

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part XV: Jerusalem's Apostasy Illustrated As An Immoral Woman (Ezekiel 16:1-34)

I. Introduction

- A. The sin of idolatry is relying on anything instead of God, what we Christians are called to avoid, 1 John 5:21.
- B. It is easy to slip into subtle forms of idolatry almost without realizing it, but we should not be flippant about this sin, for in God's eyes it is a great evil as is dramatically illustrated for us in Ezekiel 16:1-34 (as follows):

II. Jerusalem's Apostasy Illustrated As An Immoral Woman, Ezekiel 16:1-34.

- A. God likened the origin of the city of Jerusalem to that of an infant of mixed union, that of a Canaanite and an Amorite, Ezekiel 16:1-3; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1255. To explain, the city's origin was the fortress of Jebus, inhabited by Jebusites who were likely part Amorite and part Canaanite Hittite, Genesis 10:15-16; *Ibid.*
- B. Accordingly, the city's beginning was like that of an unwanted newborn infant that in the ancient world was thrown out and left to die as is graphically described in Ezekiel 16:4-5; *Ibid.*
- C. Nevertheless, God graciously passed by, saw the helpless infant [city] and called it to "Live!" with the result that Jerusalem was conquered by David as he defeated the Jebusites, and it became the thriving capitol of Israel in his early reign, though still unrefined as if it were a "naked and bare" growing female girl, Ez. 16:6-7.
- D. When God passed by her again, He saw that she had grown into a young woman of bridal age, so He spread the corner of His garment over her, a cultural sign of covenant marriage, Ezekiel 16:8; *Ibid.*, p. 1256. God cleansed and anointed her, clothed her with embroidered cloth and shod her with fine leather, wrapped her in fine linen and covered her with silk, Ezekiel 16:9. He adorned her with ornaments, put bracelets on her wrists, a chain on her neck, a decorative ring in her nose, earrings in her ears and a crown on her head so that she was decked out as a beautiful bride, Ezekiel 16:10-12. She ate the finest of foods and her renown went out into all the nations because God had blessed her as His bride, Ezekiel 16:13-14. In this way God richly adorned the city of Jerusalem in the latter days of David and at the start of Solomon's reign, *Ibid.*
- E. However, the kings and people of Jerusalem, likened to this decked out, beautiful young bride, came to shift their trust in God to trust in their own beauty as a society and used it to become a spiritual prostitute, which in the context refers to a shift from trusting in God Who had blessed and developed the city into trusting in pagan gods, Ezekiel 16:15. Indeed, beginning with Solomon's reign, Jerusalem "turned from God to idolatry" so that her "general trend" from that time onward "was downward" in the spiritual sense, *Ibid.*
- F. All the decorative jewels, clothes and rich foods with which God had adorned His beautiful young bride she made into idolatrous images of men and prostituted herself with them, offering up items of wealth God had given her as gifts to false gods in idol worship, Ez. 16:16-19. Even of the young bride's sons and daughters that she bore to her Husband, God did she sacrifice to false gods in idolatrous human sacrifice, forgetting that God had rescued her from destruction and made her into the beloved bride she had become, Ezekiel 16:20-22.
- G. Besides this, God's bride turned herself into a professional prostitute with her treaties with foreign nations, especially trusting in Egypt for protection instead of the Lord, Ezekiel 16:23-26.
- H. God thus diminished his bride Jerusalem's blessings, handing her over to the Philistines who defeated her in the days of Jehoram and Ahaz, and the Philistines were shocked at Israel's departure from her God to worship other gods, what unfaithfulness even the Philistines did not commit, Ezekiel 16:27; *Ibid.*, p. 1256-1257.
- I. Jerusalem then prostituted herself with Assyria and then with Babylonia, trusting in them with foreign protection treaties instead of trusting in the Lord, Ezekiel 16:28-29.
- J. Indeed, Jerusalem became so immoral that she scorned her Husband the Lord to play the harlot in relying on false gods and Gentile nations, and she became twisted in her immorality to do what prostitutes normally did not do -- pay her lovers instead of receiving pay from her lovers, Ezekiel 16:30-34.

Lesson: *The sin of Jerusalem's idolatry in God's eyes was like God as a gracious man who saves a baby girl from certain death and rears her into becoming his beautiful, adorned and pampered bride only to see her turn from Him to practice heinous, twisted forms gross immorality. In other words, idolatry is abominable to God.*

Application: *(1) Since replacing a trust in God with a trust in anything else is as gross immorality by a spouse in God's eyes, may we AVOID all forms of idolatry, recalling our great, lasting need for God for blessing. (2) If we face a trial that exposes our reliance on something other than God, may we immediately repent for His blessing.*