

Ezekiel 16-17, James 3(New King James Version)

Ezekiel 16

God's Love for Jerusalem

¹ Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: “Your birth and your nativity *are* from the land of Canaan; your father *was* an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ *As for* your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you*; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. ⁵ No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.

⁶ “And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ ⁷ I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. *Your* breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you *were* naked and bare.

⁸ “When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time *was* the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,” says the Lord GOD.

⁹ “Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. ¹⁰ I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹ I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. ¹² And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³ Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate *pastry of* fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. ¹⁴ Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it *was* perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord GOD.

Jerusalem's Harlotry

¹⁵ “But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who *would have* it. ¹⁶ You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be. ¹⁷ You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. ¹⁸ You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. ¹⁹ Also My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey *which* I fed you—you set it before them as sweet incense; and *so* it was,” says the Lord GOD.

²⁰ “Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your *acts* of harlotry a small matter, ²¹ that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire*? ²² And

in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

²³ “Then it was so, after all your wickedness—‘Woe, woe to you!’ says the Lord GOD—²⁴ *that* you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street.²⁵ You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry.²⁶ You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.

²⁷ “Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.²⁸ You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied.²⁹ Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

³⁰ “How degenerate is your heart!” says the Lord GOD, “seeing you do all these *things*, the deeds of a brazen harlot.

Jerusalem’s Adultery

³¹ “You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment.³² *You are* an adulterous wife, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband.³³ Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry.³⁴ You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite.”

Jerusalem’s Lovers Will Abuse Her

³⁵ “Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD!³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them,³⁷ surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, *and* all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.³⁸ And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy.³⁹ I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

⁴⁰ “They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords.⁴¹ They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers.⁴² So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more.⁴³ Because you did not remember the

days of your youth, but agitated Me^[a] with all these *things*, surely I will also recompense your deeds on *your own head*,” says the Lord GOD. “And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

More Wicked than Samaria and Sodom

⁴⁴ “Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use *this* proverb against you: ‘Like mother, like daughter!’ ⁴⁵ You *are* your mother’s daughter, loathing husband and children; and you *are* the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother *was* a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

⁴⁶ “Your elder sister *is* Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, *is* Sodom and her daughters. ⁴⁷ You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as *if that were* too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

⁴⁸ “*As I live*,” says the Lord GOD, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw *fit*.^[b]

⁵¹ “Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. ⁵² You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

⁵³ “When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then *I will also bring back* the captives of your captivity among them, ⁵⁴ that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them. ⁵⁵ When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state. ⁵⁶ For your sister Sodom was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride, ⁵⁷ before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria^[c] and all *those* around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere. ⁵⁸ You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations,” says the LORD. ⁵⁹ For thus says the Lord GOD: “I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

An Everlasting Covenant

⁶⁰ “Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. ⁶¹ Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. ⁶² And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, ⁶³ that you may remember and be ashamed, and

never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,” says the Lord GOD.”

Ezekiel 17

The Eagles and the Vine

¹ And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD:

“A great eagle with large wings and long pinions,
Full of feathers of various colors,
Came to Lebanon
And took from the cedar the highest branch.

⁴ He cropped off its topmost young twig
And carried it to a land of trade;
He set it in a city of merchants.

⁵ Then he took some of the seed of the land
And planted it in a fertile field;
He placed *it* by abundant waters
And set it like a willow tree.

⁶ And it grew and became a spreading vine of low stature;
Its branches turned toward him,
But its roots were under it.
So it became a vine,
Brought forth branches,
And put forth shoots.

⁷ “But there was another^[d] great eagle with large wings and many feathers;
And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him,
And stretched its branches toward him,
From the garden terrace where it had been planted,
That he might water it.

⁸ It was planted in good soil by many waters,
To bring forth branches, bear fruit,
And become a majestic vine.”

⁹ “Say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD:

“Will it thrive?
Will he not pull up its roots,
Cut off its fruit,
And leave it to wither?
All of its spring leaves will wither,
And no great power or many people
Will be needed to pluck it up by its roots.

¹⁰ Behold, *it is* planted,

Will it thrive?
Will it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it?
It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew.”””

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹² “Say now to the rebellious house: ‘Do you not know what these *things mean*?’ Tell *them*, ‘Indeed the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon. ¹³ And he took the king’s offspring, made a covenant with him, and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, ¹⁴ that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping his covenant it might stand. ¹⁵ But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such *things* escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?’

¹⁶ ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘surely in the place *where* the king *dwells* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke—with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. ¹⁷ Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons. ¹⁸ Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these *things*, he shall not escape.’”

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “As I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. ²⁰ I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. ²¹ All his fugitives^[e] with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken.”

Israel Exalted at Last

²² Thus says the Lord GOD: “I will take also *one* of the highest branches of the high cedar and set *it* out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* on a high and prominent mountain. ²³ On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. ²⁴ And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*.”

James 3

The Untamable Tongue

¹ My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. ³ Indeed,^[a] we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. ⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large

and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.
⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. ^[b]

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.