

# EZEKIEL

## Hard to Heart

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*“Divine Secrets of the Oho Sisterhood”*

23:1-49

### **These are the kind of girls your mother warned you about!**

We’re going to meet two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah. They are not real women, but rather characters in a rather graphic parable. They represent two cities which were the two capitals of the divided kingdom of Israel, Samaria in the northern kingdom of Israel and Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Oholah means *her tent*. Oholibah means *My tent is in her*. The “tent” is a reference to the Tabernacle, where God’s presence dwelt and where He was to be sought and worshipped.

- Oholah is Samaria where the Israelites set-up their own ‘tent,’ their own place of worship, that God had not ordained.
- Oholibah is Jerusalem where God had set-up His tent, the Tabernacle.

I’m warning you that the language gets graphic. It’s probably ‘R’ rated. If this chapter were being reviewed on ScreenIt.com, it would receive a strong warning to parents.

Sometimes people try to justify crass, graphic, even pornographic things by saying that the Bible contains them. Well, the Bible does contain some very graphic language. But its content has definite intent. God has deemed it necessary to get His point across. The Holy Spirit is a superb

inspirer of the writers and He had them write only those things that were needful.

OK. You've been warned.

Ezekiel 23:1 The word of the Lord came again to me, saying:

Ezekiel 23:2 "Son of man, there were two women, The daughters of one mother.

Ezekiel 23:3 They committed harlotry in Egypt, They committed harlotry in their youth; Their breasts were there embraced, Their virgin bosom was there pressed.

Ezekiel 23:4 Their names: Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister; They were Mine, And they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah.

The "one mother" is simply a literary device within the parable. It means Israel was once a united nation under God.

Even then, in Egypt, they were idolaters. We saw earlier in Ezekiel that their worship of the Golden Calf after God led them out of Egypt wasn't anything new. They had been worshipping idols already.

Ezekiel 23:5 "Oholah played the harlot even though she was Mine; And she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring Assyrians,

Ezekiel 23:6 Who were clothed in purple, Captains and rulers, All of them desirable young men, Horsemen riding on horses.

Ezekiel 23:7 Thus she committed her harlotry with them, All of them choice men of Assyria; And with all for whom she lusted, With all their idols, she defiled herself.

Ezekiel 23:8 She has never given up her harlotry brought from Egypt, For in her youth they had lain with her, Pressed her virgin bosom, And poured out their immorality upon her.

Ezekiel 23:9 "Therefore I have delivered her Into the hand of her lovers, Into the hand of the Assyrians, For whom she lusted.

Ezekiel 23:10 They uncovered her nakedness, Took away her sons and daughters, And slew her with the sword; She became a byword among women, For they had executed judgment on her.

We're not talking about Jewish gals lusting after hot Assyrian soldiers. No, this is a national problem, a political lust. Israel wanted to be allied with the Assyrian Empire.

God gave them over to their desires and allowed the Assyrians to conquer the northern kingdom.

Ezekiel 23:11 "Now although her sister Oholibah saw this, she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister's harlotry.

Ezekiel 23:12 "She lusted for the neighboring Assyrians, Captains and rulers, Clothed most gorgeously, Horsemen riding on horses, All of them desirable young men.

Ezekiel 23:13 Then I saw that she was defiled; Both took the same way.

Ezekiel 23:14 But she increased her harlotry; She looked at men portrayed on the wall, Images of Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion,

Ezekiel 23:15 Girded with belts around their waists, Flowing turbans on their heads, All of them looking like captains, In the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, The land of their nativity.

Ezekiel 23:16 As soon as her eyes saw them, She lusted for them And sent messengers to them in Chaldea.

Ezekiel 23:17 "Then the Babylonians came to her, into the bed of love, And they defiled her with their immorality; So she was defiled by them, and alienated herself from them.

Ezekiel 23:18 She revealed her harlotry and uncovered her nakedness. Then I alienated Myself from her, As I had alienated Myself from her sister.

Ezekiel 23:19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry In calling to remembrance the days of her youth, When she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 23:20 For she lusted for her paramours, Whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys, And whose issue is like the issue of horses.

Ezekiel 23:21 Thus you called to remembrance the lewdness of your youth, When the Egyptians pressed your bosom Because of your youthful breasts.

To the south, you'd think that the kingdom of Judah would learn from Israel the dangers of political lusting after Assyria and then Babylon. They didn't.

God keeps mentioning Egypt. Idolatry was ingrained in them in Egypt. It doesn't mean they could not turn to God from idols. It doesn't mean that they had a habitual addiction that could not be broken.

It just goes to show that some habits, some patterns, can linger and cause spiritual defection.

There's a passage in James I use a lot in this context.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

The words, “his own desires,” seems to indicate more than just the fact we all are sinners. It seems to be saying that each of us has particular “desires” that are more potent threats than they might be to someone else. We ought therefore to be extra careful in those areas.

Ezekiel 23:22 "Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I will stir up your lovers against you, From whom you have alienated yourself, And I will bring them against you from every side:

Ezekiel 23:23 The Babylonians, All the Chaldeans, Pekod, Shoa, Koa, All the Assyrians with them, All of them desirable young men, Governors and rulers, Captains and men of renown, All of them riding on horses.

Ezekiel 23:24 And they shall come against you With chariots, wagons, and war-horses, With a horde of people. They shall array against you Buckler, shield, and helmet all around. 'I will delegate judgment to them, And they shall judge you according to their judgments.

Keeping with our thoughts about sin and our desires, it can seem as though indulging them just a little is not all that harmful. We can even convince ourselves it is helpful, keeping us from doing things that are full-blown. Sooner or later, though, sin just breaks forth upon us, destroying us, ruining our lives and often the lives of many others whom we love.

Don't indulge your flesh, not for a moment, and certainly not in areas you are the most tempted.

Ezekiel 23:25 I will set My jealousy against you, And they shall deal furiously with you; They shall remove your nose and your ears, And your remnant shall fall by the sword; They shall take your sons and your daughters, And your remnant shall be devoured by fire.

Ezekiel 23:26 They shall also strip you of your clothes And take away your beautiful jewelry.

Ezekiel 23:27 'Thus I will make you cease your lewdness and your harlotry Brought from the land of Egypt, So that you will not lift your eyes to them, Nor remember Egypt anymore.'

Ezekiel 23:28 "For thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will deliver you into the hand of those you hate, into the hand of those from whom you alienated yourself.

Ezekiel 23:29 They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, and leave you naked and bare. The nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotry.

Ezekiel 23:30 I will do these things to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols.

Ezekiel 23:31 You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will put her cup in your hand.'

Interesting that God said that the Babylonians were “those you hate.” I thought they loved them, that they went after them?

A child of God can only have a love-hate relationship with sin. Here is what I mean. You go after sin, you indulge in it, but if you are born-again, all the while it is making you miserable. You hate yourself even while you're doing it. It's called conviction.

Ezekiel 23:32 "Thus says the Lord God: 'You shall drink of your sister's cup, The deep and wide one; You shall be laughed to scorn And held in derision; It contains much.

Ezekiel 23:33 You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, The cup of horror and desolation, The cup of your sister Samaria.

Ezekiel 23:34 You shall drink and drain it, You shall break its shards, And tear at your own breasts; For I have spoken,' Says the Lord God.

This is just a parable, just a figure. But I wonder sometimes if, in Heaven, the angels and the great cloud of witnesses doesn't see things the same way God sees them. Instead of 3-D glasses, maybe there is some kind of Trinity-Vision so we look the way we really are.

For example: There is a passage in Zechariah that describes the high priest. On the earth he was dressed in magnificent garments. But here is how he looked in Trinity-Vision.

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Zechariah 3:2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Zechariah 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments...

God goes on to give Joshua a change of heavenly clothing.

All this to say, What do I really look like in Heaven, right now, based on my real heart-life?

Ezekiel 23:35 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, Therefore you shall bear the penalty Of your lewdness and your harlotry.' "

Ezekiel 23:36 The Lord also said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominations.

Ezekiel 23:37 For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols, and even sacrificed their sons whom they bore to Me, passing them through the fire, to devour them.

Ezekiel 23:38 Moreover they have done this to Me: They have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and profaned My Sabbaths.

Ezekiel 23:39 For after they had slain their children for their idols, on the same day they came into My sanctuary to profane it; and indeed thus they have done in the midst of My house.

Wow. They were completely involved in pagan worship, to the point of sacrificing their children. Yet, at the same time, even on the same day, they came to worship God in the Tabernacle.

You can't serve two masters. By default, if you are not serving God, you **are** serving the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Without drawing a direct connection to Molech and literal child sacrifice, I do want to say that it's possible to sacrifice your kids spirituality by getting too involved with the things of the world. It's your call, if you are the parent. Be careful. I've seen too many families over the years quit going to church because of activities. They don't all backslide; they don't all come to ruin. But neither are they serving the Lord and, one day when they are face-to-face, they will see the vanity of their activities.

The chapter ends talking about both 'sisters' in a summary.

Ezekiel 23:40 "Furthermore you sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and there they came. And you washed yourself for them, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments.

Ezekiel 23:41 You sat on a stately couch, with a table prepared before it, on which you had set My incense and My oil.

Ezekiel 23:42 The sound of a carefree multitude was with her, and Sabeans were brought from the wilderness with men of the common sort, who put bracelets on their wrists and beautiful crowns on their heads.

Ezekiel 23:43 Then I said concerning her who had grown old in adulteries, 'Will they commit harlotry with her now, and she with them?'

Ezekiel 23:44 Yet they went in to her, as men go in to a woman who plays the harlot; thus they went in to Oholah and Oholibah, the lewd women.

Ezekiel 23:45 But righteous men will judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women who shed blood, because they are adulteresses, and blood is on their hands.

Ezekiel 23:46 "For thus says the Lord God: 'Bring up an assembly against them, give them up to trouble and plunder.

Ezekiel 23:47 The assembly shall stone them with stones and execute them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn their houses with fire.

Ezekiel 23:48 Thus I will cause lewdness to cease from the land, that all women may be taught not to practice your lewdness.

Ezekiel 23:49 They shall repay you for your lewdness, and you shall pay for your idolatrous sins. Then you shall know that I am the Lord God.' "

Key in on the last phrase of verse forty-nine. "Then you shall know that I am the Lord God."

What God did to His people was severe. But it was necessary so they would return to the understanding of the privileges and joy of their special relationship with Him.

His discipline was for their good. Indeed, as we follow Israel through history, through her dispersion, though it is severe, it was for their good. Now back in their land, God is orchestrating the End Times events prophesied in the Bible that will eventuate in the Jewish remnant being saved through the Great Tribulation and seeing their Messiah in His Second Coming to earth.

Do I "know that [Jesus] is the Lord God?" Yeah, I do, but I need to live like I do. In submission, with my knee bowed to His will and not my own.