

Ezekiel 16 • I spread the corner of my garment over you

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Chapter 16 of Ezekiel is a parable essentially. It deviates from kind of our usual form of understanding what a parable is. But just as Jesus used parables during his earthly ministry in order to illustrate and to teach about kingdom realities, we come to this chapter in Ezekiel and we find the Lord doing the same thing.

Parables give us some great insight because we're natural story lovers. It's interesting to me, we used to read stories to our kids when they were little and they had rapt attention. And it's interesting to me how it doesn't really matter how old you get, you still like a good story and they help. And in this parable that we're going to be looking at in Ezekiel chapter 16, the Lord is going to speak to the nation of Israel and specifically about the city of Jerusalem. But as He does, we know that He's ultimately going to be referring to the city's inhabitants.

Last week, I don't know if you guys remember, we talked about this, we talked about the connection between a city and its inhabitants. And many times the scripture will speak specifically to a city as if a city has committed sin. Do you remember when we discussed that? And again, the Lord makes a connection between a city or a land or a region and the people who live there. And so we're going to kind of see that in this chapter; almost as if the city and the people are one.

And one other thing I want to remind you of concerning this parable and this is a word that I usually give when we get into parables and it's kind of a word of warning slightly, that we have to be careful when we read parables, not to try to force an interpretation or a meaning out of every single element of the parable. Because parables are often very simple stories to convey a fairly simple message. And I think a lot of people who particularly have read through the parables of Jesus, they've been confused and, "well what does this mean and what does that mean in the parable? I know what this relates to and that, but what is this thing over here?" And they get all kind of caught up in this thing and many times that's not the point, the point is to simply convey an idea, all right? And so it's just a story in picture form.

Now, in this particular parable, we're given the purpose of the parable right at the very beginning so we don't have to kind of wonder what this is all about. Look with me in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter. Ezekiel 16, and it says, *"Again the word of the Lord came to me: ² 'Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations,' (ESV)* Well, there you go, that's the purpose of the parable right there. So you don't have to go any further than that to know exactly what the intention of God is related to this parable. And incidentally, the idea of addressing a city, or even specifically the city of Jerusalem, when in fact it is speaking of the people. You'll remember it was even used by Jesus, we're seeing it here in the Old Testament, but Jesus did the same thing. We shouldn't be surprised at all about that, let me show you from Matthew, on the screen, from Matthew chapter 23. Remember when Jesus said this,

Matthew 23:37-38 (ESV)

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! (notice "it") How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate."

So kind of an interesting statement of addressing the city and yet also the people of the city. Notice how Jesus literally claims that Jerusalem is the one who *"kills the prophets and stones those sent to it."* But of course it was not the city, it was the people who lived in the city and yet there's that connection. So we're seeing the same thing happening here.

So we move on with this parable that the Lord is giving to Ezekiel concerning Jerusalem and in verse 3 He says, *"and say, Thus says the Lord God (notice this) to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite."* Now this is speaking almost directly to the city of Jerusalem and not to the people. And this is how it gets kind of strange because those things don't apply to the people of Israel, but it does apply to the city, all right. And by the way, when it says that, *"your father was an Amorite and your mother was a Hittite,"* the Hittites and the Amorites were two of the largest clans of people in all of Canaan. And so it was very common for people to say the Hittites and the Amorites to refer to all of Canaan and that's what God is doing here, He's only mentioning these two people groups, but He's referring to all of Canaan. And so, He's basically

saying, “you were birthed out of the Canaanites or out of the people of, you are of Canaan.” And by the way, that became a statement of derision, that became a statement, that became an insult to say that someone was a Canaanite.

Just like in the New Testament time, if you wanted to really insult someone who was morally corrupt, you would call them a Corinthian, even if they'd never set foot on the soil of Corinth. And so these names began to take on their own connotations of immorality. And so I really think that goes along with this as well when the Lord is saying that, “you were birthed out of Canaan, you are of Canaan, you were literally of immorality.”

So, He goes on verse 4, “*And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, (wouldn't that have been a great custom to keep going) nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.*” Notice what the Lord is saying here about Jerusalem, “*on the day that you were born, you weren't really taken care of.*” In other words, see this means something more to the people of the ancient Near East than it does to us.

When we see a baby born, when a baby's born, we do things that we do just because you care for the baby and you're going to take care of the baby. The baby's been born, you cut the cord, you clean the baby up, you wrap the baby up in tight cloth, blankets, whatever, because you're just taking care of the baby. But that, it meant more to them than that, it was a way of legitimizing the birth of the child, okay.

Because you're going to see here in just a moment what they would do if they felt the birth was illegitimate and the birth could be illegitimate simply because a child was born with birth defects or sorry, ladies, if it was a girl. And that could create an illegitimate birth in the eyes of some of the people at that time.

And we'll see actually how they dealt with that. But the idea here is that Jerusalem is being pictured as having an illegitimate beginning, in other words, a shameful beginning. And the analogy here is that Jerusalem was born as an unwanted, illegitimate child, okay, that's the analogy. And you got to remember also, when the Jews finally came into the land, they didn't conquer the city of Jerusalem right away, right?

In fact, during that entire period of the Judges, the city of Jerusalem, which was not called Jerusalem, it was called Jebus, was under the control of the Jebusites and they couldn't get it away from the Jebusites. It wasn't until King David was on the throne of Israel that he conquered the city of Jebus, it became known as

Jerusalem, and of course became the capitol and royal city. So it sat under Canaanite control for a very long time and God is using that as a picture of the illegitimacy of the city.

Look what He goes on to say in verse 5, He says, *“No eye pitied you, to do any of these things (speaking of what they would do to a newborn child) to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, (I want you to take note of that phrase) for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born.”*

And I'm sorry to say that it was a fairly common practice again in the Near East to take a child that was unwanted and just leave them to die of exposure and that's what they would do. They would take a baby and just as soon as, they wouldn't clean it up, they wouldn't do anything, they would just take it out to a field and let it die of exposure and wild animals and that sort of thing and that's what the Lord is referring to here concerning Jerusalem. “You were left in that sense, you were cast out into an open field on the day that you were born.” But I want you to notice how the Lord begins to speak of His compassion, He says in verse 6, *“And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ (and then He repeats that) I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’”*

Now stop there for just a moment, isn't it interesting that God repeats that? I mean, I always kind of have felt that whenever God repeats anything, that was for a reason, don't you suppose? I don't think He just kind of had a momentary lapse and, “did I say that? I'll say it again.” No, He knows exactly what He's doing and there's an emphasis there that He's trying to convey to the people of Jerusalem and for us as well. And that is that simple idea that, “I am the one who saved you out of that shame and that deplorable situation where you were literally cast out and abhorred, I came along, I had compassion on you, and I said live.”

Now the reason this is important is not just for us to understand the origin of Jerusalem and of course the people that would eventually occupy it, but as we're going to see toward the end of our study, there's a corollary to this whole idea about us. And that there is a value to understanding your own depravity from the standpoint of the hopelessness of your own life before the Lord came along and said to you “live”. Because that's what the Lord said to you and me too.

He came along, looked at us in our absolutely desperate condition, and He had compassion on us, and He said, “live” and we lived. And we're going to see why that's important as we kind of move on here. And by the way, this whole idea of

saying “live” to the city of Jerusalem, because remember we're still in parabolic form, could be, He could be referring to the time when David actually then took the city from the Jebusites and it became Jerusalem.

So anyway, verse 7 goes on, and the Lord now speaking again to the city saying, *“I made you flourish like a plant of the field. And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment. Your breasts were formed, (again, we're in parable form here) and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare.”*⁸ *“When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, (and look at this) and I spread the corner of my garment over you...”* If you have a new King James Bible, yours says, “I spread my wing over you” and the Lord says, *“... and covered your nakedness; (and then look at this) I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine.”*

You know that's what the Lord is conveying concerning Jerusalem and the people who would then occupy it, is that they entered into a marriage relationship and it is very clearly seen in the Bible as a marriage relationship between God and Israel through the covenant promises that were made and so forth and past between them. But, this is a beautiful picture of just marriage in general, isn't it? And this whole idea about “spreading the corner of my garment,” that is, that was an illustrative act of the day that symbolized a husband placing his care over the life of his wife or this woman that he was taking as his wife. We, we see that beautifully and very illustratively played out in the Book of Ruth, and it's a beautiful picture there.

But the whole idea, what God is saying is, He's reminding them, “we entered into a union, the two of us, we came together as husband and wife, I threw the corner of my garment over you, I carried you, I embraced you, I accepted you, and you became mine.” And you can see that specific language at the very end of the verse there, *“and you became mine.”*

And that's so important for us to understand as we continue with this prophecy of Ezekiel. Because to understand the wrath that God is telling them that He's going to pour out upon their city and on their people, it can only be understood within the context of marriage and the relationship of intimacy between God and Israel, and how God poured Himself out to embrace and accept Israel, but then she spurned Him and rejected Him and went off and prostituted herself with other lovers through her pagan idolatry. And we know how that would make us feel from a human standpoint; unfaithfulness is a terrible thing, but it's a reality unfortunately and it was a reality with Israel. And God is reminding them here in this parable, “I took you as my wife, I not only took you as my

wife, I saved you from death, I brought you up and allowed you to mature and grow, and then I accepted you and embraced you and made a covenant with you.” And we forget sometimes the Lord chose Jerusalem as the place of His presence to reside and He honored Jerusalem. Do you guys understand, there is no other city on the face of the planet that has ever had the honor of Jerusalem, it doesn't exist.

There's no other city on the face of the earth that has had the same honor as Jerusalem to have the temple of the Lord and the presence of God dwelling there, and how special that is and what an incredible honor that was. You might remember what God said to Solomon, the son of David when he dedicated or actually just after he dedicated the newly built temple. Let me show you this on the screen from 1 Kings chapter 9,

1 Kings 9:3 (ESV)

And the LORD said to him, “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.”

And the LORD said to him, “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. (look at this) I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.”

Now, even though this is being spoken specifically about the temple, the facts remain, it was in the city of Jerusalem, okay? The temple resided in the city of Jerusalem. It was the city that gained the honor of being the place where the temple of the living God was built.

And of course, God is going to re exalt Jerusalem during the Millennial kingdom when Jesus Christ returns to this earth and establishes His throne during that 1,000-year period, following the great tribulation. Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem. That city will once again be the place where all the nations of the world will stream toward it to meet with the Lord, to receive blessing and so forth, it's going to be an incredible time. So the honor of the Lord is a perpetual thing for the city of Jerusalem.

Now the Lord goes on, look in verse 9 with me, *“Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰ I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with fine leather. I wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹ And I adorned you with ornaments*

and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck.” Of course, this again, is parables to describe the blessing upon blessing, upon blessing. And He says, “¹² And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.”

Notice that reference to a crown, speaking of how Jerusalem would become a royal city in the capital of the nation of Israel. He's going to make a similar comment to that in the very next verse, in verse 13, where He says, “*Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful* (and look at this) *and advanced to royalty.*” And again, Jerusalem being the royal city of Israel is why that is being said. And of course, all this is given to us in this parable form to speak of God's extravagant care, His lavish attention that is poured out upon the city of Jerusalem in the past and all of the wonderful things that He did for its people as well.

Notice in verse 14, He goes on to say, “*And your renown* (or in other words, your popularity) *went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord God.*” And I really want you to take note of those words that where the Lord says, “this is the splendor I bestowed upon you, I bestowed it.” And God wants it known in no uncertain terms here, that the splendor that Jerusalem had was from Him, He gave it, it was given through His grace, through His good goodness.

But what's really interesting about the things that God gives us is that we have this crazy, natural tendency to forget that these are the blessings of the Lord and we take them upon ourselves like, “look what I did, oh look, okay, this is great, look at me, look at the wonderful things that I did that, just look,” and we think that it came by our own hand.

You remember that Paul even confronted the Corinthians about this attitude that thinks that somehow this is all from you. Look what he, let me show you this on the screen. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7. He says,

1 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

What do you have that you did not receive? (in other words, that you didn't receive from God) *If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?* (But that you came up with it all on your own)

I kind of threw in some extra words to give you the sense of what he's asking here. "Why do you, why are you bragging about what you have as if you generated it somehow or that you made it come to pass? Why do you brag about those things when those came at my hand, those came at my hand."

The Bible says that it is God who gives a man the ability to earn wealth. (Deuteronomy 8:18) The Bible says, every good and perfect gift comes from above, right? (James 1:17) We forget that. "That's my hard work, I got in there, I had hard work," and the people tell people, "with hard work and a good positive attitude, you can gain anything."

Well, that's the attitude of the world and we've adopted some of that sometimes and as Christians, we can forget, we can forget and that's what Jerusalem did. They forgot their past, they forgot their beginning, they forgot the desperate situation they were in and how God saved them out of it and brought them to a place of splendor, brought them to a place of royalty and privilege.

And it says in verse 15, if you look with me in your Bible, "*But you trusted in your beauty...*" And what that of course implies is, "you stopped trusting in me and you trusted instead in what you had, what I had given you." Remember, the Bible talks about worshiping the creature rather than the creator, the same idea. (Romans 1:25)

He says, "¹⁵ ...and (you) *played the whore because of your renown* (which of course the Lord gave that renown) *and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his.*" In other words, "the splendor and the beauty that I lavished on you, you gave away illegitimately," right? "You gave away illegitimately, you trusted in your beauty." This is exactly what the Lord warned Israel to not let happen because don't you know people, when we are in a place of blessing, do you know that we're in a place of danger? Do you understand that? Blessing equals danger, pretty much for God's people, almost exclusively.

I wish it wasn't so, I wish we could walk in blessing and stay humble and stay grounded, but sometimes, we just let go of it all and Paul, the apostle, was a man who experienced great blessings in the Lord. Well, what did God do for him to keep him grounded? Gave him a thorn in the flesh, he says, "to keep me from becoming conceited." But we know what that means, "it was to keep me grounded because of these surpassingly, great revelations there was given me a thorn in my flesh" and he said, "I didn't like it" and "3 times in fact, I cried out to the Lord and said, please take this from me. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) He said, "no, it's there for a reason," Apostle Paul: "why, what reason?" The Lord: "Keep you grounded."

Apostle Paul: “Why?” The Lord: “Because, Paul, I've shown you things that I have not shown many other people and you could easily become puffed up and conceded and lose your way and lose sight of where you came.” So instead, what do we have in the scriptures? We have Paul saying, “I was once a blasphemer and an evil man.”

He stayed in touch with his past, he stayed in touch with his sinful past and the fact that he was also like that man wallowing in his blood along the roadside. He didn't realize it, but God came along and said to him, “live” and he lived and he stood up and he began to walk in blessing and the richness of understanding and peace and grace that most people on this earth never experience.

But he remembered, he was made to remember, “Lord, why is this happening to me?” Have you ever had somebody say that to you? Maybe you've said it, “Lord, why is this happening to me, why?” I'm not going to say exactly why things might be happening in your life, but I will tell you one thing, God might be using that thing to keep you grounded, to keep you remembering. God warned the people that blessing brings forgetfulness. Let me show you Deuteronomy chapter 6 on the screen, check this out, verses 10 through 12,

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 (ESV)

“And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

“And when the LORD your God (this is Moses speaking to the people of Israel before they went in, ‘And when the LORD your God’) brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, (by the way) and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

People, we have all been brought out of Egypt, we've all been brought out of the land of slavery and God would speak the same word to all of us saying, “when you begin to walk in the prosperity of your soul and the joy and happiness of your salvation, be careful, be careful that you don't forget.” It's a good thing to remind yourself, “I am nothing without Jesus” and to remember what He said,

He said, “apart from me, you can do nothing.” Well, that's a humbling reminder, isn't it? “Apart from me, you can do nothing, nothing.”

Sometimes I still say things that I end up grimacing over when I'm in the company of some people or whatever, just something comes out of your mouth. And I'm not talking about obscene things, just things I just shouldn't say. Maybe I'm bragging about something or whatever. Sometimes I brag about my kids too much and I come away and I go, “oh, Paul, that was stupid.”

But then I just kind of remind myself, “that's me on my best day without the Lord,” you know what I just got done doing, which is making a fool of myself. “That's me on my best day without the Lord.” Every good and perfect gift comes from above.

All right, the Lord continues, verse 16, “*You took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore. The like has never been, nor ever shall be.*” And then this is just another way of the Lord saying through Ezekiel that the people took the blessings that God had given and they used them to actually be unfaithful with the pagan deities that they began to worship. And you got to remember again, because we talked about the fact that, the people of Israel were married, by covenant with God.

He took them, He says, “I took you as my own” and they began to be unfaithful. They were spiritually, they entered into spiritual adultery with these pagan deities and they took the blessings that God had gave and they gave them to their lovers; their spiritual lovers.

He goes on to kind of speak of the same thing, verse 17 and following. “*You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore.*”¹⁸ *And you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them.*” Now, the embroidered garments could be in fact, those special embroidered garments that were made just for the priests the oil and the incense. We know though those things were involved in the temple related to prayer and so forth and so on, and He says, “these were mine, these were all about me and you gave them to your lover.”

And He says in verse 19, and “*Also my bread that I gave you—I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey—you set before them for a pleasing aroma; and so it was, declares the Lord God.*” “You set before them the very bread that I gave you, you took what was mine that I gave you and you gave it to your lovers.” It

didn't stop there though, and it got way worse. You could almost say, okay, those are just things, but it got way worse.

Verse 20, *“And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, ...”* Because that was, remember this is a marriage relationship, so that means the kids belong to the Lord too. And He says, *“²⁰...and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. ...”* And as we've mentioned, many times some pagan offerings, particularly those to the god Molech, actually included human sacrifices whereby they would sacrifice their children alive in the fire and they would beat on drums loudly so they couldn't hear the child screaming. And obviously all of this was in direct disobedience to the Lord. Let me show you on the screen, Leviticus chapter 18, verse 21.

Leviticus 18:21 (ESV)

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: (I am YAHWEH) I am the LORD.

God said, “don't ever do that” and they did, and some of the kings did it. Solomon built a temple or a shrine to Molech and some of the other kings actually offered up their babies. It is terrible, it's horrible.

And so we're still at the end of verse 20 and the Lord asks the question here, He says, *“...Were your whorings so small a matter ²¹ that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them?”* I got to tell you, I find it particularly interesting that God refers here once again to those children sacrificed to Molech and of course, He doesn't limit it just to those children, but to all the children they had as, “my children” and there's a connection here, even for us.

We forget that just like any other blessing that is given to us, it is given from the Lord. And we are stewards, we are stewards of the lives of the children God gives us. Just like the, you're a steward of the money He gives you. He gives it to you for a while, and you have stewardship over that thing to use it wisely and so forth, to invest it, whether you're talking about money or children, but ultimately, it belongs to Him.

The money you have belongs to God, the children you have belong to God. They are His and that'll change the way you think about parenting, that'll change your outlook real fast, about how you parent. These are God's kids, these were given to me, these were given to me and we get about 18 summers with them.

And that doesn't mean that it ends after that, but it changes after that. The dynamic changes greatly when your kids leave home and your ability to speak into their lives and the connection you have with them changes. And that doesn't mean it can't change for the better because it can, but it changes. Your relationship with them changes, it's a stewardship thing.

Verse 22, *"And in all your abominations and your whorings you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, wallowing in your blood."* And what God is saying here is that the people of Jerusalem forgot the place from which God had brought them. Again, like we said before, they forgot their shameful past, they forgot that God was the one who had exalted them even though they were once a forgotten city and God is the one who brought them literally into being, and that's the same thing we can forget.

"²³ And after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! declares the Lord God), ²⁴ you built yourself a vaulted chamber and made yourself a lofty place in every square." And instead of a vaulted chamber, you might just say, "you built yourself a bedroom," that's the idea. That vaulted chamber speaks of the wedding chamber that a man would build to bring his wife into it so that after they had taken their vows, they could come together and consummate the relationship and be husband and wife in that sense.

But in this case, this chamber, or if you will, this bedroom was being used for adultery. And He says, "you even," and He says, "woe to you on this, you built a bedroom of adultery."

Verse 25, *"At the head of every street you built your lofty place and made your beauty an abomination, (or if you will, a thing of ugliness, 'you made your beauty a thing of ugliness') offering yourself to any passerby (in other words, any God from neighboring towns, cities, nations), and multiplying your whoring. (or your unfaithfulness, your adultery) ²⁶ You also played the whore with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your whoring, to provoke me to anger. ²⁷ Behold, therefore, I stretched out my hand against you and diminished your allotted portion ..."* That means, "I let people come in and actually take some of your land, they took some of your outlying cities, they conquered you in certain outlying areas and your nation became smaller because of your disobedience."

And He says, *"²⁷ ... and (I) delivered you to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior."* Isn't that interesting? "Your pagan neighbors were ashamed at the things that you did." He says, *"²⁸ You played the whore also with the Assyrians, because you*

were not satisfied; yes, you played the whore with them, and still you were not satisfied. ²⁹ You multiplied your whoring also with the trading land of Chaldea, and even with this you were not satisfied.”

And then the Lord says, just says in verse 30, *“How sick is your heart, declares the Lord God, because you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen prostitute, ³¹ building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a prostitute, because you scorned payment. ³² Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband!”* There, the Lord says it flat out, “I’m your husband and you invited strangers into your bedroom and rejected your husband.”

He says, *“³³ Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side with your whorings.”* You literally paid for them to come be with you. *“³⁴ So you were different from other women in your whorings. No one solicited you to play the whore, and you gave payment, while no payment was given to you; therefore you were different.”* Not a good different.

³⁵ “Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the LORD: ³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whorings with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, ³⁷ therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.” And by the way, this is, again, this is parabolic language. It speaks of whenever the Bible speaks of nakedness in this way, it's talking about uncovering your shame, letting someone see the depth of your shame.

That's what God is saying, “I’m going to let your lovers see the depth of your shame.” *“³⁸ And I will judge you as women who commit adultery...”* What was the penalty for the women who committed adultery? They were to be stoned, right?

He says, that's how I'm going to judge you, “and I'm going to judge you like women *“³⁸ ...who shed blood or are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. ³⁹ And I will give you into their hands, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places. They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare. (God saying all the blessings I gave you, they're going to take away)*

⁴⁰ *They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.* ⁴¹ *And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women. I will make you stop playing the whore, and you shall also give payment no more.* ⁴² *So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you. I will be calm and will no more be angry.”*

Isn't it interesting? There's a promise in there if you look hard enough. God says, “I'm going to bring all this judgment upon you, but the end result is, you will stop playing the whore and you'll stop giving payments for unfaithfulness.”

And as we've said many times after their 70 years of exile in the Babylonian kingdom, the Jews were cured of their idolatry, they never lived as an idolatrous nation again. Verse 43, *“Because you have not remembered the days of your youth,...”* Now there's that statement again, *“because you have not remembered,”* in other words, because you've not remembered the depth of where you were and what I brought you from, ⁴³ *...but have enraged me with all these things, therefore, behold, I have returned your deeds upon your head, declares the Lord GOD. Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations?”*

⁴⁴ *“Behold, everyone who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you: ‘Like mother, like daughter.’* ⁴⁵ *You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and her children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.”*” In other words, “you came from Canaanite stock.” Again, speaking to the city now and then notice the Lord speaks of Jerusalem's sisters, we have to read on to find out who He's referring to.

He says, ⁴⁶ *“And your elder sister is Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.”* And the daughters mean the cities around her. So He speaks of these two cities that kind of share Jerusalem's family traits; Samaria to the north, Sodom to the south, known for their terrible sins.

⁴⁷ *“Not only did you walk in their ways and do according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways.”* And that is saying something, especially about Sodom.”

⁴⁸ *“As I live, declares the Lord God, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done.* ⁴⁹ *Behold, this was the guilt of*

your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it. ⁵¹ Samaria has not committed half your sins. You have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations that you have committed.

⁵² Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have intervened on behalf of your sisters. (without knowing it) Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous.” Doesn’t mean they are righteous, He’s saying by comparison.

He says, ⁵³ *“I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in their midst, ⁵⁴ that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them.”* By the way, we’re not sure when this restoration of Samaria and Sodom is going to take place, it’s very possible that it will occur during the time of the millennium. We’ll just have to wait and find out.

Verse 55, *“As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former state, and you and your daughters shall return to your former state. ⁵⁶ Was not your sister Sodom a byword in your mouth in the day of your pride, ⁵⁷ before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become an object of reproach for the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and for the daughters of the Philistines, those all around who despise you. ⁵⁸ You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, declares the Lord. ⁵⁹ “For thus says the Lord God: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant,””* I want you to notice how the Lord gives an encouraging word here at the end of this chapter. He says, *“⁶⁰ yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant.”* And that suggests that the covenant that they were in would come to an end and that God would establish a new covenant.

“⁶¹ Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, (and that probably is going to be during the millennial kingdom) but not on account of the covenant with you. ⁶² I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, ⁶³ that you may remember and be

confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord God.”

So this is interesting, isn't it? This chapter ends with an interesting hint of the future covenant that God would make with Israel for their ultimate atonement. And of course we're talking about the covenant I believe that God made through Jesus Christ.

So this chapter is kind of about forgetting, isn't it, forgetting what the Lord has given us, what the Lord has done in our lives and taking those things for granted. And even using them for our own sinful sorts of actions and that's convicting. That's convicting because we can do the same thing, we can make the same mistake even in little ways. We can forget, we can forget that we were just as desperate as the way Jerusalem was kind of portrayed at the beginning of this chapter, just as helpless, just as doomed. Let me let me show you one last passage from 1 Corinthians, we'll close with this. Paul writes, he says,

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV)

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (and check this out) And such were some of you. (do you remember, do you remember, do you remember that you were on your way to hell, do you remember that you were lost and wallowing, dead in your trespasses, but then what happened?) But you were washed, (right?) you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

It's a great reminder, that's what we were. “I was as lost as the day is long before I met Jesus Christ as my Savior. I was lost and so were you,” let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for the reminders that you've given us through Your Word. What a powerful, powerful chapter this is in Ezekiel. Lord, may we never forget, no matter how many blessings are bestowed upon us, that we are nothing without you, and that all that we've been given has been given from you from you, from you.

Lord, may we live in the perpetual reminder that we were picked up out of the dirt and made to live because you spoke over us and said, “live” and we are alive today for no other reason. May we never forget, we pray for your guidance and direction in Jesus' precious name, amen.