

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*  
*Message 47*  
*July 31, 2016*



Paganism- Artist Unknown

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# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel  
Message Forty-Seven

THE HARLOTRIES OF OHOLIBAH, JUDAH

July 31, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 23:11-21

*<sup>1</sup>And her sister Oholibah saw this, yet was she more corrupt in her doting than she, and in her whoredoms which were more than the whoredoms of her sister. <sup>12</sup>She doted upon the Assyrians, governors and rulers, her neighbors, clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. <sup>13</sup>And I saw that she was defiled; they both took one way. <sup>14</sup>And she increased her whoredoms; for she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, <sup>15</sup>girded with girdles upon their loins, with flowing turbans upon their heads, all of them princes to look upon, after the likeness of the Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their nativity. <sup>16</sup>And as soon as she saw them she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. <sup>17</sup>And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her soul was alienated from them. <sup>18</sup>So she uncovered her whoredoms, and uncovered her nakedness: then my soul was alienated from her, like as my soul was alienated from her sister. <sup>19</sup>Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, remembering the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup>And she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. <sup>21</sup>Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in the handling of thy bosom by the Egyptians for the breasts of thy youth (ASV, 1901).*

OHOLIBAH SEES AND DOES NOT LEARN

Ezekiel 23:1

*<sup>1</sup>And her sister Oholibah saw this, yet was she more corrupt in her doting than she, and in her whoredoms which were more than the whoredoms of her sister (ASV, 1901).*

One would think that the example of such a close sister nation captivity, the princes of Judah would learn the lesson of Israel's downfall. There is an important principle to be learned from God's message to Ezekiel.

The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was one of many to see the importance of history as an instructor. Although a seminary graduate he is primarily known for his keen philosophical insight. He presented his lectures on the philosophy of history as a reconciliation of divine providence with the evils of history. He tried in his writings to make sense in the human sphere of understanding of why God allows evil in the earth as part of His overall providence. In his Lectures on the Philosophy of History Hegel made the following statement:

*What experience and history teach is this — that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.*<sup>1</sup>

Judah did not learn from the example set by the Northern ten tribes of Israel of forsaking God for earthly pleasure and relinquishing trust in God for trust in man. They ignored the lessons and became worse offenders to God than the Northern tribes were. Judah had the long history of Israel's transgressions as an example of what not to do. They also saw the severity of the punishment that God wrought upon them for turning from His protection and trusting in men instead of Him. They had an intimate understanding of what had happened to the Northern ten tribes but they ignored what they knew to be true and committed offenses to God that were worse than their sister Oholah. Jehovah God used the prophet Jeremiah to send an accusation and warning to the Jews. God showed Jeremiah that the sins of the Northern ten tribes were actually less severe than Judah.

Jeremiah 3:6-11

*<sup>6</sup>Moreover Jehovah said unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. <sup>7</sup>And I said after she had done all these things, She will return unto me; but she returned not: and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. <sup>8</sup>And I saw, when, for this very cause that backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorcement, yet treacherous Judah her sister feared not; but she also went and played the harlot. <sup>9</sup>And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that the land was polluted, and she committed adultery with stones and with stocks. <sup>10</sup>And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith Jehovah. <sup>11</sup>And Jehovah said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath showed herself more righteous than treacherous Judah (ASV, 1901)*

In 722 B.C. for the first time in Israel's history a foreign nation had succeeded in decimating the numbers of its population. The integrity of Israel to bring God's Word to the earth had been severely compromised. After the Assyrian emperor Shalmaneser's army conquered Israel they went to Judah under King Sennacherib (II Kings 18:13). After conquering the fortified cities of Judah around the capital they came against Jerusalem. Hezekiah the godly king of Judah even gave Sennacherib the gold and silver stripped from the doors and posts of the Temple to appease him. It did not work as they verbally threatened the Jews and besieged the city two more times until Hezekiah finally sought the help of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah. He sent his servants to appeal to Isaiah to petition God. Jehovah God assured Hezekiah through Isaiah that He would not let them be harmed.

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel, Georg W. F., *Lectures on the History of History* John Sibree translation, George Bell and Sons, London, 1902, Vol 1 p. 6

## II Kings 19:5-7

*<sup>5</sup>So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. <sup>6</sup>And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. <sup>7</sup>Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land (ASV, 1901).*

As further devotion to God and an example of his faithfulness he went into the Temple to pray (II Chronicles 32:20, Isaiah 37:14-20). Isaiah did commune with God and because of Hezekiah's reliance on God his prayers were answered. This is what God said He would do.

## II Kings 19:32-37

*<sup>32</sup>Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. <sup>33</sup>By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. <sup>34</sup>For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

*<sup>35</sup>And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. <sup>36</sup>So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. <sup>37</sup>And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead (ASV, 1901).*

God's methods of divine retribution are much more effective than anything we could do. The issue for us is to trust Him and follow His Laws in so far as we are able. When we fall, ask Him for forgiveness and move on to continued trust.

The Church of Jesus Christ has also been warned by these examples. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians said this for us:

## I Corinthians 10:11-13

*<sup>11</sup>Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it (KJV).*

Hezekiah initially trusted Egypt with an alliance but later rebelled toward them and placed his trust in God and was rewarded with protection for that trust. It was a great temptation for Hezekiah during this time to make a defensive alliance with Egypt. They seemed to be the only neighbor strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians. He had learned this from his father Ahaz. The prophet Isaiah did everything he could to discourage Hezekiah from putting his trust in Egypt (Isaiah 19:11-17, 20:1-6, 30:1-7). The Lord wanted Judah to trust Him instead of Egypt. And this she did through Hezekiah.

Many kings after him did not and were the reason the God called Judah Oholibah the worse harlot. After Hezekiah there was only one good king and that was Josiah.

The southern tribes had twenty kings over the next one hundred and thirty-six years after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.. Of the twenty kings, many had differing degrees of godly obedience. There were only eight that could be considered either mostly obedient or very obedient. They were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah (very obedient; II Kings 18:5), and Josiah, also very obedient (II Kings 23:24). See the figure below.

<b>Kings of Judah</b>	<b>REIGN</b>
Rehoboam	928-911
Abijah/Abijam	911-908
Asa	908-867
Jehoshaphat	867-851
Jehoram/Joram	851-843
Ahaziah/Jehoahaz	843-842
Athaliah	842-836
Joash/Jehoash	836-799
Amaziah	799-786
Uzziah	786-758
Jotham	758-742
Ahaz	742-726
Hezekiah +++	726-697
Manasseh	697-642
Amon	642-640
Josiah +++	640-609
Jehoahaz	609-608
Jehoiakim/Eliakim	608-597
Jehoiachin/Coniah	597
Zedekiah	597-587

+++ = very obedient to God's Laws

Blue = semi obedient

Black = turned away from God

The Jews sinned greatly during the reign of the Southern Tribes Kings. Some kings tried to stop the sin and enacted laws and other measures to eliminate the idolatry and sinful behavior. In the end however, there were simply not enough obedient kings and Jews willing to turn from their sin to prevent the Babylonian captivity from occurring. Their sins were worse than their sister Oholah in the North. Hezekiah's father Ahaz and his son Manasseh were the worst.

## THE WORLDLY ATTRACTION TO THE ASSYRIANS

Ezekiel 23:12-16

*<sup>12</sup>She doted upon the Assyrians, governors and rulers, her neighbors, clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. <sup>13</sup>And I saw that she was defiled; they both took one way. <sup>14</sup>And she increased her whoredoms; for she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, <sup>15</sup>girded with girdles upon their loins, with flowing turbans upon their heads, all of them princes to look upon, after the likeness of the Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their nativity. <sup>16</sup>And as soon as she saw them she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea (ASV, 1901).*

The fall of Samaria should have served as a warning to the kings of Judah. But it did not. They also fell to the enticement of the kings of Assyria, as in the case of Ahaz (II Kings 16:7–10) and Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria. Their regalia was a factor in lusting after them. King Ahaz “went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus. And King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest, the fashion of the altar, and the patterns of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.” This strange altar was set up in Jerusalem, and the house of the Lord was defiled by him (II Kings 16:10–20). Likewise, Jerusalem also followed the Chaldeans and were infatuated by the pictures of the Chaldeans portrayed on walls in vermilion, the peculiar red color used by the Chaldeans. She loved Chaldea, and also Babylon with her vile idolatry, and so sent messengers to the Chaldeans in Babylonia. And the Babylonians responded and came to her to corrupt Jerusalem.

So Judah saw the elaborate art work of the Assyrian kings and were seductively impressed. The description of these engravings matches to the sculptures upon the inner walls of the Assyrian palaces in the monuments of Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Kouyunjik. The pictures of the Chaldeans are sculptures depicting war-scenes, and triumphal processions of Chaldean rulers and warriors. All this has subsequently been found in 1850, by the workmen of Sir A. H. Layard at Nineveh. In the ruins of the palace of Assur-bani-pal they found elaborate clay tablets and the walls of the chambers had once been paneled with bas-reliefs, one of which represented a city standing on the shore of a sea that was covered with galleys. Other magnificent paintings were discovered as well.<sup>2</sup> It was this that the Jews saw and were enticed away from their trust in God. As the text here says *And as soon as she saw them she doted upon them.*

## OHOLIBAH ALSO COURTS THE BABYLONIANS

Ezekiel 23:17-21

*<sup>17</sup>And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her soul was alienated from them. <sup>18</sup>So she uncovered her whoredoms, and uncovered her*

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<sup>2</sup> Sayce, A. H. (1915). Nineveh, Library Of. In J. Orr, J. L. Nuelsen, E. Y. Mullins, & M. O. Evans (Eds.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Vol. 1–5, p. 2151). Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company.

*nakedness: then my soul was alienated from her, like as my soul was alienated from her sister. <sup>19</sup>Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, remembering the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup>And she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. <sup>21</sup>Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in the handling of thy bosom by the Egyptians for the breasts of thy youth (ASV, 1901).*

This is nothing less than political prostitution of the harlot Oholibah with the Assyrians and now the Babylonians. The help that Judah sought from these two Mesopotamian nations amounted to nothing less than revealing herself to them so they would take advantage of her. As she revealed increasingly more of herself to them Jehovah God said, “*then my soul was alienated from her.*” He withdrew from her. He references His memory of her doing the same thing back in the earliest days of the nation Israel’s existence in Egypt. She engaged in spiritual and physical debauchery with them. When Babylon defeated the Egyptians under Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in 605 B.C. Jehoiakim lusted after a relationship with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and became his vassal (II Kings 24:1). When the Babylonians came to Jerusalem the Jews found that they were brutal. Now she was defiled by them. Judah turned away from them in disgust. The Babylonians were worse than either Assyria or Egypt. Now the Jews wanted to escape Babylon’s dominance.

While Jerusalem turned from Babylon, God turned from Jerusalem. Jerusalem continued in the ways of her sister Oholah and exceeded Samaria’s unfaithfulness. God had finally destroyed Samaria for her actions, and He now rejected Jerusalem referencing again their time in Egypt to them.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE BABYLONIAN INVASION  
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