

Ezekiel 16:1–63 – Loved, Adorned, Unfaithful... and Still Pursued by Grace

1. Exposed: Jerusalem’s Spiritual History (Ezekiel 16:1-7)

“Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.’” (Ezekiel 16:1-2, NKJV)

God tells Ezekiel to confront Jerusalem with her sins. The city itself is just stone and soil; what God is really addressing is the people who live there and the spiritual story that shaped them.

“Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.” (Ezekiel 16:3, NKJV)

God reminds them that they came from a land steeped in idolatry and pagan practices. Their roots were not noble; they were not spiritually impressive or naturally “special.”

“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. No eye pitied you... you were thrown out into the open field... when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’” (Ezekiel 16:4-6, NKJV)

The picture is stark:

- Unwanted
- Unwashed
- Uncared for
- Left to die

God is saying, “You had nothing. No one wanted you. No one helped you. But I came by, saw you in your helpless condition, and I spoke life over you.”

This is every person’s spiritual condition apart from God—unclean, helpless, spiritually abandoned, and unable to save themselves.

2. Loved, Lifted, and Lavishly Adorned (Ezekiel 16:7-14)

“I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful... 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. (Ezekiel 16:7-8, NKJV)

God did not just keep Jerusalem alive—He caused her to flourish. When she reached maturity, God entered into covenant with her. This is wedding language: “You became Mine.”

“Then I washed you in water... I anointed you with oil. I clothed you in embroidered cloth... I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck... You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 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. (Ezekiel 16:9-14, NKJV)

Notice the “I” statements:

- “I washed you.”
- “I anointed you.”
- “I clothed you.”
- “I adorned you.”
- “I fed you.”
- “I made you beautiful.”
- “I made you renowned.”

Their beauty was not self-made. God says their beauty was “perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you.”

This foreshadows what Jesus does for His people:

- We were spiritually filthy; He washes us.
- We were empty; He anoints us with the Holy Spirit.
- We were guilty; He clothes us in His righteousness.
- We were starving; He feeds us with what is truly good.

And at the center of it all stands the cross:

Jesus saved us when He shed His blood for us, bearing our sins.

The resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

3. From Bride to Betrayer (Ezekiel 16:15-34)

“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.” (Ezekiel 16:15, NKJV)

Here is the turning point:

They stopped trusting the God who made them beautiful and started trusting in the beauty itself.

Instead of using God’s gifts to honor Him, they used His blessings as tools of spiritual adultery.

- They took the garments He gave them and used them in pagan worship.
- They melted His gold and silver into idols.
- They offered His food before false gods.
- Worst of all, they offered their own children as sacrifices to idols.

“Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured... You have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire.” (Ezekiel 16:20-21, NKJV)

God calls them “My children.” The horror is not just what they did; it is who they did it to.

In their idol worship, they offered their own children as human sacrifices, burning them alive to try to please a god that did not even exist. We may never lay our children on a literal altar, but if we refuse to give our lives to Jesus and live for Him, we are setting an example that, if they follow it, will lead

them toward eternal fire and absolute separation from God and all His goodness—even though Jesus shed His blood on the cross and rose again so they could be saved.

He describes them as worse than a prostitute:

- A prostitute receives payment.
- Jerusalem paid her “lovers” to come sin with her.

This is how God sees idolatry and spiritual compromise in His people: not as a minor slip, but as marital betrayal—breaking covenant with the One who rescued, loved, and adorned them.

4. More Corrupt Than Samaria and Sodom (Ezekiel 16:35-52)

God announces judgment:

He will gather the very nations they chased after and use them as instruments of discipline. Their sin will be publicly exposed.

Then God compares Jerusalem to her “sisters”:

- Samaria (capital of the northern kingdom)
- Sodom (symbol of extreme wickedness)

Shockingly, God says Jerusalem has become more corrupt than both.

“As I live,” says the Lord God, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done.” (Ezekiel 16:48, NKJV)

Then God reveals the deeper sin behind Sodom:

“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. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.” (Ezekiel 16:49-50, NKJV)

Before the outward abominations came:

- Pride
- Prosperity without gratitude
- Leisure without purpose
- Indifference to the poor and needy

Jerusalem saw all this, judged Sodom and Samaria in her pride, and then went even further into sin. God tells her: *“They are more righteous than you.”* Not because they were righteous, but because Jerusalem had greater light and greater privilege and still went further into rebellion.

5. A Surprising Promise of Restoration (Ezekiel 16:53-63)

After a long section of indictment and judgment, the tone shifts.

“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.” (Ezekiel 16:60, NKJV)

They broke the covenant. They despised His love. They misused His gifts. Yet God says, “I will remember My covenant... I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.”

This points ultimately to the new covenant established through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

- A covenant not based on human performance, but on God’s mercy.
- A covenant sealed with the blood of God’s own Son.

“That you may remember and be ashamed... when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,” says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 16:63, NKJV)

God will deal with their sin in such a way that they will be forgiven, humbled, and silenced before Him—not out of fear, but out of overwhelming awareness of His mercy.

Practical Application

1. Remember Where God Found You

God reminds Jerusalem of her beginnings: abandoned, helpless, polluted. Believers today need the same reminder. We did not save ourselves. We were not “almost there” and just needed a small boost. We were spiritually dead and helpless until Jesus saved us.

2. Recognize That Every Good Thing You Have Is a Gift

Beauty, opportunities, resources, abilities, the breath we draw, and even our next heartbeat—all are gifts from God. But when we begin to trust in the gifts instead of the Giver, we step onto dangerous ground. Pride can take what God intended as blessings and turn them into platforms for sin.

3. Guard Your Heart Against Spiritual Adultery

Idolatry today may not involve carved statues, but the principle is the same:

- Anything you love more than God
- Anything you trust more than God
- Anything you obey instead of God

These things become idols and rivals to His place in your life.

4. God’s Discipline Is Severe, But His Mercy Is Real

Ezekiel 16 does not soften the seriousness of sin. Yet it also does not close the door on grace. God is just in His judgments and amazing in His mercy.

A Challenge for Believers

- Have you forgotten what God saved you from?
- Have you taken His gifts—time, money, influence, talents—and used them in ways that ignore or dishonor Him?
- Has your heart drifted from your first love, the One who washed you, clothed you, and called you His own?

Ezekiel 16 invites believers to deep repentance—not just for obvious outward sins, but for inward drift, pride, and spiritual unfaithfulness.

You might need to pray something like:

“Lord, I remember how lost I was when You saved me. Forgive me for trusting in Your gifts more than in You. Forgive me for areas where I have been unfaithful in heart or action. I turn back to You. Restore in me a wholehearted love for You. Thank You that Your mercy is greater than my failure.”

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (1 John 1:5-10)

An Invitation to Those Who Have Not Yet Given Their Life to Jesus

Ezekiel 16 is not just Israel’s story. It is the human story.

- Spiritually abandoned.
- Helpless and unclean.
- Chasing idols that cannot save.
- Wounded by our own choices.

Yet God still comes near. In Jesus Christ, God saw us “in our blood” and said, “Live.”

Jesus shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins—every act of rebellion, every idol of the heart, every secret shame. He rose again from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord. His cross is where justice and mercy meet. His resurrection is God’s public declaration that His sacrifice was enough.

You do not have to clean yourself up first. You come as you are, and He does the cleansing, the washing, the clothing, the transforming.

If you sense Him drawing you, you can respond to Him now. There is no magical formula, but a sincere prayer could be something like this:

“Lord Jesus, I see that I am like that abandoned child—you found me in my sin and I cannot save myself. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and that You rose again. I confess that You are God, my Savior, and my Lord. I turn from my sin and my idols and turn to You. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and make me Yours. Establish Your new covenant in my heart. Teach me to follow You for the rest of my life.”

“For ‘WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.’” (Romans 10:13)

If you truly call on Him, He will receive you.

If you trust Him, He will save you.

And He will begin the work of restoring what sin has broken, filling your life with His beauty, not your own.