

Message #26**Ezekiel 23:1-49**

Four years ago in Connecticut, a 71-year-old woman was arrested in a Police Sting and charged with Prostitution. That is right, a 71-year-old woman charged with prostitution. Now you don't expect to read about something like that.

Well I guarantee you when you come to this chapter in Ezekiel, you don't expect to read something like this. This is a chapter about two old sisters who loved being prostitutes since the time they were young girls.

This chapter is an in your face, explicit chapter in the Bible that is designed to shock and warn God's people. It is a graphic picture of sexual perversion, aimed straight at Israel and Judah and us. There is no other chapter quite like it.

GOD USES TWO SISTERS TO ILLUSTRATE ISRAEL AND JUDAH'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD AND HER ADULTEROUS HARLOTRY AND PROSTITUTION THAT WOULD BRING HER TO HORRIBLE JUDGMENT.

Now we observe from **verse 1** that the details of all of this that is given to Ezekiel comes from "the word of the LORD." Ezekiel is not the one coming up with this chapter, God is. Ezekiel is getting direct revelatory information from God. There are eight specific details to this story:

DETAIL #1 – There were two daughters born to one mother. **23:2**

There was a "common heredity" between these two daughters. They both had the same mother. We don't know if they had the same father, but we do know they had the same mother.

DETAIL #2 – The two daughters became prostitutes. **23:3**

They got involved in false religion that led them into a life of prostitution. One former prostitute who was interviewed said the life of a prostitute is hell. You always feel like a loser and you always feel embarrassed and ashamed. Not these girls. These girls lived parallel lives and they loved their prostitution work.

Fact #1 - They were prostitutes in Egypt. **23:3a**

This is important to see because they became infatuated with immoral things by being lured by a godless culture. They fell for the world's lures and lusts. They did not become prostitutes by being dedicated to God.

Fact #2 - They were prostitutes from their youth. **23:3b**

These two pursued their immoral behavior at a very young age. Now one would naturally think that they would at some point get sick of this lifestyle, but not these two. They started at a young age and loved being a prostitute to old age.

Fact #3 - They permitted their breasts to be fondled and their virgin bosom caressed. **23:3c**

They were sexually promiscuous at a young age. They were willing participants in this action.

DETAIL #3 – The older sister was named Oholah and the younger was named Oholibah. **24:4a**

Both names are derived from a word meaning “tent.” Oholah means “her tent”—she put her own worship tent in Samaria. Oholibah means “my tent in her”—God put His worship tent in Jerusalem. These were two sisters who had real names.

DETAIL #4 – The two sisters became the object of the grace of God. **24:4b**

The LORD married Himself to these two immoral sisters—Israel; Judah. This is amazing. God made both of these women His property and He caused both sisters to have children and He blessed them.

Now God is using these two women as examples of His people. **Oholah represents Samaria in the north, the capital city of Israel. Oholibah represents Jerusalem in the south, the capital of Judah.**

DETAIL #5 – Oholah went back to being a prostitute. **23:5-10**

The first sister (Samaria) is described first. She was God’s property and she lusted after all kinds of lovers. She was not content with her relationship with God. She lusted after the Assyrians, her neighbors (**v. 5**). According to **verse 6** she went after successful leaders like governors and officials. She loved the young men who rode horses. She gave herself to the Assyrians in every immoral way and she even lusted after their idols (**v. 7**). **Verse 8** says she never repented. She never forsook her prostitution. She never got sick of her sin and turned from it. So God let the Assyrians pour out their lustful desires on her. He sovereignly let her plunge into her sin (**v. 9**).

The end result is they uncovered her nakedness; they took her sons and daughters and they killed her with a sword. She became a byword among women because God had so severely judged her (**v. 10**). **The objects of her affections became the agents of her judgment.** The name “Oholah” became a byword for women who talked about her behavior and judgments.

Now during the days of Ezekiel, Samaria had already become a byword among women. About 150 years before Ezekiel, Samaria had come to an end in 722 B.C..

There will be many who one day will get before God and learn that the object of their affections become the agents of their judgment. Some will have devoted themselves to things that were not right or godly and those very things will be the basis for their judgment. Some will lose rewards because they lived their entire lives focused on that which was evil. Some will lose heaven for the same reason.

DETAIL #6 – Oholibah went back to being a worse prostitute than Oholah. **23:11-21**

Now Oholibah (Jerusalem) was the youngest sister and she saw everything her older sister did, including what happened to her (**23:11**), but that did not stop her. She was more depraved than her sister and she was involved in more immorality than her sister was.

According to **verse 12**, she, too, lusted after the Assyrians. She went after the rich politicians and the young good-looking men who rode those horses. She defiled herself the same way her sister did (**v. 13**).

But she did not stop with the Assyrians. She saw drawings of the Chaldean men (Babylonians) on the wall with all their “vermillion” (painted with red color) and they had belts on their loins and turbans on their heads. They all looked like officers, like the Babylonians (**v. 13-15**).

When Oholibah saw these drawings she lusted after the Babylonians and she sent messengers to them to come to fulfill her immoral desires (**v. 16**).

According to **verse 17**, the Babylonians came to her and they went to bed with her and they fulfilled their immoral desires. Jerusalem became intoxicated with the Babylonians. But after Oholibah had indulged herself, she became disgusted with the Babylonians.

What she did not realize is that God was disgusted with her (**v. 18**). God was disgusted with her just like He had been with her sister. She did not repent.

In fact, she multiplied her harlotries (**v. 19**) just like when she was young. **Verse 20** is very graphic and vulgar, but it was the truth. She went after men whose genitals were the size of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses.

This is language that is designed to show how disgusting and lust-crazed she was. She was not sorry for her sin; she pursued it all the more.

Verse 21 says she had regressed backwards, longing for the immoral pleasure of her youth.

DETAIL #7 – Oholibah will be the recipient of the ferocious judgment of God. **23:22-35**

God says just as I used your sister’s lovers to punish her (**v. 31-32**), I will use your lovers to punish you. You would have thought that when one sister saw the other destroyed, she would have taken the hint that I need to turn from my wicked ways. But she didn’t learn.

God says in **verse 23** that He would bring the Babylonians and the Assyrians against Oholibah, which is Jerusalem. They would come with weapons to attack her in a judgment specifically authorized by God. He would let them use their own military customs to destroy His people (**v. 24**).

Verse 25 says because of God's jealousy and wrath, He would permit them to cut off their noses and ears and He would permit them to be destroyed by the sword. Sons and daughters would be taken and many would be burned by fire.

According to **verse 26**, they would be stripped bare of clothes and jewels. God would see to it that her infidelity that started in Egypt would come to an end (**v. 27**). They would be so judged by God that they would not even remember anything about Egypt, including her deliverance (**v. 27**). God would put an end to her sin because she refused to judge herself and put an end to it.

God says I will give you to the hand of the one you hate and sent away, the Babylonians (**v. 28**). God would let the Babylonians deal with them in ways that were hateful. They would take their property, they would leave them naked and bare and the lewdness and harlotries would be completely uncovered (**v. 29**).

God says in **verse 30** He would do these things because she had played the harlot with the nations and defiled herself with their idols.

God says in **verse 31** that you walked in the ways of your sister and God would give her the same drink and judgment. That judgment would be deep and wide. Israel would be held in contempt and derision for a long time (**v. 32**).

According to **verse 33**, they would be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, horror and desolation. She would drink the same up as Samaria. She will drink it to the full (**v. 34**). Every bit of it and every fragment of it.

God says because you have forgotten Me, I will pour out My judgment on you for your lewdness and harlotries (**verse 35**).

DETAIL #8 – Oholah and Oholibah will be the recipient of the judgment of God. **23:36-49**

Now we would naturally think that after having just come through specific judgments that are ferocious judgments of God that are aimed at both Samaria (Oholah) and Jerusalem (Oholibah), that would be it. But God was not finished. Now He once again wants to address both sisters.

Fact #1 - God wanted Ezekiel to declare to them their abominations. **23:36-37**

Those sisters had committed adultery with idols and even burned their sons that were dedicated to God. They sacrificed their own children to idols.

Fact #2 - God wanted Ezekiel to declare how they defiled His sanctuary. **23:38-39**

These people would sacrifice and slaughter their own children to some idol and then go into God's sanctuary on the same day. They had just killed their children and they are in the Temple, supposedly worshipping God.

Fact #3 - God wanted Ezekiel to declare how they used His sacred things to promote their evil behavior. **23:40-41**

They invited people from afar to come and they bathed and painted their eyes and they decorated themselves with ornaments and then they sat down with them and used God's incense and His oil for their own purposes.

Fact #4 - God wanted Ezekiel to declare how these two were immoral with common men. **23:42-44**

The two sisters got involved with anyone, including men from the wilderness. The word used for these drunkard common men is Sabean. These men came bearing gifts and bracelets and crowns and these foreigners came and indulged in the prostitution.

Now the harlotry also included adultery in **verse 43**. What this means is that these relationships were now taking a new turn in that the sisters were actually leaving God and getting involved in pursuing these other nations.

Fact #5 - God wanted Ezekiel to declare that righteous men will judge them. **23:45-49**

God would send His righteous men to punish them and pronounce judgments. Who were these men? That is a debated issue. It is possible that it refers to nations God would bring to judge His people, but they were not righteous. It is also possible that it refers to righteous men who know the Word of God who will carry out the judgment of God.

I tend to lean toward the first view because of the conjunction "for" that begins **verse 46**.

In **verse 46**, God says bring the company against them and give them over to terror and plunder. This company would stone them with stones, slay them with swords and burn their houses down with fire (**v. 47**). This company would be those foreign nations that God would bring against them.

According to **verse 48**, God would make all immoral behavior cease from the land so that all women would learn a lesson. The lesson is do not pursue immoral behavior and do not pursue false idols. If one does, God will judge them.

In the end all will know that God is the Lord God. There is a judgment coming that has not yet occurred that will leave the entire world knowing that God is the Lord God.

Now along the way these girls could have turned to God and repented of their evil. But they did not do that.

There is nothing that will bring the judgment of God faster than immorality. God gives His people time to get away from immoral things, but if they refuse, He will judge. That is clearly the lesson of Ezekiel 23.

These two represent God's people who love their sin their entire lives and never turn from it.
The end will be judgment.