

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*

*Message 49*

*August 14, 2016*



Burning Incense by Vincent G. Stiepevich 1841-1910.

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel  
Message Forty-Eight

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE HARLOTS

August 14, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 23:36-49

<sup>36</sup>Jehovah said moreover unto me: Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? then declare unto them their abominations. <sup>37</sup>For they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands; and with their idols have they committed adultery; and they have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass through the fire unto them to be devoured. <sup>38</sup>Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. <sup>39</sup>For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of my house. <sup>40</sup>And furthermore ye have sent for men that come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent, and, lo, they came; for whom thou didst wash thyself, paint thine eyes, and deck thyself with ornaments, <sup>41</sup>and sit upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it, whereupon thou didst set mine incense and mine oil. <sup>42</sup>And the voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with men of the common sort were brought drunkards from the wilderness; and they put bracelets upon the hands of them twain, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.

<sup>43</sup>Then said I of her that was old in adulteries, Now will they play the harlot with her, and she with them. <sup>44</sup>And they went in unto her, as they go in unto a harlot: so went they in unto Oholah and unto Oholibah, the lewd women. <sup>45</sup>And righteous men, they shall judge them with the judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands. <sup>46</sup>For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will bring up a company against them, and will give them to be tossed to and fro and robbed. <sup>47</sup>And the company shall stone them with stones, and despatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire. <sup>48</sup>Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness. <sup>49</sup>And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; and ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE INDICTMENT

Ezekiel 23:36-37

<sup>36</sup>Jehovah said moreover unto me: Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? then declare unto them their abominations. <sup>37</sup>For they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands; and with their idols have they committed adultery; and they have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass through the fire unto them to be devoured (ASV, 1901).

The Lord begins this concluding section to the twenty-third chapter of the book of Ezekiel with an arraignment of the Nation Israel. This concludes the central theme of Israel's sins against God that has been discussed in chapters 20 to 23. Still referring to the Northern ten tribes of Israel as prostitute *Oholah* and the Southern two tribes as harlot *Oholibah* he brings the formal charges. The Lord gives Ezekiel a rhetorical question stating, "*wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah?*" The answer is an obvious yes so the Lord says, "*then declare unto them their abominations.*"

The general crime against God is Spiritual adultery against Him who married them, became a husband to them and He called the nation Israel The Wife of Jehovah. So the verdict is reached in this section of Scripture and the sentence will be given for execution in chapter 24:1-27.

Ezekiel 16:8:

*Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I swore unto you, and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord Jehovah, and you became mine (ASV, 1901).*

The words used by Ezekiel are words of the wedding night; the covenant at Sinai and the relationship between Israel and Jehovah is described by the prophet in the terms of the ancient wedding betrothal practice expression to *spread My skirt over you* (Ruth 3:9). In the first stage of her relationship as the Wife of Jehovah, Israel entered into a marriage contract, and this marriage contract is the Law and more specifically found in the book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; 6:10-15; 7:6-11).

Jeremiah 3:14

*<sup>4</sup>Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion (ASV, 1901).*

Now Jehovah God is declaring their spiritual adultery as an abomination by saying the specific crimes they have committed are "*with their idols have they committed adultery; and they have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass through the fire unto them to be devoured.*" Just examining what king Manasseh, righteous Hezekiah's son did is enough to make one ill. He engaged in serious idol worship and child sacrifice. This example shows what Jehovah God was accusing them of doing. It was a double accusation of adultery and murder. Any nation that leaves the Lord that revealed Himself to them and engages in gross idolatry (paganism) and murdering of her children is under indictment and will be judged (Ezekiel 14:13).

II Kings 21:3-7

*<sup>3</sup>For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. <sup>4</sup>And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, whereof Jehovah said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. <sup>5</sup>And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah. <sup>6</sup>And he made his son to pass through the fire, and*

*practised augury, and used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. <sup>7</sup>And he set the graven image of Asherah, that he had made, in the house of which Jehovah said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever (ASV, 1901).*

Altogether the Jews under the direction and practice were guilty of seven detestable practices which are presented in this chapter (vv. 36-44) and the verdict is given in verses 45-49. The list includes:

1. Desecration of the Sabbath (v. 38)
2. Desecration of the temple (v. 39)
3. Making forbidden foreign alliances (vv. 40-42)
4. Committing adultery (vv. 43-44)
5. Engaging in innocent bloodshed (v. 45)
6. Committing child sacrifice (vv. 46-47)
7. Idolatry (vv. 48-49)

#### THE FIRST TWO CHARGES ARE READ

Ezekiel 23:38-39

*<sup>38</sup>Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. <sup>39</sup>For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of my house (ASV, 1901).*

The House of the Lord, The Temple was defiled by false worship. While the worshippers were feigning love for God they were sacrificing their children to Molech in the valley of Gehenna to other pagan non gods. As they worshipped on the sabbath they were worshipping idols and killing their children. They thought that God did not see their hearts as they pretended allegiance to Him. It is quite probable that the elders in light of chapter 8:11 were simultaneously feigning worship to the Lord while engaging in their worship to idols in the Temple by burning incense to them. The people were so hardened by their continual sinning that they sacrificed their children and then went into the Temple with the children's blood on their hands and the smell of burning human flesh clinging to their clothes.

#### THE THIRD CHARGE IS READ

Ezekiel 23:40-41

*<sup>40</sup>And furthermore ye have sent for men that come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent, and, lo, they came; for whom thou didst wash thyself, paint thine eyes, and deck thyself with ornaments, <sup>41</sup>and sit upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it, whereupon thou didst set mine incense and mine oil. <sup>42</sup>And the voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with men of the common sort were brought drunkards from the wilderness; and they put bracelets upon the hands of them twain, and beautiful crowns upon*

*their heads (ASV, 1901).*

Their spiritual adultery was matched by their political adultery. They made forbidden alliances with nations around them instead of trusting in the Lord that loved them and gave them everything they needed to be set apart from all the nations of the world.

Deuteronomy 17:14-16

*<sup>14</sup>When thou art come unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me; <sup>15</sup>thou shalt surely set him king over thee, whom Jehovah thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother. <sup>16</sup>Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; forasmuch as Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way (ASV, 1901).*

The imagery is one of a harlot who is aggressively advertising herself to the pagans as available for a sexual encounter. She provides a picture similar to what we are warned of in Proverbs 7:10–21. She takes her bath, paints her eyelashes with *kohol*, the black pigment still used in the East, as Jezebel had done (II Kings 9:30). She prepares herself with jewels, and sits on a divan (a sofa-couch, rather than bed), and prepares a table for an exquisite meal. And on that table are the incense and the oil, which in that day were symbols of wealth and worship, which Jehovah God claimed as His alone. This she offers to her lovers instead of to God (Ezekiel 16:13, 19; Hosea 2:5, 8). It has been made quite clear earlier that both the Northern Kingdom and the South engaged in alliances with the surrounding pagan nations in violation of God's Law. They trusted those nations for their circumstances instead of God for His safety and provisions,

There is a similar parallel to Christianity. The secular forces are constantly seeking to undermine Christian convictions. When a nation or an individual breaks relationship with God and turns to the pagans whose ideas and practices are not compatible with the ethical righteousness of God's character, moral deterioration soon takes place (I Corinthians 15:33). Woman is the crowning achievement of God's creation and she is made for the highest calling of producing children. When she corrupts herself she can sink lower than any man. This then is the comparison of the harlots of *Oholah and Oholibah* to the spiritual and physical moral corruption of Israel.

Christian people need to constantly be aware of the danger inherent in witnessing. It is not necessary to enter into alliances of any kind with non-Christians in order to influence them. The wise Christian will "keep his distance" from moral impurity but, at the same time, he will seek to influence the individual in an effort to lead him to belief in and the forgiveness of sin in Christ. Similarly to Ancient Israel the Church is not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (II Corinthians 6:14).

We must maintain a wall of separation from them. The Lord has commanded it.

1. Separation is not an optional part of Christianity; it is a commandment (Romans 16:17-18; II Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Revelation 18:4).
2. Separation is not mean or unloving; it is obedience to God.
  - a. "Mark them . . . avoid them" (Romans 16:17)
  - b. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with" (II Corinthians 6:14)
  - c. "Have no fellowship with" (II Corinthians 6:14)
  - d. "Come out from among" (II Corinthians 6:17)
  - e. "Withdraw thyself" (1 Timothy 6:5)
  - f. "Shun" (II Timothy 2:16)
  - g. "Purge oneself from" (II Timothy 2:21)
  - h. "From such turn away" (II Timothy 3:5)
  - i. "Reject" (Titus 3:10)
  - j. "Receive them not into your house neither bid them Godspeed" (II John 10)
3. We are to separate even from brethren who are walking in disobedience (II Thessalonians 3:6).
4. Separation is a wall of protection against spiritual danger. Failure to separate from error leaves one open to the influence of error (I Corinthians 15:33). The reason a shepherd separates the sheep from wolves is to protect them.

#### THE FOURTH CHARGE IS READ

Ezekiel 23:43-44

*<sup>43</sup>Then said I of her that was old in adulteries, Now will they play the harlot with her, and she with them. <sup>44</sup>And they went in unto her, as they go in unto a harlot: so went they in unto Oholah and unto Oholibah, the lewd women (ASV, 1901).*

The message of God to Israel describes the two harlots as old worn out prostitutes, being aged past their prime earlier than normal through excessive promiscuity. The nations around Israel used them to the degree that they wore out Israel. Israel was to be the witness to the world and became the prostitute to the nations surrounding her. She degraded herself to the point of becoming just an old lewd woman who was past her prime with nothing to show for her infidelities. The Hebrew word for women is *nasheem*. There is a unique form of the Hebrew word for women used in verse 44. It is *essat hazma* which indicates these women are not by any measure Godly women.

#### THE FIFTH AND SIXTH CHARGES ARE READ

Ezekiel 23:45-47

*<sup>45</sup>And righteous men, they shall judge them with the judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands. <sup>46</sup>For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will bring up a company against them, and will give them to be tossed to and fro and robbed. <sup>47</sup>And the company shall stone them with stones, and despatch*

*them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire (ASV, 1901).*

These women are accused of murdering as well as adultery. They left the God that loved them as the wife of Jehovah and they participated in the criminal activities of sacrificing their children to Molech. Even though this was endorsed by the leaders of the nation Israel it was a crime against God. The same holds true for any country today that decrees that children are expendable and may be sacrificed whether they are in the womb or out of it. It is a crime against God to kill His children that He has made. In the instance of Ancient Israel He says that He will bring *up a company against them* to rob and slay them along with their children whom they wanted. He will also bring fire upon them burning their homes. So *Oholah and Oholibah* are being charged by God and facing the punishment for adultery which was death by stoning in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22; John 8:5).

THE FINAL CHARGE IS READ

Ezekiel 23:48-49

*<sup>48</sup>Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness. <sup>49</sup>And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; and ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).*

The gross sin of turning away from God and replacing Him with worthless idols will no longer be practiced. All the women engaging in these lewd activities will have been chastised. Meaning that Israel, represented by the two prostitutes in the parable will not engage in these practices any longer and the surrounding nations will learn a lesson from Israel's downfall. Even if the surrounding nations continue to worship idols they will not do so with the same degree of profligacy as Israel did. They will not be disloyal to their own particular idols either as they seek to separate themselves from Israel's sins, seeing what Israel's God did to satisfy His vengeance for their idolatry. They all shall know that this was from Jehovah the Lord.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PARABLE OF THE BOILING POT

**E-mail:** [info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com](mailto:info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com)

**Call: Toll Free 877-706-2479**