

THE NEGLECT OF MY BRIDE

(SPIRITUAL UNFAITHFULNESS)

Ezekiel 23:1-36

Adeoye, Emmanuel (Evangelist)

Israel and Judah were often the "bridges" over which these nations marched their armies, and it was impossible for the Jews not to take sides. In the days when the nation was united, King David trusted the Lord to help him defend and deliver his people, but King Solomon's policy was to make political treaties to guarantee peace. This is why he married numerous heathen princesses so that their fathers wouldn't attack the Jewish nation.

Samaria had no true faith in the living God, so she looked to the Assyrians to help her. The picture here is that of a prostitute seeking a lover to care for her and the language is quite graphic. Samaria not only welcomed Assyria's soldiers but also Assyria's idols, and the religion of the Northern Kingdom became a strange mixture of Mosaic Law and Assyrian idolatry (***2 Kings 17:6-15***).

So, to punish her, the Lord used the Assyrians her "lovers" to conquer her and put an end to the Northern Kingdom. The ten tribes that comprised the Northern Kingdom were mixed with other conquered nations and the land became part of the Assyrian Empire.

The leaders of Judah knew what had happened to their sister kingdom and why it happened, but they didn't take the lesson to heart. Judah also made alliances with Assyria and "fell in love" with the handsome soldiers in their beautiful uniforms (***Ezek 23:11-13***). Instead of looking to the Lord to protect them, the people of Judah looked to their powerful neighbors for help, but they proved to be broken reeds.

Assyria invaded Judah during the days of King Hezekiah, ravaged the land, and were stopped in their tracks at Jerusalem and slain by God's angel (***Isa. 36-37; 2 Kings 18:1-19:37***). This was God's warning to Hezekiah not to let the people follow the sinful example of Samaria.

The people of Judah sinned even more than Samaria did (***Ezek 23:14-21***).

God's punishment of Samaria and His miraculous deliverance of Judah should have brought the people of Judah to their knees in gratitude and dedication, but it didn't happen that way. Hezekiah began to fraternize with the Babylonians (***Isa 39***), a nation that was growing in power. As they had admired the Assyrian armies (***2 Kings 16:1-9***), so the rulers of Judah began to admire the power of Babylon.

King Jehoiakim asked Babylon to help him break the power of Egypt (***Ezek 23:35-24:7***), and this only made Judah a vassal state of Babylon. The kingdom of Judah became more and more idolatrous as one weak king after another took the throne, some of them for only three months. Judah was actually more corrupt than her sister Samaria! (***23:11***)

The people of Judah will suffer the wrath of God (Ezek 23:22-35). The logic is obvious: if God punished Samaria for her sins, and if Judah sinned worse than Samaria, then Judah must be punished also. In this section of his message, Ezekiel delivered four oracles from the Lord. First, God would bring the Babylonians to punish Judah just as He brought the Assyrians to punish Samaria (***vv. 22-27***).

Ezekiel described in detail the officers in the army and the equipment they would carry. Using the image of punishing a prostitute, he described how the invaders would strip the nation, expose her lewdness, and mutilate her body. It isn't a very beautiful picture.

The two accused sisters have been presented to the court and their crimes have been explained.

All that remains is for the judge to sum up the case and describe the sentence, which Ezekiel does in ***23:36-49***.

Neither Samaria nor Judah has any defense and they can't take their case to a higher court. God's verdict is true and final. Ezekiel includes Samaria in this summation so that Judah can't say that God's judgment of the Northern Kingdom was unjust. All the evidence was presented and there could be but one decision: guilty as charged.

What were their sins? Idolatry, injustice, unbelief (depending on the heathen nations for help), followed by blatant hypocrisy. They worshiped idols and killed innocent people, and then marched piously into the temple to worship Jehovah! They prostituted themselves to heathen nations when, if they had trusted the Lord, He would have taken care of them and delivered them.

In their idolatry, they even sacrificed their own children, sons and daughters who really belonged to God (*"whom they bore to Me"*).

When Judah should have remained a separated people, declaring their faith in Jehovah, their leaders participated.

in an international conference against Babylon and allied themselves with the enemies of the Lord (v. 40; ver, 27).

The prophet described how the Jewish leaders at the meeting behaved like harlots preparing to serve a customer, but he compared the meeting to a drunken brawl, a "carefree crowd" that didn't want to face the fact that Babylon was going to win.

From God's point of view, Judah was nothing but a worn-out adulteress soliciting "lovers," and their sin was something His heart couldn't accept. As Samaria had sinned by patronizing Assyria, so Judah was playing the harlot by seeking the help of pagan nations instead of trusting the Lord.

That being the case. Judah would be treated like an adulteress and even worse. The Law of Moses called for the adulteress to be stoned (Lev 20:10; Deut 20:20), prostitutes to be burned (Gen 38:24; Lev 21:9), and murderers to be put to death, probably by stoning (Ex 21:12-14; Lev 24:17). Judah would be punished for adultery, prostitution, and shedding innocent blood (Ezek 21:4-7). Her sins would find her out.

LESSONS 1

- 1. FIDELITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP IS PARAMOUNT**
- 2. TOTAL TRUST IN THE NEW-FOUND LOVE IS INEVITABLE,**
- 3. IRRESPECTIVE OF THE CONDITION WE FOUND OURSELVES**
- 4. AVOIDANCE OF DOUBT IS SACROSCANT**
- 5. NEGLECT; IS AN ABOMINATION BEFORE THE BRIDEGROOM**
- 6. CONSTANT APPRAISAL OF SELF IN PLEASING THE BRIDEGROOM
REMAIN'S UNQUESTIONABLE**

CONCLUSION

JIM REEVES THROUGH JAMES MOORE ARGUES THAT WE SHOULD NEVER GROW OLD