

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel
Message 29
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Athaliah Questioning Jehoash by Charles Antoine Coypel Cir 1943

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel
Message Twenty-Nine

God's Grace –Jerusalem's Unfaithfulness

March 20, 2016

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THE HARLOT BECOMES A CONVICT CONT.

Ezekiel 16:39-52

³⁹I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thy vaulted place, and break down thy lofty places; and they shall strip thee of thy clothes, and take thy fair jewels; and they shall leave thee naked and bare. ⁴⁰They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. ⁴¹And they shall burn thy 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 shalt also give no hire any more. ⁴²So will I cause my wrath toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. ⁴³Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast raged against me in all these things; therefore, behold, I also will bring thy way upon thy head, saith the Lord Jehovah: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness with all thine abominations. ⁴⁴Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. ⁴⁵Thou art the daughter of thy mother, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children: your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite. ⁴⁶And thine elder sister is Samaria, that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters; and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. ⁴⁷Yet hast thou not walked in their ways, nor done after their abominations; but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast more corrupt than they in all thy ways. ⁴⁸As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. ⁴⁹Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. ⁵¹Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters by all thine abominations which thou hast done. ⁵²Thou also, bear thou thine own shame, in that thou hast given judgment for thy sisters; through thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they, they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou also confounded, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters (ASV, 1901).

THE HARLOT'S PARAMOURS BECOME HER PERSECUTORS

Ezekiel 16:39-40

³⁹I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thy vaulted place, and break down thy lofty places; and they shall strip thee of thy clothes, and take thy fair jewels; and they shall leave thee naked and bare. ⁴⁰They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. (ASV, 1901).

Israel's guilt is now explained and her punishment announced. Those nations with whom she sinned become the instruments of His judgments. These are the same high places (*vaulted place*) that are cited in Ezekiel 16:24. The vaulted place is literally a fornication chamber. This is connected with the impure rites of idolatry; spiritual fornication, on "the lofty places." These places the Babylonians during their invasions treated as local sanctuaries, and laid them waste. Stripped of the riches she had received from God, but had lavished upon her lusts, she should no more be able to gratify herself in this way. She had fully proved, as she is again reminded of her Canaanite descent. The clothes and the jewels are all outward tokens of stateliness and prosperity. They will all be taken from the harlot both clothes and jewelry, and leave her naked. Which is to say Jerusalem will be laid waste. Then finally execute upon her the punishment of stoning and by sword; in other words, destroy both city and kingdom. This stoning and thrusting through does not mean to completely annihilate the people just Jerusalem because other verses say the Jews will never be completely rejected by God (Leviticus 26:44-45; Jeremiah 31:35-37).

THE CITY WILL BE BURNED

Ezekiel 16:41

⁴¹And they shall burn thy 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 shalt also give no hire any more (ASV, 1901).

The punishment of death within the Mosaic Law was made more ceremonially severe by burning the corpse after it had been stoned or run through with a sword (Leviticus 20:14; 21:9). In a like manner the burning of the houses can be regarded as intensifying the punishment. The judgment being executed is "*in the sight of many women*" refers to the many heathen nations surrounding Jerusalem, according to the description of Jerusalem or Israel as an unfaithful wife. It is a humiliating punishment to an adulterous woman to be exposed for this before other women. Accordingly the humiliation of Israel's punishment will be, that it will stand exposed in its sin before the eyes of all other nations. This is the way in which God will put an end to the fornication (*give no hire any more*), and appease His wrath and jealousy upon the harlot. It is His way to cause a person to cease to be or do anything. Since other passages discuss the burning of the city of Jerusalem this prophecy had a literal fulfillment as well (II Kings 25:9; Jeremiah 52:13).

GOD'S WRATH WILL END

Ezekiel 16:42-43

⁴²So will I cause my wrath toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. ⁴³Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast raged against me in all these

things; therefore, behold, I also will bring thy way upon thy head, saith the Lord Jehovah: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness with all thine abominations (ASV, 1901).

By the execution of the judgment the jealousy of the injured husband is appeased.

Ezekiel 5:13-14

¹³*Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath toward them to rest, and I shall be comforted; and they shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my wrath upon them.*
¹⁴*Moreover I will make thee a desolation and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by (ASV, 1901).*

God the husband of Israel is now saying that He has been satisfied with the punishment they deserved which He personally meted out to them. The cause or source of Jerusalem's sin was her failure to remember the Lord's gracious favor. All her grandeur came as a result of His blessings. Therefore when she turned from Him she was cutting herself off from the only true source of blessing. He became enraged because it was Him who had raised her to greatness. As God said through Isaiah *they rebelled, and grieved his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them* (Isaiah 63:10). By saying that *thou shalt not commit this lewdness with all thine abominations*, He is saying He will leave them with a sense of guilt that revolts and shocks them.

THE CONVICT BECOMES A PROVERB

Ezekiel 16:44

⁴⁴*Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter (ASV, 1901).*

This proverb is similar to what is said in modern or contemporary parlance, "like father, like son." This proverb states *As is the mother, so is her daughter*. In keeping with the female abandoned infant who grew to be a queen then descended into a harlot the proverb takes the feminine character. This begins a new section of the long parable. The first part had been discussing Jerusalem as an adulterous wife this part compares Jerusalem to her sisters, Samaria and Sodom. Both of those areas received severe judgment for their sins. Therefore how could Jerusalem who was more depraved ever consider that they would not be judged?

GOD REPEATS JERUSALEM'S BACKGROUND

Ezekiel 16:45

⁴⁵*Thou art the daughter of thy mother, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children: your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite (ASV, 1901).*

The Hebrew here for *loatheth* is better translated as vomited out in rejection. Which describes the level of intense hatred Israel had for God and her children. This adds to the motivation she had to become a harlot, destroying herself and her children in the process. By being disloyal to her God given destiny of holiness she rejected God. By sacrificing her children at the Canaanite altars she shows her *loathing* of them. This *vomiting out* is in accordance with the Mosaic Law. It stated that God would not tolerate sin within the boundaries of the nation Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). Israel had been warned that if they did not live according to the Laws of God as laid out in the Torah He would vomit them out of the land just as He rejected the Canaanites before them.

Leviticus 18:25-30

²⁵and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. ²⁶Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; ²⁷(for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); ²⁸that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰Therefore shall ye keep my charge, that ye practise not any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am Jehovah your God (ASV, 1901).

The land of Canaan can be viewed as Israel's mother because she grew up there in its bosom. The sisters are Sodom and Gomorrah, which were exceedingly depraved cities. Their sins are the prototype of depravity and were intolerable to God because they took place within the Holy Land and embodied the pride of Satan (Genesis 19:5). They were destroyed just as the Canaanites would be destroyed. God's charge or complaint to them is as if He is saying, "*Why have you behaved in this manner? Your mother Sarah and your father Abraham lived among the Hittites and Amorites without being influenced by them.*"

JERUSALEM IS WORSE THAN SODOM AND SAMARIA

Ezekiel 16:46-47

⁴⁶And thine elder sister is Samaria, that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters; and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. ⁴⁷Yet hast thou not walked in their ways, nor done after their abominations; but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast more corrupt than they in all thy ways (ASV, 1901).

As bad as these kingdoms were God says that Jerusalem is worse. Judah should have learned from Samaria's downfall. Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam when the civil war took place in 931 B.C. This was the center of pagan worship (I Kings 16:32-33). Judah's transgressions were worse because their idolatry was in the Temple itself. We have seen the manner in which the elders worshipped the sun and relieved their personal dung toward the Temple in defiance of God (Ezekiel 8:16-18). Samaria is viewed as the bigger sister because when the split took place ten of the twelve tribal regions went to the north and only two stayed in the south.

When one faces east in Israel, the north would be on the left hand and the south would be on the right hand. The daughters are the suburbs of Samaria (Numbers 21:25). Sodom is characterized as having fewer citizens and is situated toward the south. If Israel had not sinned in a manner that exceeded the cities of Samaria and Sodom then it would have been a small matter. But they were more corrupt and it became a very big issue to God.

THE INIQUITY OF SODOM

Ezekiel 16:48-50

⁴⁸As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. ⁴⁹Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good (ASV, 1901).

Even the other cities (sisters) did not exchange their god as the inhabitants of Jerusalem had done for nothing. Sodom's sin was pride, which is the basis of all sin. It was found in Lucifer who became Satan (Ezekiel 28:17) and was given to the world by his pollution of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Sodom's sins were fueled by her pride, which led to her haughty unconcern for the needs of others in spite of her wealth. The Jewish non-biblical text of Sanhedrin 109a says that Sodom's well being was fertile fields, producing unlimited food and rich veins of gold and precious stones that ran beneath the earth. Their unlimited material wealth stimulated bad habits of self-indulgence that led to abominations and sexual perversions. God says that because of this *therefore I took them away as I saw good*. We know from Genesis and history they were completely destroyed by fire and sulfur that rained down upon both Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25) The sin of Samaria, though not specifically stated, was her idolatry.

JERUSALEM'S SINS WORSE THAN HER SISTERS

Ezekiel 16:51-52

⁵¹Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters by all thine abominations which thou hast done. ⁵²Thou also, bear thou thine own shame, in that thou hast given judgment for thy sisters; through thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they, they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou also confounded, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters (ASV, 1901).

But Jerusalem's sins were so vile that, in comparison, the sins of both Sodom and Samaria seemed almost tolerable. Their sins that they committed seem less reprehensible than that of Jerusalem. Before her own moral collapse Jerusalem looked down on the other cities in a self-righteous manner. God is saying it was as if Sodom and Samaria had almost been righteous in comparison.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE CONVICT & HER FRIEND REPENTED

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