

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel
Message 28
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Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon by Sir Edward John Poynter 19th Century

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Twenty-Eight

God's Grace –Jerusalem's Unfaithfulness

March 13, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

THE QUEEN BECOMES A HARLOT

Ezekiel 16:23-38

²³And it is come to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord Jehovah), ²⁴that thou hast built unto thee a vaulted place, and hast made thee a lofty place in every street. ²⁵Thou hast built thy lofty place at the head of every way, and hast made thy beauty an abomination, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredom. ²⁶Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians, thy neighbors, great of flesh; and hast multiplied thy whoredom, to provoke me to anger. ²⁷Behold therefore, I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, that are ashamed of thy lewd way. ²⁸Thou hast played the harlot also with the Assyrians, because thou wast insatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet thou wast not satisfied. ²⁹Thou hast moreover multiplied thy whoredom unto the land of traffic, unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

³⁰How weak is thy heart, saith the Lord Jehovah, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an impudent harlot; ³¹in that thou buildest thy vaulted place at the head of every way, and makest thy lofty place in every street, and hast not been as a harlot, in that thou scornest hire. ³²A wife that committeth adultery! that taketh strangers instead of her husband! ³³They give gifts to all harlots; but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and bribest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredoms. ³⁴And thou art different from other women in thy whoredoms, in that none followeth thee to play the harlot; and whereas thou givest hire, and no hire is given unto thee, therefore thou art different ³⁵Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of Jehovah: ³⁶Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness uncovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers; and because of all the idols of thy abominations, and for the blood of thy children, that thou didst give unto them; ³⁷therefore behold, I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them against thee on every side, and will uncover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. ³⁸And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will bring upon thee the blood of wrath and jealousy (ASV, 1901).

ALL HER WICKEDNESS

Ezekiel 16:23-24

²³And it is come to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord Jehovah) ²⁴that thou hast built unto thee a vaulted place, and hast made thee a lofty place in every street (ASV, 1901).

God's response was to cry, "Woe, Woe" to Israel. Which is an expression of lament and horror that was given just prior to a disaster. God was horrified that they would not listen to his prophets but increased their places of sinning. He says that because you were disloyal to Me you will once again become naked and forsaken as you were in the days I called you out of the abandonment when I found you. Jerusalem developed an ever-increasing lust for idols. Her harlotry moved from the "high places" to the common places as shrines to foreign gods were erected at every location (in every street) and on every street. Her desire for idolatry drove her to seek out "lovers" other than her husband to satisfy her lust. Her whoredoms included Egypt (v. 26), Assyria (v. 28), and Babylon (v. 29). The fact that God mentions these nations implies not only Jerusalem's desire for new foreign gods to worship but also her foreign intrigues and alliances started by Solomon continued and expanded under subsequent kings after the split.

THE DEGREE OF SIN

Ezekiel 16:25

²⁵Thou hast built thy lofty place at the head of every way, and hast made thy beauty an abomination, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredom (ASV, 1901).

Now God says that they desecrated their holiness and opened their legs (leg and feet are both *regalime* in Hebrew) to every one that passed by. This is an obvious expression of flaunting their lewdness in offering their spiritual fornication to everyone. It reflects their shameless abandon for going after idols and the open sexual behavior associated with it. The Israelites sought them out and courted them all to increase her harlotry. The *multiplication of her whoredom* means the idolatrous nations yielded to her nothing in return. She had yielded so much that, like a worn-out prostitute, her tempters became weary of her.

FORNICATION WITH NEIGHBORS

Ezekiel 16:26-29

²⁶Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians, thy neighbors, great of flesh; and hast multiplied thy whoredom, to provoke me to anger. ²⁷Behold therefore, I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, that are ashamed of thy lewd way. ²⁸Thou hast played the harlot also with the Assyrians, because thou wast insatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet thou wast not satisfied. ²⁹Thou hast moreover multiplied thy whoredom unto the land of

traffic, unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith (ASV, 1901).

The Jews desire for spiritual fornication with the Egyptians was not just for carnal desire. God says that they wanted to intentionally provoke Him to anger. He brought famine upon them as a result of their attitude toward Him such as in the days of the Judges (Ruth 1:1). Jerusalem's abominations became so great that the daughters of the Philistines became ashamed of her lewd way. While such was the religious degradation of Jerusalem in following the basest and most corrupt idolatries, a corresponding moral degradation was linked with it. All the rites of the Canaanites and the other nations consisted in the grossest immoralities. The most shameless and the vilest things of the flesh were practiced in the midst of the idolatrous city. Isaiah commented on this saying, "*How is the faithful city become a harlot*" (Isaiah 1:21)! They *played the harlot also with the Assyrians* because in their lust they could not control themselves. As is always the case with lust it can never be satisfied as God says to them, "*and yet thou wast not satisfied*." They were practicing the same idolatrous rites of the Canaanites but added to the abominations already practiced "in Canaan." The name "Canaan" is used to imply that they had made Judea as much the scene of abominations as the corrupt Canaanites. The land had become utterly Canaanitish.

THE MAGNITUDE OF WICKEDNESS

Ezekiel 16:30-34

³⁰How weak is thy heart, saith the Lord Jehovah, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an impudent harlot; ³¹in that thou buildest thy vaulted place at the head of every way, and makest thy lofty place in every street, and hast not been as a harlot, in that thou scornest hire ³²A wife that committeth adultery! that taketh strangers instead of her husband! ³³They give gifts to all harlots; but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and bribest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredoms. ³⁴And thou art different from other women in thy whoredoms, in that none followeth thee to play the harlot; and whereas thou givest hire, and no hire is given unto thee, therefore thou art different (ASV, 1901).

Their heart has been completely cut-off from the wickedness of their ways. They were no longer able to discern good from evil. Their hearts were hardened to the point that they were ruled by lust and deceit. Normal harlots will play down the beautiful gifts given to her to obtain a better one to get more. God says the Jews would make do with anything. Jerusalem was worse than a brazen prostitute. She was an adulterous wife as well as a prostitute because she preferred strangers to her own husband. Jerusalem was a corrupt spiritual adulterer. She had even resorted to paying bribes (rather than receiving a fee) to get the attention that earlier had been lavishly bestowed on her. Such a reversal showed her debased preference to idolatry and foreign alliances. As she left God and His protective laws, He then withheld His blessings that He had so freely given to them in earlier days.

Normally one would expect nations to be loyal to their own gods and denigrate the gods of another nation. Israel rejected their own God by denigrating Him and following after the gods of the nations surrounding them. The stress on this verse is the depravity of Israel in comparison to the nations that they chose to follow. Instead of realizing her sin and returning to the true God, she sought out still more gods and offered larger "bribes" to

induce these other gods to bless her. Jerusalem was squandering her wealth on things that could not begin to bless her as the true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had done for them. Israel prostituted herself, not merely for any small reward without demanding more, but for “no reward.”

GOD SUMMARIZES THE HARLOT’S SINS

Ezekiel 16:35-36

³⁵Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of Jehovah: ³⁶Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness uncovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers; and because of all the idols of thy abominations, and for the blood of thy children, that thou didst give unto them (ASV, 1901);

Jerusalem the harlot has been the queen that had become like a brazen prostitute who did not take any payment for her services to her lovers. She was an adulterous wife as well as a prostitute because she preferred strangers to her own husband. Now in the next part of this parable the wronged husband is prepared to extract His vengeance from His faithless wife. She had resorted to giving bribes to get the attention that was lavishly bestowed upon her earlier by her admirers. God had tried to stop her descent into destruction but she would not listen to His warnings through His righteous prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. So now God has had enough with the harlot’s behavior. He says, “*thy filthiness was poured out*” indicating the summary designation of all her behavior. Interestingly the Hebrew word for pouring out is *nechoshet* and is used to describe the lower part of a female’s body which has the same root of *nachash* the word for the serpent. Hebrew’s play on words shows the source of her wickedness, Satan. Her wickedness included:

1. She exposed herself to her many lovers
2. She worshipped idols instead of her genuine husband
3. She sacrificed her children to the pagan gods

Now God, who is the faithful husband in this parable, will curse her as He had promised many years ago in His covenant with the nation Israel.

Deuteronomy 28:15-23

¹⁵But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. ¹⁶Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. ¹⁷Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. ¹⁸Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. ¹⁹Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. ²⁰Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. ²¹Jehovah will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it. ²²Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with

*fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.
23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron (ASV, 1901).*

THE LORD WILL BRING THE LOVERS AGAINST JERUSALEM

Ezekiel 16:37

37 therefore behold, I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them against thee on every side, and will uncover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness (ASV, 1901).

All the nations will join in the plunder of Jerusalem. Even former allies like Egypt, Assyria, and the Chaldean will join together with their perpetual enemies such as the Philistines and plunder Jerusalem. The Jews bonded together with these pagan nations and assimilated their despised religious idolatry into Jehovah God's pure relationship with them. A harlot is punished prescribed as in the Mosaic Law which included tearing off the clothes, public humiliation in nakedness, public trial, public stoning till death, dismemberment of the body, and burning of the house (Leviticus 20:10–12; Deuteronomy 22:22). Israel will likewise be exposed to attack without any protection.

DISGRACE WILL COME UPON HER

Ezekiel 16:38

38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will bring upon thee the blood of wrath and jealousy (ASV, 1901).

Israel's guilt is now summed up and her punishment announced. It will correspond to the sins she has committed. Her sins are made the means of her reparation. She will be punished as the adulteress she is. The harlot is condemned to public shame. Because she had openly carried out her sin she shall be openly exposed. She shall be made a spectacle to the world. "God will make him, who exchanges the offer of a relationship with God for love of the world, disgraced even in the eyes of the world. The Babylonians hurled stones on Jerusalem during the siege and slew with the sword as they captured it according to the Mosaic Law's punishment of an adulteress. God will pour out His jealousy on Jerusalem. Consider the image *I will bring upon thee the blood of wrath and jealousy* taken from the wrath of a husband in jealousy shedding the blood of an unfaithful wife, such as Israel had been towards God, her spiritual husband.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE HARLOT BECOMES A CONVICT

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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