

Ezek. 16:1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
Ezek. 16:2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,
Ezek. 16:3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan; thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

This chapter starts with Ezekiel receiving another message from the LORD. He is again going to be instructed to publicly condemn the *abominations* (immorality, idolatry from the Hebrew) of the people of Jerusalem. He declares that the origin of the people, their place of birth as a nation, was the land of Canaan.

Abraham was called of God to leave his home and go to a land that He would show him; that land was the land of Canaan.

Gen. 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

Gen. 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Gen. 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Gen. 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Gen. 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

The land of Canaan was populated by the Amorites and Hittites, among others. When the people went in to possess the land after being delivered from Egypt, God instructed them to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Why? To protect them from falling into the evil practices of these nations.

Deut. 20:16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

Deut. 20:17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

Deut. 20:18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

Scripture records the fact that they did not obey.

Judg. 3:5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

Eventually, the people of Israel went after the gods of these nations in disobedience. In that sense, these nations were the father and mother that gave birth to idolatry in the nation of Israel.

Ezek. 16:4 And *as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.*

Ezek. 16:5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

Verse 4 is listing the usual protective actions taken at the birth of a baby. The Lord is saying that Israel was not given that protective treatment. They were cast into the open field as an unwanted child.

One of the commentaries helped me gain understanding by placing the focus on Jerusalem. At the time the people were taking possession of the land, Jerusalem was not taken.

Josh. 15:63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

Jerusalem could be considered the *navel* of Israel. Job described the behemoth as a creature whose force or strength was in his navel.

Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Job 40:16 Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

That would also be true of the nation of Israel. Although left uncared for at the time, Jerusalem would become the capital of the nation and the place where God would choose to manifest His presence to His people. It would truly represent the place of strength for the nation.

Ezek. 16:6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.*

Ezek. 16:7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.*

God had a plan for the nation of Israel and for Jerusalem in particular. He sovereignly chose to bless the nation and the city. He caused the people to multiply and gave them abundant material wealth as well. Israel as represented by Jerusalem had matured into a healthy young adult from an ill treated infant.

Ezek. 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.*

In keeping the context on Jerusalem as representative of the nation (just as Washington D.C. is representative of the United States), the time came when she was ready to enter a marriage relationship (“the time of love”), a covenant relationship. God Himself took her as His bride.

Constable: "Spreading a skirt over someone was a customary way of committing to marry and to provide for someone in that culture." We see an example in the book of Ruth.

Ruth 3:9 "And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman."

I think this is referencing the time after David became King and established Jerusalem as the capital city and the spiritual center of the nation by arranging for Solomon to build the temple. The Lord established that covenant with Solomon.

1Kings 9:2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

1Kings 9:3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

1Kings 9:4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

1Kings 9:5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

1Kings 9:6 *But* if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them:

1Kings 9:7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

1Kings 9:8 And at this house, *which* is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

1Kings 9:9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

Ezek. 16:9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

Ezek. 16:10 I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

Ezek. 16:11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

Ezek. 16:12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

History proves and scripture records that the Lord lavished blessings upon Israel. During the reign of Solomon they possessed so much gold that silver was not even considered a treasure.

1Kings 10:21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; none *were of* silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

Ezek. 16:13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.*

Ezek. 16:14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.*

The blessings of God upon the Kingdom of Israel under Solomon were known far and wide. It was to confirm the truth of their prosperity that drew the Queen of Sheba to come and see for herself.

1Kings 10:4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

1Kings 10:5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

1Kings 10:6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

1Kings 10:7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Ezek. 16:15 But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

Ezek. 16:16 And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: *the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.*

Sadly, as is often the case, the people and their leaders began to take pride in their position. They used their wealth as a means of gaining the favor of other nations. In doing so, they wanted to be more like the other nations and began to adapt to the wicked practices of the heathen nations. They basically began an adulterous relationship with the heathen and their gods in disobedience to and rejection of YHWH.

Ezek. 16:17 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

Ezek. 16:18 And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

Ezek. 16:19 My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, *wherewith* I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and *thus* it was, saith the Lord GOD.

At this point the Lord points out that the wealth that they used to buy friends was His; God was the source of their blessings. They had taken His gifts to them

and used them to make idols and worship the false gods they represented. They used the items designed for the worship of God to worship idols. The abundance God had given them was being used to honor false gods.

Ezek. 16:20 Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.

Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,

Ezek. 16:21 That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through *the fire* for them?

Beyond comprehension and worst of all, the people had even taken to sacrificing their own children to these false gods. Those that were allowed to live were raised to follow the heathen practices of their parents. Children are described in scripture as a precious gift from God, and they were despising that precious gift.

Gen. 33:5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who *are* those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

Psa. 127:3 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.

(2/09) This is referencing sacrifice to the God Molech by taking the child and placing it in the very hot arms of the idol. It's ver similar to the abortion toay except that we use different "fire" and most are done before the baby is even born.

Ezek. 16:22 And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, *and* wast polluted in thy blood.

In other words, how quickly they had forgotten their humble beginnings. They had forgotten Who had blessed them. They were living in the now with no thought of the past or the future. They were enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season with their focus on self. They had no regard for others except for how they could benefit from the connection.

(1/07) I'm afraid the comparison to America today is obvious.

Ezek. 16:23 And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)

Ezek. 16:24 That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.

Ezek. 16:25 Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

The Lord is using quite graphic language in this section. He is using a description of a woman committing adultery to describe the actions of His people with the false gods. They didn't even try to hide their activities. They made use of public altars in prominent locations. Their beauty had been destroyed by the effects of the sin they embraced.

Ezek. 16:26 Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

It's interesting to me that the Lord singled out Israel's connection to Egypt in her disobedience. This is the very land from which the Lord had delivered the people to establish their own nation to begin with. They put more faith in establishing an alliance with the Egyptians than they did in God's ability to protect and provide for them.

Why does the flesh always lean toward choosing an abusive, unhealthy relationship over a caring, healthy relationship? Why are we so prone to make choices based on appearance rather than character or substance?

Ezek. 16:27 Behold, 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, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

I liked the wording of the NIV for this verse.

So I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your territory; I gave you over to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were shocked by your lewd conduct.

Even the Philistines were faithful to their false gods. They didn't go chasing after the gods of other nations.

I can't help but make a comparison between Christians in America today and the Israelites of Ezekiel's day. Israel was flaunting their rejection of God before the nations as they embraced other gods. "Christians" are so divided in their allegiance to God and His Word today. We publicly debate over the truth of God's Word and what is acceptable or unacceptable according to His Word. America was founded as a "Christian" nation. No one can look at America today and honestly describe us as such anymore. We are just as publicly dishonoring the name of God as did the Israelites of Ezekiel's day.

Ezek. 16:28 Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.

Ezek. 16:29 Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

Israel continued to reach out farther beyond her borders by embracing alliances with and adopting the gods of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans (Babylon). Their faith was totally misplaced and ended up backfiring in their face. To seek anywhere but to God will always result in dissatisfaction and destruction.

Ezek. 16:30 How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these *things*, the work of an imperious whorish woman;

Ezek. 16:31 In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;

Ezek. 16:32 *But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!*

The NLT words verses 30-31 more clearly:

“What a sick heart you have, says the Sovereign LORD, to do such things as these, acting like a shameless prostitute. You build your pagan shrines on every street corner and your altars to idols in every square. You have been worse than a prostitute, so eager for sin that you have not even demanded payment for your love!

Ezek. 16:33 *They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.*

Ezek. 16:34 *And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.*

Most prostitutes don't choose their profession out of a love for their work; they usually feel forced into such practice because they feel they have no other alternative to provide for their needs. Some go into the profession with the intent of making a lot of money. Israel didn't meet either of these criteria. She is acting more like a nymphomaniac with no control. Israel began a downward spiral when she chose to disobey God and ended up worse off than she was in the beginning. It's a sad thing when one gives up the best that life has to offer in relationship to the Lord to satisfy pride and the flesh.

Ezek. 16:35 *Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:*

Ezek. 16:36 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;*

Ezek. 16:37 *Behold, therefore 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 round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.*

The Lord continues to pull no punches in His address to His people; He has addressed them as a harlot, whore, adulterer, and fornicator. He is basically saying that because their rejection of Him was so public and shameful, their judgment would be just as public and shameful. In fact, He will judge her through the hands of those with whom she practiced her sin.

Ezek. 16:38 *And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.*

How did the law declare an adulterer be punished?

Lev. 20:10 *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*

And one who sacrificed their children to idols?

Lev. 20:2 *Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth*

any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

Ezek. 16:39 And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

Ezek. 16:40 They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.

Ezek. 16:41 And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

Ezek. 16:42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.

Those nations with whom Israel had aligned herself in sin would be the very ones that would take her wealth, kill many with swords, and destroy their cities and their land. This judgment would be public and would result in a cleansing of wickedness from out of the land. In His anger, God is going to put an end to her idolatry. Though Israel had broken her covenant with God, He would never break His covenant with her. Once appropriate judgment had been carried out, He would again seek to reestablish a healthy relationship with the Jewish people that remained—the remnant.

Ezek. 16:43 Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these *things*; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon *thine* head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.

Again, the point is made that history should serve as a teacher to us. Israel's history as a youth was full of the miracles of God on her behalf. She had experienced abundant blessing as part of her covenant relationship to God. She became comfortable and prideful in her luxury; she began to think she was self sufficient and wise. The more independent we get, the more we think that God is unnecessary in our lives. This is one of the greatest dangers of an abundance of wealth.

The time came when God's longsuffering had reached its limit and the time for judgment had come. God is jealous for His name and His character, and He is going to purge His people of this terrible sin.

Ex. 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

Is. 42:8 I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Ezek. 39:25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

Zech. 1:14 ... Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

Ezek. 16:44 Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use *this* proverb against thee, saying, *As is the mother, so is her daughter.*

Ezek. 16:45 Thou *art* thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou *art* the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother *was* an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.

Ezek. 16:46 And thine elder sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters.

This section refers directly back to verse 3. There was/is a well-known proverb that states, "Like mother, like daughter." Israel had become just as wicked as the heathen nations (i.e., the Hittites and Amorites) that had introduced idolatry into the nation. Jerusalem is being specifically compared to Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, and Sodom, representative of the cities to the south (from the Hebrew for "right hand") that abounded with idolatry and wickedness.

Ezek. 16:47 Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

Ezek. 16:48 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

Now the Lord declares that Jerusalem had become more corrupt than either of the other cities ever were. The biggest difference I can find from scripture regarding the wickedness of these cities was that the people of Jerusalem were willing to sacrifice their children to these false gods. (10/12) Regarding Samaria--Maybe their corruption was so much worse in the eyes of God because they continued in their sin and rebellion so blatantly even after witnessing God's judgment upon the Northern Kingdom. Regarding Sodom--the people of Jerusalem possessed the light of God's word and the ministry of His prophets; the people of Sodom had lived in spiritual darkness.

Ezek. 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Ezek. 16:50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.

The first thing that usually comes to mind when I think of Sodom is homosexuality. As the Lord details their sin, the first thing He lists is pride. I am convinced that pride is the root sin, because it is the sin that positions us as being wiser than God. Add to that material wealth and time on your hands and you have an environment for sin to abound. That environment feeds a culture of "me" as the priority in life. That, in turn, results in lack of concern for the needs of those around us. Sodom and Samaria reached the limit of God's longsuffering; but sad to say, Jerusalem had done even worse in the time allotted to them. That is one of the puzzling truths to absorb. Why do some people appear to get away with their sin? Why is God's extent of longsuffering different for different people and situations? I don't have the answers, but I do know that according to His character, He is acting with righteousness according to His sovereign purposes. The Psalmist had some of the same thoughts.

Psa. 73:3-17 For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm. They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. **When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.**

We may not understand God's longsuffering, but we should never question His choice to give men more time to repent because we know what their end will be if they don't repent.

Ezek. 16:51 Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

Ezek. 16:52 Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.

The Northern Kingdom set up their own worship center and established their own priesthood after splitting from Judah. At the time Ezekiel was writing they had already been taken captive by the Assyrians. In God's assessment Jerusalem's wickedness made Samaria and Sodom look like good girls in comparison. I think another thing to consider is that Jerusalem had been privileged to know God's law and experience the benefit of His presence. Their wickedness was a result of overt rejection of an ever-present God as represented by His temple. Samaria was basically removed from His presence by disconnecting with temple worship in Jerusalem, and Sodom never experienced His presence. This would make Jerusalem's rejection an even greater sin.

Ezek. 16:53 When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then *will I bring again* the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:

Ezek. 16:54 That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.

The NIV gives a better understanding of these verses.

However, I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters, and your fortunes along with them, so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you have done in giving them comfort.

Ezek. 16:55 When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

This is speaking of a time yet future when the Lord will again allow Sodom and the cities of the plain around the Dead Sea and Samaria and the cities of the Northern Kingdom to be blessed with people and material wealth. At that time, He will also restore Jerusalem and the cities of Judah to their former glory. This tells me that the prophet is making reference to Messiah's Kingdom during the millennium.

Ezek. 16:56 For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride,

Ezek. 16:57 Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of *thy* reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all *that are* round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.

Ezek. 16:58 Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.

The Complete Jewish Bible gives a clearer understanding of this passage.

When you were so proud, you spoke with contempt about your sister S'dom, before your own wickedness was exposed. But now the daughters of Aram mock you, as do her neighbors; and the daughters of the P'lishtim on every side are repulsed by you. You have brought it all on yourself with your depravities and disgusting practices,' says ADONAI. Pastor Bob has often stated something to the effect that "Your sin looks worse on you than my sin looks on me." In our pride, that is how we think. Because we don't see our sin in the same light as the sins we despise in others, we are more prone not to see the need for repentance as quickly, and the sin just gets a stronger and stronger grip on our lives the longer we allow it to go unchecked. It can get to the point that those we are so quick to condemn for their sin are able to point at us as being more wicked than they. Finally, if we have any conscience left, we are brought to a position of shame.

Ezek. 16:59 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

Ezek. 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

God is a faithful father/husband. He is going to judge His people in accordance with their sin and the breaking of her covenant with Him. Still He is going to honor His covenant as established with Moses and David (conditional) as a young nation. He is in fact going to establish a new everlasting covenant with them that will bring about the fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (unconditional). He is going to write his law on their hearts, so they will never again turn from Him in rebellion and disobedience.

Jer. 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Again, it is obvious that this time is yet future. It will be fulfilled at the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom.

Ezek. 16:61 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.

As I read through the different translations and a couple of commentaries, it was interesting to see the different thoughts that were presented. They each acknowledge the future relationship among the cities being discussed. Some make the emphasis that the everlasting covenant applies only to Jerusalem/Israel. Some seem to be emphasizing that this relationship is not part of the new covenant between the Lord and Israel. My first thoughts were that Israel would experience a healthy relationship with these cities, but not because they were seeking an alliance for the wrong reason as they had done in the past. They would be secure in their relationship to the Lord and would just be enjoying the benefits of good friendship.

Ezek. 16:62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD:

Ezek. 16:63 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.

Although a message of great sorrow and judgment, this message ends on a high note. Jerusalem/Judah/Israel will once again experience a healthy covenant relationship to the LORD. It will be a bittersweet time, just as it is for every believer who realizes how unworthy and unlovable they were, and how merciful and gracious God has been to provide for our salvation. This time they will remember and profit from that remembrance.

It is significant to note that we are told that God remembers His covenant (v60), *then* the people will be given the opportunity to remember. This is another one of those hard truths to understand. Everything about our salvation is a gift from God. I'm not sure we will ever be able to fully integrate all the truths associated with that statement until we get to heaven—if then.

I think it is also important to note that though we may remember our shame, God does not remember; once He forgives, He forgets.

Heb. 10:16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Heb. 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

In this passage in Hebrews the context is regarding ALL the sanctified. The preceding verses in Hebrews declare that this is possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Heb. 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Heb. 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

Heb. 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Heb. 10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Heb. 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Our remembrance should motivate us to righteous living and a heart of worship and obedience toward our Savior. It should never be allowed to mar the joy of our salvation, which was provided at such great cost.