



## Ezekiel 15-16

**Tape #7320**  
**Ezekiel 15-16**  
**By Chuck Smith**

The nation of Israel had been likened in parable, to God's vineyard, God's vine. Isaiah chapter six speaks about the vineyard of the Lord, how He took, and planted this vineyard, and put in it the finest vines and so forth. But how that the vineyard never brought forth anything but wild grapes. It was a disappointment in the fruit that came from it. It's in chapter five I believe of, of Isaiah.

Then in Psalm eighty, it was a psalm of Asaph, the chief musician under David, beginning with verse eight, he said, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt", that of course is the nation of Israel, "and you have cast out the heathen, and planted it", there in the land of Israel. "You prepared room before it, and you did cause it to take deep root and you filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent forth her boughs into the sea, her branches into the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges? So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth wasteth, the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, the branch that you made strong for thyself. It's burned with fire, it is cut down. They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance."

So this branch he speaks of as being burned with fire, that's sort of the lead-in to Ezekiel fifteen as he talks about the branch of the vine having really only one purpose, and one value, and that's to bear fruit. It's really not fit for anything else. Jesus said, "I am the true Vine, my Father is the Husbandman, and every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, He takes away." If the branch isn't bearing fruit, it's of no value. But here he speaks of how that...

*The word of the Lord came to him, saying, Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Would you take the wood from it to do any work? will man take a pin of it to hang a vessel thereon (15:1-3)?*

Now they used to hang their pots and pans in the kitchen, and they would have these wooden pegs that were driven into, sort of the dowel pegs, and they'd hang their pans and all. But you wouldn't use a, a branch of a grapevine for that. It's just too flexible, it's not strong enough. It's a very pithy kind of wood, and thus it really has no value in, in building at all. You wouldn't even make a pin out of it. It would, it just is too weak. It doesn't stand up. So...

*Behold, [He said] it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both of the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. It is then fit for any work? Behold, when it was whole it wasn't fit for work, how much less shall it be fit for any work when the fire has devoured it, and then it is burned (15:4-5)?*

As the branch burns it turns into a white ash, that crumbles when you touch it. So it is God speaking of the nation of Israel. The purpose of God for Israel is that they bring forth fruit. That the nation be a demonstration of the world of the blessings of the people, who will make God their King, who will serve the Lord. God wanted to demonstrated to the world, the blessings of acknowledging Him as God. The fruit was to demonstrate to the world how important it is to serve the Lord and have God as your King. Israel failed in that purpose. They did not bring forth the fruit that God was desiring.

Jesus, again in the analogy in John fifteen, said that, "When a branch doesn't bear fruit, when it's cut off from the vine, it doesn't bear fruit, men gather them together, and throw them in the fire and they are burned." So with Israel. It's failure to fulfill its purpose of bearing fruit, was to be burned. The city of Jerusalem of course was burned by the Babylonians. It became totally worthless. The only value is to bear fruit, outside of that, there is none.

*So thus saith the Lord God; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [He now interprets this parable.] And I will set my face*

*against them; and they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord God (15:6-8).*

So God is announcing the judgment that's to come upon the Jerusalem. Now this is in the face of the false prophets who were predicting Jerusalem's victory over the Babylonians, and encouraging the people in their rebellion against Babylon. The false prophets were going around saying that, not a stone would be cast into the city, no javelin, or spear! That God was gonna deliver the Babylonians, that they were to stand up and resist!

But as we have just gone through Jeremiah, you remember that he was getting into all kinds of trouble! In fact, accused of treason because he was saying, "You should obey God and realize that God is judging you, and surrender to the Babylonians for your own good! For if you surrender, you can spare the city. But if you resist, they will destroy the city, and it will be burned."

Now God here is predicting in Babylon the same thing, through Ezekiel. He's warning that the city is to be burned, it's to be destroyed, because they have failed to bring forth that fruit that God was looking for in their lives.

Oh how important it is, and of course, put this together with John fifteen, and we realize how important it is that we fulfill the purpose that God has designed for our lives, that we bring forth fruit, more fruit, and much fruit! Because Jesus follows the progression, "I am the true Vine, my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away. Every branch in me that bears fruit, He cleanses it that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and let my word abide in you, that ye may bring forth much fruit, and herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit." God wants your life to be fruitful. I'll tell you something, outside of that, there really isn't any purpose for your existence. Life is very meaningless and empty when you just live for yourself, or live for your flesh. The only real purpose and meaning in life will be discovered when you are bringing forth fruit for the glory of God. "The vine", He said, "isn't fit for building, it isn't fit for anything else when it's whole, much less when it's burned." Thus, your life is fit for one thing, and that's to bring forth fruit, that the Father might be glorified.

## Chapter 16

Now as we go into chapter sixteen it sounds like something from Dante's inferno. Or, some of the other works of Dante that are very graphic. The work on Florence, and the evils of Florence. Another parable of sorts, as God speaks of the birth of the nation of Israel, and of Jerusalem, and how that, well let's just read it! We'll, we'll just go into it and, and follow this parable.

*Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, ["Speak out against these abominations!"], which is always scripturally idolatry, the worship of idols, the establishing of some idol in your heart that is over, and against God.] Say, Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; for thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother was a Hittite (16:1-3).*

Before Abraham ever came to the land of Canaan, it was possessed by the Amorites, and the Hittites. Now these were once great nations. The Hittites, according to discoveries in archeology, were once a very great and powerful people, because of their wicked and vile practices. Especially their, their worship, which was involved with all types of sensual, lascivious kind of activities. The Hittites were ultimately just, uh disappeared from history. Though once one of the great ancient nations. They were sort of lost from history, until recent years when the Archeologists began to uncover some of the cities of the Hittites and found some of the records, and realized that they were once a very powerful, and well educated people.

But they occupied the land of Canaan before Israel. Thus, Jerusalem was first of all a city of the Amorites, "and the mother was a Hittite, your father, an Amorite". So the nations that preceded the coming of Israel into the land.

*And as for your nativity, in the day that thou wast born your navel was not cut, neither were you washed in water to supple thee; you were not salted at all, nor swaddled at all (16:4).*

Now when a child is born, of course the first thing is the cutting of the cord, and then, in those days, they would salt the child. The purpose of that was of course to kill the germs, the bacteria. It was used as an antiseptic. Then once the child was salted and washed, it was then wrapped in swaddling clothes. But the Lord said when He first discovered the child, it was actually just born and abandoned, it would surely die! The cord had not even been cut from the placenta! The, there had not been anything done, it was just left to die.

*And no one [He said] pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion upon you; but you were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that you were born. [So rather an inglorious kind of a birth, no one really cared.] And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in your own blood, I said unto thee when you were in thy blood, Live; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live (16:5-6).*

So God gave life to these people to this nation. God said...

*I have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field, and you have increased and become great, and you are come to excellent ornaments: your breasts are fashioned, your hair is grown, whereas at one time you were naked and bare. And now when I passed by thee, and looked upon you, behold, your time was come, the time of love; and [to spread my] I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yes, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and you became mine (16:7-8).*

The birth of the nation of Israel. Nothing. But God rescued the abandoned child, gave life to it. Watched over and cared for it in its early development, until the day came when, the time had come for them to be a nation. They had been slaves in Egypt, they had been grossly mistreated as slaves. The Egyptians finally were demanding that they kill the boys that were born, leave only the girls alive. The people began to cry out unto God by reason of the horrible oppression, and these tragic experiences in Egypt. Time had come that they should become a nation.

So God brought them out of Egypt, and God made a covenant with them. He gave the law to Moses, and the covenant was that, "If you will keep this law, and these statutes, to do them, then I will be your God, and you will be my people." The people all said unto Moses, "We will do whatsoever the Lord has commanded us!" So there came this covenant relationship, a marriage, where they became God's bride, God's people in that covenant relationship. That beautiful relationship with God. But then God tells that, as His bride, or as His wife, He began to just bless her. The time had come for love. "And I spread my skirt over you, covered your nakedness, and I entered into this covenant, and you became mine. My bride, my people."

*So I washed you with water; I thoroughly washed the blood from you, and I anointed you with oil (16:9).*

The preparation for, of the bride, for the wedding. You remember Esther, for a year they were putting on the perfumed oil, and bathings, and so forth to prepare her.

*I clothed thee also with brodered work, and I shod thee [That is, made thee sandals] of badgers' skin, and I clothed you with fine linen, I covered you with silk. Then I decked you with ornaments, I put bracelets on your hands, a chain on your neck. I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head (16:10-12).*

God blessed the nation. God clothed the nation with beauty, and He also clothed her with glorious ornaments, perfumed oils.

*You were decked with gold and silver; your raiment was fine linen, and silk the brodered work; and you did eat the fine flour, and the honey, and the oil: and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom (16:13).*

So God did prosper them as they served the Lord. God blessed them, He brought them into the fertile land. He gave them an abundance of food, He gave them the finest clothing, clothed them with jewels, and the kingdom came to its apex, and its glory. Exceedingly beautiful, prosperous.

*And the fame went forth among the heathen for your beauty (16:14),*

Everybody was talking about the beautiful city of Jerusalem, and the beauty of the nation, and these people, the travelers who would travel through, and to the land, would go away with stories of, of just a Eden kind of a land. A land that was flowing with milk, and honey! A land that was filled with riches, people who were blessed, who no doubt shared the Sabbath day, and the glory of the Sabbath day. When

every one ceased from their labors, and the families gathered together and spent the day together worshipping God, and honoring God. God speaks of the beauty, that was His beauty that He had placed upon them. He speaks about their...

*being perfect through his majesty, that he had put upon them, saith the Lord. [But, tragic] Thou didst trust in your own beauty, when you played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your fornications on every one that passed by; his it was (16:14-15).*

The time had come when God had blessed them, and wanted to have this beautiful, loving relationship with them. He would be their people, they would be His, He would be their God, they would be His people. God wanted to just demonstrate to the world, the glory of serving God. But instead, having attracted so many people by their beauty, they began to give themselves over to every one that came by. As an adulterous wife, breaking the covenant of marriage. The garments that God gave to them

*The beautiful garments, you decorated your high places with these divers colors, and you played the harlot thereon: [The high places were little chambers for the prostitutes there on the mountainside.] You have also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and my silver, which I have given to you, and you made of yourself images of men, and did commit whoredom with them (16:16),*

Little statues of these gods that were used in the worship of, and turning from God, they took the very things that God had given them, and they used them for perverse purposes. We read at the time that Solomon was king that the silver was just as common as rocks in Jerusalem. Extremely prosperous and wealthy! Yet, they took the gold and the silver that God had blessed them with, and they made these little idols, idols of men that they might worship them in these sexual rites.

*You took the beautiful garments, and you covered your little idols: and you set my oil and my incense before them. [He'd given them the oil, the incense and all, and now they're setting them before these idols that they made with the gold that was His, that He had given to them.] My meat also which I gave you, the fine flour, the oil, the honey, wherewith I fed you, you have even set those before the idols as a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the [Jehovah, or the] Lord God (16:18-19).*

Tragic, tragic! They took the blessings of God and used them on their own lusts, and in the worship of these false gods.

*Moreover [He said] you have taken thy sons [And here's where it comes really heavy, "you've taken thy sons"] and daughters, whom you have borne unto me, and these you have sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou has slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them (16:20-21)?*

These gods that they had made, the high places were the worship of Ashtoreth. The pagan sensual goddess of sexual pleasures. These men gods that were created, and used to enflame passions. With the highly aroused sexual passions, there came tremendous sexual promiscuity. What was true of their relationship with God, in that they, they broke relationship with God, and turned to these idols, and were serving these idols. In the serving of idols, there was the, the worship that involved sexual rites. Thus, there was a, a figurative adultery against God, but there was also a literal fornication involved in this whole rites of the gods that they had begun to worship. As God is speaking to them.

You see when you have people who have heightened sexual activities, as the result of being stimulated, and aroused, the result is you always have unwanted pregnancies. Thus they took the children that were born, and God said, "They are my children, but you've thrown them in the fire, caused them to pass through the fire". In the worship of their god, "Molech", their god of pleasure, they would build these bonfires in the valley of Hinnom. They would take and place little iron replicas of their god Molech, in the fire until it would turn a glowing red hot.

You can see some of these little iron gods of Molech in the museum of natural history, there in Jerusalem. You see the little figures with arms outstretched from the stomach, and the hands upturned. It was so they could cradle the babies. So that when the fire, when the little iron gods were red hot, they could then put the babies in the arms, and let them roast there in the arms of their gods. God is complaining against this practice, putting their children in the fire, these unwanted babies. God said, "They're my children."

Because of this, God speaks of His judgment that must come upon them. He cannot let them get by with

such evil practices. They must be judged.

I look at our nation, and I look at the decisions that have been made by the liberal Supreme Court over the past several years. How that, first of all, they opened the doors for pornography, because they weren't able to define "obscenity". So because these poor old doddering Supreme Court justices didn't know what was obscene, probably because their minds are so filthy, they couldn't recognize it when they saw it, the laws against pornography was pretty much stricken from the books. Our country became the leader of pornography in the world. We produce more pornography than any other nation in the world. We supply the world with filth!

The result of pornography of course is, heightened sexual stimulation. With heightened sexual stimulation, there is that feeling of urgency. "I don't want to wait for marriage, I don't want to commit to marriage! I just want a sexual partner." Thus we had to liberalize the laws concerning homosexuality, concerning adultery. We finally liberalized them to the point that, "anything goes among consenting adults". Doesn't matter, anything goes. Thus there's a pressure for even greater liberalization. The pedophiles are pushing for legislation that will allow the older men to have young boys nine, ten years old. They're pushing for more, and more, and more sexual freedoms. It's horrible!

But what happens when you have all this sexual liberty, you have a lot of unwanted children. What are you gonna do with them? Well we are too civilized to throw them in the fires after they are born. So we burn them in the womb with saline solutions. As God looks down, I'm sure He weeps as He sees over 25,000,000 of His children here, in the United States.

But He said, "You caused to pass through the fire, my children that you've destroyed." But you see it's a progression. The one follows the other. It happened in Israel, and it's happening here. But how in the world can we possibly escape the judgment of God? When these are the things that brought God's judgment upon Israel. They didn't bear fruit for Him any longer, they took the gifts and the blessings that God had bestowed upon them, and they used them, misused them really in, in their lifestyles and all. They turned their backs on God, and ultimately they destroyed God's children. "My little children", God said.

*And all of your abominations and all of your whoredoms you forgot about the days of your youth (16:22),*

"You forgot what I did for you, you forgot that I am the one that brought you into life. I am the one that gave you life! I am the one that sustained you when you were ready to die, and to perish, I'm the one that rescued you. I'm the one that blessed you, and put my blessings upon you, and yet, now, in all of your pursuit after these other gods, you've forgotten me! You've not remembered the days of your youth"...

*when you were naked and bare, and polluted in your blood. And it came to pass after all of your wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord God; (16:22-23))*

I mean, it's just like God is, is speaking these things, and He just becomes overwhelmed. He said, "Oh woe! Woe!" I mean, there's, there, you don't give God any, any alternative. You don't give God any way out. There's got to be judgment.

*And you have also built unto yourselves an eminent place, [That is the eminent place for the worship of these gods.] the high places in every street. [The land was filled with prostitution and whoredom.] And you have built the high place at the head of every way, and you have made thy beauty to be abhorred, you've opened your feet to every one that passed by and you've multiplied your whoredoms. You've committed fornication with the Egyptians your neighbours, great of flesh; you've increased your whoredoms to provoke me to anger. And behold, therefore I've stretched out my hand over you, I've diminished your ordinary food, I've delivered you unto the will of them that hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way (16:24-27).*

Actually, even the heathens around them became ashamed of what was happening there. They had become so diabolically evil, they'd turned so against God that the things that they were doing embarrassed the heathen! "They were ashamed of your lewd way."

*For you have played the whore also with the Assyrians, because you were unsatiable; yes, you have played the harlot with those, and yet you could not be satisfied (16:28).*

"It seems like your lust was unsatiable. There was, you were just anything, and everything!"

*You have moreover multiplied your fornication in the land of Canaan unto Babylon; and yet you were not satisfied (16:29).*

Of course you never will be satisfied. The life of the flesh can never bring satisfaction! You see there's one real problem with the sexual fantasies that a person conjures. The, we live in a fantasy world so often. But reality can never live up to fantasy, unless you have all these fantasies, and the actual experience can never live up to the fantasy. So it, it's never satisfying. The end result is an emptiness. The end result is a, is a feeling of filth, and dirtiness, and emptiness. Because the flesh cannot satisfy. So they were unsatiable. Going after this, going after that, but never satisfied.

*You've built your eminent place at the head of every way, you make your high places in every street; you have not been as a harlot, because you didn't take money. ["You were actually giving money for your services!"] You're as a wife who commits adultery, who takes strangers instead of her husband. [And contrary] and the contrary is with you from other women in that, in your whoredoms whereas none followed thee to commit whoredoms, in that you gave a reward, no reward was given unto you, therefore you're contrary (16:31-34).*

"You're weird!" "I mean you're just unsatiable! You've just turned to these other gods, these other things, and you know, you're getting nothing for it!"

*Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord: [Now that's God's indictment, now, here's God's judgment.] Thus saith the Lord God; Because your filthiness was poured out, your nakedness was discovered through your whoredoms with your lovers, and with all of the idols of the abominations, and by the blood of your children, which you did give unto them; ["Because of these things"] Behold, therefore I will gather all of your lovers, with whom you have taken pleasure, and all of those that you have loved, with all of those that you have hated; and I will gather them round about against you, and I will discover your nakedness unto them, that they may see all of your nakedness. And I will judge you as women that break wedlock, [Now in the law, if a woman committed adultery, she was to be stoned to death, under the law, thus, "I will judge you as a woman that has broken wedlock",] and shed blood [Those that murdered are judged, that is, by stoning.] and I will give you blood in fury and in jealousy. And I will also give unto you their hand, and they shall throw down your eminent places, they shall break down your high places: they will strip you of your clothes, they will take your fair jewels, and they will leave you naked and bare. And they shall also bring up a company against you, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords (16:35-40).*

Judgment's gonna come upon Jerusalem. The nations are gonna gather. They will take their machines of warfare, and throw the stones, these huge stones, into the city. They will then come in and slaughter with the sword. God will bring His judgment upon these people because of the lifestyle that they have chosen, that was opposed unto God. You cannot get by, you will be judged. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." The day of God's judgment will come, certainly will come! God is promising this judgment that's to come upon these people, and upon the beautiful city of Jerusalem.

"They're gonna strip you. I gave you these beautiful clothes, they're gonna strip you. I gave you all of these wonderful jewels, they're gonna take them." Jerusalem was stripped, Jerusalem was sacked. All of the gold, the silver out of the temple was taken. Even they took the brass columns and melted them down and took them to, uh, that held up the pillars, that held up the temple porch, were carried off to Babylon. The people, God's word was fulfilled. They were judged and they were stripped.

*They will burn your houses with fire (16:41),*

Today in Jerusalem, going down from the dung gate towards the spring of Gihon, you can see a layer of ash about six inches thick, the ash of the houses of Jerusalem that were burned by the Babylonians. There you'll see that whole strata of ash, which is a mute witness to the truth of God's judgment that He had promised would come upon them. God fulfilled these promises of judgment. "They will burn your houses with fire"...

*and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women: and I will cause you to cease from playing the harlot, and you will give no hire any more. And so will I make my fury toward you to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. [When the judgment is*

fulfilled, then God can rest in that, justice has been accomplished.] *Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but you have fretted me in all of these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense your way upon your head, saith the Lord God: and you shall not commit this lewdness above all of your abominations. Behold, every one that uses proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As the mother, so is her daughter (16:41-44).*

Now we usually say, "Like father, like son." You know that's the proverb we have today. But God said, "This is the proverb they will use. Like the mother, like the daughter", you know.

*For thou art thy mother's daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children; and you are the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children: your mother was a Hittite, your father was an Amorite (16:45).*

The, going back again, the Amorites and the Hittites were wicked people. "You've become like them."

*Your elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at your left hand: [That is if you're standing in Jerusalem facing east, it would be at the left hand, actually at the north side.] and your younger sister, that dwells at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. [Both Samaria and Sodom had been destroyed because of their wickedness.] And yet you have not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, you were corrupted more than they in all of your ways (16:46-47).*

"I mean, you're, you weren't as bad as they were! I mean, you were worse than Samaria! You were worse than Sodom!"

*And as I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom your sister has not done, neither she, nor her daughters, you and your daughters (16:48).*

God has a rule, and that is, "To whom much is given, much is required." The more God has given of His light, and understanding to a nation, and to a people, the greater is that responsibility of those people unto God. Thus, for a nation who has been blessed of God, prospered by God, for them to turn against God is far worse than people who never knew God, who lived wicked lives. To sin against the truth, to sin against light, and understanding, is one of the worst of all sins.

God has surely given to our nation light, and understanding. We were His people! God blessed us, God made us strong, God prospered us! God gave us the fields of golden grain. God has blessed and prospered abundantly. But we have used our riches to indulge our own lusts, and we have not honored God, who made us great.

Now God speaking of Sodom said...

*This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom (16:49),*

Now if I talk about the sin of Sodom, what comes into your mind. Interesting that it isn't listed here! What was the real iniquity of Sodom? It began with...

*pride, then it was fulness of bread (16:49),*

You see, Sodom being in the plain, down there in the Jordan valley, that great rift, was one of the most fertile areas in that part of the world. In fact, today, the Jordan valley is a very fertile valley. Driving down the Jordan valley in the wintertime, in the middle of winter, you will see them harvesting cucumbers, tomatoes, and eggplant. It's sort of like our Imperial valley, in that there's, it's warm in the wintertime, it gets into the 80's in the wintertime. There's plenty of springs at, down there in the valley, and they just grow fabulous vegetables down there in the Jordan valley, to the present day. Melons and all, it's just, it's just great! Winter, they grow all year round down there in the valley.

Thus those who were living in Sodom, because it was an agrarian society, and that, you see, before you can develop any real kind of a society, you have to have an abundance of agriculture. One man must be able to produce more food than just he can eat, or his family can eat. When you can produce more food than what your family can eat, then you have a surplus of food that you can start trading off. You trade your food to a guy that is skilled in making hoes, or making shovels, or making plows.

So you have now a plow maker. He doesn't have to farm because he can use his skill in making plows, to trade the farmer for food. Because, the farmer can produce now, more food than just what his family can consume. But you see, you first have to have that abundance of food, before you can use food as a bartering

for other things.

Now when you have an area that is very fertile, as was the Jordan valley, it was easy to produce more food than just what your family could use, and so they had this fulness of bread. They had an overabundance of agriculture. That led to

*idleness (16:49),*

“Don’t have to work so hard you know just kick back!” My mother used to tell me that “Idleness was the devil’s workshop.” So they had the idleness.

*and her daughter and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy (16:49).*

So with this abundance they didn’t really reach out to help the poor and the needy. They, they cared not for the homeless. So God is, is, is saying, “This was the problem, it was pride, it was this surplus of bread, it was the idleness of time, and the failure to help the poor and the needy that brought the conditions of homosexuality, and these other things upon the land. So...

*They were haughty, and they committed abomination before me: [Of course which was that homosexuality] and therefore [God said] I took them out of the way as I saw fit. [“I wiped them out!”] Neither has Samaria committed half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and you have justified your sisters in all of your abominations which you have done (16:50-51).*

“You look around you know, and after all I know I’m not living as I should, but look what they’re doing!” You know, and you justify yourself by the wicked and the evil of others! But your fellow man is not the standard of measure, for your righteousness. You’re not gonna be judged by the standards that are set by your fellow men. The standard of righteousness by which you will be judged is that of Jesus Christ.

*Thou also, which hast judged your sisters, you bear your own shame for your sins which you have committed are more abominable than they (16:52):*

“You’ve had the knowledge, you’ve had the light, you’ve had the blessing. God has been with you. God has been good to you, God has blessed you.”

*and thus they are more righteous than you: yes, you can be confounded also, and bear your shame, in that you have justified your sisters. When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them (16:52-53):*

This goes out now in the future. God is promising a future restoration of the nation of Israel. But when He again restores Israel, He will restore many nations. Egypt will be restored and be a light unto God, as well as Syria. Interesting that Babylon isn’t spoken of as being restored. It’s gonna be destroyed completely. But Samaria will be restored, as will Sodom be restored. They will again be inhabited, and marvelous places of dwelling.

In fact, the Dead sea where the city of Sodom was down by the Dead sea, the new river that we read about further on in Ezekiel that comes out of the Jerusalem, flows into the Dead sea. The waters of the Dead Sea will be healed. It will no longer be a “Dead” sea. It’ll be filled with fish, and they will spread their nets in En Gedi. And thus that whole area will again not be just a wilderness waste. But, will again become fertile as it was during the time of Sodom. God will restore the land down there in the southern part of the Dead sea. When, when He restores Israel to their former estate.

*For your sister Sodom was not mentioned by your mouth in the day of your pride. And behold, your wickedness was discovered, as at the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise you all around. And you have borne your lewdness and your abominations, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord God; I will even deal with you as you have done, which have despised the oath in breaking the covenant (16:56-59).*

“You’ve broken your covenant with me. I’m gonna do with you just like you’ve done. I’m gonna break my covenant with you, and the judgment will come upon you.”

*Nevertheless (16:60)*

God said, and, and here’s, God’s such a softie! He just gives every opportunity to repent. You know you do the most heinous things, and still God says, “Well I just, I still love you.” And, He still willing to take

you, and wash you, and cleanse you, and to restore you. “Nevertheless”...

*I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth (16:60),*

Those days in your first love, those days when you were committed unto me, those days when you were so excited about our relationship”. God said, “I remember the days of the espousal, when you were writing holiness unto the Lord on the walls, and you know, around the place. I mean you were just thinking about me all the time.”

*that day of close communion. And then you shall remember your ways, and be ashamed, when you shall receive your sisters, and your elder and your younger: and I will give them unto you for daughters, but not by your covenant. [“You still have a special place, special covenant.”] And I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord: [Longsuffering, patient, kind, gracious, merciful, tender.] that you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more because of your shame (16:60-63),*

“You’ll never speak against God again, you’ll be so ashamed of what you’ve done.” Yet, here’s God, still loving, still restoring, still forgiving. Oh how glorious, how marvelous is that God that we worship! How forgiving, how gracious, and kind, and patient! God said...

*when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, saith the Lord God (16:63).*

There’ll be peace again reigning between you and God. God, tonight loves you with an undying love! It seems that it can’t be quenched! Though Israel had done so many horrible things in violating the covenant, and in forsaking God, turning from God. Worse than forsaking, turning, and becoming an enemy of God! Yet, God still loved. God loves you. God is desiring to restore that love, that fellowship that you once knew.

You remember when Jesus was writing to the church of Ephesus? He said, “I have this against you, in that you’ve left your first love. Remember what it used to be, and repent”. Let’s come back to that first relationship. That first relationship that you had with God when you were so excited about God, and the things of God. You just couldn’t get enough of the word, you just couldn’t get enough of fellowship. You were just talking about the Lord all the time, you were so excited! The work of God’s Spirit in your heart, and life, and the love just burned like a fire. But Jesus said, “You’ve left that first love. Remember what it used to be, and repent, and come back to your first works.” Some of you tonight are in the church of Ephesus, and the Lord is speaking to you. The time has come to return.

Shall we pray?

Father, may we hear the voice of Your Spirit, as He calls clearly to our hearts. God we are ashamed that we should turn from You to other things, things that cannot satisfy, and give ourselves Lord to those things that leave one empty. Lord people even paying to see x-rated movies. Paying to be aroused, and stimulated. Taking the money Lord, You’ve given to them, and using it for evil purposes. God have mercy! Lord may we be drawn by Your Spirit, back into that intimate relationship with you. Renew Lord your covenant with Your people. May we indeed be Your people, and Father, help us that we might bring forth fruit, that You may be glorified. In Jesus’ name. Amen.