Jerusalem's lovers would also incite other nations to attack and wage war against her. Her enemies would burn her houses and punish her in the sight of even more nations. This would end her prostitution.

### **Ezekiel 16:39**

**And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.**

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<sup>41</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

<sup>42</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:38). Chicago: Moody Press.

### **Ezekiel 16:40**

**They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.**

**Missler:** Stoning was the punishment spelled out in the law for this crime, and it is interesting that when the people did not carry this out, it was still carried out by other agencies. See Lev 20:1-2, 13:22-23; Deut 13:6-11; Rev 16:21.

**A company.** A multitude gathered for the trial and stoning of the adulteress (cf. v. 38). 41. Burn thine houses. Cf. Judges 15:6; 12:1. In the sight of many women. To warn them. Cf. 23:10. My fury will be appeased. Cf. 5:13. 43. Thou hast not remembered. A summary of verses 35-43.<sup>43</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:41**

**And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.**

### **Ezekiel 16:42**

**So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.**

**Constable 42-43:** This punishment would satisfy the Lord's anger against Jerusalem. She had enraged Him by not remembering His goodness to her and by her lewd conduct. Now He would punish her for that conduct so she would not practice it on top of all her other sins.

### **Ezekiel 16:43**

**Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon *thine* head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.**

**[fretted me in all these things]** Chafed at Me, because of My laws.

**[thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations]** I will not allow this greatest evil by suffering it to go unpunished, and thus cause your daughter to sin (Ezekiel 16:43-44; Leviticus 19:29).

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<sup>43</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:40). Chicago: Moody Press.

## **Ezekiel 16:44**

**Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use *this* proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.**

**LAN 44-52:** The city of Sodom, a symbol of total corruption, was completely destroyed by God for its wickedness (Genesis 19:24-25). Samaria, the capital of what had been the northern kingdom (Israel), was despised and rejected by the Jews in Judah. To be called a sister of Samaria and Sodom was bad enough, but to be called *more depraved* than that meant that Judah's sins were an unspeakable abomination and that its doom was inevitable. The reason it was considered worse was not necessarily that Judah's sins were worse, but that Judah knew better. In that light, we who live in an age when God's message is made clear to us through the Bible are worse than Judah if we continue in sin! (See also Matthew 11:20-24.)

**44, 45. As is the mother, so is her daughter.** Jerusalem and her sisters resembled their common mother, the Hittite (cf. v. 3). 46. Thine elder (lit., *greater*, i.e., in political and territorial power) sister was Samaria, who lived with her daughters (dependent towns) to the north (i.e., left, as one faces east; Gen 14:15), while her younger (i.e., less important) sister to the south or right (I Sam 23:19), was Sodom and her daughters. Galling comparisons. Cf. Jer 3:6ff.; Isa 1:9.<sup>44</sup>

**44-45.** The first part of Ezekiel's parable (vv. 1-43) is an analogy between Jerusalem and an adulterous wife. The second part of the parable (vv. 44-63) is an analogy between Jerusalem and her **sisters** Samaria and Sodom. If Jerusalem's wicked sisters received judgment for their sin, how could Jerusalem, who was even more depraved, hope to escape?

Jerusalem had a proverb about her fate (see comments on 12:22), but God gave her a new **proverb: Like mother, like daughter.** This meant that the traits of the parents were seen in the **children.** Jerusalem's actions were characteristic of her family heritage. Her **mother had despised her husband and her children.**

For emphasis, Ezekiel repeated the ancestral background of Jerusalem, already stated in 16:3. The debauchery, petty rivalries, and heartless cruelties of the Canaanite tribes were well known. Jerusalem inherited these characteristics from her "parents" and displayed them in her abandoning God and in cruelly sacrificing her own children.<sup>45</sup>

The parable of the three sisters is similar in some details to the preceding one. Parable mongers in the future would say regarding Judah, "like mother, like daughter." As in the preceding parable, Jerusalem's mother is a Hittite, her father is an Amorite (cf. 16:3). Here is added that Samaria was Jerusalem's older sister, Sodom her younger sister. Both the mother and sisters loathed their husbands and children. The prophet accused Jerusalem of being worse than her sisters. Jerusalem had not merely "walked in their

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<sup>44</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:44). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>45</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:44-45). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

ways or done according to their abominations.” Jerusalem had actually “acted more corruptly” in all her conduct than they (16:44–47).<sup>46</sup>

**ESV 44–48:** A history much like that of v. 3 is sketched (v. 45), and the “proverb” of v. 44 (see note on 12:21–25) may account for bringing the Hittite mother to the foreground. The relationships are different and more laterally focused now, with no mention of the husband-wife metaphor of the first half of the chapter.

**ESV 44–58:** Jerusalem and Her Sisters. The second major block in this chapter aligns Jerusalem's crimes with those of two more cities. Jerusalem suffers in comparison with both “sisters.” The structure parallels that of the preceding section, with metaphorical reminiscence (vv. 44–48) giving way to analysis (vv. 49–52) before divinely imposed outcomes are announced (vv. 53–58).

The “mother” of this proverb was the “Hittite” (Ezek 16:3). The Hebrews were as lewd and immoral as the original inhabitants of Canaan. Every mother should contemplate the far-reaching influence of word and example she has with her daughter.

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 (see 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 Kin. 17:5, 6). Jerusalem, the very city of God, had become “more corrupt” than even Sodom and Samaria. Clearly this passage emphasizes the people’s great sinfulness and the certainty of their punishment. sister of your sisters: This is a 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.<sup>47</sup>

**Constable 44-47:** Other people would quote the proverb, "Like mother, like daughter," in regard to Jerusalem. She was like her Hittite "mother" who was also idolatrous and selfish. And she was like her older (larger) sister, Samaria, and its dependent villages, and her younger (smaller) sister, Sodom, and its dependent villages, both of which despised their husbands and children. The Hebrew text describes Samaria and Sodom as on Jerusalem's left (north) and right (south) respectively, reflecting the customary eastern orientation of the Old Testament. However, Jerusalem acted even worse than they. The depraved worship of the Canaanites had affected all three of these cities, but Jerusalem had become the worst of the lot.

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<sup>46</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:44–63). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

<sup>47</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

### **Ezekiel 16:45**

**Thou *art* thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou *art* the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother *was* an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.**

### **Ezekiel 16:46**

**And thine elder sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters.**

On Israeli maps, east was always at the top, because they always faced east. This left hand refers therefore to what was to their north (Samaria), and the right hand here refers to what was to their south (Sodom).

“And her daughters” - refers to the satellite cities around those central areas.

By inspiration Ezekiel compared them to Samaria and Sodom and their daughters, charging Judah with even greater sinfulness. Since God did not spare those mothers and daughters, He could not spare Jerusalem and her daughters from punishment.

**46-48.** Ezekiel expanded his analogy by comparing Jerusalem to her sisters, both of whom had “despised their husbands and their children” (v. 45). These two sisters (Samaria and Sodom), who shared Jerusalem’s family traits, were selected by Ezekiel to reinforce his point. Both cities—one north and one south of Jerusalem—were known for their gross sins and divine judgment.

Yet Jerusalem was even more depraved than both Samaria and Sodom. Not even Sodom, with its heinous sins, was guilty of some of Jerusalem’s lewd ways! (v. 48)<sup>48</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:47**

**Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.**

They were worse than Sodom!

More than they. Jerusalem exceeded the wickedness of her sisters (cf. Mt 10:15; 11:20-24). 48-50. Sodom’s heinous crimes of Genesis 19 are not recounted, but rather her pride, prosperous ease (RSV; *abundance of idleness*, AV), and failure to strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. Cf. Amos 6:4-6; Est 3:15; Lk 16:19-31. 51, 52. Samaria. Samaria’s

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<sup>48</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:46–48). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



sins are not named, but she and Sodom appear righteous, relatively speaking, in comparison with Jerusalem (cf. Amos 3:2).<sup>49</sup>

**Dake: [thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways]** Tenfold sinfulness of Israel:

1. Corrupt in all your ways more than Sodom (Ezekiel 16:47-48)
2. Pride more than Sodom (Ezekiel 16:49)
3. Fullness of bread and abundance of idleness more than Sodom (Ezekiel 16:49)
4. No pity on the poor and needy
5. Haughtiness more than Sodom (Ezekiel 16:50)
6. Committed abomination before God
7. More wicked than Samaria (Ezekiel 16:51)
8. Multiplied abominations
9. Justified Sodom and Samaria and their daughters in sinning more than they did
10. Sins more abominable than Sodom and Samaria (Ezekiel 16:52)

### **Ezekiel 16:48**

**As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.**

**Dake: [as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters]** Judah and Jerusalem had committed greater sins than Sodom and Samaria, so much so that these wicked cities which had already been destroyed could be considered righteous and justified in comparison (Ezekiel 16:48-52).

**The record of the sisters (16:48–52).** In order to underscore his charge that Jerusalem had acted more corruptly than Sodom or Samaria, Ezekiel examined the record of the three sisters. The sexual misconduct of the Sodomites is well documented in the book of Genesis (Gen 19). Ezekiel added to that picture. Because of “abundant food” and “careless ease” Sodom was filled with “arrogance.” She made no effort to “help the poor and needy.” This heartless pride caused Sodom to commit “abominations” before the Lord. Because of this, Sodom was “removed” from the face of the earth. Yet Jerusalem’s transgressions exceeded that of Sodom. Samaria, her northern sister, did not commit half of the sins committed in Jerusalem. All the abominations committed in Jerusalem made Sodom and Samaria appear righteous by comparison. Jerusalem would forever bear the disgrace of being considered morally and spiritually worse than her wicked sisters (16:48–52).<sup>50</sup>

**Constable 48-50:** The people of Sodom were not as bad as the people of Jerusalem (cf. 22:15; 2 Kings 15:37; 16:6; 24:2; 2 Chron. 28:18-19; Isa. 3:9; Jer. 23:14). The Sodomites were arrogant, affluent, selfish, and great sinners. Material abundance and physical

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<sup>49</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:47). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:44–63). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

security fostered sexual perversion (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:4-5). The Lord removed them when He saw their sins (cf. Lam. 4:6; Matt. 11:23-24).

### **Ezekiel 16:49**

**Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.**

**LAN:** It is easy to judge and condemn Sodom, especially for its terrible sexual sins. Ezekiel reminded Judah, however, that Sodom was destroyed because its people were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned about the needy people within their reach. It is easy to be selective in what we consider gross sin. If we do not commit such horrible sins as adultery, homosexuality, stealing, and murder, we may think we are living good enough lives. But what about sins like arrogance, gluttony, and indifference to the needy? These sins may not be as shocking to you as the others, but they are also forbidden by God.

**49-52.** Sodom's sin was her haughty unconcern for the needs of others in spite of her wealth. Also the Sodomites did detestable things before God. This could refer to their deviate sexual aberrations (cf. Gen. 19:4-5). The sin of Samaria, though not specifically stated, was her idolatry. But Jerusalem's sins were so vile that, in comparison, the sins of both Sodom and Samaria seemed almost like righteous deeds!<sup>51</sup>

**ESV: Sodom ... did not aid the poor and needy.** There were other sins as well (as narrated in Gen. 19:4-9; cf. Jude 7), but this is the sin that God chooses to highlight through Ezekiel's prophecy at this point (along with Sodom's pride, Ezek. 16:50).

**ESV 49-52** Jerusalem's crimes exceed those of her sisters, but these now fall into the category of social justice (v. 49), beyond that of idolatry.

**BSB:** Sodom's sin did not end with its sensuality and unnatural acts, but reached to the "pride" which had come with material prosperity. This "pride" had lifted them above moral law in their own eyes. Like Sodom, Israel in her wealth and pride forgot and neglected the poor. For Israel this crime was more serious because she had received specific commands concerning the poor (cf. Deut 15:7, 11). This concern for the poor and needy is echoed in the N.T. (cf. Matt 26:11; 1 John 3:17).

**Chuck Smith:** So this is God's indictment against Sodom. The reason why Sodom was judged: pride, prosperity, idleness, and no concern for the poor and the needy. Now, these conditions of pride and prosperity and idleness of time. Men began to look for things to fill in their idle time. And in looking for things to fill their idle time, they began to indulge themselves and their flesh. And having run the gamut of kinky flesh and not finding any satisfaction, only a greater lust, they began to burn in their lust for each other.

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<sup>51</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:49-52). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

And that horrible condition in which we find Sodom when the angels of the Lord came and were staying in the house of Lot and the men of the city began to knock on the door saying, "Open unto us and send out those men that came into your house that we may know them." And Lot went to the door and said, "Go away, don't do this evil unto these men. Behold, I have a couple of daughters that are virgins, I'll turn them over to you. But don't do this evil to these men." And they said, "You're a stranger. You come to live with us, and now are you gonna judge us?" And they were going to grab him, and the angels said to Lot, "Stand back." And they smote the men with blindness so that they wearied themselves of trying to find the door. And they said, "Get out of here."

But you see, behind this scene there was the pride, there was the prosperity, there was the idleness of time. Now, these are the conditions that produced this blatant demonstration of these homosexual men. It was because of this kind of an environment they felt the bravado to parade publicly. When the conditions of a nation become so corrupt and immoral that men of this character feel a forwardness in expressing themselves publicly and begin to parade in public demonstrations, you know that you are at the end of the rope. The next thing is judgment. And as I see the things that are happening in the United States, San Francisco, Hollywood, Washington, D.C., I realize that the cup of God's indignation is about to overflow, and America will be judged of God.

### **Ezekiel 16:50**

**And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.**

**Chuck Smith 50-51:** And that's, of course, the whole thing, the rationale, the justification, "Well, you know, every man has a freedom to express himself however he desires, and no one has the right to dictate their moral standards on other people, you know."

### **Ezekiel 16:51**

**Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.**

Israel, who had the greater advantage of the Temple and their priesthood, "justified" Samaria and Sodom by making them appear almost innocent by comparison.

**Constable 51-52:** Samaria was bad, but not half as bad as Jerusalem. In fact, Jerusalem made her wicked sister cities look good by comparison. This was a disgrace to Jerusalem, that she had made other wicked cities look righteous (cf. Matt. 11:23-24).

### **Ezekiel 16:52**

**Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.**

**Chuck Smith 52-59:** God made a covenant with them, "You are Mine." They broke the covenant and they gave themselves over to every god and idol and abomination. And so God speaks of them that they have despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

Now, God here, of course, speaks of the day of restoration--even of Sodom and of Samaria. That day is coming. I do not believe the day is far off. As we go further in Ezekiel, we're going to find that a new... there is an earthquake that is going to take place in Jerusalem that is going to create a new valley and is going to unlock an underground river, a spring that will begin to flow from Jerusalem down to the Dead Sea with such a supply of water that when it comes into the Dead Sea, the waters of the Dead Sea will be healed and there will be all manner of fish and all there in the Dead Sea. And Engedi will be a place where they will be drying their fishing nets. And the area of the Dead Sea will no doubt become a verdant, beautiful valley again. Sodom shall be inhabited as Samaria, and of course, as Jerusalem.

### **Ezekiel 16:53**

**When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then *will I bring again* the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:**

**Missler:** This appears to suggest that Israel will not be restored until Sodom and Samaria are— and that their restoration will be at the same time, not Israel ahead of Sodom and Samaria.

**[When I shall bring again their captivity ...]** The 23rd prophecy in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 16:53-63; Ezekiel 16:59 fulfilled; Ezekiel 16:53-55,60-63 unfulfilled). Next, Ezekiel 17:1.

**Dake:** **[the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them]** This could not mean that there were survivors in Sodom, Gomorrah, and other cities destroyed by fire as in Genesis 19:24, so the reference is to the Millennium when the Dead Sea will be healed and men will live in the vicinity again, even on the same sites of these destroyed cities (Ezekiel 47).

**Bring again their captivity.** Cf. Jer 12:14-17; 46:26; 48:47; 40:6, 33:7; Isa 19:24. 54-56. If Samaria and Sodom were punished, how much more did Jerusalem deserve punishment! If Jerusalem was to be restored, it was only just that they who were a byword in her mouth be restored also.<sup>52</sup>

**Dake:** One Prediction—Fulfilled:

I will even deal with you as you have done, which have despised the oath in breaking the covenant (Ezekiel 16:59).

**Dake:** Eight Predictions—Unfulfilled:

1. When I bring again the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then I will bring again the captivity of your captives in the midst of them (Ezekiel 16:53).
2. When your sisters—Sodom and her daughters, and Samaria and her daughters—return to their former estate, then you and your daughters will return to your former estate (Ezekiel 16:55).
3. Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth (Ezekiel 16:60).
4. I will establish unto you an everlasting covenant.
5. Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed, when you will receive your elder and younger sisters (Ezekiel 16:61).
6. I will give them to you for daughters, but not by the covenant.
7. I will establish My covenant with you (Ezekiel 16:62).
8. You will know that I am Jehovah.

**53-58.** Having announced the sin of and judgment on Jerusalem, Ezekiel then offered consoling words for her. Verses 53-63 speak of the restoration of all three “sisters.” I will restore the fortunes (blessings) of Sodom ... and of Samaria ... and your fortunes along with them. If God would restore Jerusalem, could He do any less for her more righteous sisters? Ezekiel was speaking of the national restoration of these cities in the Millennium. (Evidently Sodom will be rebuilt at that time.)

Once restored, Jerusalem will sense deep remorse. She will bear her disgrace and be ashamed of all she had done in giving Samaria and Sodom comfort. This statement is connected with verse 52. Jerusalem’s shame would be deeper because the depths of her sins actually were a source of comfort to Sodom and Samaria. In other words, if God would restore (return) the wretched Jerusalem, certainly He would restore her sisters.

Jerusalem’s sin became the subject of gossip. In her haughtiness, before her fall, she would not even mention the name of her “fallen” sister Sodom. However, after her exposure and sin Jerusalem would be the object of derision by surrounding nations, including the daughters of Edom and all her neighbors and the daughters of the Philistines. Edom, south of the Dead Sea, was a constant rival of Judah (cf. 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chron. 28:17; Obad.). Edom gloated over Judah’s fall to Babylon and aided Babylon in her attack on Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 137:7; Ezek. 25:12-14; 35:5-6, 15). “The

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<sup>52</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:53). Chicago: Moody Press.

daughters” of Edom and Philistia probably were the cities located in those countries. Jerusalem would be restored—but she would first have to bear the shameful consequences of her sin.<sup>53</sup>

**McGee:** Verses 53 and 55 (as well as ch. 37) have been used by several cults to teach the doctrine of restitutionalism; that is, that everybody ultimately will be saved. Again, this is a case of resting doctrine on a few isolated verses of Scripture which will result in weird and unscriptural doctrine. In these verses and in Ezekiel 37:12, where God says, “I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,” God is *not* talking about the resurrection of the wicked to eternal life. In both instances He is talking about the restoration of a city or a nation, and it has no reference to the people who lived there years ago. Here in Ezekiel 16 He is saying that the city of Sodom is to be rebuilt. Now, personally, I don’t see anything there to attract anybody, but there is tremendous development today along the coast of the Dead Sea in that area. And in chapter 37 the Lord is speaking of the restoration of a nation, the nation of Israel.

Actually, in the Old Testament we do not have the divine revelation concerning the future state that we have in the New Testament. God had no plan to bring back from the dead the saints of the Old Testament and to take them out yonder to a place prepared for them. He has told us that that is His plan for us, but nowhere did He tell the Old Testament saints that. He told them there was to be a heaven down here on this earth, and that is the resurrection Abraham looked for. There is to be a restoration of the nation. You cannot read what is New Testament development of this doctrine into this Old Testament passage. However, every Old Testament passage will conform also to New Testament teaching. The New Testament makes it very clear that there will be a twofold resurrection: the resurrection of the saved, and the resurrection of the lost who are *lost* when they are raised from the dead. Therefore, these verses deal only with the restoration of a nation. We must read them in their context and not draw any more from them than is there.

This chapter concludes in a most glorious way: God is going to make good His covenants with the nation Israel. The sin of these people, their rebellion, their constant departure from Him, their backsliding, will not annul, abrogate, or destroy God’s covenant with them.

Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD [Ezek. 16:60–63].

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<sup>53</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:53–58). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

God says that not only will He make good on the past covenants but He is also going to make a new covenant with them. Unfortunately, these passages of Scripture are not studied very much at all. When they are, they make it very clear that God still has a future purpose with the nation Israel.<sup>54</sup>

**The future of the sisters (16:53–63).** Though Sodom and Samaria had long since disappeared from the stage of history, and though Jerusalem was about to be destroyed, yet the three sisters had a future. God would “restore their captivity,” i.e., restore their fortunes. That act of God’s grace would cause Jerusalem to be ashamed of the abominations she had committed. All three sisters would return “to their former state” (16:53–55). This symbolic prophecy looked forward to the salvation of Jew, Samaritan and Gentile in the kingdom of Christ.

A new relationship would exist between the three sisters in that messianic age. In former times self-righteous Jerusalem would not even mention the name of Sodom. Jerusalem, however, was humbled when her own wickedness was made public through divine judgment. Singers in surrounding nations made her the object of ridicule. Jerusalem had suffered much already from her lewdness and abominations. She would yet suffer much for having broken the marriage covenant with God (16:56–59).<sup>55</sup>

**ESV 53–58:** Unlike the “outcome” of vv. 35–43 (which detailed punishment), here judgment is presupposed and a future restoration envisaged. Neither here nor in the conclusion of vv. 59–63 does future hope exclude shame. Restoring each to their former state (v. 55) puts Jerusalem on the same level as her “sisters” who have been similarly graded.

**Constable 53-55:** Jerusalem would experience captivity as Sodom and Samaria had. Evidently the Lord meant that the people of Sodom had experienced captivity in the sense that He had taken them away. Jerusalem's captivity would bring humiliation and shame to her people when they realized that their judgment had been a comfort to the people of Sodom and Samaria. Obviously these people were now dead, but the parabolic form of this message allows for some unusual details. Jerusalem's captivity had showed them that Jerusalem was worse than these towns. Yet the Lord would end the captivity of all these towns; their descendants would have a future (cf. Deut. 30:3).

The main point seems to be that God's willingness to restore Jerusalem, despite the magnitude of her sin, offers hope for other sinful nations, even those who violate his moral standards in blatant ways.

### **Ezekiel 16:54**

**That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.**

How often we ourselves say, “If God can forgive Israel, then there is hope for me.”

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<sup>54</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 16:55–63). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>55</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:44–63). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

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 promises 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.<sup>56</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:55**

**When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.**

He repeated this, said it twice.

This again predicts the restoration of the places where the cities of the plain were located. They will again be inhabited under the Messiah, as explained in the note above.

### **Ezekiel 16:56**

**For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride,**

Constable 56-57: Many people of Jerusalem did not even speak of the Sodomites because they were such great sinners. Yet in the future the people of Edom and the Philistines, Israel's ancient enemies, would not speak of the Jerusalemites because they were such great sinners.

### **Ezekiel 16:57**

**Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of *thy* reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all *that are* round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.**

**57, 58.** Jerusalem had become an object of reproach of the daughters (i.e., cities) of Syria (following many MSS and Syr., read *Edom* instead of MT *Aram*, i.e., Syria) and to the daughters of the Philistines. The destruction of Jerusalem, here prophetically assumed,

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<sup>56</sup> The Nelson Study Bible



causes unholy glee in the Edomites and Philistines (25:12-14, 15-17; Ob 10-14; Ps 137:7-9).<sup>57</sup>

### **Ezekiel 16:58**

**Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.**

**Constable 58-59:** The Jerusalemites were bearing the penalty of their lewdness and abominations; the Babylonian's were threatening to destroy them completely. The Lord promised to deal with them as they had dealt with Him. They had despised His covenant, and now He would despise them.

### **Ezekiel 16:59**

**For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.**

See Deut 29:1, 5, 12-18.

**LAN 59-63:** Although the people had broken their promises and did not deserve anything but punishment, God would not break his promises. If the people turned back to him, he would again forgive them and renew his covenant. This covenant was put into effect when Jesus paid for the sins of all mankind by his death on the cross (Hebrews 10:8-10). No one is beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. Although we don't deserve anything but punishment for our sins, God's arms are still outstretched. He will not break his promise to give us salvation and forgiveness if we repent and turn to him.

**59, 60. Breaking the covenant.** Jerusalem had broken the covenant made in her youth at the Exodus (cf. vv. 8, 43). Consequently, she must suffer; but in the day of her repentance, God will give her an everlasting covenant (cf. 37:26; Isa 54:9, 10; 55:3; Jer 31:35, 36; 32:40; 33:20-22). Samaria and Sodom (as representing the heathen world) are to be included in the new covenant as an act of grace, since the former covenant broken by Israel did not include them. **63. Remember.** Jerusalem will be abashed by memories of her unworthy past "when I purge you," "make atonement for you." The word "atone," *kippēr*, with God as agent, is used (cf. Deut 21:8; Jer 18:23; Ps 78:38).

The fall of Israel was a cause of Ezekiel's outreach to the Gentile world. Even peoples like those of Sodom shall be converted to the Lord, says Ezekiel. Similarly the Apostle Paul declares, "By their (Israel's) fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Rom 11:11, 12; ASV). "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom 11:32; ASV).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:57). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>58</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 16:59). Chicago: Moody Press.

**59-63.** Though Jerusalem's sin would be judged, God would restore her to fellowship with Him. Describing the certainty of Jerusalem's judgment, Ezekiel stressed that God was not abandoning His people forever. God had entered into a binding **covenant** with His people (cf. v. 8), and He would remember (i.e., keep) it. This everlasting covenant is the "New Covenant" spoken of by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34) and Ezekiel (cf. Ezek. 11:18-20; 36:26-28; 37:26-28).

When this "everlasting covenant" is established, God will also change the relationship between Jerusalem and her restored sisters. They will become her daughters, that is, Jerusalem will assume responsibility for Samaria and Sodom when her kingdom is restored in the Millennium. God's covenant here (16:61) probably refers to the Mosaic Covenant established with Israel which she had broken (cf. vv. 59-60a).

In the Millennium, when God establishes the New Covenant and restores Jerusalem, she will know that God is the LORD. Jerusalem's problem had been her forgetting God's past deeds (v. 43). But God's final covenant will correct her problem of spiritual amnesia (v. 63). Then, God said, when I make atonement for you ... you will remember (cf. v. 61) and be ashamed (cf. vv. 52, 54). God's judgment and subsequent restoration would have a humbling effect on the nation. Her problem of pride (v. 56) would be eliminated forever.<sup>59</sup>

**ESV 59–63:** The Everlasting Covenant. The final brief passage of ch. 16 explicitly refers back both to the sections on the abandoned child (vv. 8 and 59, 22 and 60) and the "sisters" (vv. 45 and 61), drawing them together in one conclusion. The malleability of the metaphors can be seen in the sisters being given as daughters in v. 61. The everlasting covenant (Hb. *berit 'olam*) of v. 60 finds parallels elsewhere in the OT, most significantly in 37:26 (cf. Isa. 61:8); also within the context of bringing back together the old kingdoms of north and south (cf. the hope expressed in Jer. 32:40).

This is a full statement of the law of retribution. Judah had broken her covenant with the Lord, but He had remained faithful. The Lord would introduce a new covenant which would be everlasting (v. 60; cf. Gen 9:13, note; Jer 31:33, note).

### **Ezekiel 16:60**

**Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.**

#### **The Restoration**

Now we are going to get into restoration. The definitive passage on restoration is Deut 30, but we will read the next four verses and then try to put it into perspective.

"Nevertheless" - in this case, the word is a relief.

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<sup>59</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 16:59–63). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**[Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed]** Then—after God has made an everlasting covenant with them, Israel will be ashamed of her past sins and rebellion (Ezekiel 34:25; Ezekiel 37:26; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

**Dake: [thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger]** Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem are compared to sisters in Ezekiel 16:44-52. Here the idea is continued, Samaria being the elder sister of Jerusalem, and Sodom the younger (Ezekiel 16:46,61). These sisters of Jerusalem were to become her daughters in the Millennium, but not by the covenant between God and Jerusalem.

Though Jerusalem had forgotten her national youth and the marriage covenant with God, the Lord would remember that covenant. He would therefore establish an everlasting covenant with his people (cf. Jer 31:31). This new covenant would be with those who were genuinely ashamed of their old ways. Under this covenant Samaria and Sodom would be regarded as daughters of Jerusalem. This is what is meant by the restoration of Samaria and Sodom (cf. 16:53). The idea here is that citizens of the former Northern Kingdom, and the heathen in general would become part of the new covenant through the instrumentality of the Jews. The establishment of this covenant would be a solemn act of God which would aid God's people in knowing his true nature. Under this covenant the unfathomable grace of God in forgiving past sin would forever silence self-justification (16:60–63).<sup>60</sup>

And so God is... for all that they have done, God is not utterly destroyed, utterly rejected, but He is going to take them back again and establish an everlasting covenant with them through Jesus Christ.

**Constable 60-61:** Yet the Lord promised to remember and stand by His promises in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3). He would establish a new, everlasting covenant with His people in the future (cf. 11:18-20; 36: 26-28; 37:26-28; Isa. 59:21; 61:8; Jer. 31:31-34). The New Covenant is an organic outgrowth of the Abrahamic Covenant in that it explains further the blessing aspect of that covenant. It does not have the same relationship to the Mosaic Covenant, which it eventually replaced. In the (far distant) future, when the other cities of Canaan would come under Israel's authority (ch. 48; Gen. 17:7-8; Lev. 26:42), the Israelites would remember their sinful ways and feel ashamed (cf. 20:43; 36:31; Zech. 12:10-14). Other nations would come under Israel's authority, not because of her faithfulness to the Mosaic Covenant, but because of God's grace.<sup>261</sup>

God can no more help being gracious than He can cease being God. He is the God of all grace, and He always finds a covenant basis on which He can exercise His grace.

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<sup>60</sup> Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 16:44–63). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

### **Ezekiel 16:61**

**Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.**

There are 2 covenants referenced here: “My covenant” and “Thy covenant.” Do not confuse God’s covenant which is an everlasting covenant, with the covenant that they made at Sinai where they swore they would uphold God’s law.

### **Ezekiel 16:62**

**And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD:**

**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 (see 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.<sup>61</sup>

**Constable 62-63:** The Lord promised to establish His new covenant with His people, and then they would know that He was Yahweh. He would do this to humble His people and to stimulate them to obey Him by demonstrating forgiveness (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13).

### **Ezekiel 16:63**

**That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.**

See Isa 61:7-9; Jer 31:31-34.

**Missler:** The Abrahamic Covenant promised them the land. There was also the Palestinian Covenant. The way they entered the land under Joshua was through the Palestinian Covenant. They have yet to take advantage of the Abrahamic Covenant (due to the borders described and other issues). This covenant brings up issues that are yet to

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<sup>61</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

be settled, it is a practical and political issue of today. It is going to be very interesting to see somebody try to get Israel out of the land because God put them there.

Israel does not need the United States, except as God should choose to use as an instrument. The issue is going to be drawn, I believe, between Israel and all the world, including the United States; we will apparently be against them also.

This chapter was a heavy, but important one. It uses an idiom which we will notice is integrated throughout the Scriptures. One of the things it demonstrates is that these 66 books by 40 authors are an integrated message system designed by One Person.

The penalty for adultery was stoning. In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was stoned. (Rev 9, hailstones.)

Mystery Babylon, the harlot in Revelation, had commerce with all the kings of the earth, and she gets judged. All the nations turn against her, but not before she first makes the boast that she, unlike Israel, is not a widow. One harlot in contrast with another.

It is interesting how Mystery Babylon will boast that she is in contradiction to Israel.

Chapter 16 hammered home the point of playing the harlot, selling out to the world. We do not bow down before idols, but what else in our lives is offending God?

**Dake:[That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame]** God's purpose in blessing Israel in the future, regardless of her past, is that she might remember, be confounded, and never again open her mouth because of being ashamed of her past. Such unheard-of mercy and eternal love and patience with such a sinful nation will produce a genuine gratitude and respect for God, so much so that she will never again murmur and complain, or utter words of rebellion against Jehovah.

**[I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done]** I have accepted a propitiatory covering for all that she has done.