

Matthew Henry on Ezekiel 16:60-63

Ezekiel 16:60-63: “*Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. 61 Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. 62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: 63 That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done,*” saith the Lord GOD.

Here, in the close of the chapter, after a most shameful conviction of sin and a most dreadful denunciation of judgments, mercy is remembered, mercy is reserved, for those who shall come after. As was when God swore in his wrath concerning those who came out of Egypt that they should not enter Canaan, “Yet” (says God) “your little ones shall;” so here. These closing verses are, without doubt, a previous promise, which was in part fulfilled at the return of the penitent and reformed Jews out of Babylon, but was to have its full accomplishment in gospel-times, and in that *repentance and that remission of sins* which should then be *preached* with success *to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*. What mercy God has in reserve for them!

1. He will take them into covenant with himself (Ezek.

16:60): *I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant*; and again (Ezek. 16:62), *I will establish*, re-establish, and establish

more firmly than ever, *my covenant with thee*. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all true penitents that the covenant of grace is so well ordered in all things that every transgression in the covenant does not throw us out of the covenant, for the covenant of grace is inviolable.

2. He will bring the Gentiles into church-communion with them (Ezek. 16:61): “*Thou shalt receive thy sisters*, the Gentile nations that are found about thee, *thy elder and thy younger*; greater than thou art and less, ancient nations and modern, and *I will give them unto thee for daughters*; they shall be founded, nursed, taught, and educated, by that gospel, that *word of the Lord*, which shall *go forth from Zion and from Jerusalem*; so that all the neighbours shall call Jerusalem *mother*, while the church continues there, and shall acknowledge the Jerusalem which is from above, and *which is free*, to be *the mother of us all* (Gal. 4:26). They shall be thy *daughters*, but *not by thy covenant*, not by the covenant of peculiarity [exclusive to the Jews only], not as being proselytes to the Jewish religion and subject to the yoke of the ceremonial law; not upon such terms as thou shalt think fit to impose upon them as conquered nations, as captives and homagers [vassals] to whom thou mayest rule over at thy pleasure (such a dominion as that which the carnal Jews hope to have over the nations); but as being converts with thee to the Christian religion. They shall be thy daughters *by My covenant*, the covenant of grace made with thee and them together. I will be a Father, a common Father, both to Jews and Gentiles, and so they shall become sisters to one another. And, when thou *shalt receive them*, thou shalt be *ashamed of thy own evil ways* wherein thou wast conformed to them.”