

# The Visions of Ezekiel

## Lesson 11

### (5) Disciplined by God

#### (a) The Reason

##### (i) For Embracing of Lovers

**Eze 16:35 Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD. Eze 16:36a Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers**

In the last lesson we learned that the word for “lewd” is *zimmah* and it means *a plan* (16:27). We also learned that the word for “nakedness” means *evil deeds* (16:7). The “lovers” were also identified as the *nations surrounding Israel with whom she interacted* (16:32-34). These “lovers” were *strangers, not her husband*. Therefore, in this passage the LORD was foretelling the punishment He intended to inflict on Jerusalem because she exposed her *plan of evil deeds to strangers* instead of trusting solely in Him as her metaphorical Husband. This was the first reason.

##### (ii) For Worship of Idols

**Eze 16:36b and with all your detestable idols,**

The LORD’s punishment of Jerusalem was also coming because of her insatiable desire for *idol worship*. The LORD said the *idols* were *detestable*. Elsewhere in Ezekiel this same word was translated *abominable*. It was a *detestable* thing to the LORD to see His *elect* bowing in worship to something of their own creation instead of bowing to Him as the Creator. This was the second reason.

##### (iii) For Killing of Sons

**Eze 16:36c and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols,**

The third reason the LORD was intent on punishing the city was because she was killing her children – sacrificing them to *idols*.

#### (b) The Way

##### (i) Your Truth Exposed

**Eze 16:37 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.**

And thus we come to *the way* the LORD would expose the truth about the horrendous sin among His chosen people. Obviously, the LORD was using this extremely graphic human example of the unfaithful wife to express how the *Nation of Israel* had been unfaithful to the LORD. This example in human sin was sexual. But this sin was the sin of mistrust in the LORD. The *Nation of Israel* had long since shifted her trust from the LORD to her neighboring nations which had no intention of being faithful to her and here was the real problem. The *Nation of Israel* knew full well the intention of the other nations. To make matters worse, the LORD had pinpointed the sin

to one city, its capital, Jerusalem. As one commentary states, “Jerusalem had degenerated from a queen to a tramp.”<sup>39</sup> The city was not guilty of an intimate relationship with just one country but many intimate relationships at the same time. The LORD had promised to provide only if the nation would remain faithful, but she had not; therefore, He had stopped the supply. The city had exposed herself to all the nations and now, the LORD would use all those nations to destroy her, strip her of all of her wealth only to reveal just how poor she actually was because of her decisions in the past to forsake the LORD.

(ii) [Your Adultery Judged](#)

**Eze 16:38 "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."**

In Numbers 5:11-31 we find a test that was prescribed for *Israel* while she was in the wilderness to determine if a woman had been unfaithful to her husband. It was called the “water of jealousy.” We need not repeat the story here except to say that the woman who was proven by the test to have committed adultery was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). Therefore, it was the intent of the LORD to put Jerusalem to death. But how? And who will do it?

(iii) [Your Possessions Removed](#)

(a) [Stripped by Lovers](#)

**Eze 16:39 "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."**

First, Jerusalem would be stripped by her lovers, the nations that she had reached out to while she was in need instead of trusting in the LORD. When those nations entered her land, they would strip her bare of all her wealth that remained.

(b) [Killed by Lovers](#)

**Eze 16:40 "They will incite a crowd against you and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords."**

Second, these nations would not come alone. It would be a gang effort and they would kill the city.

(c) [Punished by Lovers](#)

**Eze 16:41a "They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women."**

Third, after the people of the city were killed, its structures would be burned. To make matters worse, all the cities of all the surrounding nations would see Jerusalem burn.

(iv) [Your Actions Stopped](#)

**Eze 16:41b "Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers."**

Then we come to the sobering moment of realization. Only the death of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the fiery destruction of the city would stop the Jews from continuing their sin. It must be a full destruction, a partial one would not do. The *Nation of Israel* had had many partial judgments and they did not work. It was time for the full judgment of the LORD on Jerusalem for that was the only thing that would stop the grave sin.

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<sup>39</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary, Ezekiel 16: 37.

## (6) Reaction of God

Eze 16:42 **"So I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you, and I will be pacified and angry no more.**

And, so, we see the anger of God. It would not be satisfied until the total destruction of the city and her inhabitants was complete. We see in this destruction His “fury” and His “jealousy.” The Hebrew word for “fury” is *chemah* and it means *heat or rage*. The Hebrew word for “jealousy” is *qinah* and the word “jealousy” appropriately translates its meaning. The LORD was *jealous*, He wanted no one to come between Him and that which belonged to Him. Jerusalem belonged to the LORD and she was unfaithful to Him; therefore, death was her penalty and the only thing that could calm His anger.

### (a) Because of Lewdness

Eze 16:43 **"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.**

The birth of the *Nation of Israel* occurred with the *birth* of Jacob. The *toddler years* took place in marriages and births of Jacob’s children and grandchildren. The *preteen years* developed in Egypt, but the *youth years* encompassed the 40 years of wandering before the marriage in taking Beulah Land, when Israel was married to the Promised Land. The nation had forgotten those days of her youth and her young marriage, unsatisfied with the LORD, satisfied by strangers whom she did not know. Unfaithful to her LORD, her *plan* did not include Him. Scholars tell us that the word for “lewd” is *zimmah* and it means *a plan*. The LORD wanted nothing of this plan in the life of Jerusalem. Because of her lewdness, she would die.

### (b) Because of Heritage

Eze 16:44 **"Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote *this* proverb concerning you, saying, 'Like mother, like daughter.' Eze 16:45a "You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children.**

Because of her heritage, she would die. The sin of the city of Jerusalem was not new. It had gone on for many generations. **“Like mother, like daughter, You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children.”** *The apple does not fall far from the tree.* An apple tree does not produce lemons, and a lemon tree does not produce grapes. The tree produces the fruit it was created to produce. Therefore, the mother who lies and teaches her daughter to lie will produce a lying daughter. The daughter will do the same to her daughter and so on down through the generations. The mother who hates her husband will train the daughter to hate hers. Such traits are bred into the fiber of each generation and most difficult to break from and establish a new character within. Cultures have their cultures, their ways of doing things, right or wrong, they have their ways. Jerusalem had had ample opportunity to change her ways down through the generations and time was up in the LORD’s estimation. But Jerusalem’s character was within her from her beginning and the LORD addressed it next.

### (c) Because of Relationships

Eze 16:45b **You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.**

Jerusalem was not the only *lewd* child to continue the character traits of her parents. She had two sisters. As we have discussed before in this chapter, two tribes of the Canaanite clan formed on the western side of Jordan River. The tribe directly next to the river was the Amorite and next

to it to the west was the Hittite. An Amorite man married a Hittite woman and produced a son named Jebus. When he married and thereafter multiple generations were born, his tribe developed and land north of the tribes of his father and mother became his, the land that encompasses the city we know today as Jerusalem. He started a village as his capital and called it Jebus. Later, King David captured that city, moved to it and renamed it Jerusalem. But in the midst of that same land which contained the village of Jebus, two other notable cities were developed and became important to the story. Because they were all in the land controlled by the tribes of Jebus, Amor and Hitt, the LORD considered them sisters of Jerusalem.

(i) [The Older Sister](#)

**Eze 16:46a "Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters;**

Jerusalem's older sister was called "**Samaria**" and she sat 42 miles to the north and a few miles west of Shechem. A solitary mountain was called the *hill of Shomeron*. It was an oblong hill with steep sides and a flat top. It was a lookout hill and the name *Shomeron* means *watch tower or protection*. This area was inhabited long before Jebus because the Canaanite descendants used it to see trouble coming from miles away. For that matter, it was inhabited long before Abraham. But the real trouble for this site came into being when King Omri of the Northern Kingdom purchased the hill from *Shemer* for two talents of silver. He then built the new capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel there, moving it from Tirzah. It may have been a new capital, but all the sins of the old capital simply found a new home on this hill. By the time of Omri, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was in great rebellion against the LORD. Omri named the city Samaria and it was the capital of all the cities in the Northern Kingdom.

(ii) [The Younger Sister](#)

**Eze 16:46b and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.**

Just as with the settlement on the hill of *Shomeron*, long before the days of Abraham, to the south and a little to the east of Jebus was a village developed in a beautiful valley next to what we call the Jordan River. It was the chief city among the other villages that sat on the river, Canaanite cities populated by members of the tribes of Amorites and Hittites. The Bible records the names of some of those villages as Gomorrah, Amah, Zeboim and Bela. Abraham's nephew would select that area to shepherd his flocks leaving the rough rugged hills of Judea for Abraham. It was a greedy decision for the nephew named Lot. It turned out to be a disastrous decision. In the year of the birth of Isaac, the LORD destroyed the valley, blasting it with fire from outer space and as a result, it became the lowest point on earth. The Jordan continued to flow into the deep hole which had no outlet. The result was the formation of the Dead Sea. Just as with its older sister, Samaria, the sin of Sodom was great in the eyes of the LORD. Samaria was formed first, then Jebus and finally Sodom, the youngest of the three.

(iii) [The Middle Sister](#)

**Eze 16:47 "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.**

Jebus, the middle sister, renamed Jerusalem was, by the time of Ezekiel, in outright rebellion to the LORD. Samaria was corrupt, Sodom was corrupt, but Jerusalem had found a way to outshine them all in corruption

#### (iv) The Worst Sister

**Eze 16:48 "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done.**

It is interesting that the LORD turned to the sins of Sodom first to compare Jerusalem. We know of Sodom and its destruction because of its homosexuality. That same sin was prevalent in all five of the cities that were destroyed in that section of the Jordan River valley. Their sin was against the LORD by committing abominable, unnatural acts with other humans. But Jerusalem had found a way to be the worst sister of the three with greater sin that appalled the LORD.

#### (v) Sin of the Younger Sister

**Eze 16:49 "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. Eze 16:50 "Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw *it*.**

We know the sin of Sodom as homosexuality. Moses explained that in the record found in Genesis. Such sin flourishes when the culture flourishes and dissipates when the culture declines. The LORD said of the time of Sodom's acts that the cities lived in "**arrogance, abundant food and careless ease.**" In arrogance the people of Sodom said of Lot the following.

**Genesis 19:**<sup>9</sup> But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.

Lot had already noticed the abundance of their provisions which provided for the careless ease in the area when he chose the sight over the hills of Judea. He said the following to Abraham.

**Genesis 13:**<sup>10</sup> And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere-- *this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah-- like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

And then the Sodomites became haughty with no time to help the poor and needy. Most likely the poor and needy were few and far between in the beautiful valley and that makes their actions all the more arrogant. If you have only a few needy and cannot care for them, you have a real problem. However, it is much easier to have many needy and not care for them. You then have a good excuse because *who can only care for so many – where do you start?* With few needs, careless ease prevail, and thus careless ways prevail. For instance, America once experienced the decade of the *Roaring Twenties*, a time of careless ease. But in those times of careless ease careless decisions were made that led to the decade of the *Great Depression*. Arrogance led to destruction. So, too, were the acts of Sodom. Careless ease led to promiscuous deeds – immoral and unnatural.

#### (vi) Sin of the Older Sister

**Eze 16:51a "Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they.**

Returning to the comparison of Jerusalem with Samaria, the LORD found that both were sinful; however, Samaria, in all its sin that led to the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC had not committed half the sins of Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom in 591 BC. Here we must pause to ask how? How did Samaria commit half the sins of Jerusalem and yet be destroyed more than 130 years before? Within the year after Solomon's death the *Nation of Israel* was divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom immediately began dabbling in

idolatry. Furthermore, all the kings of the north were generally evil. In the south, all the kings were generally good, although not all were godly, until the reign of Manasseh began in 687 BC, 35 years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. He was the most evil king of the Southern Kingdom and idolatry began to abound under his rule. From that point on, the sin of the Southern Kingdom which occurred in the next 40 years was more than double that found in the 390-year existence of the Northern Kingdom.

#### (vii) Sin of the Middle Sister

**Eze 16:51b Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed.**

Are there degrees of sin? Are some sins worse than other sins? No. All sin is sin. However, with that said, humans, unlike the LORD, tend to perceive that some sins can be tolerated and other should be obliterated. The LORD condemns *sorcery* as evil and most humans of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century agree. However, most do not understand that *sorcery* in the Bible was explained as the *preparation of drugs for poisons, spells and enchantments – all for evil purposes, all to alter the mind from reality*. Sin! Americans, in general, agree. On the other hand, the use of some concoctions that alter the mind are off limits on this topic – not a sin. For example, to some, the mind-altering use of marijuana is not a sin. Its side effects include memory loss, severe anxiety and paranoia, seeing/hearing/smelling things that are not there, imagination overriding reality (psychosis), panic, hallucinations, loss of personal identity, slow reaction time, increased heart rate leading to the risk of heart attacks, coordination problems, sexual problems, drop in intelligence, poor school and work performance, inability to complete complex tasks, low life satisfaction, relationship problems, antisocial behaviors, and increased dependence on welfare. No problems with any of that! Right! Many think marijuana should be totally free and available for common everyday use by all. Smoke it, bake it, eat it, distribute it at will. Nothing wrong with that! It was used by sorcerers of the past to manipulate humanity. We might well say it is being used by society today to manipulate humanity. Here is the quandary. If sorcery of the past was evil, why would we use the same sorcery of yesterday for recreational purposes today? One is considered a sin and the other, used in the same way is not! What is the difference? Both are sins, in fact, they are the same sin, *sorcery*. Samaria had a religious problem; Sodom had a moral problem; Jerusalem had both problems.

#### (a) The Disgrace

**Eze 16:52 "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.**

And then came the disgrace. Samaria and Sodom were both sinful cities but by the time they were both gone, in the last 40 years of the Southern Kingdom's existence, Jerusalem dipped deeper into sin than the others combined. Her sin was so severe against the LORD that it made the sins of Samaria and Sodom seem acceptable – sinless.

#### (b) The Detention

**Eze 16:53 "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, <sup>Eze 16:54</sup> in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them.**

Although the LORD compared Jerusalem to Samaria and Sodom, the older and younger had already been destroyed and taken into captivity. When the LORD said, "I will restore their

**captivity,”** He meant that in spite of making the comparison that Jerusalem was worse than both of them, they would not be removed from the captivity the LORD had already placed on them years before. They would not be resurrected in any way. The LORD used the mention of their name to shame and humiliate Jerusalem. But the two cities would not be returned from their detention. Rather, in the story of their existence, the LORD was returning them to their detention. In fact, they never left the detention they were placed in at all. They were just being used by the LORD as an example.

#### (c) The Doom

**Eze 16:55 "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.**

When the LORD mentioned Sodom and Samaria, their former states were nothing less than doom. They were doomed and disciplined by the LORD years before and they would remain in that state forever, never to rise from the dust.

#### (d) The Despise

**Eze 16:56 "As *the name of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride,* <sup>Eze 16:57</sup> 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.**

The mere mention of the names of Sodom and Samaria were taboo in the Southern Kingdom. Jerusalem dared not be compared with them in any terms. But the LORD compared them to shame them. Within five years after this prophecy, Jerusalem would experience the wrath of the LORD and all the nations that surrounded her would think that she was as bad as Samaria and Sodom. No nation wanted to experience the fate of Samaria or Sodom and because it would look like Jerusalem had joined that family of three, Jerusalem would inherit the same perception and be despised as well.

#### (e) The Defiance

**Eze 16:58 "You have borne *the penalty of your lewdness and abominations,*" the LORD declares. <sup>Eze 16:59</sup> 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.**

Why was the LORD going to rain down His wrath on Jerusalem in a similar way that He had judged Samaria and Sodom? Her defiance! We come to an interesting English word in this passage that is rarely understood – “borne.” It was a correct translation for the Hebrew word in this passage. The problem is with its assumed definition. It means *to carry, transport or bear the weight*. It does not mean to give birth as some assume. When Paul said in Colossians 1:15, “And He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the first borne of all creation” it does not mean that He was the first creation or the first-born child of God. It means that Jesus was the first to carry the weight of creation. In this passage, the LORD says the same thing to Jerusalem. “*Because you have carried the weight of your lewdness [plan] and abominations [disgusting things], the LORD will do to you what you have done to Him. You broke the covenant with Him, He will break the covenant with you.*” He was going to destroy Jerusalem because of her defiance.

#### (f) The Delivery

**Eze 16:60 "Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. <sup>Eze 16:61</sup> "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.**

The LORD did not intend to break His covenant with all the *Nation of Israel*, but only with the portion who broke the covenant with Him. They were still living in the Southern Kingdom and controlled by the rulers in the capital city of Jerusalem. His covenant with *Israel* was everlasting. It was a binding contract and He would keep His promise. The LORD said, **"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."** This was the LORD's way of saying that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were responsible for embracing (when they "received") the sins of Samaria and Sodom in the last years as the capital of the Southern Kingdom. The sins Jerusalem embraced were of their own making and were not part of the LORD's eternal covenant with *Israel*. But, in spite of *Israel's* sin, the LORD would deliver her.

(g) The Declaration

Eze 16:62 **"Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,** Eze 16:63 **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.

Finally, at the end of this long and dreadful chapter, filled with the raw facts of sin, the LORD made His declaration. He would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom and most of its inhabitants and He would do so as an example, a monument in time and a warning to the *Nation of Israel*. Sins must be punished even if they were performed by the elect of God. The shame of the punishment was to be a physical reminder of the spiritual sin. The punishment would be the teacher, the humiliation would be the executioner of the heart and soul to shut the mouth and accept the forgiveness of the LORD. But that would not be for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day; it would be a reminder for the descendants of *Israel* who were already safely in exile for whom the *elders of Israel and Judah* sitting in front of Ezekiel were representatives.