

EZEKIEL

Chapter 16

The long History of Israel, the Unfaithful Wife

This parable is of finding a dirty and filthy little child for whom it would seem there is nothing that can be done. 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 finding of a child of questionable origin, Jerusalem. This child is found by the roadside to die. But she is rescued by the Lord to become her benefactor. Having grown up a beautiful maidenhood, she is taken in marriage by her benefactor and becomes His royal bride, the queen. The proud queen however proves to be utterly unfaithful and plays the harlot with other gods. Therefore she is punished and put away. Nevertheless the Lord makes a glorious promise of restoration through an everlasting covenant.

This is the summary of the truth of the parable of chapter 16. God and his unfaithful wife, the people of Jerusalem.

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. 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. (Ezekiel 16:1-14)

Jerusalem and its Humble Origins to its Exalted Position (1-14): The history of Jerusalem is that it was in the land of Canaan with the inhabitants of the Amorite and the Hittite. Thus, this city was not of royal lineage but nonetheless God found favor in her and cleaned her up anointing her with oil and blessed her abundantly: Clothed her with beautiful garments (vs. 10), decked her with an array of costly ornaments, bracelets, jewels and a crown upon her head, ornaments of gold and silver. (11-13a) and blessed her with abundance of fine foods (vs. 13b). The result was that she became a mighty kingdom in the eyes of all the nations around her (vs. 14).

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. 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. 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, And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. 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. 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, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? 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. And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;) That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street. 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. Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger. 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. 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. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; 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; But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! 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. 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. (Ezekiel 16:15-34)

The Squandering of Jerusalem's Blessings and What Jerusalem had Become (15-34): Jerusalem had taken all the blessing that God had given her and played the harlot, offering the blessings upon the altar of gods (vs. 15):

- With her beautiful garments she decked the high places (vs. 16)
- With her costly jewels of gold and silver, she made images (vs. 17)
- Her blessing of fine foods she offered to her idols (vs. 19)

As if all this was not enough God says, "moreover":

- The fruit of the womb that was born unto Him did they offer in sacrifice to their gods (vs. 20-21)

As if offering the abundant blessings of God to their idols was not enough, they committed spiritual fornication with the countries round about her by making alliances with those countries:

- Egypt vs. 26 (2 Kings 18:21)
- Philistines vs. 27 (2 Chronicles 21:16-17)
- Assyrians vs. 28 The conduct of Ahaz stripping the temple of its gold and silver to pay tribute to Assyria gives apt illustration of what the prophet means (2 Kings 16:8).
- Chaldea vs. 29 Babylon

Thus, Jerusalem plays the harlot (see vss. 32-34) and is judged accordingly.

Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: 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; 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. 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. 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. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. 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. 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. 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. (Ezekiel 16:35-43)

The Judgment upon the Unfaithful Wife (35-43): Because of all the things previously mentioned Jerusalem is worthy of all that befalls her (vs. 36). All the nations she has committed spiritual fornication with by making alliances with them will now be turned against her (vss. 37-41).

Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. 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. 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. 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: 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. 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. For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride, 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. Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD. 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. (Ezekiel 16:44-59)

The Proverb against Jerusalem (44-59): The proverb put forth is “as is the mother so is her daughter”. The idea is that this generation is as the previous one, they loth their husband and their children (45). Then God likens the two neighboring cities, Samaria and Sodom as sisters to Jerusalem (vs. 46) saying that Jerusalem has committed more abominations than her sisters (vss. 47-59).

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. (Ezekiel 16:60-63)

The Unfaithful Wife will be Restored (60-63): God reconfirms that though Jerusalem is being put away at this time (*Loammi – ye are not my people Hos. 1:9*) they will be brought back to God (cf. Hosea 1:10).

EZEKIEL

Chapter 17

Break not an Oath: A Parable about Zedekiah, Babylon and Egypt

Judah, Babylon and Egypt are the three in the riddle and the parable of Chapter 17: it will be stated in Ezekiel 17:3-10 and explained in Ezekiel 17:11-21.

Background to Consider: Backing up to Jehoiakim, king of Judah who reigned at 25 years of age. He reigned 11 years and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 23:36,37) so the Lord removed him (2 Kings 24:1-5). Following Jehoiakim reigned Jehoiachin his son (2 Kings 24:6). Jehoiakin, *also called Jeconiah & Coniah* was 18 years old when he began to reign (2 Kings 24:8). He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 24:9), so the Lord removed him by Nebuchadnezzar bringing the second siege against Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:16). Jehoiachin would be the last of his descendant to sit on the throne of David. God pronounces a blood curse, saying that none of his seed would rule any more in Judah:

Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. (Jeremiah 22:28-30)

So then God allows something interesting to take place: He allows Nebuchadnezzar to take the youngest son of Josiah, Mattaniah and put him on the throne as a vassal king, renaming him Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17 cf. Jeremiah 37:1). Thus, Zedekiah is Jehoiachin's uncle. (*Josiah's sons: Jehoiakim who bore Jehoiakin and Zedekiah (Mattaniah)*)

In doing this Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah to swear by an oath before the Lord to be

loyal to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:13). However Zedekiah broke this oath making alliance with Egypt (Jer. 37:7, 44:30). Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaiah all warned against aligning with Egypt (Isaiah 30:1-7). It is because of this alliance that the final siege against Jerusalem takes place.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants. He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree. And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs. There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons: Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the

covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it. (Ezekiel 17:1-21)

The Parable and its Interpretation (1-21):

A Great Eagle (vs. 3)—Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 12)

Lebanon (vs. 3)—Jerusalem (vs. 12). The Temple at Jerusalem: called “Lebanon” by the Jews because its woodwork was wholly of cedars of Lebanon.

Highest Branch (vs. 3)—The Davidic line, specifically Jehoiachin (vs. 12) also called Jeconiah & Coniah.

Young Twigs (vs. 4) — The royal family of Jehoiachin (vs. 13) which was taken with Jehoiachin cf. 2 Kings 24:15.

The Land of Traffick a City of Merchants (vs. 4) - Babylon (vs. 12). (Matt. 13:45)

Seed of the Land (vs. 5)—Zedekiah (vs. 13). Zedekiah was the seed of the land not a foreigner. He was the son of Josiah brother of Jehoiachim and uncle to Jehoiachin.

Fruitful Field by Great Waters (vs. 5)—The land of Israel known for its many brooks of water and fountains (Deut. 8:7).

Vine of Low Stature with Branches Turned Toward Him (vs. 6)—Zedekiah and his submissiveness to Nebuchadnezzar by taking of the oath (vs. 13).

Another Great Eagle (vs. 7)—Egypt (vs. 15), Pharaohhophra (Jer. 44:30) who Zedekiah made alliance with in opposition to Nebuchadnezzar.

It was Planted in Good Soil (vs. 8-10)—If Zedekiah had remained loyal to Nebuchadnezzar he would have blossomed, but instead judgment (vss. 15-17). Ezekiel, like his contemporary Jeremiah (Jer. 37:7) and his predecessor Isaiah (Isa. 30:1-7), was against this policy of an Egyptian alliance.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will

plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it. (Ezekiel 17:22-24)

The Interpretation (22-24): The King of the Davidic Line. Ezekiel chapters 17 & 18 are two chapters dealing with the end of the Dynasty of David, the succession of kings in Judah. However in the middle of these two chapters God promises the most important King of the Davidic line, the Messiah.

God proclaims He will also take of the “highest branch of the high cedar”: God will “also” take of the Davidic line. He shall be a tender one whom God shall plant upon an high mountain, namely Zion; and it is through this tender plant on a high mountain that shall grow into a goodly cedar that all shall find shade and protection.

Jesus Christ is the seed of David (2 Tim. 2:8; Rom. 1:3; John 7:42) planted in the land of Israel (Isaiah 60:21). He is as a root out of the dry ground a tender plant (Isa. 53:2). His Kingdom shall grow and prosper until it becomes a great mountain (Dan. 2:35, 45) and all shall see and find protection (Isaiah 11:1-9).