

# Jerusalem — An Unfaithful Wife After God Loved Her, part 2

**O**ur last study was in Ezekiel 16:1-34. The passage was about a parable of the city of Jerusalem. Yahweh told the people of Israel that the city was started by the Amorites and Hittites. Yet, He loved the city and its people and made the city famous during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. But Jerusalem abandoned Him like a harlot. In the opening thirty-four verses, Yahweh used the words harlot and harlotries eighteen times to describe the people in Jerusalem. Most of us would have been angry if that had been said once or twice of us. But Yahweh said it repeatedly because He was concerned about them. They were engaged in occult worship and sexual activities that were part of that worship. So, they were harlots in more than one way. They abandoned Yahweh for idols, and part of that idol worship was abominable promiscuous sexual behavior. Also, they engaged in appalling cultic ritual sex, killed their children by sacrificing them to false idols, and made their children walk through the fires of Moloch. They were extremely evil people. That summarizes our last study.

**REASONS FOR YAHWEH’S JUDGMENT ON THE HARLOT.** This study comes from the last half of Ezekiel 16:35-63. The parable ended with verse 34. Now in verse 35, Yahweh begins to announce the punishment that they deserved.

*Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD. Ezekiel 16:35 (NASB)*

Yahweh says, “O Harlot!” Wow, what a statement! But that accurately described the city of Jerusalem. The people needed to honestly evaluate their behavior and examine their hearts’ desires. They needed to listen and repent. Yahweh had already told the prophet Ezekiel that they would probably not listen and repent (Ezekiel 2:4-7; 3:11), and they did not.

Verse 35 is a summary of the rest of the chapter. It has four sections, and we are going to discover seven principles about

the purpose of Yahweh’s discipline or punishment. The first section is verses 35-43 and is titled “Reasons for Yahweh’s Judgment on Jerusalem.” Here are verses 36-37,

*Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because your lewdness was poured out*

*and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness.” Ezekiel 16:36-37 (NASB)*



Now Yahweh gives Jerusalem a list of abominations associated with idol worship. He refers to their nudity and sexual activities with people from other nations, and the child sacrifices they offered to the idols. They had adopted the religions of certain nations they loved. These nations are referred to as Jerusalem's lovers. The people of Jerusalem wanted to be like them. They wanted to enjoy their passing pleasures of sin. This is a summary of the sins of the people in Jerusalem. Therefore, Yahweh would gather those nations that Jerusalem loved and those nations that hated Jerusalem. Yahweh would draw these nations from every direction against Israel. Yahweh said they would strip Jerusalem so they see her nakedness.

Verses 38-39 now explains in more detail what Yahweh was saying.

**“Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. “I will also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare. Ezekiel 16:38-39 (NASB)**

Yahweh was saying that He would judge them like adulterous wives were judged under the Mosaic Law. If we read Leviticus 20:10, we discover that under the Mosaic Law the punishment for adultery was stoning. Deuteronomy 13:15 adds that idol worshipers were killed with a sword.

Then Yahweh connects the punishment of an adulterous wife to the destruction of the invasion of Jerusalem. They will destroy the places of worship and strip her “naked and bare.” Yahweh would motivate these nations to do that. Proverbs 21:1 tells us how Yahweh can do that.

**The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. Proverbs 21:1 (NASB)**

Since Yahweh is sovereign, He can do whatever He wishes with a king. The expression “naked and bare” should remind us of verse 7 of this chapter. There Yahweh also described Jerusalem as being naked and bare” just before He made Jerusa-

lem famous under King David and King Solomon. The point Yahweh made is that He would return Jerusalem to the condition it was in before He made it famous.

Throughout Scripture nakedness outside of marriage is described as shameful. Revelation 16:15 very clearly states that nakedness is shameful. Genesis 3:7-11 tells us that Adam and Eve covered their naked bodies and that Yahweh made clothes for them. This reveals that people in our culture today who claim that we should feel free to be scantily clad or naked have seared or warped consciences. The behavior they are promoting is shameful. Yahweh's point is that He would embarrass Jerusalem. His judgment was intended to humble them. So, this gives us our first principle about Yahweh's discipline upon us. If He disciplines us because we have sinned, the discipline is designed to humble us.

How would Yahweh humble Jerusalem? We are given the answer in verses 40-41 when Yahweh said,

**“They will incite a crowd against you and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.” Ezekiel 16:40-41 (NASB)**

As we have already discovered from Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 13:15, harlots will be killed by stoning or the sword. So in 588 B.C., Yahweh motivated the surrounding nations to invade and leave Jerusalem “naked and bare.” The population was slaughtered and the city and temple were burned to the ground. A massive number of people were killed.

Our second principle about Yahweh's discipline due to sin is that He punishes to motivate us to stop committing certain sins. For He says in verse 41, “Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.” So, Yahweh seeks to humble us to motivate us to stop committing certain sins.

Verses 42-43 concludes this first section about judgment, and reveals another reason why He disciplines us for our sins.

**“So I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you, and I will be pacified and angry no more. Because you**

have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged Me by all these things, behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head,” declares the Lord GOD, “so that you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your other abominations. Ezekiel 16:42-43 (NASB)

He says that He must satisfy His fury against us when we sin and are unrepentant. In the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9, we are told to pray “Hallowed be Your name.” The Greek word for “hallowed” refers to making someone holy. That is, we are supposed to pray that God the Father makes Himself holy. One way He does this is by not allowing sins to go unpunished. Since He is righteous, if we do not stop sinning, He must punish us. When He does, His fury will then become calm. The Hebrew word for “calm” in verse 42 can also be translated as “rested.” That is, His fury settles down and rests. The Hebrew word for “pacified” has the sense of “peaceful,” and the expression “no more” is obvious. The point is that His anger and fury increase against us when we refuse to stop committing certain sins.

In 1 John 2:2, we are told Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. That is, He satisfies God the Father’s wrath against our sins. So Christ protects believers from condemnation that would send us to hell (Romans 8:1). Yet, we must remember the Father will discipline us for unrepentant ongoing sin.

Notice that in verse 43 Yahweh said, “Because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged Me by all these things, behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head.” Yahweh was also angry that Jerusalem did not remember what He had done for them. That should have motivated them to remember and be grateful for all that He had done. That should also motivate us to act holy. So, our third principle about discipline due to our sin is that Yahweh’s holiness demands He discipline us for ongoing unrepentant sin.

**THE HARLOT BECAME LIKE HER NEIGHBORS.** The second section of our study in Ezekiel 16:44-52. It reveals that Jerusalem became like the nations around her. Verses 44 through 46 are about a proverb.

“Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb

concerning you, saying, ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children. You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. Ezekiel 16:44-46 (NASB)

A proverb is given to us in verse 1. It is “like mother, like daughter.” That is Jerusalem had become like her mother. In verse 3 of this chapter, Yahweh told us what He was referring to when He said mother and father. Jerusalem’s mother was the Hittites. Her father was the Amorites. Yahweh’s message is that Jerusalem had the characteristics of the Hittites. In verse 45, Yahweh said Jerusalem had the characteristics of her sisters which were Samaria in the north and Sodom in the south. The common sin for all of them is that they did not love people. They exploited other people and murdered their children.

Verses 47-50 continues the description.

“Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they. As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it. Ezekiel 16:47-50 (NASB)

Now Yahweh tells Jerusalem that her sins were more evil than the sins of her lovers. We have discovered earlier that there are degrees of sins. It is a lie that all sins are equal. Some sins are worse than others. Verse 47 says, “You acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they.” Jerusalem acted more corruptly in all their conduct—in everything they did.

Notice that Yahweh now condemned Jerusalem for its arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, while ignoring the poor and needy. Now it is easy to notice the contrast and conclude that the contrast is what Yahweh condemned. But

we need to notice that Yahweh used the word arrogance which is a sin; then He included abundant food and careless ease. The message is arrogance, abundant food, and excessive ease are sins along with ignoring the poor and needy. But when Yahweh compares them, He is emphasizing the sins. In fact, ignoring the poor and needy is a sin of greed, and the absence of love. These sins are occurring in the United States.

Like a snake, these sins have slithered into the church. Some Christians think they are Yahweh's blessings. We need to remember that He wants us with our wealth to advance His kingdom and help others. This gives us the fourth principle about discipline due to our sin. Yahweh may discipline us for what we have failed to do.

Then Yahweh says in verses 51-52,

*“Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they. Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed. Also bear your disgrace in that you have made judgment favorable for your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. Yes, be also ashamed and bear your disgrace, in that you made your sisters appear righteous. Ezekiel 16:51-52 (NASB)*

Now Yahweh reveals that He is counting our sins. He says that Samaria committed, “Half of your sins.” Thus, Samaria looked like a more righteous nation. We make the same type of comparisons. The United States in 2023 looks more wicked than other nations. In verse 52, Yahweh said that Jerusalem made Samaria to look even righteous. Again, Yahweh is counting Jerusalem's sins and comparing. Then He adds Jerusalem should feel ashamed and feel the disgrace of their sins. The people of Jerusalem should have felt guilty for making the wicked people of Samaria appear more righteous. Notice that Yahweh did not say Samaria was righteous. He is comparing the sins of the nations. Yahweh is watching!

So, Yahweh both sees and compares our sins. Luke 10:13-14 also teaches us that He more severely judges the wicked according to their sins.

*“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.” Luke 10:13-14 (NASB)*

First Jesus condemned Chorazin and Bethsaida for not believing in Him. Then in verse 14, He revealed their punishment would be worse in hell. The point is that just as there are degrees of evil in various sins, there are also degrees of punishment for sin for the wicked both now and in eternity. There are also degrees of discipline for believers in this life, but not in eternity. So, this gives us the fifth principle about discipline due to our sin. Yahweh will more severely discipline us if our sins are more evil.

**THE HARLOT AND HER NEIGHBORS WILL BE RESTORED.** The third section of our study is in Ezekiel 16:53-59. In this section, Yahweh announces He will restore Jerusalem and her neighbors. Verses 53-59 state,

*“Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity, in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state. As the name of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride, before your wickedness was uncovered, so now you have become the reproach of the daughters of Edom and of all who are around her, of the daughters of the Philistines — those surrounding you who despise you. You have borne the penalty of your lewdness and abominations,” the LORD declares. For thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Ezekiel 16:53-59 (NASB)*

Now Yahweh promises to restore Sodom and Samaria and their daughters. Why? Yahweh wants to humble and shame Jerusalem. Five times in this chapter (verses 51, 52, 54, 61, and 63) Yahweh says that His discipline is designed to shame Jeru-

salem. I believe true humility and shame occur when we truly admit our sin and repent to Yahweh. Proud people do not repent and seek forgiveness. Sometimes repentance requires apologizing to other people. That is humbling and it causes us shame. Now we have the sixth principle about discipline due to our sin. Yahweh designs our punishment to bring confession of our sin and stop us from continuing to sin.

Verse 56 and 57 can be hard to understand. The basic message of verse 56 is that before Jerusalem became wicked, she never or rarely mentioned the name of Sodom. She never mentioned Sodom because Sodom was not respected since its sins were so vile. Jerusalem was too proud to refer to her. So, the message in verse 57 is that Edom, the surrounding nations, and the sisters of the Philistines would despise Jerusalem after Yahweh punished her. Why? Verse 59 explains! Jerusalem would suffer punishment because it broke its covenant with Yahweh. This gives us a seventh principle about discipline due to sin. We reap what we sow.

**YAHWEH FAITHFULLY REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT.** The fourth section of our study is in Ezekiel 16:60-63 and is titled, "Yahweh faithfully remembers His covenant." Here are verses 60-61,

*"Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant."*  
Ezekiel 16:60-61 (NASB)

Now we come to the encouraging part of this study. Yahweh promises Jerusalem and all of the Jewish people that He will remember the covenant that He made with them in the early days. That is, Yahweh keeps His promises. The covenant was an everlasting one, and it would be fulfilled. This refers to the millennial kingdom and the eternal state which will be established along with the other nations (Zechariah 14:9-21).

Ezekiel 16:62-63 describes what will happen after Jerusalem repents in shame,

*Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know*

*that I am the LORD, so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done," the Lord GOD declares. Ezekiel 16:62-63 (NASB)*

Zechariah 12:10-14 captures these four verses. It reveals that at the second coming of Christ all of Israel, who are alive at the time of His coming, will be remembered and will be forgiven. They will be saved. In Zechariah 12:10-11, at the battle of Armageddon when Christ descends, Yahweh says this will happen,

*"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. Zechariah 12:10-11 (NASB)*

Jerusalem will respond in shame. Then Yahweh says He will forgive her for all that she has done. That is because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Zechariah 12:10 makes that point. They will see Him whom they had pierced. Then they will enter the millennial kingdom. So, even though the vast majority of Israel were unbelievers, Yahweh will remember His covenant and save all of Israel that is left at the end of the tribulation. He keeps His promises.

**CONCLUSION.** I want to close with a reminder that this should be an encouragement for everyone who has believed in Christ. God keeps His promise to believers too! 1 John 2:1-2 reminds us that,

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2 (NASB)*

The message is that God has promised believers that our sins have been forgiven forever, and our Savior Jesus Christ will

defend us until we enter heaven.