

**EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES**  
**Part XII: God's Work To Enforce Faith-Rest Living On His Self-Help People**  
**(Ezekiel 23:1-49)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. God has called us to trust in Him as opposed to leaning upon our own efforts for blessing and success. Hebrews 4:1 emphatically states as much.
- B. The problem remains that God's people often resist a life of faith as it is too "risky," and the sin of unbelief grabs hold of us so easily, Hebrews 12:1 in light of He. 11:1-40. Even if we ourselves learn to rely on the Lord, we can become distraught that other believers seem to flail along, seeking human efforts for solutions that should only come from the Lord.
- C. Ezekiel offers hope--the hope that God enforces the capacity of His people to trust Him! (Ez. 23:1-49)

**II. God's Work To Enforce Faith-Rest Living On His Self-Help People, Ezekiel 23:1-49.**

- A. When God commissioned Moses to lead His people out of Egypt into Canaan, He urged the people through Moses no longer to seek help from foreign nations, but to seek the Lord's help instead, cf. Deut. 17:16-17.
  - 1. Israel's kings were not to multiply unto their forces military horses from Egypt, Dt. 17:16.
  - 2. They were not to take many foreign wives unto themselves, a practice in which alliances for defense were established by marriage with Gentile nations, Dt. 17:17a.
  - 3. They were not to multiply material possessions to their coffers lest they use these for purchasing Gentile forces for purposes of self defense, Dt. 17:17b.
  - 4. **Instead, the kings of Israel were supposed to rely upon the Lord for their power in military conflicts, a matter of personal faith instead of human self-help effort.**
- B. However, Israel's history revealed a detailed departure from faith to colossal self-help and use of foreign alliances for security, Ezekiel 23:1-49.
  - 1. Through use of allegories, God likened the Northern Kingdom, Samaria (Israel) to an adulteress named "Aholah," and the Southern Kingdom of Judah to another adulteress, her sister, named "Aholibah," 1-4.
  - 2. The Northern Kingdom sought the associations of the Assyrians for security, a sin likened by God to adultery in that it caused a departure from trusting in God to trusting in Assyrians and their gods for military help, Ez. 23:5-7.
  - 3. Not content with Assyria's help, Israel also sought alliances with Egypt and her gods, Ez. 23:8.
  - 4. Accordingly, God turned Israel over to Assyria and Egypt for them to destroy her, Ez. 23:9-10.
  - 5. One would have thought that the Southern Kingdom would have learned from watching the fall of the Northern Kingdom not to make alliances with foreign nations. However, Judah, the Southern Kingdom, actually became worse in her spiritual adultery than her 'older sister,' Aholah. Judah cavorted in alliances with the Assyrians and the Babylonians along with the Egyptians, Ez. 23:11-21.
  - 6. Accordingly, God stepped in with judgment upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah, upon the faithless adulteress "Aholibah," Ez. 23:22-49. (The language is so explicit in terms of immorality that I prefer to use the notes that read the actual text.)

***Lesson:*** *As God came down in strict discipline upon Samaria and Judah for their efforts to trust in human power for security instead of in the Lord, God is sure to make His people come around to trust in Him instead of in human efforts.*

***Application:*** *God sees reliance upon human effort when we depart from depending on Him as a form of spiritual adultery. Accordingly, as a jealous, angered husband, God will surely address His spiritually "adulterous," self-help flock to cause us always to come back to trusting in Him alone. (a) We thus ought to fear if we do not depend upon the Lord for security, cf. He. 4:1. (b) We must limit our accumulation of wealth or development of human associations if these things become our security in place of God, Dt. 17:16-17.*