

Interamerican Adventist Theological Seminary

Universidad Adventista de las Antillas

Campus

**Historical-metaphorical Reconstruction of
Jerusalem as Wife and Mother
Based on Ezekiel 16**

Thesis presented in partial compliance with
the requirements for the Master of Arts
[Biblical and Theological Studies]

by

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Abstract

In chapter 16 of his book, Ezekiel writes the story of Jerusalem through metaphor. Jerusalem is symbolized by a woman and her story becomes the story that takes place in the life of this woman. The relationship that develops between her and God entails certain levels of responsibility and commitment on both sides. These levels were forgotten and abandoned by one or more characters throughout the story. The result is the inevitable payment for the crimes committed. The end, although achieved by painful and shameful methods, becomes a happy ending and more glorious than its beginning.

This interesting story, unfortunately, becomes a controversial chapter and the value of its content is often underestimated. On the one hand sexists use it to support their extremist theories, on the other hand its high content of explicit sexual language makes many want to avoid reading the chapter and its use in ecclesiastical teachings and preaching. Leaving prejudicial extremes aside, one can arrive at a broader interpretation and understanding of the story and its implications. Although difficult to understand, Ezk 16 contains much more than an interesting story. It contains extensive and profound realities about the relationships that sustain (1) God with his people and (2) the people of God with the rest of humanity.

A study of the historical and metaphorical context of Ezekiel's book, the chapter and its content define the purpose and function of the story. Thus, recovering the value that for a long time has been lost in the eyes of its readers. The historical account that Ezk 16 elaborates is not a recount of the history of ethnic Israel, but of the people of God through the ages. From Genesis, with its origins, to

Revelation, with its eschatological restoration prophecy, Ezekiel shows the people the faithfulness, justice, grace and mercy of God. These qualities of God remain valid despite the infidelity, rebellion and transgressions committed against Him by his own people. God, based on his promises, has stipulated a moment for the restoration of his repented people. Through messianic and eschatological prophecies, all human beings can appropriate the promise of restoration of the people of God. This restoration brings the opportunity of total integration to the people of God to those who accept the atonement of Christ on the cross. While waiting for the final fulfillment of this restoration, the church has the responsibility to remain faithful to it and to be a good example for all human beings.

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Dedication

To my parents Ana Álvarez Duran and Rubén Regis Miranda. Those who always encouraged me to study the Word of God. Also, dedicated their efforts, time and money to provide for me a Christian education since elementary school until graduate school.

To pastor David Rodríguez, president of the Asociación Adventista del Oeste in Puerto Rico, to Efrén Pagán, PhD and Efraín Velázquez, PhD. The ones who supported and encouraged me to complete the MABTS degree.

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Index of Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
ASV	American Standard Version (1901)
<i>BDB</i>	<i>The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BGT	BibleWorks Greek LXX/BNT
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BNP	La Biblia de Nuestro Pueblo (Traducción de Alonso)
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAB	La Biblia - Castilian Bible Versión
<i>CHALOT</i>	<i>A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Imagery</i>
<i>DOTP</i>	<i>Dictionary of Old Testament Prophets</i>
ESV	English Standard Version (2007)
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, <i>Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
LBA	La Biblia de Las Americas (1986)
LXT	Rahlfs' LXX Septuaginta
NBH	Nueva Biblia de Los Hispanos
NET	New English Translation
<i>NIBC</i>	<i>The New International Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld

<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIV	New International Version (1984)
NKJ	New King James Version
NVI	La Santa Biblia, Nueva Versión Internacional
PER	La Biblia del Peregrino (Alonso Schökel)
R60	Santa Biblia, Versión Reina-Valera Revisión 1960
R95	Santa Biblia, Versión Reina-Valera Revisión 1995
RVA	Santa Biblia, Versión Reina-Valera Actualizada (1989)
RVG	Santa Biblia, Versión Reina-Valera Gómez
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZPEB</i>	<i>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> , ed. Merrill C. Tenney

Chapter One: Introduction

Living in exile, Ezekiel (author of the book that bears his name),¹ is called by God to be a prophet (Ezk 2: 1-3: 11). Ezekiel was possibly exiled to Tel-Abib, along the river Chebar,² which coincides with the biblical story (Ezk 1: 3). It is believed that he was deported, along with his wife, in 597 BC³ for political reasons that will

1. From the beginning of the book of Ezekiel it is clearly established that he is the author of the words recorded there (Ezk 1: 1-3: 11). Regarding his persona and way of expressing himself, not many theologians consider him a sane man. In fact, they can be very hostile and accuse Ezekiel of catalepsy and even schizophrenia. See the accusations about the personality of Ezekiel in: Robert K. McIver, *Ezekiel: Through Crisis to Glory*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier Series, ed. B. Russell Holt and George R. Knight (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1997), 23; L. Alonso Schokel and JL Sicre Díaz, *Profetas II: Ezekiel, doce profetas menores, Daniel, Baruc, carta a Jeremías* (Madrid, Spain: Christianity Editions, 1980), 671. McIver suggests that their perception of Ezekiel is really based on modern opinions and terms and that in judging this way they aren't considering the historical context in which Ezekiel lived. He also claims that his unusual behavior was not foreign to the prophetic tradition of his people. For their part, Alonso and Sicre prefer to describe Ezekiel as a character of special sensitivity, more acute and refined than that of other prophets.

2. Tel-Abib is known as the main colony of those who had been exiled and apparently the place of assembly of the elders of the community according to Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (ZPEB)*, book version: 4.0.1, Pradis CD-ROM, version 5.17.0014 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002-2004), see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /4. The captivity; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 6.

3. C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 228; Margaret S. Odell, "Book of Ezekiel," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (NIDB)*, ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, 2 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006-2009), see "Ezekiel, Book of"; Eugene H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 281; James E. Smith, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The Major Prophets* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1992), see The Life of Ezekiel / A. His Family and Station. She is exiled and dies around 587 BC when Jerusalem was besieged.

be described later. It is probable that Ezekiel, who was a priest (Ezk 1: 3), was 30 years old (Ezk 1: 1?) when he was called to the great mission.⁴ Thereafter he continued his prophetic ministry for about 20 years.⁵

In chapter 16 of his book, Ezekiel writes the story of Jerusalem in divine perspective;⁶ through the experience of Yahweh God with that city. Jerusalem is symbolized by a woman and her story becomes the story that takes place in the life of that woman. The first verses talk about her origins, or antecedents, and birth. The narrative also describes the physical development of Jerusalem. From a dying baby girl, she becomes the young bride and then a wife who later becomes a prostitute.⁷ These stages of growth are only made possible through divine interventions. These stages involve certain levels of responsibility and commitment on the part of both, for a relationship is being established.

The story takes a turn when the woman breaks the marriage vows and slanders the honor of her husband, Yahweh. Her adulterous acts have consequences, the weight of the law falls on her and she must be punished for her crimes. To understand her behavior, in manner of deliberation of the jury, it is compared to the

4. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 2. Literary Analysis / a. Judean prophetic and priestly traditions.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Steven Tuell, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ezekiel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard and Robert K. Johnston (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 6.

7. Daniel Bodi, "Ezekiel," in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament: Volume 4, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, ed. John H. Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 441.

behavior of her mother and sisters. Connections are made of similarities and differences between them. The decision is to give her the wages she deserves, to be held responsible for her perverted acts in accordance with what the law demands.⁸ As a light amid darkness, Yahweh makes an undeserved promise/proposal, a promise of restoration and atonement.⁹

Ezk 16 is a controversial chapter. On the one hand, it lends itself to supporting feminist tendencies that criticize the supposed biblical machismo and exaggerate the reasons why the judgment of God falls so severely upon the woman.¹⁰ On the other hand, its high content of explicit sexual language makes many want to avoid reading the chapter and its use in ecclesiastical teachings and

8. Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 365, identifies punishment according to the law established in the Pentateuch about adulterous women, whose punishment was death.

9. Jiri Moskala, "Parables in the Book of Ezechieel: The Prodigal Daughter, Study of kapar in Ezekiel 16:63", in *Biblical Parables: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Johnston*, eds. Thomas R. Shepherd and Ranko Stefanovic (Berrien Springs, MI: New Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2016), 41.

10. Among the feminist point of view in Ezk 16 is Marry E. Shields, "Multiple Exposures: Body Rhetoric and Gender Characterization in Ezekiel 16," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 14, No. 1 (1998): 13, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016); Bryan D. Bibb, "There is no Sex in Your Violence: Patriarchal Translation in Ezekiel 16 and 23," *Review & Exhibitor* 111, No. 4 (2014): 343, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016); and Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, 130 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 2. On the danger of using the feminist point of view in Ezk 16 see: Iain M. Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 217.

preaching.¹¹ There were even those who did not want Ezekiel's book to be part of the biblical canon, for this same reason.¹² Some of the topics that the chapter talks about, explicitly and implicitly, are:¹³ (1) the origins and their impact on the person, (2) adoption, (3) marriage, (4) adultery, (5) prostitution, (6) adoration, (7) motherhood, (8) idolatry, (9) cause and effect reaction, (10) judgment, (11) mercy, (12) forgiveness, (13) restitution and (14) restoration.

Several terms have been proposed to describe the content of the chapter. Some theologians call it a parable, others call it an allegory, metaphor and/or extended metaphor.¹⁴ The two most frequently used are “allegory” and “metaphor.”

11. Bibb, 337, 340; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 76-77, comments that Rabbi Eliezer forbade the liturgical use of Ezk 16 and stipulated that it could only be read followed by his comments in the tergum, which reduced the sexual element of the content.

12. Bodi, 402-403.

13. Duguid, 35-39, proposes the following topics: Glory and sovereignty of God, sinfulness of man, inescapable judgment to come, the return of the King and the restoration of the people to their land and a state of “already but not yet.”

14. Example of use of parable: Moskala, 41; example of allegory: Blenkinsopp, 77; Istvan Haag, Stephen Llewelyn and Jack Tsonis, “Ezekiel 16 and its use of Allegory and Disclosure-of-Abomination Formula,” *Vetus Testamentum (VT)* 62, No. 2 (2012): 198, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASeries, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016); Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 426; Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), 202; Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 270; metaphor example: Peggy L. Day, “Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi,” *VT* 50, No. 3 (2000): 285-309, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASeries, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016); example of extended metaphor: Tuell, 92. Although Tuell calls it an extended metaphor, it also considers it parallel to an allegory or a parable.

Ezekiel himself uses neither allegory nor metaphor to describe his writings, he calls them proverbs or parables (Ezk 20:49 in English and 21:5 in Hebrew). In this research the term metaphor will be implemented to describe the type of personification that Ezekiel uses for the chapter, although not in a categorical way. What most theologians agree about is that this chapter, whether allegorically or metaphorically, represents the history of the people of Israel regarding their behavior towards the relationship that existed between them as a people (corporately) and God. Specifically, this relationship that took place before and during the Babylonian exile prior to the absolute destruction of Jerusalem and the Solomonic temple in 587/6 BC.¹⁵

Chapter 23 of the same book (Ezekiel) contains more details about the acts of the woman, Jerusalem. Also written in symbolic form (the city as a woman) chapter 23 sheds more light on the events mentioned in chapter 16.¹⁶ It is probable that using chapter 16 as a basis, since its story is more historically extensive, a more accurate and detailed reconstruction of the sequence of events can be achieved. This, by introducing to the account the clarifying segments provided by chapter 23.

15. ZPEB, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /3. Fall of Jerusalem.

16. Arnold V. Wallenkampf, *Ezekiel habla otra vez* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Casa Editora Sudamericana Association, 1990), 69; Galambush, 1-2; James E. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, ed. reviewed (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2004), 146; Alonso and Sicre, 767; Bodi, 403; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 115-116; Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 409; John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, New Century Bible, ed. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, 1976), 94, says that these chapters have been mutually influenced, with the result that the story is considerably expanded.

The result of the reconstruction is a surprising story that represents the relationship of Yahweh with his wife, Jerusalem. The story ends with a prophetic-eschatological promise¹⁷ and it's addressed to the woman, even in her state or metaphorical role as wife and mother.¹⁸

Although not as explicitly as in chapters 16 and 23, the last chapters of the book of Ezekiel expand the final prophecy of the unfinished story of the woman of Ezk 16. These are prophecies of restoration¹⁹ that not only expand but also clarify the last section of chapter 16. The final vision of Ezekiel is of the new temple and its laws, the new priestly work team, the new division of the land and the new city, whose name ceases to be Jerusalem and becomes "Yahweh is there" (Ezk 48: 35).

Ezekiel is not the only prophet who speaks of Jerusalem and its history using this "woman" symbolism. Nor is he the only one to prophesy the restoration of the people of God²⁰ in symbolic aspects of wife and mother. In both the Old and New Testaments, several authors use these feminine roles or attributes as symbolic

17. Richard M. Davidson, "Essay 7: The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," in *To Understand the Scriptures*, ed. George Reid (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archeology, Andrews University, 1997), 81, considers the chiastic counterpart of Ezk 12-23 to be the restoration oracles of Ezk 34-39 and that the latter are the eschatological opposite to the first. The last section of chapter 16 could be considered part of the principles of that "eschatological opposite" section, see the "Interpretations" section of this study.

18. Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secretos del Apocalipsis: Un vistazo judío al Apocalipsis*, trans. Miguel A. Valdivia (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2008), 109.

19. Davidson, "Essay 7: The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," 72, 74-75.

20. Merrill, 281.

images that can describe the functions of the people of God vertically (to God) and horizontally (to men) during several stages of the history of the people of God. Ezk 16 is peculiar in that it provides an extensive narrative in which it appropriates the literary figure used, and in a creative and dazzling way it presents the historical realities of the people of Israel with respect to their cultic and political infidelity towards God.²¹

Problem Statement

Given the complexity of reading, studying, interpreting and preaching the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, is there a better and more accurate way (than the previous prejudicial studies) of interpreting and understanding the content of the story told in Ezk 16? What are its theological implications? In what way, these implications, affect the image of the people of God and, what biblical beliefs do they support?

Hypothesis

Ezk 16 can be interpreted in a balanced way, neither feminist nor macho. In this way we can reach a wider interpretation and understanding of the story of the chapter and its implications. The theological implications of Ezk 16 affect the image of God's people negatively and positively. Negative, because it shows a reality that everyone wants to hide; the unjustifiable infidelity towards God. Positive, because it

21. Galambush, 18, 82; Merrill, 282.

offers hope and a better future; forgiveness or atonement for sins and undeserved restitution.²²

Purpose of the Investigation

This research proposes the following objectives:

1. Examine the historical context of (1) the metaphor, (2) the wording of the text and (3) the content of the text.
2. Review the prophetic literature of the Old and the New Testaments' writings that use the metaphor of the woman to symbolize Jerusalem.
3. Reconstruct the metaphorical story of Ezk 16.
4. Provide a balanced view of Ezk 16.
5. Provide metaphorical, historical and theological-exegetical interpretations that justly represent the text and its story.
6. Show the importance of the knowledge of the story and its implications for the people of God today.

Justification

The value of the content of Ezk 16 is often underestimated by the literary style that (Ezekiel) uses and the way he uses it.²³ However, a different perspective to those previously proposed can show valuable and eternal realities. These realities

22. Carol M. Kaminski, *Casket Empty: Old Testament Study Guide: God's Plan of Redemption through History* (Charleston, SC: Casket Empty Media, 2013), 230; Moskala, 41.

23. McIver, 23

not only show the past of the people of God but have repercussions on the present and the future of His people.

Definition of Terms

Some terms in the research have a popular meaning in the English language (in which this document is written) which will eventually be adapted to their symbolic meaning. Therefore, a list of words with their popular definitions and those adapted for this research will be provided (first popular use will be given, then the one that has been adapted):

1. Woman - (1) An adult female person. (2) Representation of a city²⁴ and has the following implications: she is attractive, fertile and capable of making her own decisions.
2. Wife - (1) A female partner in a marriage.²⁵ (2) Representation of a geographical, political, social and religious entity (Jerusalem - capital of the kingdom and bearer of the temple) that is intimately related to God,²⁶ who must be identified, figuratively as the husband.

24. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979), 335.

25. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, see "Wife."

26. Ralph H. Alexander, "Marriage" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996) and Moskala, 40.

3. Mother - (1) a female parent; woman who has had one or more children.²⁷
(2) A leading or prominent city²⁸ (usually the capital of some realm, like the term “wife”)²⁹ that influences or is responsible for other cities and their own inhabitants. In the middle of the narrative, the wife becomes a mother: she gives birth to sons and daughters for God. At the end of the narrative she is not only a legitimate mother but is also the adoptive mother of those who were once her sisters.
4. Prostitute - (1) Person who has sexual intercourse in exchange for money.³⁰
(2) Name given to women who are disloyal to God through idolatry and undue political alliances, breaking the covenant.³¹ Another characteristic is that not only is she identified as a prostitute, but more specifically, she is accused of being an adulteress – she does not receive money from her lovers, they are the ones who get paid.

27. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, see “Mother.”

28. Isaac Blois, “Women” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series, ed. Douglas Mangum (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

29. A. Fitzgerald, “The Mythological Background for the Presentation Jerusalem as Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT,” in *CBQ* 34 (1972): 405, cited by Galambush, 20.

30. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, see “Prostitute.”

31. Blois, see “Women.”

5. Daughters - (1) A female offspring of human parents or an adopted female child.³² (2) Group of people who belong to or comprise the entity “wife.”³³ The idolatry of which the wife is accused implied infanticide. Literally, the people are accused of sacrificing their children to the gods. Therefore, sons and daughters are not only the group of people who understand the entity of a wife, but also refer to the younger members of the village who were victims of their parents' sins.

There are also terms that will be used with respect to the literary style and literary figures that would be imperative to define and differentiate one from the other. They are the following:

1. Allegory - understood as a literary figure that symbolically shows a reality and these (symbolism and reality) correspond point by point in a mutual way.³⁴
2. Parable - this is an imaginary story whose details may have happened literally, and its purpose is to illustrate a spiritual truth.³⁵

32. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, see “Daughter.”

33. Keith N. Schoville, “Jerusalem” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996); Alonso and Sicre, 735. In relation to Jerusalem, its inhabitants are known as the sons or daughters of Zion.

34. N. Frye, “Allegory,” in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. A. Preminger (Princeton, PA: Princeton University, 1974), 12-15, cited in Galambush, 10.

35. G.H. Schodde, “Parable,” in *ISBE Bible Dictionary*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1979), BibleWorks, version 9.0.005f.1.

3. Metaphor - is a literary figure consisting of a tenor and a vehicle, the tenor is a main idea or subject and the vehicle is the figurative language that describes the tenor (unlike allegory, the metaphor doesn't use the point to point correspondence, but uses what are considered "common places" to only associate certain aspects that the perception of the audience can recognize).³⁶

Other terms that should be clarified are: (1) "eschatology," (2) "classical prophecy" and (3) "apocalyptic prophecy." Eschatology is the study of the "last" things, events, the end of time or a time.³⁷ Classical prophecy is to be understood as the "general prophecy" whose fulfillment is seen in the time of the prophet himself. The apocalyptic prophecy, in contrast, finds its fulfillment at the end of the cosmic conflict.³⁸

Limitations

Books, articles and other documents that can be found about Ezekiel are written in different languages. This investigation will only be based on Spanish and

36. M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1962), cited in Galambush, 5-6.

37. Douglas Mangum, ed., *The Lexham Glossary of Literary Types* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), see "Eschatology."

38. Richard M. Davidson, "Interpretación de la profecía del Antiguo Testamento," in *Entender las Escrituras*, ed. George W. Reid, trans. Cantábriga SC (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Casa Editora Sudamericana Association, 2010), 222-223. There is a detailed table of the differences between classical and apocalyptic prophecy.

English documents. The amount of information exposed will also be limited to the number of pages required for the course, around 120 pages.

Delimitations

Although the entire Bible is the most complete historical account of God's people, only those chapters that use the woman metaphor for Jerusalem and identify it as Yahweh's wife will be used. Therefore, this will not be an exhaustive account of Jewish history but the history of the people of God as presented in Ezk 16 and some additions from other chapters of the same book.

Given that Julie Galambush in her dissertation, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife*, has already investigated exegetically, historically and linguistically many aspects of the chapters to be considered in this study, it will not be necessary to do the same here. Although her approach is feminist and based on the critical historical method,³⁹ it provides a good basis for this study. Later, a brief review of the content of her dissertation will be presented. Throughout the investigation it will be shown which aspects of your dissertation are supported by this study and which are not.

The chapters and key texts of the research will be translated from their original. The version of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) will be used for a personal translation of the Hebrew. No textual criticism will be made, only some necessary notes will be made.

39. Galambush, 2

In chapter five, "Allusion in the New Testament," images and symbols of Revelation will be dealt with. This study will be limited to presenting the allusion that may exist between the story of the woman in Ezekiel, in Revelation. It is not intended to provide an interpretation of all the symbols or the history of the woman of Revelation.

Methodology

The type of historical-descriptive research according to Vyhmeister⁴⁰ will be used. The method of interpretation will be the historical-theological⁴¹ because in contrast to the historical-critical, that has the ability to "incorporate all levels of depth... the unity of what happened, and its meaning based on the intervention of the transcendent in history as its ultimate reality."⁴² In addition, this method will be used since the narrative falls within the category of historical-theological discourse.⁴³ The historical-theological method will be complemented by the historical-grammatical that will provide clarity in rhetorical and linguistic aspects that help to identify and/or justify the practices of women.

The information will be collected through books, articles, dictionaries and biblical commentaries, whether printed, online or on digital platforms such as

40. Nancy Weber de Vyhmeister, *Manual de investigación teológica*, Biblioteca teológica vida, 12 (Miami, FL: Editorial Vida, 2009), 41-43, 47-49.

41. Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993), 129.

42. *Ibid.*, 132.

43. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*, 232.

BibleWorks, Pradis, Logos, and others. The information gathered will be analyzed qualitatively and developed in a descriptive manner. The prophetic aspects will be analyzed according to the interpretation principles of Richard M. Davidson for Old Testament prophecies.⁴⁴ Next, the process to be followed will be detailed: (1) The brief history of interpretation of Ezk 16 will be developed. (2) Then, attempt to put the chapter and its content in context of Ezekiel's book to define what is the purpose and function of the story. (3) A reconstruction of Ezk 16 will be proposed to be able to (4) provide a more detailed picture of the relationship that the people of God held with Him. (5) Realities of the metaphorical images alluded to in Ezk 16 can be established, compared and evaluated by means of a tripartite interpretation.

Presuppositions

It is recognized that the Bible is the Word of God and has the supreme and final authority. The historicist fulfillment of the biblical prophecies is presupposed as interpreted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴⁵ God, Yahweh and other translations of these names are interchangeable; in addition, three persons (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) compose the one and only true God. Ellen G. White, is a messenger of God and her writings were inspired by Him. Finally, the

44. Davidson, "Interpretación de la profecías del Antiguo Testamento," 221-246 and "Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy" (lecture, Michigan Conference Ministers' Retreat, Andrews University, MI, 2006), 1-40.

45. With the method provided by Adventist theologians such as Davidson, Hasel and Jon Paulien, "Interpretación del simbolismo de Apocalipsis," in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-I*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2010), 85-115.

unity of the Scriptures is an essential element that is presupposed throughout the investigation.

Chapter two: Contexts

History of the Metaphor's Interpretation

Galambush

Galambush states that until 1992, the interpretation of the metaphor of Jerusalem as a wife was very limited and only focused on chapters 16 and 23 of Ezekiel. Attempts to observe and examine these personifications in other parts of Ezekiel's book had not been made and that the dynamics of the metaphor in the aforementioned chapters had not been given due attention either.¹ Being she the precursor of this approach, she proceeds to give an account of the few theologians who had commented on it. Her study of the history of interpretation can be summarized in two parts: the theologians of the nineteenth century and those of the twentieth century. Below is a table that shows the results of her study.²

Figure 1. Theologians who Studied the Metaphor in the 19th and 20th centuries

19th Century	20th Century
Ferdinand Hitzig	Gustav Hölscher
Hengstenberg	Walther Zimmerli
Rudolf Smend	Walther Eichrodt
The Bible as Literature Movement	Georg Fohrer
A. B. Davidson	Moshe Greenberg

1. Galambush, 11.

2. For more details on the theologians and their contributions, see Galambush, 11-20.

Richard Moulton	Carol Newsom
	Ellen Davis
	James Durlless

Also, in the twentieth century Galambush herself must be added. Her contribution to the subject is one of the most prominent since then. Your dissertation can be outlined and summarized as follows:

Sketch:

- I. Definition of the literary terms proposed for the use of Jerusalem as a wife. It also identifies and determines the correct term, “extended metaphor.”
- II. History of interpretation of Ezekiel's usage of this metaphor.
- III. The use of the metaphor of a city as a woman in the extra-biblical literature of the ancient Near East.
- IV. The use of the metaphor in the books of the Old Testament:
 - a. Extra-prophetic books.
 - b. Prophetic books.
 - c. Ezekiel:
 - i. Jerusalem as a wife in chapters 16 and 23.³
 - ii. Jerusalem as a woman and her role.

Summary:

Ezekiel adopts this metaphor not only from previous prophets, but it was also a custom of the Ancient Near East (ANE) to consider a capital city as the wife of the god who was worshiped there. He uses this metaphor to justify God's actions⁴ when He withdraws from the temple and allows the destruction of it and of the city.

3. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / A. Structure and Outline of Book, states that both chapters develop the metaphor “adulterated wife” of God, Jerusalem.

4. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, ed., *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets (DOTP)* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 225.

Using the metaphor of a woman implies that the city - symbolizing its inhabitants - was intrinsically impure and destined for contamination. This intrinsic impurity is because of her uterine-menstrual blood. For this reason, in the last chapters of Ezekiel's book there is no mention of Jerusalem as a wife and the city of God is called "Yahweh is there."

After Galambush

In the years following Galambush's dissertation, there seems to be an awakening in the study of Ezk 16 and its rhetoric. In 1998, Mary E. Shields⁵ uses Galambush's study. She uses her description of metaphor to combat the machismo that can arise from a misinterpretation about God and His actions in Ezk 16.⁶ Shields, a woman, closes the twentieth century with her contribution and is followed by two women to open the 21st century, Peggy L. Day and Linda Day.

In 2000, Peggy L. Day contributes not one but two articles⁷ in which she also bases the use of metaphor according to the study of Galambush and accepts that there may be disagreement between the tenor and the vehicle since, unlike the allegory, it has no point by point correspondence.⁸ In both articles she develops the

5. Shields, 18.

6. Ibid.

7. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi" and "The Bitch Had It Coming To Her: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Ezekiel 16," *Biblical Interpretation* 8, No. 3 (2000): 231-254, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016).

8. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 291.

theme of punishment and the destruction of Jerusalem as a metaphorical figure. On the other hand, Linda Day, who also references Galambush, develops the theme of the usage of metaphor to “show that there are alternate possibilities to the traditional way - of a loving and faithful God and a disobedient Israel - of understanding this extended metaphor.”⁹ These three articles are an example of the impact that Galambush had on subsequent studies of Ezk 16 and the value of her work.

By 2005, the Galambush boom was waning but it was still part of Karin Schöpflin's research.¹⁰ Schöpflin focuses his article on the use of the metaphor in Ezekiel and where that metaphor really comes from. Contrary to Galambush, Schöpflin recognizes more similarities in the use of the metaphor in Ezekiel with its use in Hosea¹¹ than a distinctive and novel use in Ezekiel. After that, two more authors have used Galambush as a reference for this type of study (metaphorical). These are (1) Jason Gile, “Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?” in 2011 quoting Galambush three times¹² and (2) Bryan Bibb,

9. Linda Day, “Rhetoric and Domestic Violence in Ezekiel 16,” *Biblical Interpretation* 8, No. 3 (2000): 206, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016).

10. Karin Schöpflin, “The Composition of Metaphorical Oracles within the Book of Ezekiel,” *VT* 55, No. 1 (2005): 109, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016).

11. Schöpflin, 110.

12. Jason Gile, “Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, No. 1 (2011): 87-108, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016).

“There's no Sex in your Violence: Patriarchal Translation in Ezekiel 16 and 23,” in in 2014 quoting Galambush only once.¹³

Jason Gile proposes something totally different that the theologians had not yet considered. He suggests that the use of the metaphor, structure, and themes of Ezk 16 is based on a “prophetic transformation” of the song of Moses in Dt 32: 1-43.¹⁴ He uses linguistic, thematic and structural connections to prove his theory. Bibb suggests that the metaphor of “prostitute” and what it refers to must be seen and studied considering the patriarchal use of this language.¹⁵ He quotes Galambush, P. L. Day and Linda Day. His study shows the need for a more patriarchal (explicit) translation of Ezk 16 to show the true message behind the metaphor.¹⁶

The most recent articles on Ezk 16 are, “Ezekiel 16 and its use of Allegory and the Disclosure-of-Abomination Formula” by Istvan Haag, Stephen Llewelyn and Jack Tsonis in 2012,¹⁷ and “Parables in the Book of Ezechiel: The Prodigal Daughter, Study of kapar in Ezekiel 16:63” by Moskala in mid-2016.¹⁸ These two completely exclude Galambush and even choose other terms to describe the content of Ezk 16.

13. Bibb, 337, 340 and 343.

14. Gile, 88.

15. Bibb, 337-338.

16. Ibid., 343.

17. Haag et al., 198.

18. Moskala, 41.

The preferred literary can be read in the titles of their articles. Although the former seems to prefer the term allegory, he considers it as equivalent to a parable,¹⁹ which is the term that Moskala prefers to use. Moskala simply takes the term parable as an accepted term to speak of the account of Ezk 16 and compares Ezekiel's use of parables to Jesus' use of parables in the New Testament.²⁰

Historical context of the book of Ezekiel

The Assyrians had been rivals of the Egyptians for many years, but when the Chaldeans rose with great strength to take Palestine, the Assyrians and the Egyptians united to fight against them in Carchemish in 605 BC.²¹ Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar,²² thus securing an alliance with the Babylonians (2 Kg 23: 36- 24: 1) and was taken captive to Babylon along with the temple utensils and some of the people (2 Kg 24: 8-17). 2 Ch 36: 5-8; Dn 1: 1-4). After having enjoyed a few years of Assyrian and Egyptian freedom, after 626 B.C,²³ Judah had fallen again. Jehoiachin was the next to reign, though he was also finally taken captive to Babylon

19. Haag et al., 199.

20. Moskala, 39.

21. *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /2. The destruction of Assyria.

22. *Ibid.*, This could also be the deportation in which Daniel was taken; Alfred J. Hoerth and John McRay, *Bible Archeology: An Exploration of the History and Culture of Early Civilizations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 61.

23. Hoerth and McRay, 61.

in the second deportation by Nebuchadnezzar, in 597 BC.²⁴ Probably Ezekiel and Jehoiachin were taken captive at the same time. It is according to his captivity (Jehoiachin's) that Ezekiel dates his writings and visions. The following is a table of the dates of his writings based on the year of captivity of King Jehoiachin:²⁵

Figure 2. Dates in Ezekiel

Text	Content	Day	Month	Year	BC Date
1:2	Vision of the throne of God	5	4 (?)	5	July 593
8:1	Vision of the abomination in the Temple	5	6	6	September 592
20:1	Message to the elders	10	5	7	August 591
24:1	Report of the siege of Jerusalem	10	10	9	January 588

24. ZPEB, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /2. The Destruction of Assyria, and J. Daniel Hays, Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 200.

25. William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, *Panorama del Antiguo Testamento: Mensaje, forma y trasfondo del Antiguo Testamento* (Grand Rapids, MI: Libros Desafío, 2004), 454-455; Smith, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The Major Prophets*, see The Book of Ezekiel / E. Chronology of the Book; McIver, 32-33; Moshe Greenberg, *The Anchor Bible: Ezekiel 1-20* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 7-17, gives more details and comments on these dates. Note that the book is organized in chronological order, it's only altered in the area of prophecies against the nations. Later this phenomenon will be discussed.

26:1	Prophecy against Tyre	1	1 (¿?)	11	March/April 587-586
29:1	Prophecies	12	10	10	January 587
29:17	against	1	1	27	April 571
30:20	Pharaoh and	7	1	11	April 587
31:1	Egypt	1	3	11	June 587
32:1		1	12	12	March 585
32:17		15	1 (¿?)	12	March/April 586
33:21	Report of Jerusalem's destruction	5	10	12	January 585
40:1	Vision of the restauration of the Temple	10	1/7(¿?)	25	April/October 573

The opportunity to reign was given to Zedekiah (2 Ch 36: 11-13), who also rebelled against the Babylonians.²⁶ He hesitated between being faithful to the alliances made between the kingdom of Judah with Egypt in 609 BC²⁷ (2 Ch 36: 1-4) or being faithful to the alliances they now professed to Babylon. At the end his decision was Egypt, and this led to the horrible event of the siege of Jerusalem that lasted a year and a half, and to the destruction of the city and its temple in 587/6

26. Hoerth and McRay, 62.

27. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / b. Ezekiel's understanding of Judean political alliances.

BC.²⁸ Many of the oracles in the book of Ezekiel are concentrated on the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and almost all these oracles are against the neighboring nations.²⁹

Literary Context of Ezekiel 16

Immediate Context

The function of Ezk 16, the largest literary unit of the book,³⁰ within the immediate context can be seen in three ways: (1) negative, (2) positive, and (3) realistic. Generally, each of the sexist extremes point out one of the two (pro-male= positive for themselves, pro-female= negative for themselves).³¹ The first, negative, could be identified in Ezk 16: 1-43 because of depicting Jerusalem in such a negative and vituperative way.³² The function in this case is to confront Jerusalem abruptly

28. *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /3. The fall of Jerusalem.

29. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / a. Date notices in Ezekiel.

30. Block, 459.

31. *Ibid.*, 467-468, 470; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 366. Feminism sees it as sexual violence against women and as a means of restoration, on the other hand, machismo sees it as a well-deserved punishment that will finally subdue the woman under his orders.

32. Feminist point of view expressed by Shields, 6. She observes the total destruction of Ezk 16: 1-43 as something that God does against Jerusalem and this darkens the last verses of the chapter (verses 44-63) and therefore the last chapters of the book regarding the restoration of Jerusalem as a city. On page 13 she quotes Galambush, when she mentions that after the temple was destroyed at the time of Ezekiel, the city of Jerusalem was never again personified as a woman to the point that it will no longer be called that city in that way. "The Lord is there" (Ezk 48:35).

and shockingly³³ without offering hope. The second, positive, might be found in Ezk 16: 59-63. Its function is to proclaim with great certainty that Jerusalem will no longer be unfaithful and that the relationship between the people and God will remain valid. The punishment of the woman then is the only way in which the husband can make his “nymphomaniac” wife faithful to him.³⁴

The third proposal, realistic or balanced,³⁵ is what is intended to be achieved in this research. Looking at the chapter from a wider spectrum it could be observed that the chapter takes to deeper levels the realities behind the disgrace of exile and future destruction. Ezekiel speaks not only to Jerusalem, but to a part of the people of God who have been taken into captivity and have not yet reacted about their sins.³⁶ The purpose of the message was to reflect on their mistakes and not repeat them.³⁷ The punishment of Jerusalem is in accordance with their actions as cause

33. Marten H. Woudstra, “Everlasting Covenant,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 6, No. 1 (1971): 30, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016). Woudstra does not take a negative position of the text but recognizes that the literary style that is used there has the objective of surprising the audience so that they recognize the condition in which they were.

34. Blenkinsopp, 76; Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989), 106.

35. Bodi, 403, suggests a balanced reading and interpretation, not negative, that puts the writing in its time, space and culture.

36. Peter C. Craigie, *Ezekiel*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), 107; Hoerth and McRay, 61-62. Ezekiel was taken captive to Mesopotamia in 597 BC, the second deportation at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and even then, the people did not react. Ezk 18: 2.

37. Wallenkampf, 74.

and effect (Ezk 16:59),³⁸ the people had not repented because they did not see how all this was their fault; they thought themselves innocent facing the situation.³⁹ On the other hand, punishment also becomes a redemptive act rather than vindictive;⁴⁰ not only for her (Jerusalem) but also for her sisters (Ezk 16: 61-62). Hope of the restoration of Jerusalem is proclaimed through its covenant relationship with God.⁴¹ Its function then is to confront the people with the reality (religious, legal, social and political)⁴² that God sees (described in a shocking way⁴³ to provoke them to dislike idolatry)⁴⁴ and to offer hope to the remnant after the punishment.

This chapter is not the only one that presents God's judgment upon his people. Ezk 16 is part of a large section of oracles against Jerusalem and the surrounding nations. This can be better appreciated in the chiasmic structure of the book, which Davidson proposes:

38. Hals, 111; Craigie, 112.

39. Don C. Benjamin, *The Old Testament Story: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 385, 393-395.

40. McIver, 108.

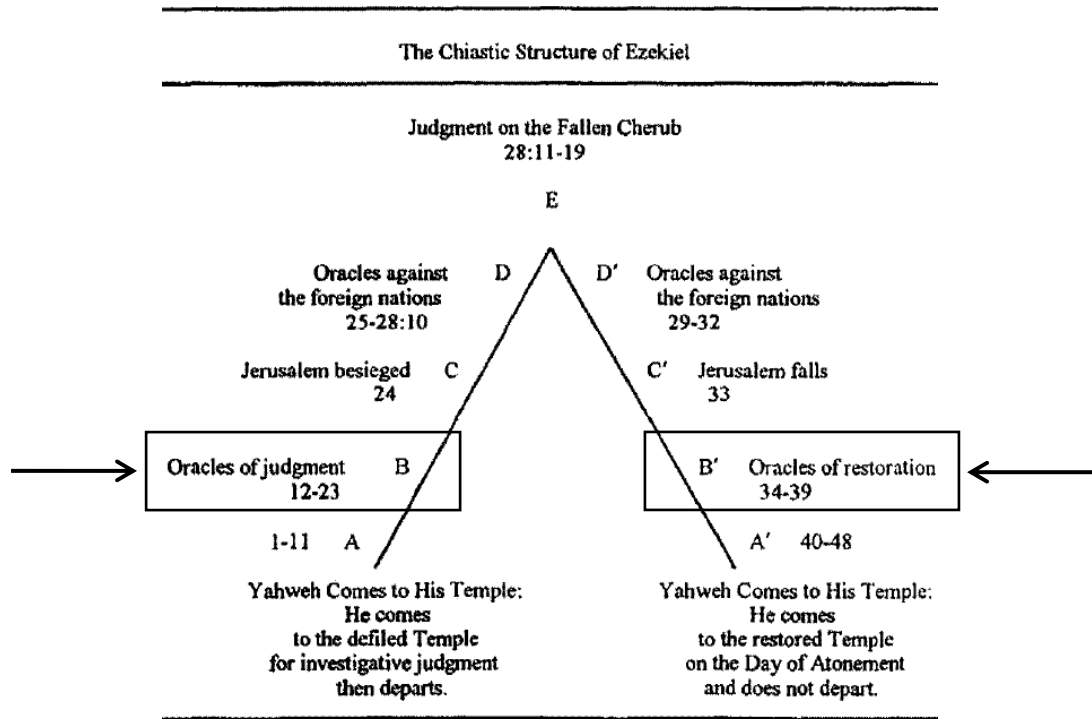
41. Woudstra, 29 and 33.

42. Bodi, 403.

43. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 313, identifies it as an animalistic passion behind the physical sex.

44. Bodi, 403.

Figure 3. Chiastic Structure of Ezekiel by R. M. Davidson⁴⁵



Oracle after oracle the divine judgment dominates the topics that could be found. The very explicit language of the book and chapter 16 as well as the shocking performances that the prophet executed are reflections of the critical and offensive (to God and others) state the people lived out.⁴⁶ Section B, shown in the structure, is full of reasons why the destruction would come (Ezk 22), but it does not lack of calls

45. Davidson, "Essay 7: The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," 75.

46. Tuell, 101-102, "As we have seen, even when he is speaking of Jerusalem's restoration, Ezekiel's emphasis falls on the city's corruption and unworthiness...;" Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 313; Woudstra, 22.

for repentance to Israel (Ezk 18: 30-32). Although it seems a strong message, it is rather a message to provoke the people to react about their actions and repent.⁴⁷ In chiastic parallel section B' stands out and its contents are oracle of restoration. These amplify and detail the section of Ezk 16: 59-63. Davidson explains the correspondence of one section with the other (B//B') quoting Mays when he says that: "The revelation of the history of Israel's sins in the past (Ezk 20: 1-44; see also chapters 16 and 23) are answered by the announcement of a new story of salvation in the future (Ezk 36: 16-38)."⁴⁸

Biblical Context

What role does Ezk 16 exercise considering the rest of the Scriptures?

Undoubtedly, Ezk 16 recounts the history of the people of God. The interesting thing is that it could contain connections to the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation. Ezekiel's narration of the origins of the people of God does not refer to the history of creation. It may probably refer to the second creation that takes place after the flood (Gn 6-10), as proposed later in the sections of Reconstruction and Historical Interpretation of this research. The final part of the chapter (Ezk 16: 59-63) contains

47. Hals, 106. These strong declarations against the adulterous wife portray the intensity of God's love for her.

48. James Luther Mays, *Proclamation Commentaries: The Old Testament Witness for Preaching- Ezekiel, Second Isaiah*, ed. Foster R. McCurley (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 23, in Davidson, "Essay 7: The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," 79.

a messianic prophecy incorporated into an eschatological prophecy with repercussions that reach the New Jerusalem of Revelation.⁴⁹

Its function within the biblical framework is like that of the immediate context. Its purpose is to present the historical recount of the people of God without hiding the reality in which they live. The history of the people of God is not a fictional story in which everything goes well and perfect, it is a realistic story. From the beginning to the end the people must make the decision of what to do and must face the consequences of their actions, positive or negative.

Historical and Literary Context of the Metaphor

Ezekiel is not the only biblical writer who uses the metaphor of women to talk about Jerusalem and its relationship with God and others. The prophetic and even the extra-prophetic literature of the Old Testament makes use of this form of personification.⁵⁰ Even the New Testament makes use of it. In fact, the biblical writers did not originate their use, this was something common for the cultures of the ANE.⁵¹

49. Davidson, "Essay 7: The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel," 81; Moskala, 46.

50. For the use of the metaphor in the extra-prophetic literature, see Galambush, 27-35.

51. Tuell, 85; Bodi, 435-436.

Historical context

The use of this metaphor was so common in the ANE that in a certain sense it was normal, a “dead metaphor.”⁵² Its use had interpenetrated so much in the culture that despite the differences between a woman and a city, people perfectly understood the “common places” to which their use referred. An example of the use of dead metaphors in today's world is “time is gold.” Everyone knows and understands the differences and similarities between “time,” which would be the “tenor” in this case, and gold, the “vehicle.” This common expression is accepted by all and its meaning is easy to understand; time is very valuable, even if it is not physically visible or can be bought like gold that can be seen and bought. In the same way the metaphor of the city (the tenor) as a woman (the vehicle) was common and accepted in the ANE.

Particularly, capital cities were personified in this way.⁵³ The city was considered the home of the village goddess, who was the mother of its inhabitants and the one who provided the fertility of women.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the god that

52. Galambush, 8.

53. A. Fitzgerald, “The Mythological Background for the Presentation Jerusalem as Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT,” *CBQ* 34 (1972): 403-416, 405, and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, “Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language,” in *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), cited by Galambush, 20.

54. T. Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once...: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1987), 127-128, in Galambush, 22.

chose that city as his dwelling made that city/goddess his wife.⁵⁵ Even Western Semitic civilizations, Akkadians and Assyrians named their cities with feminine names.⁵⁶ Phoenician coins from the Hellenistic era have also been found, in which there is a woman with a crown and the name of the city on it.⁵⁷

In Hebrew, the words אֶרֶץ (earth: the ground or the material of which it is made - Gn 2: 7, or a specific geographic location as in Gn 12: 1) and עִיר (city) denoting an inhabited place, are considered and treated as feminine words.⁵⁸ Also, most of the collectives are feminine,⁵⁹ which is consistent with the use of the city as a woman, since women represent a collective or corporate personality.⁶⁰ Even the proper names of cities, towns and countries are usually feminine⁶¹ and the word יושְׁבֵי־הָאָרֶץ which translates as “inhabitants” (see Jr 46:19) is also feminine.⁶² Possibly the

55. Julius Lewy, “The Old West Semitic Sun God Hammun,” in *HUCA* 18 (1944), see Galambush, 20-21.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 30. Nouns without endings are generally masculine singular, but there are exceptions to the rule (feminine singular nouns) for example: אֶרֶץ (land) and עִיר (city).

59. Ronald J. Williams, *William’s Hebrew Syntax*, ed. John C. Beckman, 3rd ed. (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 1.

60. H. W. Robinson, “The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality,” *Werden and Wesen des Alten Testaments*, in *BZAW* 66 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1936), in Zimmerli, 335.

61. Williams, 5.

62. Ibid., 6.

metaphor was not only embedded in people's way of thinking (beliefs) or speaking (popular sayings) but also in their writing and language.

Literary context

Usage in the Old Testament

The metaphor of Jerusalem as a wife appears in several prophetic books. As a vehicle, the images of “wife,” “mother,” “prostitute,” “daughter,” and “sister” are used to describe the tenor that can be both the city and the land itself. These two are intimately related since one is co-dependent on the other and sometimes the prophet speaks of them without identifying the difference (as will be shown later in this section). The use of images of infidelity such as prostitution, used specifically to describe the land and the city (the town), shows infidelity to God. This use of the image of prostitution could be identified as the second metaphorical level,⁶³ which shows in sexual terms the relationship between God and the people. Thus, the comparison then exists between idolatry and adultery and not between idolatry and prostitution as seen in Lv 20: 5 and Dt 31:16,⁶⁴ which show an illicit sexual activity in violation of the authority, of God in this case, by changing God for other gods.

63. Galambush, 31, suggests that the first metaphorical level of the image of prostitution is understood as the sexual behavior of a woman who was not under any male authority, either the authority of her father or her husband. The second level would be, according to her, the application of the metaphor to cultic activities that did not necessarily involve sexual activity. In this case the subject is always masculine or mixed gender since they are the cultic activities of man that are legally circumscribed.

64. Ibid.

Interestingly Jerusalem is not the only city, within the prophetic framework, which is symbolized as a woman committing prostitution or adultery (Is 23:15, Nah 3: 4). But Jerusalem is the only one who is condemned for it. Since the other nations are not “married” to God, they cannot be accused of infidelity to Him.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the comparison is still used, possibly, by the theme of the universal dominion of God⁶⁶ over the nations.⁶⁷ Although not openly united to him, the sovereignty of God makes them responsible for their actions before him.

Isaiah

There are great similarities in the content of Ezk 16 to images that are first seen in Isaiah.⁶⁸ The language used to describe the relationship between God and the people is closely related to the sexual-relational language seen in Ezk 16. Isaiah begins his book the way Ezk 16 ends (16: 61-63); declaring Israel a prostitute (Is 1: 21-31) who will be rescued from her prostitution and this act will cause her shame. Here as in Ezk 16, personification is used metaphorically. Galambush points out

65. Ibid., 38.

66. Davidson, “Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy,” 14-15, 22, 24.

67. (1) Nations used by God: Is 10: 5-34, 45:16; Jr 27; (2) Nations on which the judgment of God falls: Is 13-24, 31; Jr 46-51; Ezk 25-32, 38-39; Am 1-2; Ob 1; Jnh 3; Mc 4: 1-5; Nah 1-3.

68. Eichrodt, 201; Mays, 52-53. The content, especially the last chapters of both books is so similar that critics think that whoever writes in Isaiah is a contemporary character with Ezekiel. Since this research supports a method of historical-grammatical interpretation, it is more appropriate to conclude that Ezekiel borrows much of the content of this part of Isaiah for rhetorical reasons.

that, although “there is no use of metaphorical sexuality,” “metals are used to describe their corruption and purity” instead.⁶⁹ In Is 54: 6-7 Yahweh says about the people of Israel:

Indeed, the LORD will call you back like a wife who has been abandoned and suffers from depression, like a young wife when she has been rejected," says your God. For a short time I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. (NET)

Also, Is 62: 1-12 speaks of God's love for Zion and Jerusalem and says of their lands: “you will be married to Him.” Although she is not called “mother” explicitly, in the texts Is 3: 16-22 and 32: 9, her inhabitants are designated as females, “daughters.” Particularly Is 49: 20-23 mentions “the children born during your time of bereavement” about which she asks: “Who gave me these children for me? ... Who raised these children?” These are non-legitimate children that God promises to give her when she is restored. Furthermore, the restoration that the Messiah will bring has a universal aspect by bringing “light to the Gentiles” (Is 42: 6; 49: 6) and Yahweh's salvation to the ends of the earth.⁷⁰ From there, from among the nations, God will bring her sons and daughters (Is 60). This idea is also parallel to the idea of Jerusalem as the mother of her sisters in Ezk 16:61.

69. Galambush, 52-53.

70. Davidson, “Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy,” 14.

Here in Isaiah we can see an example of other cities that are also personified metaphorically. The following is a table based on the description of these cities according to Isaiah and highlighted by Galambush:⁷¹

Figure 4. Foreign Cities/Nations Personified in Isaiah

City/Nation	Text	Content
Sidon	Is 23	"...virgin daughter of Sidon," "...I was never in labor: I did not give birth, I did not raise young people or make girls grow up."
Tarshish	Is 23	"...daughter of Tarshish."
Tyre	Is 23	"...will return to trade and fornicate again." It is compared to, and it is suggested that she is a prostitute. ⁷²
Babylon	Is 47	"...virgin daughter of Babylon," "...I will not be a widow, nor will I know orphan hood." She identified herself as a queen, her punishment is because of her pride.

71. Galambush, 39 and 43.

72. Ibid., 39.

Jeremiah

Some think that most of Ezekiel's images and themes seem to be taken from his contemporary Jeremiah and that he expands and elaborates them in such a way that he creates his own idea.⁷³ Jeremiah for his part seems to take most of his images of the prophet Hosea by expanding his ideas (those of Hosea).⁷⁴ One of these is the idea of the people being faithful in the desert period after the Exodus, although this is somewhat contrary to what is seen in the Exodus and Numbers narrative, according to Galambush.⁷⁵ In fact, so do the other biblical writers; they see Israel in the desert as something positive, to the point of calling the desert "its place" in Rv 12: 6, 14.

In Jeremiah, the image of Jerusalem as the bride can be clearly seen and there are many texts that indicate her infidelity towards her husband (Jr 2: 2, 20-25; 3: 1, 4-5, 14, 20; 32). Sometimes the tenor changes from the "city" to the "nation" and the vehicle is first a "woman" and then it is spoken to, in a feminine way, as if it were talking about a "camel."⁷⁶ Jeremiah also presents the close relationship that exists

73. Mays, 20; Tuell, 3-4; Eichrodt, 201; Wevers, 94.

74. Block, 466, considers Jr 3: 1-13 as an echo of Hs 2: 1-23; Galambush, 53-55; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 315.

75. Galambush, 53-55; Blenkinsopp, 79, believes that Ezekiel describes the story in colors much darker than Jeremiah.

76. Galambush, 44-46, 54-55, the tenor is not fixed, it is fluid in character as in Hs 2, 4, 10 and 11 where the tenor also changes constantly without prior notice

between women as cities and as lands, “their past is already affecting the earth.”⁷⁷ It is also imperative to note the comparative relationship of “better than - worse than,” between Israel and Judah, Samaria and Jerusalem (Jr 3).

Hosea

Hs 2: 1-3: 5 is practically the original of what is Ezk 16. There, the same images of conjugal and family relationship can be found. Even both Hosea and Ezekiel end the story of infidelity with a reconciliation by divine initiative.⁷⁸ Instead of Jerusalem, Hosea speaks against Samaria. The condemnation that is described is that of prostitution in the sense of depending on lovers, foreign political powers.⁷⁹ These alliances, as can be seen in the rest of the biblical account, are considered a prelude to idolatry.⁸⁰ For this reason, when the people are condemned for prostitution, not only their political relations are mentioned, but both political and religious ones. This unity or relationship between the two is described extensively and literally in the story of King Solomon (1 Kg 3: 1-2, 10: 1-11: 43).

77. Ibid., 55-57, it is suggested that this affecting of her toward the earth is because of the conditions of the covenant in Dt 24: 4 and 28: 23-24.

78. Alonso and Sicre, 728; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 315.

79. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 312, says that even in Hosea this prostitute receives payment from her lovers.

80. Galambush, 49-50; Wevers, 94.

Hosea is the first biblical writer to personify God as the husband, but this should not consider something original to him as Galambush suggests,⁸¹ since this is another common image for the ANE; the god as husband of the city where his dwelling is. As in Ezekiel, the husband does not have an oppressive power over his wife. The wife is free to make her decisions regardless of what the husband thinks or does to avoid her infidelity. She must, however, face the consequences of her actions, not because the husband demands it, but because the law establishes it. An implication of this symbolic act of marriage is the result of having children. This idea of God as husband and father is also seen in Ezekiel.⁸²

Nahum

Nahum does not speak of Jerusalem as a woman, but of Nineveh. Here also this city is called a prostitute, in a metaphorical way, even if it is not part of the chosen people of God. Galambush believes that although she is called and condemned as a prostitute, she is not credited with the status of anyone's wife, since Yahweh would be defending the honor of another god and this would imply

81. Galambush, 52. Galambush suggests that this concept is original to Hosea. She is right that Hosea is the first to put Yahweh at that level in the relationship, but we must not ignore the common use of this image in the ANE (Schöpflin, 109). She rightly states that, "the metaphor demands its vulnerability (that of God) as a rejected and wounded husband whose honor has been compromised." This image of God also links Hosea with Ezekiel.

82. Schöpflin, 110; Gile, 90 and 101, suggests that the use of this image of God is based on the song of Moses in Dt 32 and that both Hosea and other prophets used this song as the basis of some of their prophecies.

accepting the existence of that other god,⁸³ so God takes responsibility to punish her for adulteress as a foreign woman. But as already mentioned, the sovereignty of God gives Him the right to make nations responsible for their actions before Him. Condemning her adultery does not imply in any way having to admit the existence of another god; in any case, it implies her relationship with God as part of the universal domain that He possesses.⁸⁴

Usage in the New Testament

Jesus

The New Testament takes many subjects and ideas that Ezekiel manifests.⁸⁵

One of the characters of the New Testament who was very influenced by Ezekiel is Jesus. W. A. Curtis, quoted by Bullock, suggests that the relationship between Ezekiel

83. Galambush, 40-41.

84. Tim Laniak, quoted in Pratico and Van Pelt, 37-38, comments that the inhabitants of the nations neighboring Israel are considered brothers (allegorically or metaphorically) of Israel (Am 1: 9,11). He suggests the possibility of this phenomenon because of real covenants that existed among them, but it could also present a sample of the perspective of the universal relationship of God with all nations as vassals. The same could be applied to the use of the metaphor of adultery when it is used to describe other nations.

85. *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / VI. New Testament Uses of Ezekiel, offers a list of verses from the New Testament that refer to specific texts of Ezekiel and these are just some, as will be seen later.

and the mind of Christ be studied more.⁸⁶ Jesus takes at least six things from Ezekiel, according to Bullock: (1) the use of parables to illustrate his messages, (2) the theme of “knowledge of God,” (3) the phrase “son of man,” (4) the theme of “zeal” for the temple, (5) the resurrection as the inaugural event of the new eschatological era and (6) the role of “mediator.”⁸⁷ Possibly the “judgment of Jesus” could be added in Mt 23:29, as Eichrodt⁸⁸ suggests and the use of the husband metaphor to represent Jesus. Although Jesus makes no explicit reference to Jerusalem as His wife, He certainly identifies Himself as the “husband” (Mt 9:15; 25: 1-13).⁸⁹ It would be implicit then, to interpret His people as His wife or bride; as other New Testament writers emphasize. Moskala is the one who makes a more specific connection between Jesus and the metaphor of the husband of Ezk 16. He identifies Ezk 16: 59-

86. W. A. Curtis, *Jesus Christ the Teacher: A Study of His Method and Message Based Mainly on the Earlier Gospels* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 138, quoted in Bullock, “Ezekiel, Bridge Between the Testaments,” *JETS* 25, n° 1 (1982), in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016), 23. Bullock mentions that Curtis “gives an impressive list of affinities between the life and message of Ezekiel and that of our Lord.”

87. Bullock, “Ezekiel, Bridge Between the Testaments,” 29-31. *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / VI. New Testament Uses of Ezekiel / 3. Jesus and Ezekiel make the same connection between the phrase “son of man” between Ezekiel and Jesus. Instead, McIver, 264, interprets the relationship, concerning this phrase, between Dn 7:13 and Jesus.

88. Eichrodt, 213.

89. Richard Lehmann, “Las dos cenas,” in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-II*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2011), 272.

63 as a messianic prophecy whose fulfillment is the true atonement for sins, which is achieved only through sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.⁹⁰

In Mt 23: 37-39 the following is read:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it! Look, your house is left to you desolate! For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' (NET)

This text implicitly categorizes Jesus as the husband of Jerusalem and the father of its inhabitants. As in Ezk 16, Jerusalem is a murderer whose victims are her children; here the text is not clear in identifying whether the prophets are spoken of as part of their children, but it is known from the Old Testament that they were. The prophets were always of the people of God; before the kingdom (Samuel and others), in the united kingdom (Nathan and others) and even in the divided kingdom (Elijah, Jeremiah, and others); both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah had their local prophets.

Paul

Not many theologians recognize the great influence of the book of Ezekiel in the writings of Paul. Those who do, see the theological relationship between Paul's

90. Moskala, 46.

letter to the Galatians and Ezekiel.⁹¹ In Gl 4, Paul uses the element of allegory and concludes that the eternal covenant is based on the covenant made to Abraham. His offspring with Sarah (of promise, faith, freedom and grace) are part of the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. They are also children, therefore citizens, all those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition to including the Gentiles as children of the promise, he explicitly identifies them as adopted children (Gl 4: 3-7, Rm 8:15 and chapter 11, Eph 1: 5). Now she, the heavenly Jerusalem becomes, metaphorically, the “mother” of all - the church/people of God - and not the earthly Jerusalem.⁹² In Galatians, Paul clearly identifies two “Jerusalems” (the heavenly and the earthly) symbolized by two women (Sarah and Agar). Adding one more woman to the equation, as a counterpart to the other, is something original to Paul, although his element of “inclusion” is not.

This (inclusion) is an element that is part of the eschatological prophecy of Ezk 16: 59-63. In Eph 2: 1-22 and 5: 21-33, Paul identifies the church as the beloved wife of Christ.⁹³ He identifies the gentiles as adoptive children, who, when incorporated into the church, become one body with the legitimate children

91. F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary (NIBC)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002-2004), book version: 5.1.50, Pradis CD-ROM, version 5.17.0014, see “Part Two: The Old Testament / Ezekiel / V. Allegory and Event (16: 1-19: 14) / i. The unfaithful bride (16: 1-63)”; Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (DBI)* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 571. David A. Jones, *Citas y referencias al Antiguo Testamento en el Nuevo Testamento* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2011), see “Ezk 16:61, 63,” only consider the use of Ezk 16 in Ro 6:21.

92. Woudstra, 38-39.

93. Blois, see, “Women.”

(believing Jews).⁹⁴ There Paul also declares how it is possible for this to happen: by means of the cross. McIver, in harmony with Paul's allegorical/metaphorical application, says that "the church is the receiving nation," then, "the promises of the kingdom, having an organic link between the church and Israel."⁹⁵

John

John and Revelation are the NT books that most allude to the book of Ezekiel, especially Revelation and its symbols.⁹⁶ Some, as Bullock emphasizes, consider Ezekiel the "Father of the Apocalyptic,"⁹⁷ making his prophecy an apocalyptic resource.⁹⁸ Themes found in Ezekiel are repeated in Revelation; like the sealing of God's people, the ruin of Jerusalem, theophany, resurrection, Gog and Magog, the

94. C. Marvin Pate, "Church" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996).

95. McIver, 264

96. *DOTP*, 223; Roberto Badenas, "La nueva Jerusalén, ciudad santa," in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-II*, ed. Frank B Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2011), 308. Alonso and Sicre, 679-680; *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / VI. The New Testament use of Ezekiel. through Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / VI. The New Testament use of Ezekiel. /2. Ezekiel's influence on John, gives the following list of verses in Revelation that refer to verses in Ezekiel: Rv 1:15; 4: 3; 6; 19: 6; 20: 8; 21: 10-27; and 22: 1,2.

97. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*, 235-236.

98. Bullock, "Ezekiel, Bridge Between the Testaments," 23, shows Ezekiel as the resource of the "imagery and phraseology" of Revelation.

new temple and the new city.⁹⁹ Although John never quotes the Old Testament directly, there are two ways in which John uses the Old Testament as a reference: “direct allusions” and “echoes.”¹⁰⁰

Rv 12 talks about a woman/mother and tells what happens to her. She gives birth to the male child and his brothers, the rest of their offspring. She is sent to the desert, to her place (which God has prepared for her), where she seeks refuge from her adversary, the dragon. Could she be representing a city? Rv 17-18 also shows a woman who identifies “Babylon” symbolically.¹⁰¹ This woman could be metaphorically symbolizing the city of Babylon. Another woman is mentioned in Rv 19 and 21. This woman is the wife of the Lamb who well represents the saved (the church). Their meeting with Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is presented metaphorically as the wedding celebration banquet.¹⁰² John identifies it as the holy city, the “New Jerusalem,” and possibly describes it in contrast to the earthly Jerusalem.¹⁰³ Could it

99. Jean-Pierre Prévost, *Para leer el Apocalipsis* (Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1994), 44, 62; James W. Knox, *El libro de Apocalipsis*, La serie de Comentarios en honor a Cristo (DeLand, FL: THE BIBLE Baptist Church, 2014), 42, 46.

100. Paulien, 85.

101. W. B. Nelson Jr., “Prostitute” in *EDBT*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), considers that her real name or identity is Rome.

102. Siegfried H. Horn, *Diccionario Bíblico Adventista del Séptimo Día*, ed. Aldo D. Orrego (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Casa Editorial Sudamericana, 1995), see “Matrimonio.”

103. Schoville, see “Jerusalem,” equates the earthly Jerusalem with the city of Rv 11 which is symbolically called Egypt and Sodom.

be that all these women of Revelation represent cities? If so, which cities? A possible answer to these questions will be proposed in chapter five, "Allusion of the story in Revelation," of this investigation.

Chapter Three: Reconstruction of the Story

Previous Considerations

For this reconstruction of the story of Jerusalem as Yahweh's wife, the Hebrew text provided by the BHS will be translated. The proper annotations will be made when necessary and will be placed as footnotes. Things to consider in the translation:

1. Many of the words found in Ezk 16 are exclusive,¹ only appear in his book or only appear in this chapter of the book. Therefore, the translation will be based on the definition provided by more than one lexicon to express the fullest sense of the word.
2. Personal pronouns will be highlighted according to the emphasis given by the Hebrew and not looking for a refined translation in this regard.
3. Ezk 16 will be the base text, although much content will be added from Ezk 23. The phrases repeated between the two chapters will only be quoted from chapter 16 and not from chapter 23.
4. In Ezk 23 God addresses Jerusalem in both the 2nd and the 3rd person.² For the purposes of this research and the literary coherence in joining both chapters the pronouns will be changed from 3rd person to 2nd (when it is

1. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 16, recognizes the originality of Ezekiel despite his extensive use of other authors such as Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zephaniah. He gives a list of Ezekiel's original phrases and mentions that there is a long list of verbs and nouns peculiar to Ezekiel.

2. Possible rejection as part of the rhetoric.

convenient for reading fluency and will be made known to the reader through a footnote).

5. Ezk 16 and 23 use the metaphor explicitly,³ but the last chapters of Ezekiel's book relate the prophecy of the outcome of the woman's story using the metaphor implicitly. These restoration prophecies amplify the last section of Ezk 16. Since restoration is promised in its metaphorical state, it would be expected that the final vision of Ezekiel, the new temple and the new city, would also be explicitly metaphorical. This does not happen because the purpose of the rhetorical use of the metaphor has already been fulfilled. The chapters of condemnation and reasons for which the trial came had their fulfillment. The people did not need more shocking images to point out their sins because the trial had already taken place. Now they needed hope, something direct and tangible that will give them courage.
6. Only translation annotations will be made to the base chapters (16 and 23).
7. Parentheses that may appear within the story are not personal additions. These are sections that according to English grammar should go in parentheses.

3. Galambush, 89-125, literary unit between Ezk 16 and 23 (use of metaphor).

The Story of Woman Jerusalem

The word of the Lord came to me and said: “Son of man, let Jerusalem know her abominations. Say to her: ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh⁴ to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and

4. Willem VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis (NIDOTTE)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 275, says about יְהוָה, “... the form may signify majesty or intensification; sing vbs. are used because its meaning was similar to בָּעַל (# 1251), it may have emerged as the suitable alternative. In a great majority of instances יְהוָה is directly linked to Yahweh (315 ×). It is rarely used in divine speech (5 ×) ... A large percentage of the occurrences of יְהוָה for God are in the prophets (320 ×, 217 × in Ez) and the Ps (55 ×). Prominently featured in prophetic messenger formulas (Is 3:15; 10:24), it may be especially associated with the authority of the word of God. In some texts יְהוָה or יְהוָה has a more universal reference, the “Lord of all the earth” (Jos 3:13; Ps 97: 5; Mc 4:13) or “Lord of lords” (Dt 10:17; Ps 136 :3); This and other factors have led to the suggestion that יְהוָה means “Lord of all.” The universal authority of God may as well be the basic sense of the word.” For a study on יְהוָה יְהוָה, see Peter C. Hamilton, “Theological Implications of the Divine Title Adonai Yahweh [Hebrew] in Ezekiel,” PhD dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990.

your mother was a Hittite.⁵ When you were born, on that day your umbilical cord was not cut, you were not washed by water for cleansing,⁶ you were not salted with salt, nor were you wrapped in wrappings. No eye had mercy on you to make you one of these things out of compassion for you, instead you were thrown on the face of the field in abhorrence to your life on the day you were born.

Then, I passed by you and I saw you wallowing⁷ in your blood. I told you, being in your blood: Live! I told you, being in your blood: Live! I gave you a crowd like the grass of the field, I made you abundant and you grew up. You entered puberty,⁸ your breasts were firm and your hair⁹ grew abundantly; and you were completely naked. (Ezk 16: 1-7). There were two women daughters of a mother, they prostituted themselves with the Egyptians (they prostituted themselves in their youth). There their breasts were squeezed (their virginal breasts were squeezed). The name of the elder was Oholah, and her sister's name was Oholibah. (Ezk 23: 2-4a).

Again, I passed by you and when I looked at you, behold, your time was a time of love. So, I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness. I made you an oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord, and you were mine. (Ezk 16: 8). And they were mine and gave birth to me, sons and daughters. The name of Oholah is Samaria and of Oholibah is Jerusalem. (Ezk 23: 4b).

Then I washed you with water and I drained your blood from upon you¹⁰ and anointed you with oil. I dressed you in colorful cloth,¹¹ I gave you leather sandals, I wrapped you in linen and I covered you with silk.¹² I adorned you with ornaments, I put bracelets on your hands, a necklace on your neck, a ring on your nose, earrings

5. Hettite or Hittite? Some readings of the text in different versions of the Spanish language differ in the translation of this Hebrew word חֵתִי. The BNP, CAB, NVI and PER versions translate it as “hittite,” while LBA, NBH, R60, R95, RVA and RVG translate it as “Hettite.” The translations in English (NET, ESV, NIV, NKJ and ASV) and Greek (BGT and LXT) do not recognize difference between “Hettite” and “hittite” but all the versions translate as “hittite.” RA Torrey, *The New Topical Text Book* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1897), see “Hittites,” gives a list of all the Biblical mentions of the Hittites and their descriptions without mentioning whether they are in all cases the same name or if you could talk about different groups with the same name. GA Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 160-161, is right when he comments that the Hebrews themselves are a group of Aramaic descent who immigrate to Canaan. They are not native, but they are related to the inhabitants of this land. Cooke also highlights that the Canaanites were a mixed group and the Hittites were a non-Semitic people who had mixed with them after the Hittite invasion. He considers the mention of the Hittites in this part of Ezekiel's narrative as a non-historical term for the group of Subartu people who were not Semites either and points out that the biblical (Hittite) names Uriah and Araunah may belong to this group (on the other hand, the names of Melchizedek and Adoni-Zedek are considered to be of Semitic roots). A more specific proposal, to whether Hittites and Hettites should be considered distinct groups or one, is provided by the hittitologist Harry A. Hoffner Jr., who is quoted in Hoerth and McRay, 215. He considers that they are two groups, the Hittites (from Anatolia / Hatti, *ibid.*, 212) and the Hettites (inhabitants of Palestine, *ibid.*, 215). The differences between both groups are difficult to identify biblically because the Hebrew only provides a word for both groups of people. The Hittites established kingdoms and invaded the territories of Babylon (at the time of the Old Kingdom 1650-1400 BC, *ibid.*, 212) and the territory of Syria (at the time of the New Kingdom 1400-1180 BC, *ibid.*) Until they were defeated by the Assyrians in 1180 BC. These, Hoffner considers, should be those mentioned in the times of the monarchy of Israel. The Hettites, inhabitants of Palestine in the second century, are those mentioned in pre-monarchical writings (*ibid.*, 215). So, which of the two groups of people is the most suitable for Ezk 16: 3? Although Ezekiel's writing dates from the monarchical era, the metaphor is referring to the pre-monarchical era, the Hettites, since Yahweh has not yet made any covenant with Jerusalem. These Hettites can be identified as the descendants of Het (Gn 10:15, 23, 25, 27 and 49). A detail that could support this idea is the abundant use in the book of Ezekiel of references to tribes and nations descended from the sons of Noah, who only appear here (Ezekiel), in Gn 10 and in the count of the genealogies in 1 Ch 1. At least 25 allusions can be found between Gn 10 and the book of Ezekiel, 13 of which are recognized by Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2009), 91-97. It is very likely that Ezekiel wanted to begin the historical recount of Jerusalem from the second creation when Yahweh had not yet made a covenant with Jerusalem or the Hebrew people.

6. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic (BDB)* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 606, translates מִשְׁעָרַי “washed for cleansing” “citing directly Ezk 16: 4 since it is the only place where it appears.

7. *BDB*, 100-101, unique instances of the hithpael מִתְבּוֹסֵסָה are Ezk 16: 6 and 22, it should be understood as the undefined movements of an infant; William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (CHALOT)* (Grand Rapids, MI: E. J. Brill and Wm B. Eerdmans, 2000), 35, translates it as kicks without precise direction or wallowing.

8. Galambush, 93-95; Greenberg, 276, “developed the loveliest adornments”; Zimmerli, 324, translates here as times of entering menstrual period, although a literal translation would be adorned with the greatest ornaments. This phrase of “adorning with ornaments” (use of the same verbal root) is also found in Ezk 16:11 and 23:40 without any relation to having a menstrual period as Zimmerli suggests. In this study it is translated as “entering puberty” because of the context of growth within the same verse; puberty can encompass both ideas since it is at this stage that the woman enters menstrual periods and begins to adorn herself to capture the attention of men.

9. Wevers, 96. Following the context of growth and puberty, the hair that grows at this stage can refer to the pubic hair given that its nudity is mentioned.

10. This image of “draining your blood from upon you” may be illustrating that the blood from which it is cleansed is not her own blood that flows from within her (menstrual), but blood that she had “over/upon” her from birth when she was not cleansed of the uterine blood of her mother. This cleaning could refer to a possible marriage ritual in which the husband “bathed” the wife, according to JW Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary Based on Iezekiël* in Codex Vaticanus, eBook Academic Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016), see “An Adulterous History.”

11. *CHALOT*, 347, רִקְמָה, has a connotation of variety. Here it must be translated as “fabric of various colors” according to the lexicon. In Ezk 17: 3 as “plumage variety.” Note the idea of variety in both uses in the book of Ezekiel. Wevers, 96, mentions that these colored fabrics were commonly worn by queens.

12. Galambush, 69, her clothing is composed of materials whose mention has only occurred in the context of the materials used in the construction and elaboration of the tabernacle; Olley, see “An Adulterous History.”

on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. You adorned yourself¹³ with gold and silver, your clothing was linen, silk and fabric of many colors. You ate flour, honey and oil; you were beautiful in a great way and you prospered until you reigned.¹⁴ (Ezk 16: 9-14).

13. *CHALOT*, 265, the verb *העֵד* is used here in Ezk 16 and Is 61:10 (“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; I will be overjoyed because of my God. For he clothes me in garments of deliverance; he puts on me a robe symbolizing vindication. I look like a bridegroom when he wears a turban as a priest would; I look like a bride when she puts on her jewelry.”) The difference of use in Ezk 16:11 and Is 61:10 is that here the second person is the subject of the action possibly to describe that she used the adornments that her husband had given her, she identified herself with him.

14. Galambush, 95, “The clothing in which Yahweh dresses his bride reflects Ezekiel's focus on Jerusalem as the location of the temple. The woman's clothing is more elegant than any other described in the Bible ... the woman is clothed in material mentioned elsewhere only as the covering for the tabernacle ... commonly used to describe the priestly garments ... The woman who is 'fit to be queen' is adorned with the same materials that adorned Yahweh's holy place and is fed offerings for the tabernacle.” Olley, see “An Adulterous History,” “(flour and oil) ... are linked together in the consecration of priests (Ex 29: 2), general offerings (Ex 29:40, Lv 2: 1, 2, etc.), offerings at the dedication of the tabernacle (Nm 7:13, etc.) and in the list of luxury goods in Rv 18:13, and while ‘honey’ is excluded from offerings (Lv 2:11), it is regularly in descriptions of the land God is giving to the people (Ex 3:8, 17, etc.). Thus, all the vocabulary of ornaments, clothing and food has rich associations with the best and most luxurious, often in contexts of the worship of God and his provision.”

Figure 5. Illustration of Jerusalem as wife¹⁵



14. Personal illustration based on the text.

Oholah prostituted herself being mine. She went after her lovers, her Assyrian neighbors ... She did not leave her fornications with the Egyptians because she had slept with them in the days of her youth ... So, I gave her into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the Assyrians, whom she desired.

... you saw¹⁶ this and corrupted yourself in your desires more than she and your fornications were more than your sister's. (Ezk 23: 5, 8-11). You trusted in your beauty and prostituted yourself because of your fame. You spilled your fornications¹⁷ on everyone who was passing by,¹⁸ you were his. You took your clothes and made for yourself high places of colored blankets¹⁹ and prostituted

15. Here the verbs and pronouns appear in 2nd person, but they have been translated into 3rd to maintain the flow of the narrative.

16. *CHALOT*, 388, see תְּזוּנִית, “obscene manner,” direct quote to Ezk 16: 15-36 and 23: 7-35; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)*, ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 1994-2000), see תְּזוּנִית, occurs only in Ezekiel and has no parallels in the languages of the time. It must be understood as obscene practices and is metaphorically used for idol worship (directly cites Ezk 16: 5, 20 and 22); *BDB*, 275-276, “of intercourse with other deities, considered as harlotry, involving actual prostitution ... esp. of Isr., Judah, and Jerus. under fig. of lewd woman Ezk 16:15,” translated as “fornication” based on international treaties with religious references (Ezk 16:15, 20, 22, 25, 26, 29, 33, 34, 36; 23: 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 29, 35, 43).

17. Galambush, 97, points out the use of the verb “to pass by,” in participle, here contrasts Yahweh’s passing by from the first verses. Yahweh was passing by and he sees her in her blood, then passes again and sees that it is time for love, now she prostitutes herself with those who are passing by, later (when she is restored) those who pass by will see her restored (“cultivated” and not “desolate” Ezk 36:34).

18. *CHALOT*, 124, בְּמִזְבְּחֵי טָלְאוֹת, “colored padding, made of quilting, for sacred prostitution Ezk 16:16.”

yourself over them. This should not have happened or will happen again.²⁰ You took the utensils that embellished you (those of gold and silver), which I had given you and made for you images of man²¹ to prostitute yourself with them. You took your colored clothes and covered them.²² You put my oil and incense in front of them;²³ my bread (which I had given you), the flour, the oil and the honey that I gave you for food, you placed them in front of them as a pleasant smell. That's right, declares the Lord Yahweh.

And you took your sons and daughters whom you gave birth to me and murdered them for sacrifice to them, so that they might eat. Were your fornications few, that you murdered my children and made them pass through fire for them?²⁴ And with all your abominations and fornications you did not remember the days of

19. יִהְיֶה וְלֹא בִּאֲזֹת לֹא, Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 107, "They are not coming, and it will not lie." Smith comments on the possibility of understanding this part as an expression of disgust for the actions of Jerusalem that show her idolatry as an act of freedom of choice since she is the one that actively acts in her fornications (Olley, see "An Adulterous History," calls her "the daring initiator"); Zimmerli, 326, "not by sign (not entering?), and it will not be," may be a more likely translation but for him (Zimmerli) there is still no satisfactory explanation to justify the phrase; Wevers, 97, "the like has never been, nor ever shall be."

20. It refers to idols – "images" in Hebrew is a masculine noun.

21. Bodi, 438-439, shows that dressing idols was a ritual of the Mesopotamian cults.

22. It can be as an offering or sacrifice according to the context, see footnote 11 of this chapter.

23. *CHALOT*, 263, see "hif.," "let pass through (fire)= offer (sacrifice);" Wevers, 98.

your youth in which you were completely naked and rolled in your blood, so you were.

And after all your iniquity (woe, woe to you! Declares Yahweh the Lord), you built a platform,²⁵ on which you made a high place, in every square.²⁶ On each main road you built your high place. You made your beauty abominable when you opened your legs to everyone who was passing by and multiplied your fornications.

You prostituted yourself with the Egyptians, your neighbors whose genitals are huge,²⁷ and multiplied your fornication to anger me.²⁸ And behold, I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your portion. I gave you over to the mercy of the Philistine women²⁹ who hate you and are ashamed of your path of perversity. You also prostituted yourself with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you prostituted yourself with them, but you have not satiated yourself yet.

24. Ibid., 53 “גִּבּוֹ torus (rounded molding) of the altar-base Ezk 16:24, 31, 39.” Olley, see “An Adulterous History.”

25. Ibid., The platform is built to raise the pedestal on it (high place), it is the base, see footnote 19. She does this in every square, she builds; use of architectural language.

26. *CHALOT*, 56, גְּדֹלֵי “w. great (male) member Ezk 16:26”; Zimmerli, 327, “large genitals.”

27. Ibid., 162, לְהַכְעִיבֵנִי, see “hif.,” “offend, insult, provoke to rage (obj. God).”

28. פְּלִשְׁתִּים בָּנוֹת, the literal translation would be “daughters of the Philistines,” but generally understood as the Philistine women.

You multiplied your fornication to the land of the merchants, Chaldea, and you have not yet satiated yourself. (Ezk 16: 15-29). But you increased³⁰ your fornications when you saw men engraved on the wall, images of Chaldeans engraved in red ... you desired them when your eyes fell on them and you sent messengers to the Chaldeans. And the Babylonians came to you, to your bed of love and they corrupted you with their fornications. When you were corrupted with them, your soul turned away from them. When your fornications and your nakedness were discovered, my soul departed from you as when my soul departed from your sister. (Ezk 23: 14-18).

How sickening is your heart³¹ (declares Yahweh the Lord) in doing all these actions as a shameless prostitute!³² When you built your platform on each main road and made your place high in each square you did not go as a prostitute because you despised the pay. Adulteress! Who instead of her husband, takes strangers. All prostitutes are rewarded, but you, you give your reward to all your lovers and bribe them to come to you from the surroundings to your fornications. And the opposite happened to you that the women in your fornications, not asked to fornicate and you gave the salary instead of receiving it, you were different. (Ezk 16: 30-34).

29. Here the verbs and pronouns appear in 2nd person, but they have been translated into 3rd to maintain the flow of the narrative.

30. The use of *חַלּוֹת* here could be of exclamation, according to the indications of Williams, 53, about this participle. *BDB*, 51, translates *חַלּוֹת* as weak or languishing; *CHALOT*, 20, hot or with a fever. The only instance of the qal in the OT, participle adjective absolute predicate followed by the construct without article; see footnote 16 in this chapter, Olley already described/called her “the daring initiator.”

31. Apposition followed by the attributive adjective.

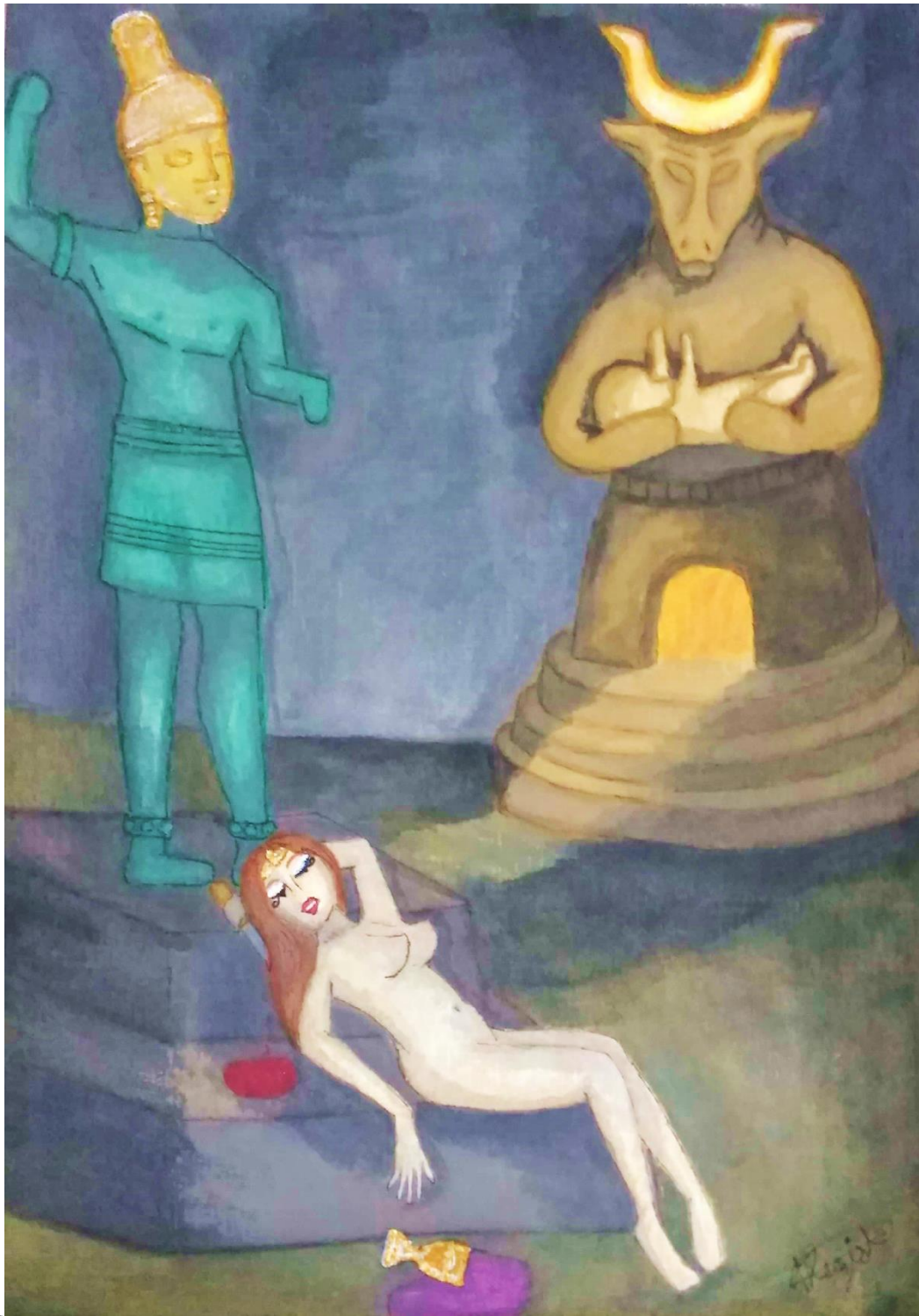
Then you increased your fornications by remembering the days of your youth when you prostituted yourself in the land of Egypt ... You longed for the wickedness of your youth. (Ezekiel 23: 19-21). Therefore, prostitute, listen to the word of the Lord. Thus, says the Lord Yahweh: For your lust has been shed,³³ your nakedness has been uncovered (in your whoredoms) over your lovers and your abominations over your lovers (like the blood of your children that you gave them). Therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers whom you pleased³⁴ (all those you loved and those you hated). From the surroundings I will gather them against you and I will discover your nakedness to them so that they may see all your nakedness.³⁵ (Ezk 16: 35-37). To the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, to those of Pekod, Shoa, Koa and all the Assyrians along with them. (Ezk 23:23a).

32. גִּזְעָתָהּ -BDB, 639, defines it as lust, fornication or obscene behavior; CHALOT, 235, “mng. Uncert. ∴ sugg. ‘Female genitals,’ but more likely ‘menstruation’;” Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 10, “female genital ‘distillation’ produced by sexual arousal;” Zimmerli, 330, “sexual extravagance” or “menstruation;” Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 110, “filthiness.” If you compare the “pour out” here with the “pour out” of verse 15, the root of the verb is the same. In verse 15 the direct object is his fornications and it is probable that Ezekiel makes reference to that event of the 15th in the 36th, thus making 36 a summary of all her evils in the form of accusation.

33. BDB, 787, translates this phrase as “to whom thou wast pleasing.”

34. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 9, highlights the use of exposing the female sexual organ for the purpose of causing shame.

Figure 6. Illustration of Jerusalem as an adulterous and murderer³⁶



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35. Personal illustration based on the text.

Then I will judge you as adulterers and those who shed blood are judged and I will give you blood of anger and jealousy. I will hand you over to them and demolish your platform, tear down your high places, remove your clothes from you, take the utensils that embellished you and leave you completely naked. Then a multitude will rise against you, they will stone you with stones, they will smash you with their swords. (Ezk 16: 38-40). And they will come against you with weapons, chariots, wagons and a multitude of peoples. They will put shields and helmets against you and I will put judgment before them and judge you with their judgments. I will put my jealousy against you, with anger they will press you. They will tear off your nose and ears, whatever remains of you will fall by the sword, your sons and daughters will be taken, and your residue will be consumed by fire. They will take away your clothes and your utensils that embellished you. (Ezk 23: 24-26). They will burn your houses with fire and they will execute judgment on you in the sight of many women.

And I will take you out of prostitution and you will not give payment again. I will appease my anger with you and my zeal will be withdrawn from you. I will be silent, and I will not be angry again. Because you did not remember the days of your youth and you made me angry with all these things. Behold, your way I lay on your head (declares Yahweh the Lord) so that you do no more evil over all your abominations.

Behold, everyone who uses proverbs, about you will say a proverb, saying: Like mother, like daughter. You are your mother's daughter, abhorring husband and children, and sister of your sisters are you, who hated their husbands and their

children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. Your eldest sister was Samaria, she and her daughters lived north of you. Your younger sister lived south of you, Sodom and her daughters.³⁷ It is not that you walked in their ways and in their abominations, but that, as if it were very little, you corrupted yourself more than them in all your ways.

As I live, declares the Lord Yahweh, your sister Sodom and her daughters did not do what you and your daughters have done.³⁸ Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom your sister: arrogance, full of bread, quiet without worry, (so it was with her and her daughters) and did not strengthen the hand of the afflicted and the needy.³⁹ They exalted themselves and made abomination before me, so when I saw it, I took them away. And, Samaria did not commit half of your sins that you did with your abominations (more than theirs). You have justified your sisters with all your abominations that you have done. (Ezk 16: 42-51).

You walked the path of your sister, so I'll put her cup in your hands. Thus, says the Lord Yahweh: You shall drink of your sister's cup, which is deep and wide

35. Millard Lind, *Ezekiel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), accessed November 6, 2016, see "Restoration 16: 53-63," comments that both Samaria and Sodom only represent small towns around Jerusalem.

36. אֶם-שֶׁקֶטָה - possibly the "privative" use of אֶם according to the study of Hebrew grammar by Williams, 160.

37. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 149, 162-164, 175, comments that the inhospitality of which Sodom is accused must be understood as a sexual sin because of its context and because her sins are described as abominations. Davidson also believes that the interpretation must be not only of rape, but of same-sex relationships prohibited in the legislature of the book of Leviticus.

because it contains much laughter and mockery. You will be filled with drunkenness and pain. The cup of your sister Samaria is a cup of horror and devastation. You will drink it until you empty it, you will break its fragments and you will tear your breasts, because I have said it; declares the Lord Yahweh. (Ezk 23: 31-34). Also load your insult, because you mediated for your sisters with your sins, more abominable than theirs; they were justified by you. Now you, embarrass yourself and load your insult for having justified your sisters.⁴⁰

I will bring restoration to Sodom and her daughters,⁴¹ to Samaria and her daughters and to you along with them; so that you can carry your insult and be ashamed of all that you have done in comforting them. Your sisters Sodom and Samaria,⁴² and their daughters, will return to their first state, just as you and your daughters will return to their first state. Was not your sister Sodom a bad example⁴³ to you in the days of your greatness, before your wickedness was discovered? As at

38. Claus Westermann, *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*, trans. Keith Crim (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1991), 253, considers that the oracle expression should appear here, but it is not explicit as in Ezk 29:21.

39. For a study of the restoration of Sodom, see Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 113-114.

40. The relationship of sisterhood between Samaria, Sodom and Jerusalem may be based on the use of these names as geographical places, not peoples, as mentioned in footnote 3 of this chapter. These three cities belong to the same offspring of the sons of Canaan (Canaanites), son of Ham, see Figure 6. The descendants of Cam alluded to in Ezekiel, and Figure 8. Map indicating the territory of the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem.

41. CHALOT, 375, לְשִׁמוּעָה בְּפִיךָ ...” be on the tongue of = be ‘bad news,’ a bad example Ezk 16:56.”

that time, now you are the reproach of the Syrians and all around you, the Philistines around you hate you. Carry your wickedness and your abominations, declares Yahweh. (Ezk 16: 52- 58).”

And the LORD said to me: “Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare their abominations, because they have committed adultery and have blood on their hands. With their idols they committed adultery, even more, their children whom they gave birth to for me, they made them pass through fire for them, so that they could eat. They also did this to me, they corrupted my sanctuary and on that same day they profaned my Sabbaths. They murdered my children for their idols and entered my sanctuary, on that same day, to desecrate it. Behold, they have done so in the midst of my house.

They also did this, they sent for men who came from far away ... ‘For them you washed, you painted your eyes and adorned yourself with adornments. You sat on a large mattress and the table was prepared in front of the mattress and incense and oil was placed on it ...’ and I said about the one that was worn out of adulteries: now they will prostitute themselves committing their fornications with her. They approached her like a prostitute, and they joined Oholah and Oholibah, wicked women. (Ezk 23: 36-44).

And thus, says the Lord Yahweh: I will do with you as you did;⁴⁴ that you despised the oath to break the covenant. (Ezk 16:59).⁴⁵ And righteous men will judge against them, in the judgment of the adulteresses and those who shed blood;

42. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 114, comments that, for breaking the marriage covenant, she must suffer the consequences and Olley, see "An Adulterous History," stresses that the initiative to bring Jerusalem to a change is from Yahweh. This phrase "I will do with you as you did" seems to allude to the statements of Yahweh in Jr 17:10, "I, the LORD, probe into people's minds. I examine people's hearts. I deal with each person according to how he has behaved. I give them what they deserve based on what they have done." and 21:14 "But I will punish you as your deeds deserve," says the LORD. 'I will set fire to your palace; it will burn up everything around it.' (NET)

43. Possibly Ezekiel uses this phrase to point out that the people had done exactly what Yahweh had warned them not to do in Lv 26: 14-33 and that the punishment mentioned in the previous verses was not to amaze them, because it had been part of the consequences of breaking the covenant: "If, however, you do not obey me and keep all these commandments—if you reject my statutes and abhor my regulations so that you do not keep all my commandments and you break my covenant—I for my part will do this to you: I will inflict horror on you, consumption and fever, which diminish eyesight and drain away the vitality of life. You will sow your seed in vain because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you ...You will sow your seed in vain because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you. You will be struck down before your enemies, those who hate you will rule over you ...If, in spite of all these things, you do not obey me, I will discipline you seven times more on account of your sins. I will break your strong pride ...I will bring on you an avenging sword, a covenant vengeance. Although you will gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you and you will be given into enemy hands. When I break off your supply of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven; they will ration your bread by weight, and you will eat and not be satisfied ...You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars, and I will stack your dead bodies on top of the lifeless bodies of your idols. I will abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will refuse to smell your soothing aromas. I myself will make the land desolate and your enemies who live in it will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and unsheathe the sword after you, so your land will become desolate and your cities will become a waste." (NET); Greenberg, 290-291, argues that here Ezekiel means that Yahweh will demonstrate the same hardness with which she showed him, not that Yahweh will violate the covenant because he actually keeps it.

for adulteresses and because there is blood on their hands. For thus says the Lord Yahweh: lift up against them a multitude, and to them give them over to terror and spoil. The multitude will bring stones against them and they will stone them and cut them with the sword. They will kill their sons and daughters and their houses will be set on fire. (Ezk 23: 45-47).

Yet, I,⁴⁶ I will remember my covenant⁴⁷ that I made with you in the days of your youth and I will establish an eternal covenant in your favor.⁴⁸ You will remember your ways and you will be humiliated when you receive your sisters, the eldest and the youngest, when I give them to you as daughters; and not because of your covenant. (Ezk 16: 60-61). Devourer of men you are, and you have left your

44. Bullock, 229 and 250, considers that all this last part of chapter 16 makes use of the first emphatic person (to reinforce the subject of the verb, God) to illustrate the change of emphasis between the divine action and the response of the human being.

45. The verb זָכַרְתִּי (remember), Yahweh being the subject in the first person, followed by the direct object אֶת-בְּרִיתִי (my covenant), appears only three times in the OT. The first time it happens is in Gn 9:15 (in context of the covenant that God makes with men after the flood of not destroying the earth in that way again, a possible reference to the Genesis story). The second in Lv 26:42 (here follows the narrative of the consequences of disobedience.) The last section of the chapter, like Ezk 16: 60-63, gives hope based on God “remembering” the covenant he made with his people: “However, when they confess their iniquity and their ancestors’ iniquity which they committed by trespassing against me, by which they also walked in hostility against me (and I myself will walk in hostility against them and bring them into the land of their enemies), and then their uncircumcised hearts become humbled and they make up for their iniquity, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. The land will be abandoned by them in order that it may make up for its Sabbaths while it is made desolate without them, and they will make up for their iniquity because they have rejected my regulations and have abhorred my statutes. In spite of this, however, when they are in the land of their enemies I will not reject them and abhor them to make a complete end of them, to break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God. I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD.” (NET). The third and final instance is here in Ezk 16:60.

46. Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Paris, France: J. Gabalda Editors, 1982), 34, 106, points out the similarity between the word used for “covenant” in Ezk 16:60, 62 and the use of that same word in Lv 26. Hurvitz believes that the words and their uses in both chapters are almost identical and that Ezekiel demonstrates a broad apprehension of Lv 26.

nation without children, that's the way you are. Therefore, you will no longer devour men again or leave your nation without children again, declares the Lord Yahweh. (Ezk 36: 8-14). And I, I will establish my covenant with you, then you will know that I am Yahweh.⁴⁹ (Ezk 16:62).’ ... and from that day the name of the city will be: Yahweh is there (Ezk 48: 35b). ‘So that you remember and no longer open your mouth because of your humiliation,⁵⁰ when I forgive⁵¹ everything you did, declares the Lord.’⁵² (Ezk 16:63).

47. Jenni Ernst and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (TLOT)* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 519-520, identify this as the “recognition formula” to emphasize, not the knowledge of Yahweh, but the recognition of His unique and sovereign power with respect to the action (or actions) that He has just executed (or declare that He will execute), “The recognition formula consistently combines the ‘statement of recognition’ yd’ kî ‘know that’ (‘you will know that’), usually appended as a result clause to a preceding announcement or mention of a particular divine activity, with some type of description of the content recognized. In addition to free formulations concerning Yahweh's unique nature to be recognized in Yahweh's historical declarations, the formula ’anî yhw’ ‘I am Yahweh’ occurs particularly as a strict statement of recognition, sometimes further expanded by appended statements. The statement of recognition is rooted in the nebulous realm of signs in which decisions are reached and unclarified situations are illuminated through symbolic acts ... This background is esp. clear for the recognition formulae that appear with particular frequency in the plague narratives associated with the Exodus tradition ... The recognition formula occurs elsewhere, primarily in prophecy, with a view to impending events as a final element of the ‘proof saying,’ so called because of the occurrence of the recognition formula ... predominantly in connection with judgment sayings against Ezekiel's own people, but also sayings that supersede announcements of judgment, such as Ezk 37:13; 39:28.”

48. Tuell, 106, believes that keeping silent and not opening the mouth further goes beyond the dimension of humiliation, involves a self-assessment.

49. See footnote 42, “Lv 26: 40-45.” For a study on the word כָּפַר and its use in this verse, see Moskala, 42-48.

50. Craigie, 121, considers the verses of 53-63 to be an addition to the narrative, by Ezekiel himself, after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

Figure 7. Illustration of Jerusalem as repented wife and mother⁵³



51. Personal illustration based on the text.

Chapter Four: Interpretations of the Story

Metaphorical

The metaphorical story of Jerusalem as a woman in Ezk 16 begins by talking about her origins or birth. It probably speaks of its origins, not as a people but as a territory. The Hebrews, as Cooke mentions,¹ are of Aramaic descent (descendants of Shem, son of Noah) not Canaanite. However, Ezekiel mentions that she is of Canaanite descent, being her father Amorite and her mother Hittite. Being of Canaanite origin, she may be equated with pagans, and unbelievers.² This image of pagan origin could have been used by Ezekiel to challenge the popular perception of the people who traced their origins to their ancestor Abraham.³ On the other hand, Anderson believes that the Canaanite origin of the infant must be understood theologically, not historically or archeologically.⁴ This research suggests an interpretation of both theological and historical origins.

1. Cooke, 160-161.

2. Ibid., "She had been a heathen all along;" Anderson, 408, "there was never a time when she was sinless;" Eichrodt, 205; Galambush, 81-82, 91, believes that she is, from birth, foreign to the Israelite community, rejected and considered as impure and worthless. In contrast to the "pagan" origin of Jerusalem (the people of God), the origins of Tyre (pagan city) are traced to Eden itself, in the presence of God (Ezk 28: 12-15).

3. Block, 474, also calls the "theologoumenon function" to this phenomenon of identifying the origins of Jerusalem with the Canaanites and using Canaan as a symbol of everything that goes against Israel and God.

4. Anderson, 409

The story continues with the abandonment of the infant in the field. Here the allusion of Jerusalem as a territory is very unlikely and should be understood as the childhood of a group of people.⁵ She is not attended to even at her birth⁶ and is left unclean from her mother's blood, her umbilical cord is not cut, and no one has compassion for her.⁷ In a legal sense, she did not belong to anyone, nor was she in anyone's custody.⁸ Until Yahweh passes by her and makes her grow greatly, quantitatively (gives a multitude of inhabitants) and qualitative (makes her breasts and her hair grow).⁹ This is the beginning of a relationship between God and the girl.

5. See section "Jeremiah" and footnote 66-67 of the previous chapter of this investigation. In the use of metaphor, it seems to be accepted that the tenor changes from a geographical location to a group of people. The city can represent both itself and a territory, as an inhabited place and as its inhabitants, without explicitly mentioning the change of tenor while the vehicle remains the same.

6. Hals, 106, considers the description of abandonment a complete exaggeration.

7. Meir Malul, "Adoption of Foundlings in the Bible and Mesopotamian Documents: A Study of Some Legal Metaphors in Ezekiel 16: 1-7," *JSOT* 46 (1990): 101-110, in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 6, 2016), presents biblical texts in which the same idea of "throwing out" what is unwanted and rejected, appears as a legislative action. Also, Malul presents extra biblical evidences of infants, who are born and "thrown" into the field (and other places) even though they are in their mother's uterine blood. This act of getting rid of the child without cleaning it leaves him without a legal guardian and opens the way for someone else, who wants to take care of the child, to adopt him through the cleansing act. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 458-459, 486, 501; Craigie, 108; Eichrodt, 204; Bodi, 436. Many theologians consider this situation a very common custom in the ANE.

8. Malul, 99; Bodi, 437, "ownerless domain."

9. Malul, 111-113, another form of adoption is to rescue the infant from an emergency that may cost the life of the child. The verbs "live" and "grow" may be giving the idea of a legal adoption by God in favor of this dying girl.

This relationship, probably, is that held by a father who provides for the growth and development of his daughter. Yahweh is responsible for making the infant grow up to become a young woman.¹⁰

The chronological events of the growth of Jerusalem in Ezk 16 can be expanded by details provided in chapter 23. Ezk 23: 2-4a sheds light on what happened to Jerusalem when she reached the stage of puberty. She and her sister “prostituted” themselves with the Egyptians in the days of their youth. This event happens after God helped her develop. The young woman who has grown up remains naked and vulnerable.¹¹ Prostitution here is not infidelity to a husband because she was not yet married. This prostitution can be considered as metaphorical first level prostitution,¹² sexual conduct free of supervisory authority. The fact of prostitution in Egypt in the days of her youth shows the limitation of the vehicle of the metaphor of Yahweh as her father, provider, but not guardian who takes charge of her custody.

10. It is in this sense that the metaphor of adoption comes into play. Yahweh takes responsibility of her growth and physical development as a father with a daughter.

11. Galambush 94, highlights the incompatibility of being adopted, because she is still vulnerable. This vulnerability is not due to Yahweh's ineffectiveness as an adoptive parent nor is it inconsistent with His role as a father. It must be kept in mind that Yahweh became her legal guardian only in the aspect of helping her survive the dying stage in which she had been found. As mentioned above, the use of the metaphor element is not a point-by-point correspondence. The same text shows in what specific aspect God became her adoptive father.

12. For a study on the different metaphoric levels of prostitution, see Galambush, 31.

Jerusalem, not being a virgin, marries Yahweh,¹³ who has proven to be a faithful provider and supporter. This marriage does not excuse or promote incest, it is not even part of the metaphor as some suggest.¹⁴ Yahweh was not her father literally or allegorically, the relationship they maintained was a provider - needed (dying); that is, metaphorical. The sense of adoption should not be understood as complete but partial, as the text suggests; from a provider (father) to the girl who, without His help, can die (daughter - girl in need of a sponsor). In addition, the text does not emphasize or detail the adoption event as giving too much importance to His role as a parent.

Upon entering into this contract and marriage oath, she acquires full legal status as wife.¹⁵ The marriage metaphor here is much more detailed and extensive than the adoption metaphor; emphasis is placed on this relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem. Among the details of this wedding ceremony are described elements that were part of the marriage rite¹⁶ and the trousseau of the bride that

13. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 426; Tuell, 102; Zimmerli, 339; Moskala, 42; Greenberg, 277; Galambush, 34, 95, when Yahweh entered this marriage, He not only became a participant but also a guarantor of the covenant (if the covenant was broken, not only would the husband be dishonored, he would also be the god whose name had been defamed because these oaths of loyalty were sworn before the god of the people).

14. L. Day, 208; Shields, 8; Galambush, 92; Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 143, commenting on Ezk 22, mentions the different types of incestuous acts that existed in the midst of the people and how these were considered sexual sins that went against their laws (Lv 18).

15. Eichrodt, 205-206.

16. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 382; Eichrodt, 206; Bodi, 438.

the groom was supposed to give her.¹⁷ Some of these are the bracelets, the ring in the nose and the crown. The complete attire she came to possess symbolized the relationship between her and her husband. This relationship was one of intimacy and closeness, provision and sustenance; a mutual covenant.¹⁸ Eichrodt declares that,

In choosing this woman to be his wife, He was not amusing Himself, but fully committing Himself to put His love into effect by finding a community, within which it was His will to enter an intimate relationship with His people and through it with all mankind.¹⁹

Unfortunately, being influenced by her sister (Ezk 16:51; 23:11), Jerusalem turned from being a faithful wife and mother²⁰ to an adulterous woman and

17. Wevers, 96; John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, No. 20 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1969), 136; Cooke, 164-165, compares these garments of the bride with those of Rv 21: 2.

18. Her garments were composed of materials designated for the tabernacle and the priests, and her food was part of the offerings to God; see footnotes 10 and 12 of this chapter. In Ex 25: 8 this place, sanctuary or tabernacle, is described as the dwelling place of God while He lived among His people. The glory of God covered the place and His presence was with them (Ex 40: 34-38).

19. Eichrodt, 209.

20. Blenkinsopp, 76, mentions that the gods were usually represented as fathers in Mesopotamia; Bodi, 441, considers that the metaphor of marriage itself implies having children, who bear witness to the love of parents, guarantee the future of the nation and ensure the continuity of parental love.

murderer, thus putting the honor and will of God to shame.²¹ A list of her sins²² could be the following:

1. Arrogance²³ - she trusted in her own beauty.
2. Rebellion - (1) religious (prostitution - doing and worshiping idols), (2) political (prostitution - offering and surrendering to other men/nations), (3) familial (adultery - receiving strange men on their [hers and her husband's] bed and giving them payment for sleeping with her, and infanticide - she offered her sons and daughters, whom she had given birth to for God, to idols).²⁴
3. She despised and dishonored Yahweh²⁵ - she took everything that her husband gave her and offered it to her idols and lovers (clothes, jewelry and food).

21. Eichrodt, 209.

22. James Drulessen, "The Rhetoric of Allegory in the Book of Ezekiel" (PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1988), 351, quoted in Galambush, 20, comments that these abominations of which Jerusalem participates are considered sins against Yahweh.

23. Craigie, 111.

24. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / A. Structure and Outline of Book; P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 293-295, summarizes these as "breach of covenant"; Armando J. Levoratti, ed. *Comentario Bíblico Latinoamericano: Antiguo Testamento* (Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2007), 1: 430; Galambush, 82.

25. Eichrodt, 207.

4. Ingratitude²⁶ - she yearned for the lovers of her youth, who did nothing in her favor and despised her husband, who had made her a queen.
5. She defiled the house of the Lord - she murdered their children and entered the sanctuary on the same day (Sabbath).²⁷
6. She broke the covenant and marriage oath.²⁸

Cooke describes this stage of the story of Jerusalem as her national fall.²⁹ She is guilty of the political, religious and family break that confronts her marriage to God.³⁰ Her improper sexual acts are described as prostitution, but when God addresses her to confront her directly he calls her an adulteress. The irony of the case is that the undue sexual act of women was normally that of prostitution, but Jerusalem did not even behave naturally in this regard.³¹ She changed her role as a normal prostitute, who receives money in exchange for sexual favors, to be the adulterous woman, who seeks people to do sexual favors in exchange for a payment

26. Craigie, 112.

27. Galambush, 118-119, suggests that this Sabbath does not refer to the Sabbath of Ex 20: 8-11 but to a ceremonial Sabbath of sanctuary festivals and that the entire event could be part of a single ritual as a sacrifice to Yahweh. Jr 19: 5 suggests that this practice was part of the sacrifices to Baal in the high places where they worshiped him. The act of sacrificing Baal does not mean that they left aside the religious tradition of the worship of Yahweh. This event could unite both rituals to a single day.

28. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 293-295.

29. Cooke, 167.

30. Levoratti, 430, does not mention family but the other two.

31. Galambush, 98-99.

(which she gives them). This puts her in conscious and open rebellion against her husband, bringing her lovers to the same house (possibly, also to the same room) where she and her husband coexist. She was free to make the decision to act for or against Yahweh and decided to act against him without reason.

Her acts are compared with those of her family. Apparently, her genetic nature is brought to light,³² even after being “transformed” by her husband. This, by internal and external influences, but not by obligation or genetic predisposition.³³ Her current status could be compared to that of her relatives. The sins of her biological parents (Amorite father and Hittite mother) had led her to destruction.³⁴ She could also be compared to her sisters, Samaria and Sodom.³⁵ Samaria, the eldest,³⁶ had also been Yahweh's wife and had committed prostitution and adultery

32. Duguid, 213.

33. Merrill, 282, comments that although she is listed as worse than her family, she must be punished for her own sins and not those of her ancestors (Ezk 16: 46-47 and 18: 4). If it were by genetic disposition, Tire (and whoever he may be representing) would not have departed from the customs of his pure and perfect origins, but it did (Ezk 26-28: 19).

34. Duguid, 213; Gn 15: 16-21

35. Again the tenor changes group of people to territory in a geographical sense.

36. Eichrodt, 215, “north”; Greenberg, 288, proposes that Samaria was greater because of her geographical size but less in years of existence as a people; Duguid, 213, adds a third detail, Samaria could also be considered greater because of her location north of Jerusalem.

even after this alliance.³⁷ Sodom, the youngest,³⁸ had acted with arrogance, self-assurance and abominations (probably sexual). Both Samaria and Sodom (like their Canaanite parents) were destroyed by their evil deeds. Again, the use of irony opens the way in the narrative, all her family had been destroyed because of their sins and Jerusalem (who knew and had seen the whereabouts of her family) acted consciously as they did. And as if the evilness of her relatives was not enough, she did even worse things.

The logical sequence behind the comparison between Jerusalem and her relatives should lead her to understand the actions that will be taken with respect to her. God has no choice but to give Jerusalem the punishment for her sins as he did with Samaria and Sodom.³⁹ Yahweh lets His wife suffer the consequences that she deserves⁴⁰ (punishment of adulteresses and murderers)⁴¹ and a change of behavior on her part is not expected.⁴²

37. *DBI*, 257, says that both were united in sisterhood for their addictions to prostitution. Before being wives, they had acted as prostitutes (idea also highlighted in Hs 1: 2) and after being wives they gave themselves to adultery.

38. Eichrodt, 215, "south"; Greenberg, 288, shows that Sodom was smaller in geographic size, but actually greater than Jerusalem in age; Duguid, 213, points to the location of Sodom south of Jerusalem. Duguid's position is also shared by Block, 513.

39. Renz, 193.

40. McIver, 108.

41. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 294-295.

42. Levoratti, 429; Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*, 242.

The laws of the people of Israel that Yahweh Himself had stipulated required the penalty for the sins committed by her: idolatry, infanticide and the breaking of the covenant. The consequences and punishments for her actions in according to Ezk 16 and 23 are the following:

1. A public trial where her lovers are present, those she loved (most probably the Egyptians)⁴³ and those she abhorred (possibly the Assyrians and Babylonians).⁴⁴
2. Discover your nudity to expose it totally to the public.
3. Accusing and judging her for her adultery.
4. Accusing and judging her as murderous.
5. Destruction of her places of religious prostitution.
6. Strip her of all her properties, which God had given her, and she gave to her lovers.
7. Left naked.⁴⁵

43. It is with the Egyptians that she first prostitutes herself (Jerusalem) in the days of her youth, before being married to God. She remembers the days of her youth, only when she once again yearns for prostitution with Egypt, after having prostituted herself with the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Egypt could be the most desired lover of Jerusalem. This may be the reason why Yahweh proclaims so many oracles against Egypt in the book of Ezekiel. See Figure 2. Dates in Ezekiel. Even, chronologically, Egypt is the first foreign nation on which destruction is prophesied in Ezekiel, in the year 10. Also, the last message given by Ezekiel is against this nation, year 27.

44. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 303, suggests that the judicial body that judges it is not Israelite but her very lovers, not even Yahweh.

45. Block, 501, maintains that if extending the cloak over her is a symbol of a marital commitment, then leaving her naked is equivalent to a divorce.

8. Stoning.
9. Attacked by weapons, carriages and wagons.
10. Surrounded by shields and helmets.
11. Her properties burned with fire.
12. Dismembered by the sword.
13. They confiscated her sons and daughters, and some were killed.
14. Her remains are burned.
15. Your lovers will also be judged.
16. She will be the mockery of other peoples.⁴⁶
17. Her sisters will be justified and restored.

This section of the story mixes reality and symbolism to such an extent that it becomes difficult to determine what the punishment is metaphorically (which is the tenor, and which is the vehicle). Some theologians simply take the accusations metaphorically⁴⁷ and describe the punishment literally.⁴⁸ The truth is that the

46. Zimmerli, 353. The actions of Jerusalem had caused the name of Yahweh to be defamed and now He makes her go through a trial where she is mocked.

47. Cooke, 174, in this case does not consider that the metaphor (or allegory, as he calls it) of adultery and prostitution even refers to idolatry, but only to foreign political alliances.

48. P. L. Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 293-295; John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *Isaías-Ezekiel, El Conocimiento Bíblico, Un Comentario Expositivo: Antiguo Testamento* (Puebla, México: Ediciones Las Américas, 2000), 298, and Cooke, 175.

penalty for the sin of adultery was death (Dt 22),⁴⁹ although not all the protocol that Ezk 16 describes was required.⁵⁰ Note that the other occasions in which the people are condemned for infidelity, is done in the context of metaphorical marital infidelity.⁵¹ Unlike those other occasions, the punishment of her adultery results in divorce and here in death.⁵² For this reason, it is likely that not only will she be judged as an adulteress but also as a murderer (infanticide),⁵³ as mentioned above.

After Yahweh declares His punishment to the woman, an unexpected prophetic response appears.⁵⁴ When accused of being unfaithful to the oath, thus invalidating the covenant,⁵⁵ the prophetic oracle of judgment is combined with

49. Galambush, 3, compares the death of the Jerusalem woman with the death of Ezekiel's wife. This could be a double use of symbolism, a wife dies (Yahweh's) and so does the other (Ezekiel's). But it should not be concluded that Ezekiel's wife had also committed adultery and that was why she had died.

50. Tuell, 92. This description of the trial of adulterous women is somewhat different from what the law demanded and does not present the reality of what punishment was or should be since it is an extended metaphor. Says Tuell, "unquestionably, this is a deeply disturbing, indeed offensive, text. In no way is the intention of this passage to justify or encourage child abuse, spouse abuse, or rape. Remember, too, that Ezekiel did not invent the imagery of this chapter; rather, he participates in a long history in the ANE. Ezk 16 is not a literal description of the God of Jerusalem, but an extended metaphor-an allegory, or parable."

51. Renz, 197.

52. Ibid.; Block, 501, sees a possible allusion to divorce when she is naked.

53. Taylor, 140.

54. Moskala, 42.

55. Ralf H. Alexander, "Ezekiel 16:59" in *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002-2004), book version: 5.1.50, 2 vols., Pradis CD-ROM, version 5.17.0014. The covenant that was broken for spiritual adultery was the Mosaic covenant, and they broke it in the same way it was written in Dt 29.

declarations of recognition of the sovereignty of God.⁵⁶ In verses 62-63 an allusion is made to the eternal covenant that God will make with His unfaithful wife.⁵⁷ Although Jerusalem does not remember or act according to the agreement, her husband does. He remembers and decides to establish it forever.⁵⁸ This covenant can be described as a new marriage covenant with Jerusalem; possibly with Jerusalem as a group of people, composed of those who mercifully survived the destruction of the death penalty.⁵⁹ God, acting under a principle of continuity, shows forgiveness and love towards his unfaithful wife.⁶⁰ The eternal meaning of this covenant makes divorce impossible; therefore, God will continue to consider her His wife no matter what he must do for her (atonement).⁶¹

The unexpected response of God expresses a promise of restoration by which this adulterous woman becomes a faithful wife. With the restoration is added the

56. Mangum, see “proof-saying.”

57. Hays, 207; Schoville, see “Jerusalem,” points out that Jerusalem and the temple are symbols of the eternal covenant of God and His people.

58. Duguid, 215.

59. Wevers, 100, considers that all her crimes had only one punishment, death penalty.

60. Eichrodt, 216-217; Alonso and Sicre, 736-737; George Kufeldt, *Asbury Bible Commentary*, ed. Eugene E Carpenter (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002-2004) book version 5.1.50, Pradis CD-ROM, version 5.17.0014, see Part II: The Old Testament / Ezekiel / Commentary / VII. Oracles of Divine Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah (13: 1-24: 27) / C. Jerusalem as the Unfaithful Bride (16: 1-63), on the other hand, the fact of offering forgiveness for everything she had done to God and their children, did not mean that punishment or discipline would not come to her.

61. Robert W. Jenson, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), see 16: 44-63.

privilege of becoming a mother again. At this point in the narrative it is already known that the cruel mother murdered the children (though not all).⁶² But, in verse 61, God promises to grant her the privilege of being a mother again. She will even become an adoptive mother; Jerusalem is to receive as daughters her sisters, the younger ones and the older ones (Samaria with her daughters and Sodom with her daughters) through the eternal covenant.⁶³ Interestingly, the girl who was “adopted” now becomes the adoptive mother of her own sisters. The worst curse for a woman was not having children, and her greatest blessing was having them;⁶⁴ therefore, she will be greatly blessed.

Although this will cause her shame,⁶⁵ that the sons and daughters of her sisters are also restored along with her family as one family,⁶⁶ it is a great blessing. Jerusalem was worse than her sisters, although she will be treated as they are with

62. Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishing, 2002), 235. It should not be assumed that all the “children” of Jerusalem were offered to idols (allegorically), nor that all were taken from her, since her restoration (which includes the remnant of her offspring) is prophesied (it includes people from Jerusalem, Sodom and Samaria). These were the “remnant” who remained on the land (Merrill, 280) and others who returned from exile (Ezr 2: 1, 59; Neh 7: 6-61).

63. R. B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 252, believes that Jerusalem now has sovereign authority over her sisters.

64. *DBI*, 570-571.

65. Greenberg, 292, believes that, indeed, Jerusalem will be ashamed when she sees that God fulfilled the covenant and even beyond the letter of the law, when He gives even more than what was promised.

66. Levoratti, 429.

respect to punishment,⁶⁷ she will be exalted over them when God makes her their mother.⁶⁸ Before, her sisters were not under the covenant (Samaria was, but for a little time) and now they are. They will not be left out of the territory and the people, they must be treated as belonging to the same family; citizens completely incorporated into Jerusalem.⁶⁹ Note here a kind of expansion of what comprises the territory of Jerusalem (metaphor of territory),⁷⁰ as well as an increase of citizens (metaphor of a group of people).⁷¹

Yahweh, her husband, will forgive everything she did and will not leave her the same. There will be a change in her, she will no longer open her mouth arrogantly, nor commit her horrendous crimes any more. This is the internal and external change that must occur in her when her husband forgives her and restores her: humiliation of the heart. This change is accompanied by another, a change of

67. Cooke, 177-178.

68. Alexander, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, see Ezekiel 16: 61-63. Jerusalem is restored in the future kingdom of chapter 48, Sodom and Samaria are turned into legal suburbs of Jerusalem.

69. Block, 518.

70. Woudstra, 37-38. Seeing chapter 16 in light of chapter 47, the prophecy concerning the messianic future. Clarification is made there that its closest fulfillment must be seen at the end of exile; Walvoord and Zuck, 300. The eternal covenant of Ezk 16: 59-63 is the same from Ezk 11: 18-20, 36: 26-28 and Jr 31: 31-34, by which Jerusalem will watch over her sisters when her kingdom is restored (the author puts the restoration at an eschatological era); Zimmerli, 335, considers the possibility of a reference to Jdg 1:27 where the Canaanites “persisted in inhabiting that land” and the image of a Jerusalem that includes all this territory as described in Ezk 47: 8 and 13.

71. Renz, 235.

name. Her name will no longer be Jerusalem, but “Yahweh is there.” She will be completely restored. A new (eternal) covenant will be made in her favor, new children will be given her and a new and better name.

Historical

Ezk 16 shows Jerusalem, metaphorically, as (1) a girl abandoned by her parents and adopted by God,⁷² (2) a young woman (bride) who marries God, (3) a beloved wife who becomes unfaithful and prostitutes herself with many lovers,⁷³ (4) a cruel mother who gives her children in sacrifice to idols,⁷⁴ (5) a daughter equal or worse than her mother, and (6) a sister who acts worse than her vile sisters. These images must also be viewed historically and geopolitically⁷⁵ to understand the true meaning of the story and the message behind it.⁷⁶

72. Duguid, 216. A girl was generally rescued for the purpose of turning her into a prostitute when she grew up; adopting her was not the purpose in rescuing her. Having this in mind, one can appreciate more the grace that God shows when He adopts, marries and gives everything to her.

73. Hays, 207. This image of unfaithful wife is frequently used by Jeremiah and most of the prophets.

74. *DBI*, 571, see Mother/Motherhood. The women of Jerusalem came to commit horrendous crimes against their children; not only did they kill them, they also ate them. This is, in addition to sacrificing them to idols in pagan rituals.

75. Davidson, “Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy,” 39, considers that the symbolic imagery of Jerusalem within the prophecies of the kingdom refers to her geo-politically.

76. Galambush, 2, admits the need for a historical reconstruction; *DOTP*, 225, consider that there are only two ways to see the text: (1) historical or (2) literal, but that the literal is very unlikely.

Jerusalem is identified at the beginning of the chapter as a city of Canaanite origin. Her pagan ancestors are also identified: the Hittite mother and the Amorite father (Ezk 16: 3). The Amorites can be found in that area from the time of the Patriarchs (Gn 15:16). The Hittites, on the other hand, can be two groups of people: (1) the descendants of Het (Ex 3: 8,17) or (2) people from the neo-Hittite kingdoms of northern Syria who were successors of the Hittite Empire (1 R 10:29; 2 Ch 1: 17).⁷⁷ The moment David takes the city of Jerusalem to join it to his kingdom, it is the Jebusites who live there (2 Sm 5: 6-10).

The word "Jerusalem" is mentioned for the first time in the biblical account in Jos 10: 1-27; his king was Adoni-Zedek who was executed by Joshua. Adoni-Zedek is described as one of the Amorite kings in that story.⁷⁸ Abdu-Heba took the reign after

77. Eichrodt, 204, considers the possibility that those mentioned here are neo-Hittites, although no (non-Israelite) references have been found of them in southern Palestine; Duguid, 209, quotes Julie Galambush, who takes the first option as the most viable since it shows the roots of Jerusalem as natural to that land, as well as pagan; Horn, see "Jerusalén," and B. Mazar, *Jerusalem through the Ages* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, Israel: Exploration Society, 1968), 4, cited by Greenberg, 274, say that in the time of Joshua, Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem made alliances with the Amorite kingdoms in the south of the country (Jos 10:13). B. Mazar continues that after the death of Joshua, the city was destroyed and the Amorites who inhabited it perished (Jdg 1: 8). This gives way to the Jebusites, apparently belonging to Hittite kingdoms, occupying the city after migrating from the north in the first half of the 12th century BC.

78. Zimmerli, 337.

his death,⁷⁹ his name means “servant of Heba” (Hittite goddess).⁸⁰ He was probably a Jebusite,⁸¹ from those who lived in Jerusalem until the days of David (2 Sm 5: 5-7). Although this is the first time that the word “Jerusalem” is mentioned, it is not necessarily the first time that the territory called “Jerusalem” is mentioned in the Bible. Jerusalem was known by other names throughout the region. For example, Urusalimum, Urusalim, Urusalimmu and Salem.⁸² Of these, only Salem is used by the biblical writers (Gn 14:18, Ps 76: 2). Even if you take the origins based on the word “Israel” you get to the same point of departure. The word “Israel” is mentioned for the first time in history, in 1210 BC on the Merneptah Stela; they are mentioned as a group of people and not as inhabitants of any city or belonging to any identity.⁸³ Orlinsky points out that the term “Israelite” came to replace the term “Hebrew” at the time of the judges.⁸⁴

79. Hoerth and McRay, 107, describe Abdu-Heba as one of the Palestinian “princes” who remained faithful to Egypt and complained about the Israelites at the time of the conquest. These princes wrote letters to Amenhotep III and Akhenaten, kings of Egypt.

80. Horn, see “Jerusalén.”

81. Mazar, 4, cited by Greenberg, 274, identifies the Jebusites as the successors of Adoni-Zedek and the Jebusites, as apparently belonging to the Hittites.

82. Horn, see “Jerusalén.”

83. Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 113.

84. Harry M. Orlinsky, *Understanding the Bible through History and Archeology* (New York City, NY: KTAV Publishing House, 1972), 22.

If this is the historical link of the origins of Jerusalem, that of Jos 10, the story of the girl Jerusalem and her first encounter with God (adoption relationship) would have to be in 2 Sam 5: 6-8, when David conquered the city.⁸⁵ But this event does not seem to match the story of the childhood of Jerusalem. The city was already considered “the stronghold of Zion” and the Jebusites did not believe that conquering it was possible.⁸⁶ These descriptions are of a strong and sophisticated city, not abandoned and dying.⁸⁷ Then, the childhood of Jerusalem must go back to other times older than this.

Other proposals have been made by theologians such as Wallenkampf, Bodi, Orlinsky and Rabbi Eliezer cited by Blenkinsopp. Wallenkampf proposes that the story begins with the Israelites in Egyptian slavery, their maturity in Sinai and their reign with David and Solomon.⁸⁸ Bodi considers that the story begins with the declaration of Abdu-Heba, in the Amarna letters, when he says that neither his mother nor his father have given him the city of Jerusalem, but the hand of the king

85. Blenkinsopp, 76, considers that the principle of monarchy could be the starting point of her origins or perhaps an earlier point, that of Abraham (77); Wevers, 95, believes that the origins of Jerusalem are not a mention of some period of Israel and that they should be treated only symbolically; Eichrodt, 204, says that here it is about Israel's entry into Canaan.

86. Hoerth and McRay, 114.

87. Orlinsky, 84; Iain Provan, V. Philips Long and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 301-302, identify a significant Jerusalem in the eyes of other cities long before David conquers it, according to Amarna's letters.

88. Wallenkampf, 70.

(14th century BC).⁸⁹ Orlinsky identifies the origins of Jerusalem with the Hebrew origins of Abraham when he moved to Canaan.⁹⁰ Eliezer, like Orlinsky, considers that the origins pointed to Abraham and Sarah; even the Targum identified Sara as the Hittite mother.⁹¹

Another proposal on the Canaanite origin of Jerusalem could be as follows. The “catalog of the peoples”⁹² in Gn 10 shows the Canaanite origin of Jerusalem of which Ezekiel possibly makes mention.⁹³ It is likely that Ezekiel was quite familiar with the Genesis account of Noah and his descendants. He mentions Noah himself twice (Ezk 14:14, 20). In fact, Ezekiel presents Jerusalem as worse than her sisters even though men like Noah, Daniel and Job were among them.⁹⁴ He also uses many of the descendants of (Noah’s) children (Shem, Ham and Japheth), like no other biblical writer.⁹⁵ Below are some tables presenting the use of the names of these

89. Bodi, 436.

90. Orlinsky, 24.

91. Blenkinsopp, 76-77.

92. Siegfried Herrmann, *Historia de Israel en la época del Antiguo Testamento*, 4th ed. (Navarra, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 2003), 61.

93. Ibid., Also considers that a recount of the history of Israel should begin with Gn 10, although there is no mention of “Israel.”

94. John Bright, *La historia de Israel* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial MethoPress, 1966, 351.

95. Some of the names of the descendants mentioned by Ezekiel only appear in the genealogical account of Genesis and 1st Chronicles, the rest of the OT is silent about these names.

descendants as nations in the book of Ezekiel and a map of their territories according to the geographical description of Gn 10.

Figure 8. Descendants of Japheth Alluded to in Ezekiel⁹⁶

Name	Mention in Genesis 10	Alusion in Ezekiel
Gomer	10:2, 3	38:2, 6
Magog	10:2	38:2, 6, 14-23; 34:6
Javan	10:2, 4	27:13
Tubal	10:2	27:13; 38:2; 39:1
Meshech	10:2	27:13; 38:2, 3; 39:1
Togarmah	10:3	27:12-14, 38:6
Elishah	10:4	27:7
Tarshish	10:4	27:12, 25; 38:13
Kittim	10:4	27:6

Figure 9. Descendants of Ham Alluded to in Ezekiel⁹⁷

Name	Mention in Genesis 10	Alusion in Ezekiel
Cush	10:6-8	29:10
Mizraim (Egypt)	10:6, 13	16-17; 19-20; 23; 27; 29-32; 47-48
Put (Fut)	10:6	38:5
Canaan	10:6, 15, 19	16:3
Ramah	10:7	27:22

96. Beitzel, 91-97, see "The fourteen descendants of Japheth," recognizes the allusion of Gomer, Magog, Javan, Tubal, Togarmah and Kittim in Ezekiel.

97. Ibid., 91-97, see "The fourteen descendants of Ham," recognizes the allusion of Cush, Sheba, Dedan, Ludites, Pathrusites and Put in Ezekiel.

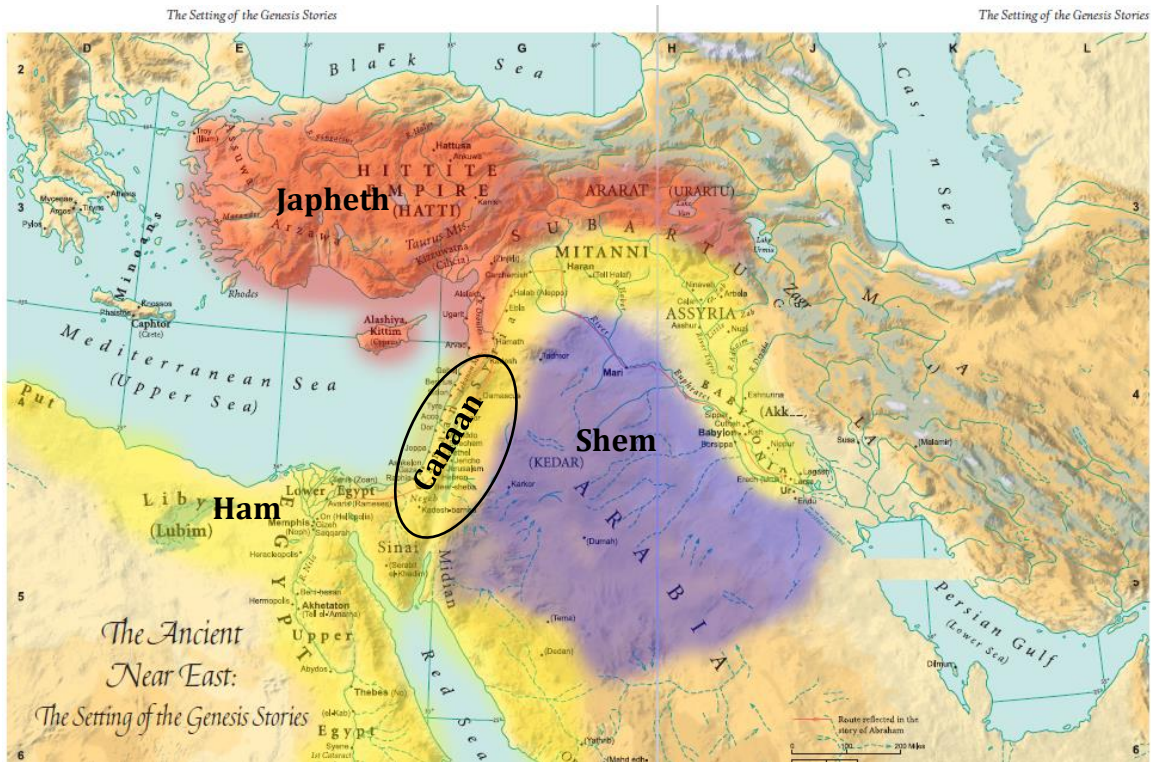
Sheba	10:7	27:22-23; 38:13
Dedan	10:7	25:13; 27:20; 38:13
Ludites (Lud)	10:13	27:10; 30:5
Pathrusites (Pathros)	10:14	29:14; 30:14
Casluhites (Philistines)	10:14	16:27, 57; 25:15-16
Sidon	10:15, 19	27:8; 28:21-22
Heth	10:15	16:3,45; 32:23,27
Amorites	10:16	16:3, 45

Figure 10. Descendants of Shem alluded to in Ezekiel⁹⁸

Name	Mention in Genesis 10	Alusion in Ezekiel
Asshur	10:22	27:3
Elam	10:22	32:24
Uzal	10:27	27:19

98. Ibid., 91-97, see “The twenty-six descendants of Shem,” recognizes the allusion of Uzal in Ezekiel.

Figure 11. Map⁹⁹ indicating the territory of the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem.



As the tables and the map show, both the Amorites and the Hittites come from the offspring of Canaan, son of Ham. The Israelites, to be specific, are Hebrews, descendants of Eber (Gn 10:21),¹⁰⁰ son of Shelah, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem (Gn 10:21, 11: 10-26). If the section on the origins of Jerusalem is transported to the

99. Adrian Curtis, ed., *Oxford Bible Atlas*, 4th ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2007), 66-67. The colors red, yellow and blue have been added according to the description of the territory in Gn 10. The red shows the territory of the descendants of Japheth, the yellow one of the descendants of Ham and the blue one of the descendants of Shem.

100. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Old Testament History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 23.

time of Genesis, possibly the years of her childhood also make an allusion to that time. The childhood of Jerusalem begins with its apparent and partial adoption. As Orlinsky proposes,¹⁰¹ it is possible that allusion is being made to God's call to Abraham in Gn 12: 1-3 and 17: 1-2:

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you. Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, and all the families of the earth will bless one another by your name." ...When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the sovereign God. Walk before me and be blameless. Then I will confirm my covenant between me and you, and I will give you a multitude of descendants." (NET).

This is a stage of quantitative and qualitative growth and development, as already mentioned and can be confirmed with the story of Abraham's life. The relationship between Yahweh and Abraham (together with his descendants) develops little by little, partially. The descendants of Abraham still did not consider themselves the chosen people, although later they would become it. They did not belong to the Canaanites or to these lands that Yahweh had promised them, but they would have to possess them when God so arranged (Gn 12: 5-7). They do not really get to own the promised land until after slavery in Egypt, around 1,400 BC:¹⁰²

I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the region of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. (Ex 3:8 NET)

101. Orlinsky, 24

102. Hoerth and McRay, 108.

This proposal of origins and childhood of Jerusalem could give a better answer to the reality behind the metaphorical symbolism. The first proposal considers the tenor of the metaphor as Jerusalem being territory in its origins and childhood. It has already been shown that a metaphorical interpretation of Jerusalem's childhood as a territory is not possible. Therefore, a historical interpretation of Jerusalem as a territory in its childhood would not be possible either. That is why this research's interpretation may be more probable since it deals with the tenor of the metaphor as a territory in the stage of its origins and as a people in the stage of its childhood.

If this interpretation is correct, then the juvenile prostitution of Jerusalem fits well chronologically. Chapter 23 mentions the prostitution of Jerusalem, in the days of her youth, with the Egyptians before her marriage covenant with God. This stage can, then, correspond to the slavery in Egypt prior to the Exodus,¹⁰³ in the 18th dynasty.¹⁰⁴ The prostitution referred to may be the idolatry they learned in Egypt.¹⁰⁵

The next stage of the story would be the marriage oath/covenant and marriage gifts. Following the chronology, this covenant could be the Sinaitic Covenant since the matrimonial gifts, her vestments, jewels and food, allude to materials only used for the tabernacle and by the priests. Notice here a change in the relationship held by Abraham and his descendants before and after the Exodus. The

103. Galambush, 110; Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 146; Alonso and Sicre, 767.

104. Hoerth and McRay, 79-83.

105. Galambush, 110; Anderson, 409.

relationship changes from being partial to total, they are not just a group of descendants of Abraham but a nation.¹⁰⁶ God makes the covenant with a large group of people and establishes the conditions of the relationship explicitly and concretely (Ex 19-40, Lv 1-27). Before, they could be considered a clan that had roots in the covenant between God and Abraham, but now they were a nation that had to unite politically, socially and religiously as guardians of the covenant made to Abraham.¹⁰⁷

The relationship between Yahweh and his people was king-vassal type.¹⁰⁸ In this relationship, the king swore to protect the vassal and the vassal swore exclusive loyalty and obedience to the king (a mutual covenant but that establishes different roles to the members).¹⁰⁹ Before, they worshiped God in altars and simple places, but now that the covenant had been made with the nation, the tabernacle would be designated the place of worship.¹¹⁰ Yahweh and his people maintain a good relationship in fulfillment of the covenant until Jerusalem comes to reign; from the

106. Merrill, 128.

107. Ibid., 129, believes that this political, social and religious union should take place in Sinai so that a metamorphosis could take place with the people and become a nation.

108. Galambush, 32; Hamilton, 124-126.

109. Moshe Weinfeld, "b'ērîth," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT)*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1974), 1: 278, cited by Galambush, 32; Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 4, 69, 140 and 149, gives several examples of this same king-vassal pact being used by different ANE nations.

110. Merrill, 142.

departure from Egypt in process of conquering Canaan until 931 BC with the death of Solomon.¹¹¹ This era can be called the “era of greatness” of the nation.¹¹²

After the kingdom of Israel is divided in 931 BC with the death of Solomon,¹¹³ the other nations stopped seeing the people as a strong kingdom, now it presented no threat. Then, it became an easier target for those who wanted to conquer it.¹¹⁴ Ezk 16 mentions that Jerusalem prostitutes herself with many lovers;¹¹⁵ according to the historical context, at least three of them can be identified: (1) the Egyptians, (2) the Assyrians and (3) the Babylonians.¹¹⁶ These political alliances contribute greatly to the wrath of God against Jerusalem. In this way they showed a lack of trust in God and in His ability to preserve and protect them.¹¹⁷

Egypt was the first to attempt to subdue Israel. He managed to capture some cities that had belonged to the kingdom of Judah (southern kingdom), whose capital

111. Hoerth and McRay, 108, 119.

112. Merrill, 185-225.

113. Ibid., 119.

114. Ibid.

115. Galambush, 10, the lovers of Jerusalem are political allies and idolaters, here one sees her prostitution, both political and religious; P.L. Day, “The Bitch Had It Coming To Her: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Ezekiel 16,” 242, points out that in the terminology used for deals or business at that time, loyalty was regularly expressed by the verb love; one of the reasons why one can assign “lovers” to Jerusalem.

116. McIver, 29, 107; Levoratti, 429; P. L. Day, “Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi,” 293-295.

117. *DOTP*, 225.

was Jerusalem, and take treasures from the temple and palace for 926 BC.¹¹⁸ This possibly starts the prostitution of Jerusalem, making political deals (pacts) with other nations. But Egypt was not the only one interested in conquering this geographical area, just as there were many prostitutions in Jerusalem.

The Assyrians were making their way to the kingdom of Israel (northern kingdom) and fought against Ahab but could not win. It was in the reign of Jehu, that the Assyrians managed to subdue Israel, to pay them tribute, in 841 BC by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III,¹¹⁹ making Jerusalem as the goddess Ishtar who paid gifts to her lover Gilgamesh.¹²⁰ However, the weakened realm had not fallen. As the Assyrian Empire grew stronger, the king of Israel, Pekah, joined forces with the Syrians to fight against the Assyrians and invited the king of Judah, Ahaz, to join them.¹²¹ Taking a “either join or we will make you join” policy, Israel and Syria tried to take over the kingdom of Judah (2 Kg 16: 5), but these sought helps from a more powerful army, the Assyrian. This resulted in the total fall of the Syrians and the first deportation of the kingdom of Israel (2 Kg 15:29). The siege of Samaria was such a difficult event for the Israelites that they even killed their children to serve them as food (2 Kg 6: 28-29).¹²² A short time later, in 722 BC, the Assyrians completely took

118. *Ibid.*; 2 Ch 12: 2, 4, 9 and 1 Kg 11:40, 14:25

119. Herrmann, 245; Hoerth and McRay, 49, 50, 120.

120. Bodi, 440.

121. Hoerth and McRay, 52.

122. *DBI*, 571.

Samaria the capital of the kingdom of Israel and exiled all the people (2 Kg 17: 6);¹²³ although they asked for help from Egypt, it was in vain (2 Kg 17: 4).

The fall of Samaria was not only political, they had also been declining religiously. The prophets and priests had mingled between Israelites and Canaanites, as can be seen in the story of Elijah (1 Kg 18).¹²⁴ As a warning against idolatry, in 701 BC Sennacherib takes 46 villages from the region of Judah but fails to take Jerusalem (2 Kg 18: 13-18).¹²⁵ Ahaz introduced innovative pieces of Assyrian style in the temple of Jerusalem after meeting his ally Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria (2 Kg 16: 8-16).¹²⁶ Later, when the Assyrian Empire was in decline, Josiah (King of Judah) tried to take advantage of the situation to emancipate himself.¹²⁷

Emancipation entailed two areas, politics and religion. The main one was the religious, bringing a reform that eliminated the foreign cults and destroyed the places of those cults.¹²⁸ In this reform Josiah tried to eliminate the sacrifices of

123. Hoerth and McRay, 53; McIver, 28; *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / b. Ezekiel's of Judean political alliances; Provan et al., 367, think that it was in 727.

124. Merrill, 241.

125. Provan et al., 381; Pfeiffer, 360; Eichrodt, 208; Hoerth and McRay, 54. Herrmann, 333, gives a broad spectrum of possible date between 701 and 622.

126. Duguid, 212-213.

127. Herrmann, 340.

128. *Ibid.*

children to Baal,¹²⁹ but the practice returned after his death.¹³⁰ The need for this reform suggests that religious prostitution had begun much earlier, possibly on or before the time of the conquest of Canaan.¹³¹ From the judges to the monarchy (united and separated) there were always syncretistic ideologies among the people of God and that “yahwehism” and “baalism” coexisted in harmony.¹³² Even the cult of Baal was popular in Egypt from the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties, when the Hebrews still dwelt there.¹³³

With the death of King Josiah, in 609 BC,¹³⁴ Jerusalem makes political alliances with the Egyptians, once again.¹³⁵ Judah was now a vassal of Egypt and gave him tribute,¹³⁶ but with the arrival of another political power this would not

129. Eichrodt, 207; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, 489, 490, suggests that it be a sacrifice to Moloch. In both cases, Baal or Moloch, this is still Canaanite worship.

130. Bodi, 439; see footnote 17 of this chapter.

131. Frank E. Eakin Jr., *The Religion and Culture of Israel: An Introduction to Old Testament Thought* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), 208-210.

132. *Ibid.*, 210-213; Orlinsky, 92.

133. Eakin, 209.

134. Herrmann, 348.

135. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / b. Ezekiel's of Judean political alliances. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 69, connects the vision of the abominations in chapter 8 of Ezekiel with the pact of king-vassal made by the king of Judah with the pharaoh Necho (608-605 BC). It also suggests that Judah sought political and spiritual support from the Egyptians.

136. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 149; Herrmann, 350; Pfeiffer, 378.

last long. After the battle between the Egyptians and the Babylonians in Carchemish, 605 BC,¹³⁷ Judah became a vassal of the Babylonians.¹³⁸ But years later, in 589, Zedekiah decided not to renew the pact with the Babylonians.¹³⁹ Instead, Tyre and Ammon joined him in rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.¹⁴⁰ And for the third time Judah made an alliance with the Egyptians. This time against Babylon, in 592 BC.¹⁴¹

On this last date there is a presence of Egyptian priests who were stationed in Palestine. Possibly an agreement was signed against the Babylonians and some religious ritual carried out.¹⁴² The Babylonians did not take this betrayal as unimportant. In 588/7 BC they besieged Jerusalem for a year and a half,¹⁴³ just as at the time of the siege of Samaria (by the Assyrians), they began to eat their children

137. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / b. Ezekiel's of Judean political alliances; Herrmann, 351

138. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 4.

139. Pfeiffer, 379-380.

140. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, 4, suggests that they expected support from the Egyptians; Herrmann, 360-361, like Smith considers the possibility of hope in favor of the Egyptians.

141. Galambush, 120-122, considers that this last alliance be the climax of Jerusalem's infidelity. Not only is it recent, but, as mentioned, Egypt is apparently the most desired of her lovers; Cooke, 170, compares the relationship between Jerusalem and Egypt as that of the Maccabees with Rome. This was a people that was always looking for protection from other nations and gods instead of trusting in God.

142. *Ibid.*; *DOTP*, 571, comments that the people sought both political and spiritual support from their lovers.

143. Pfeiffer, 380-381; *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / I. The historical background of the book. /3. The fall of Jerusalem.

for food (Lk 2:20, 4:10).¹⁴⁴ After the fall of Jerusalem in 576 BC there were approximately 20,000 Jews in Judah.¹⁴⁵ The rest of the survivors were deported or fled to other nations, only the poorest remained in the city.¹⁴⁶ Over the poor who remained, they put Gedaliah; who was not of Davidic descent and he moved the capital from Jerusalem to Mizpah.¹⁴⁷ Many cities of Judah were so ravaged by the Babylonians that they were never rebuilt,¹⁴⁸ they fell so low that they were mocked.¹⁴⁹

The destruction and exile were the just punishment of God to his unfaithful people.¹⁵⁰ Babylon acted like the furious lover who avenged the adulteries committed by Jerusalem.¹⁵¹ His punishment was based on the sins of idolatry,

144. *DBI*, 571.

145. Merrill, 280.

146. Pfeiffer, 382.

147. 2 Kg 25: 22-26 NKJ60; Pfeiffer, 382; Provan et al., 386; Herrmann, 420; Merrill, 271.

148. Orlinsky, 206; Provan et al., 383; Pfeiffer, 381.

149. Wallenkampf, 71.

150. Block, 463, believes that the punishment was just, but that as in Egyptian captivity, this would not be the end.

151. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / b. Ezekiel's of Judean political alliances; Block, 467

infanticide and breaking the covenant.¹⁵² On the other hand, his restoration was based on a covenant (Ezk 16:60). Although the nation had disappeared, the covenant had not been forgotten.¹⁵³ As part of the covenant Samaria and Sodom, sisters of Jerusalem, would be restored. Historically it cannot be said that Sodom and Samaria were of Amorite and Hittite origin.¹⁵⁴ Considering the geographical area, both were in the Canaanite territory as well as Jerusalem.¹⁵⁵ Possibly the restoration of Samaria and Sodom together with Jerusalem, referred to a tripartite restoration that included the northern (Samaria), southern (Sodom) and center region (Jerusalem) of Canaan and the Canaanite element within the population of Israel and Judah.¹⁵⁶ It was assumed that the renewal of the people should take place in Jerusalem itself.¹⁵⁷

152. Cooke, 175; Walvoord and Zuck, 298; PL Day, "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel xvi," 307-308, and "The Bitch Had It Coming To Her: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Ezekiel 16," 243-253, considers that the punishment should not be to be understood literally against adultery but the breaking of the covenant. She also does a study and shows that there are theologians who interpret the punishment literally against adultery; These are Zimmerli, Greenberg, Eichrodt, Shalom, Paul, Wevers, Fohrer, Steinstra, Davidson, Carley, Rofé, Fishbane, Swanepoel, Brownlee, Galambush and Hals.

153. Merrill, 283

154. Alonso and Sicre, 735.

155. Cf. Figure 8. Map indicating the territory of the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem.

156. Block, 513-514.

157. Herrmann, 388.

The time between destruction and restoration was considerably short, 70 years.¹⁵⁸ In 538 BC, a year after the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus, an edict that gave the people the opportunity to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple was issued.¹⁵⁹ But few were those who decided to return to Jerusalem and even these didn't seem to have appropriated the promises of the restoration agreement.¹⁶⁰ About 20 years after Cyrus, Darius I also supported the reconstruction that was beginning to take place.¹⁶¹ Apparently, Jerusalem lacked men and materials since at times it seemed that the reconstruction was not going to succeed, but what was really missing was the will to do things and appropriate the promises.¹⁶² By 515 BC, Jerusalem owned a temple and dedicated it to God, although not as beautiful as the first.¹⁶³ After this they spent years in silence and although the Jews had a temple, the city was unprotected. In 457 BC Ezra offers his help for the direction of the town in the construction and in 444 BC Nehemiah is sent as ruler and helps raise the walls of Jerusalem.¹⁶⁴ From then on Judah did not become a

158. *NIDB*, see Ezekiel, Book of / B. Detailed Analysis / 1. Historical background / a. Dates notices in Ezekiel; Merrill, 281; Orlinsky, 212.

159. Herrmann, 383.

160. Merrill, 281.

161. Herrmann, 384, 386.

162. *Ibid.*, 391; Merrill, 281.

163. Pfeiffer, 477; Herrmann, 391.

164. Hoerth and McRay, 146; Merrill, 296; Pfeiffer, 477.

kingdom again. It became a province of the Persian Empire and although not very prominent, it managed to face several opposition forces.¹⁶⁵

Theological-exegetical

As Hasel mentions, it is necessary to ...

Incorporate all depth levels of historical experience, that is, the unity of what happened, and its meaning based on the intervention of the transcendent in history as its ultimate reality of which the biblical text testifies.¹⁶⁶

The first theological aspect that requires interpretation has to do with the very purpose of the text. It has already been mentioned that the people to whom Ezekiel speaks have not reflected on their errors because they still don't recognize their guilt regarding the concurrent calamities. This perspective of inculpability raises questions: how can a good God allow the innocent to suffer? Did God lie about his promises? Is God dead?¹⁶⁷ Theodicy becomes a central theme of the purpose of the chapter's message (Ezk 16). The metaphorical story clearly presents the guilt of the people versus the innocence and justice of Yahweh.¹⁶⁸ The people were guilty not only for the sins of the community and their ancestors, but also for their own sins.¹⁶⁹ By confronting the people with the reality of their guilt and the innocence of

165. Orlinsky, 242-243.

166. Hasel, 132.

167. Benjamin, 385.

168. Bright, 346, 349.

169. Benjamin, 393-395.

God in this tragic historical recount, the honor of God and his justice would be vindicated.¹⁷⁰

Eichrodt suggests that the theme of “divine election” is present in this story.¹⁷¹ The divine choice in this story seems to be based on love and focused on irony. The whole story, from beginning to end, is based on God's love and how it is not conditional. God's love is not conditioned by external factors,¹⁷² for example, like the unpleasant appearance that Jerusalem possessed before being rescued by Yahweh. It is ironic that after being rescued by God chosen to be a wife, Jerusalem betrayed him to such depth to even deserve death. This leads to the next point, the choice versus the decision.

As can be seen throughout history, Jerusalem acts by her own decision at every moment. First, she makes the decision to make a marriage covenant with Yahweh, then decides to become an adulteress. On certain occasions God tried to make her reflect on her behavior, taking the necessary measures, but she did not want to stop her bad behavior. She had the opportunity to break the cycle, but she didn't.¹⁷³ The result of her actions was what she wanted them to be, she knew the stipulations of the covenant. That is why her destruction was the only thing that could vindicate the justice of God. Pfeiffer describes it thus: “God was more concern

170. Pfeiffer, 361.

171. Eichrodt, 218.

172. Craigie, 108-109.

173. Ibid., 116.

that his people would know him as a holy God who could not allow faithlessness and idolatry than that heathens might think of him as a powerless God.”¹⁷⁴

After the judgment, Ezk 16: 52-63 provides an oracle of salvation.¹⁷⁵ In this section we find divine grace. Block calls this section, specifically verses 59-63, “The Good News: The Triumph of Grace”¹⁷⁶ and Moskala describes it as light in the midst of darkness.¹⁷⁷ No doubt this is a very positive section compared to the rest of the chapter. Judgment, mercy and divine grace play a very important role in this passage. God reacts to the judgment that must be executed against the woman who broke the covenant, death. Ezk 18 and 33 make it clear to us that God does not want the death of the wicked, but that they come to repentance and live. The forgiveness that God offers does not mean that there are no consequences to the evil acts, but that these consequences must help the injured party to never again make the same mistakes. In this case, as has been previously proposed, Jerusalem the prostitute was destroyed but the remnant of her offspring had to appropriate the promise of restoration and grace.

The love of God reflected in His acts of mercy covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4: 8). The list of the sins of Jerusalem was immense and not only in the long

174. Pfeiffer, 361

175. Westermann, 168.

176. Block, 520.

177. Moskala, 41.

sense, but immense in the sense of abominable sins.¹⁷⁸ But with all this, God told them that He was willing to forgive (expiate, cover, cleanse) all their iniquities. The divine grace can be seen in that not only did Yahweh declare that he wanted to forgive His people, but He also declared that He wanted to restore them. From their humiliating condition, He wanted to cleanse them and give them honor and dignity as they had in the times when they let themselves be guided by God.¹⁷⁹ The people at the end of all misfortune had to understand that God's actions are always in favor of His beloved people.¹⁸⁰

The text suggests that the basis of the restoration is a covenant; this is generally recognized by theologians.¹⁸¹ The image of marital infidelity that includes an oath and a covenant is not common for the culture or epoch in which Ezekiel lives, according to Greenberg.¹⁸² He suggests that this formula of oath and covenant is the result of the union of the divine oath made to the patriarchs, and the declaration of mutual obligation in relation to the Exodus and the covenant with the

178. Ezk 8.

179. As in the days of the conquests when everyone feared the people who let themselves be led by Yahweh (Jos. 1-12), or as in the days of King David and King Solomon, who from everywhere would see the greatness of the kingdom (2 Sm 2 - 1 Kg 10).

180. Moskala, 42.

181. Theologians such as Renz, Alexander, Greenberg, Kufeldt, Alonso and Sicre, Duguid, Moskala, Woudstra, and others.

182. Greenberg, 278.

people at Sinai (Jr 2: 2).¹⁸³ These two elements are portrayed in v. 60: (1) “I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth” and (2) “I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.”¹⁸⁴ There are also different positions on what the pact mentioned there is. Renz adopts the position of a completely new beginning without connection to those who survived the exile.¹⁸⁵ This is because he interprets the destruction of Jerusalem as a total extermination (as in Ezk 15) that allows a change in the initial point of this new people with this new covenant, so that the same mistake is not made again.¹⁸⁶

Moskala also mentions the novelty of this pact but does not stop to explain his position or on what it is based.¹⁸⁷ On the other hand, Kufeldt, Duguid, Alonso and Sicre, Greenberg and Alexander argue that the pact that has been broken is the same that will be established, and this time will be forever (sense of continuity from the

183. Ibid.; Woudstra, 30.

184. Greenberg, 291. The phrase “I will establish an everlasting covenant” refers to a covenant already concluded, not a completely new covenant. Specifically, in the literary context in which it is found, it must be understood that it is a pre-existing pact that extends from its past to its future; Woudstra, 29, sees “having the covenant memory” as a way to make the covenant functional again, or to come into force again.

185. Renz, 193, 198-199.

186. Ibid.

187. Moskala, 40. Moskala's article does not have the purpose of developing this topic, therefore, it does not explain or defend its position, it only mentions the pact as new and eternal.

past to the future).¹⁸⁸ Woudstra, who dedicates his article “Everlasting Covenant” to the exegetical study of this subject, considers the covenant of the days of their youth as the Sinaitic covenant (according to Jr 2: 2), having continuity (when God “remembers” the covenant He makes it come into operation again) in a novel way.¹⁸⁹

The Sinaitic Covenant remains valid, both in the execution of the punishment there stipulated for those who break it¹⁹⁰ and in the promise of restoration for those who repent of their idolatry (Lv 26: 40-45). This continuity of the promise of blessings and restoration is based on the covenant first made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Lv 26:42). The newness of the covenant should not be understood only as the inclusion of the sisters as daughters, because already in the covenant made to Abraham in Gn 12: 1-3 these were included; although perhaps partially.¹⁹¹ The novelty could also be seen in the unilateral, not bilateral, emphasis of the eternal

188. Kufeldt, see Part II: The Old Testament / Ezekiel / Commentary / VII. Oracles of Divine Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah (13: 1-24: 27) / C. Jerusalem as the Unfaithful Bride (16: 1-63), identifies the original covenant as established in Ex 19-24. Greenberg, 291, identifies the first covenant as that of Gn 17: 19,21 on which the covenant of Lv 26: 9 and Dt 8:18 is based; similar to Alexander, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, see Ezekiel 16:60, who mentions the covenant of Genesis 17: 7-8 as a covenant of continuity in Lv 26: 40-45. Meanwhile, Duguid, 215, and Alonso and Sicre, 736-737, abstain from identifying which is the original pact.

189. Woudstra, 29-30.

190. The punishment of the curses that were established in Lv 20, 26, and Dt 13, 28 are those that fall on Jerusalem in consequence and punishment of her prostitution (infidelity and idolatry).

191. Davidson, “Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy,” 14.

covenant. God emphasizes His initiative, ability and authority to keep Jerusalem within the covenant that she has despised.

The restoration of promised Jerusalem in Ezk 16: 59-63 is based on the restoration once promised in the Sinaitic Covenant. The latter has its basis in the covenant that God made with Abraham in antiquity. It can be concluded that the promise of restoration has very deep roots, both patriarchal in Genesis, and judicial in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In Ezk 37, the eternal covenant promised here in Jerusalem is promised to a broader group of people.¹⁹² This eternal covenant that is emphasized in Yahweh's faithfulness is that God and His law dwell in the hearts of all the faithful.¹⁹³ In this way God returns to his people and restores the relationship with them.¹⁹⁴

The restoration, which would be the last point to consider in this section, involved forgiveness to Jerusalem and the addition of her sisters to the status of daughters and therefore participants of the eternal covenant. Before this inclusion of the sisters, other peoples, there were certain restrictions for foreigners who wanted to join the community of the people of God. There was a prohibition that prevented the total inclusion of foreigners; this was to own land.¹⁹⁵ Mendieta comments that, in Ezekiel, God creates a new community where the foreigner is not

192. Galambush, 145.

193. Cooke, 18.

194. Westermann, 179.

195. Erick Mendieta, "A Promised Land for the Stranger and the LXX's Resistance for Inclusion in Ezekiel 47: 22,23," unpublished monograph, 10.

excluded, but also has the right to appropriate land.¹⁹⁶ The sisters have thus been fully incorporated into the family relationship with God.

The restoration promised here was not carried out at the end of the Babylonian captivity. Thus, this section becomes an eschatological prophecy.¹⁹⁷ Block believes that, without this eschatological portion, Ezekiel's portion of classical prophecy up to this point would be pessimistic, insignificant, and hopeless.¹⁹⁸ According to Davidson there are three stages of eschatological fulfillment: (1) the inaugurated, (2) appropriated and (3) consummated.¹⁹⁹ Since this restoration section has been identified as an eschatological prophecy, it should meet the three stages of fulfillment.

In the first stage, you can see the fulfillment with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Moskala declares that there on the cross the Messianic prophecy of Ezk 16: 59-63 was fulfilled,²⁰⁰ when God forgave Jerusalem for what she did and brought her sisters to her to give them as daughters.²⁰¹ These sisters that Jerusalem receives

196. Ibid., 1, 10.

197. Jenson, see 16: 44-63.

198. Block, 463.

199. Davidson, "Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy," 29, 34.

200. Moskala, 46; Davidson, "Biblical Principles for Interpreting Old Testament Classical Prophecy," 14, 22-23.

201. Woudstra, 40-41. Compliance must be seen in both, after the exile and after the cross.

as daughters are other peoples that God would forgive and would convert to Him,²⁰² the Gentiles. The second eschatological stage finds its fulfillment in the church. The “Paul” section of this investigation is based on this compliance. There, the relationship of the New Testament church with God as her husband is described. Gentiles are like adopted children, but children of the promise (Gl 4: 3-7, Rm 8:15 and chap 11, Eph 1: 5). Like Ezekiel, Paul denounces the error of false doctrines and begs to demonstrate loyalty to Christ.²⁰³ The third stage must show connections with the end of time. The possible future fulfillment of this stage has been introduced by the “John” section of this investigation. The Lamb's wife in Revelation represents the restored Israel,²⁰⁴ the saved, the church, the holy city, the New Jerusalem. Its inhabitants are the nations (Rv 21:24), not a specific or limited ethnic group;²⁰⁵ the nations make up the authentic people of God.²⁰⁶

202. Alonso and Sicre, 737; Renz, 235.

203. H. I. Hester, *The Heart of the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 304.

204. Badenas, 317.

205. Héctor A. Delgado, *Apocalipsis y sus fascinantes profecías*, 2nd ed. revised (Charleston, SC: Create Space, 2015), 290.

206. Badenas, 328.

Chapter Five: Allusion of the Story in Revelation

Revelation may be the NT book that most alludes to the book of Ezekiel.¹ It could be said that as in Ezk 16, Revelation maintains vertical and horizontal continuity. It maintains a constant relationship between God and men and traces the continuous development of history.² This aspect puts Ezk 16 within classical prophecy and somewhat in the apocalyptic prophecy. Although John does not cite the Old Testament directly, he refers to the Old Testament through direct allusions and echoes.³ Direct allusions find verbal, thematic and structural parallels between the text of the Old Testament and that of the New.⁴ These can be classified in the following way, according to Paulien:⁵ (1) sure allusions, (2) probable allusions, (3) possible allusions, (4) doubtful allusions, (5) false allusions.

Rv 12 speaks of a woman who gives birth to the male child and the rest of her brothers, is sent to the desert, where she finds refuge from her adversary. The description given of the woman is as follows: (1) she appears in heaven, (2) dressed

1. Osborne, 289; DOTP, 223; Alonso and Sicre, 679-680. *ZPEB*, see Articles / E / Ezekiel, Book of / VI. The New Testament use of Ezekiel / 2. Ezekiel's influence on John, there is given the following list of verses in Revelation that allude to verses in Ezekiel: Rv 1:15; 4: 3; 6; 19: 6; 20: 8; 21: 10-27; 22: 1,2.

2. Kenneth A. Strand, "Principios fundacionales de interpretación," in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-I*, ed. Frank B Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2010), 17, 19.

3. Paulien, 85.

4. Ibid., 85, 107, 108.

5. Ibid., 109.

of the sun, the moon and the stars, (3) she is a mother, (4) she is persecuted, (5) she goes from being in heaven to the desert. Some theologians identify the woman with (1) Mary, the mother of Jesus,⁶ others point to (2) some goddess of mythology in the times of John,⁷ (3) Jerusalem of the Old and New Testaments,⁸ a group considers her

6. Oecumenius and Andrew of Cesare, *Ancient Christian Texts: Greek Commentaries on Revelation*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, trans. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 51; Samuel Pérez Millos, *Comentario exegético al texto Griego del Nuevo Testamento: Apocalipsis* (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial CLIE, 2010), 742.

7. George Arthur Buttrick, "Revelation" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, General Articles; Indexes, n ° 13, ed. Walter Russell Bowie, Paul Scherer, John Knox, Samuel Terrien and Nolan B. Harmon (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1957), 452, 453; Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010), 149; Pérez, 742-743. Osborne, 284.

8. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 38: 54, 188, 195; Craig S. Keenser, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 313, 314.

(4) the people of God through all ages,⁹ (5) the Christian Church,¹⁰ and/or (6) the True Church.¹¹ Her clothes not only identify with the ancient people of Israel,¹² also identify with the religious system of the people as it is consistent with the priestly attire.¹³ The desert, according to some theologians, may be the trial period of “the church,”¹⁴ an allusion to the flight of Elijah into the desert or that of Mary and Joseph

9. Gluder Quispe, *The Apocalypse in Seventh-day Adventist Interpretation* (Lima, Peru: Editorial Imprenta Unión, 2013), 55, 163, 225; William G. Johnsson, “La victoria escatológica de los santos sobre las fuerzas del mal,” in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-II*, ed. Frank B Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2011), 21; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 232; Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 13: 695; Ranko Stefanovic, *La revelación de Jesucristo: Comentario del libro de Apocalipsis* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2013), 384; Mangina, 150; Prévost, 107-108.

10. Knox, 45; Gerhard Pfandl, “The Relevance of Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology for the 21st Century,” in *The Cosmic Battle for Planet Earth: Essays in Honor of Norman R. Gulley* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2003), 383; Quispe, 92; William H. Shea, “Las profecías cronológicas de Daniel 12 y Apocalipsis 12-13,” in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-I*, ed. Frank B Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2010), 409; Delgado, 291

11. Mangina, 149; Quispe, 65; Pérez, 745.

12. Delgado, 293; Although Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster and John Knox Press, 2009), 179, comments that in Rv 12: 3 the word “crown” can be replaced by “Caesar” or “emperor,” this research does not promote such substitution by the apparent connection with the royalty of the Old Testament, not of the New Testament.

13. A. F. Johnson, 696; Ford, 189.

14. Prévost, 108.

to Egypt,¹⁵ or the earthly existence of God's people.¹⁶ The descendants of the woman who are persecuted, the remnant, are those who survived some destruction, are faithful and protected to continue as the chosen people of God.¹⁷

Rv 17-18 also shows a woman who identifies herself as the “mother of harlots,” symbolically called “Babylon.”¹⁸ These two chapters make a lot of reference to Ezekiel. Figure 10: Comparison between Ezk 16, 23, 26-28 and Rv 12, 17-18, 19, 21, which will be presented later shows the allusions of these chapters to the book of Ezekiel. Although, not all theologians consider Ezekiel as the main contributor of allusions to these chapters. Some consider that these chapters refer to the history of Israel in the time of Queen Jezebel, giving a religious touch to women.¹⁹ LaRondelle, who supports this last position, considers that the context of this “new Babylon” is that of the new covenant and its contextual basis, chapters 12 and 13.²⁰ Others also consider that the only two instances of the Old Testament that mention a pagan city as a prostitute, Nineveh and Tyre, are the ones that John uses for these chapters.²¹

15. Delgado, 309.

16. Ford, 193.

17. Stefanovic, 399; Ford, 205; Delgado, 311; Quispe, 65; Johnsson, 22.

18. W. B. Nelson Jr., see “Prostitute,” considers that her real name or identity is Rome.

19. Knox, 52-53; Stefanovic, 516; Hans K. LaRondelle, “Babilonia, imperio anticristo,” in *Simposio sobre Apocalipsis-II*, ed. Frank B Holbrook (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2011), 198-290; Keenser, 405, 406.

20. LaRondelle, “Babilonia, imperio anticristo” 197, 189.

21. Keenser, 405; Mounce, 308.

The theologians who accept the use of Ezekiel in these chapters are divided between those who identify Jerusalem as a reference and those who identify Tyre as a reference. The use of allusions to Tyre is quite evident, but Tyre, although she is identified as a prostitute not of God's people, is not to be considered 100% pagan. The origins of Tyre in Ezekiel are not pagan but are created by God. For their part, the kings of Tyre made contracts with the kings of Israel and even helped build the temple of God in the reign of Solomon.²² In Figure 10: Comparison between Ezk 16, 23, 26-28 and Rv 12, 17-18, 19, 21, the comparison between Tyre in Ezekiel and Babylon in Revelation is also shown. Both groups that support the use of Ezekiel in this part may be right, since Jerusalem and Tyre may be somewhat similar. The following is a table that shows the comparison between these two cities, based on their descriptions in the book of Ezekiel.

Figure 12. Comparison between Jerusalem and Tyre

City	Jerusalem Ezk 16	Tyre Ezk 26-28
Origins	Pagan Verses 1-4	Heavenly 28:13-14
Attire	Granted and beautiful Verses 10-13	Obtained by trading and beautiful 27:7, 12, 16, 17, 22-24
Beauty	Extreme Verses 13-14	Perfect 27:3,4, 10, 11; 28:12

22. Ford, 283-284; Badenas, 317.

Corruption	Because of beauty Verses 15	Because of beauty 28:15-17
Judgement and Execution	Because of prostitution Fire Nakedness By the hands of her lovers and an army Riches are taken away Verses 35-41	Because of trading Fire By the hands of a merchant and an army Riches are taken away 28:18; 27:33-34; 26:7-12
Humiliation and Culmination	Silenced Familial restoration That the people may know that Yahweh is God Verses 60-62	Silenced Familial annihilation That the people may know that Yahweh is God 26:4-6, 13, 14

The woman of Rv 17-18 is described as: (1) a prostitute, (2) sitting on many waters/kingdoms, (3) the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, (4) she is in the desert, (5) seated on a beast, (6) colorful clothing and ornamented with jewels, (7) a cup in her hand, (8) mother, (9) murdered, (10) queen, (11) place where God's faithful people live, (12) arrogant woman, (13) is destroyed at the hands of her supposed allies, (14) will be lamented and (15) will be completely destroyed, only the people of God who leave it will survive. Some theologians recognize the religious aspect of women and identify it as the original Christian

Church of Rome.²³ Theologians who consider her a secular woman identify her with Imperial Rome.²⁴

Noticing the religious aspect of this woman, the woman in chapter 12 can reach the memory. The description of the clothing of the woman in chapter 12 linked her to the priestly religious system, as did the garments of this woman in 17-18.²⁵ And the desert becomes the place where both live. As in Ezekiel, here the desert is presented as a place where the people of God are not faithful to him despite his providence.²⁶ Stefanovic comments that although the symbols seem to be describing two different women, this may be the same religious identity at different times and circumstances.²⁷ Doukhan considers it “the church that has flirted with its lovers.”²⁸ Delgado, who sees a direct allusion of Ezk 16 and 23 in these chapters, says the following:

The idea that this passage reveals the apostasy of the people of God has been systematically avoided by most Christian theologians and scholars in exegesis, as well as by the rabbinical scholars who were so scandalized by Ezekiel's severe language that they forbade reading of Ezk 16 in the

23. LaRondelle, “Babilonia, imperio anticristo,” 198, 203; Delgado, 462, 463, 465; Knox, 54

24. Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16, 17-19, 10*, Series XXIII, 376 (Frankfurt, Germany: Verlag Peter Lang, 1989), 270, 283; D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 720.

25. Ford, 279.

26. Bright, 351.

27. Stefanovic, 522.

28. Doukhan, 164.

synagogue. In a special way, John develops the theme of systematic apostasy in chapters 12-17 in great brushstrokes.²⁹

The last woman mentioned in Revelation is found in chapters 19 and 21. This woman is the Wife of the Lamb, the Church, the New Jerusalem.³⁰ A lot of theologians see the New Jerusalem as an antithesis of the woman Babylon.³¹ Just as the Babylonian woman seems to be an antithesis to the woman in chapter 12.³² The woman in Rv 12 could then be the antecedent of the Lamb's wife or her double.³³ Utley recognizes the reference to Ezk 16 of the metaphorical image of marriage in Rv 19.³⁴ The description of the New Jerusalem, like the woman of Rv 12 and Rv 17-18, refers to the priestly garments.³⁵ Below is a table that summarizes the allusions taken from Ezekiel.

29. Delgado, 463.

30. Lehmann, 271; Delgado, 516-517; Oecumenius and Adrew, 184.

31. Doukhan, 164; Badenas, 322-323; Stefanovic, 378-379, 517; Ford, 188; Prévost, 118; Keenser, 313, 314; Pérez, 745; Ruiz, 238-239, 242.

32. LaRondelle, Symposium, 201; Mangina, 195; Ruiz, 235.

33. Keenser, 313; Mangina, 149-150.

34. Bob Utley, *Apocalipsis*, ed. Claudia Quintanilla, trans. Walt Morgan, accessed November 6, 2016 from <https://archive.org/details/ApocalypseRevelationBibleCommentarySpanishVersion>.

35. Badenas, 326.

Figure 13: Comparison between Ezk 16, 23, 26-28 and Rv 12, 17-18, 19, 21

Ezk 16, 23, 26-28	Rv 12, 17-18,³⁶ 19, 21
28:13-14	12:1
16:10-13	12:1; 17:4; ³⁷ 21:9-26
16:63	12:10-12
16:15, 51; 23:11, 30, 31; 27:2-4, 22-24	17:1-5; ³⁸ 18:1-2 ³⁹
16:39-41, 59; 23:40-44; 27:3, 8, 9	18:3-6 ⁴⁰
16:13-14, 22, 30-32, 42; 23:42; 28:2, 12	12:1-2; ⁴¹ 18:7 ⁴²
26:16-18	18:8-11 ⁴³
16:17-19, 23, 38; 23:31-34, 37-39; 26:3-6, 12, 13; 27:7, 12, 13, 15-17, 30- 36	17:4, 6-8; 18:6, 12-24 ⁴⁴

36. S. Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield University Press, 1995), quoted in Wei Lo, "Ezekiel in Revelation: Literary and Hermeneutical Aspects," PhD dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 1999) 25, 223; Delgado, 462-463; M. E. Boismard, *L'Apocalypse* (Paris, France: Cerf, 1950), 530-532, cited in Ruiz, 48; Ruiz, 249; A. F. Johnson, 738; Utley, 190-192; Albert Vanhoye, "L'utilisation du livre d'Ézéchiél dans l'Apocalypse," *Bib* 43 (1962), 440-441, cited in Ruiz, 64; Stefanovic, 535.

37. Delgado, 462; Ford, 283.

38. Delgado, 462; Buttrick, 489, Pérez, 997.

39. Mounce, 320.

40. Ford, 301.

41. Stefanovic, 384; Ford, 195.

42. Ford, 283; Perez, 746, 1002; Utley, 198.

43. Mounce, 332; Utley, 198.

44. Ruiz, 375; Ford, 283; Mounce, 333, 335, 336; Utley, 199-201.

16:37, 39-41, 46, 47; 23: 24-26, 29; 28:17-19	17:15-18 ⁴⁵
16: 60-63	19:6-9; 21:2-9, 27

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, using the historicist method of interpretation of prophecy,⁴⁶ interprets the woman in chapter 12 as the Christian Church⁴⁷ and to that of chapter 17 as Apostate Christianity.⁴⁸ LaRondelle recognizes a connection between both chapters as a continuous story. For him, this is the story of Jezebel and the people of God under the new covenant.⁴⁹ However, this study suggests the connection between both chapters and these two to chapter 21 through the story of Jerusalem in Ezk 16.

In Rv 12 the woman is the people of God through the ages. First, it can represent the faithful people among the Jews. Later when it is persecuted, it can be the primitive Christian Church. The remnant could be the people of God who remained faithful when the majority didn't. She is left in the desert while the dragon pursues the rest of her offspring, setting the stage for the eschatological part of the

45. Delgado, 462; Utley, 196; Ford, 283; Mounce, 332.

46. William G. Johnsson, "Apocalíptica bíblica," in *Teología: Fundamentos bíblicos de nuestra fe*, ed. Raoul Dederen (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2008), 8: 91; Pfandl, 390.

47. Hans K. LaRondelle, "El remanente y el mensaje de los tres ángeles," in *Teología: Fundamentos bíblicos de nuestra fe*, ed. Raoul Dederen (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2008), 8: 201.

48. Ibid., 214.

49. Ibid.

book.⁵⁰ In chapter 17 the woman is still in the desert. The waters that the dragon had thrown at her did not drown her, so the dragon gives them to her to sit upon.

The *Diccionario Bíblico Adventista del Séptimo Día* recognizes the woman of Rv 17 in her role as wife as the whole people of God.⁵¹ Rv 17 and 18 also attribute the role of mother, of “the harlots” and possibly of the “people of God,” to the woman. She is guilty of political and religious adultery, arrogance and murder of the children of God. She is given drink of the cup of abominations and judgment and her destruction is carried out by her allies. Only the faithful who come out of it will live.

Finally, this woman is presented as the wife of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem. Although she has been destroyed, through the restoration she continues to represent the remnant who have remained faithful. Georgi describes the New Jerusalem as restored Babylon.⁵² The restoration of Jerusalem that was promised to the ancestors through the prophets, for example, Ezk 16: 59-63, finds its full fulfillment in the New Jerusalem.⁵³ She dresses in purity,⁵⁴ because she has been

50. George R. Knight, *La visión apocalíptica y la castración del adventismo* (México DF: GEMA Editores, 2009), 69.

51. Horn, see “Esposa.”

52. Dieter Georgi, “Die Visionen vom himmlischen Jerusalem in Apk 21 und 22,” in Kirche, FS Günther Bornkamm zum 75 Geburtstag, ed. Dieter Lührmann and Georg Strecker (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1980), 370-371, cited in Ruiz, 166.

53. Badenas, 317.

54. Schoville, see “Jerusalem.” Presenting to the New Jerusalem in contrast to the allegorically called “Sodom and Egypt,” earthly Jerusalem of Rv 11: 8 (where Christ was crucified).

cleansed and forgiven, and she is ready for the marriage celebration banquet of the Lamb. She is called a wife, but weddings are to be celebrated. This image alludes to Ezk 16: 59-63,⁵⁵ where the unfaithful wife is newly espoused in a new marriage.⁵⁶ The husband is Christ, God, Yahweh, the Lamb and those who live in the city, will be the children that come from the nations that have been saved. Here the final and total restoration of Jerusalem as wife and mother is fulfilled.⁵⁷

Not all theologians see the possibility of the allusion of Ezk 16 in the history of the people of God (Jerusalem) in Revelation. This could be for many reasons. The most probable is that in the first instance they do not see a unity between chapters 12, 17-18, 19 and 21. By not recognizing the unity among all the chapters, it becomes difficult to see a progressive story. The similarity between both metaphorical stories must be considered, then, as a probable allusion. As there is no unanimity among theologians, it should not be classified as a sure allusion, even if there are thematic, verbal and possibly structural parallels.

55. Woudstra, 37.

56. Pate, see "Church"; Horn, see "Matrimonio."

57. McIver, 37. The new earth will be the fulfillment of the future promised to Christians and the glorious future of the promised restoration in Ezekiel.

Chapter six: Conclusions

Summary

Ezk 16 is often underestimated by the literary style, the content of the message and the way it is used. Throughout history, the chapter has been studied by sexist groups. They do not give credit to the true message but use it to support their own extreme points of view. However, a balanced perspective of his message can show valuable and eternal realities that God wanted his people to recognize. These realities not only show the past of the people of God but have repercussions on the present and the future of His people.

The historical account that Ezk 16 elaborates is not a recount of the history of ethnic Israel, but of the people of God through the ages. From Genesis, with its origins, to Revelation, with its eschatological restoration prophecy, Ezekiel shows the people the faithfulness, justice, grace and mercy of God. These qualities of God remain valid despite the infidelity, rebellion and transgressions committed by the people against him. The righteousness of God could not let go of the sins committed against Him and He preferred that the nations defame His honor and not that His character would change. After all, the people had to accept their guilt and the consequences of their actions.

As God is a God of grace and mercy, He did not abandon the covenant He had made with Abraham. And based on His promises, through the story of the descendants of Abraham, He stipulated a time for restoration. Because of the disbelief of His chosen people, the restoration did not take place right after the

liberation of the Babylonian captivity. But through messianic and eschatological prophecies, all human beings can appropriate the promise of restoration of the people of God. This restoration brought, brings and will bring the opportunity of total integration to the people of God to those who accept the atonement of Christ on the cross. While waiting for the final fulfillment of this restoration, the church has the responsibility to remain faithful to Him and to be a good example for all human beings.

Conclusions

After having examined the historical context of the metaphor, of reviewing the canonical literature that uses the metaphor of woman to symbolize Jerusalem, of reconstructing the metaphorical history of Ezk 16 and of offering the possible interpretations, it can be concluded that:

Ezk 16 can be interpreted in a balanced way. In this way we can arrive at a broader interpretation and understanding of the story of the chapter and its historical and theological implications. The theological implications of Ezk 16 affect the image of God's people negatively and positively. Negative, because it shows the reality that everyone wants to hide; his unjustifiable infidelity towards God. Positive, because it offers hope and a better future; forgiveness or atonement for sins and undeserved restitution.

Ezk 16 would also contain a message for the Church today. Just as the story is based on God's love for Jerusalem, so the story of the church of Christ is based on

His love.¹ The figure of marriage continues to symbolize today the relationship between God and His people.² As the wife, the church has the responsibility to remain faithful to her husband. Although sometimes the church is guilty of the same crimes as Jerusalem. Eichrodt points out the criminal abuse of the divine gift of God's love.³ The duty of the church, in realizing its error, is to accept its guilt and repent. Like Jerusalem, repentance and forgiveness fill with shame, not because of contempt for forgiveness, but because of the sin committed that has affected the relationship with God.⁴ McIver not only sees in Ezekiel a notice of responsibility regarding the faithfulness of the church to God, he also sees a warning of responsibility of the church and its mission regarding those who have not yet been saved.⁵

The 22nd chapter of the book *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White,⁶ contains a possible application of the story of Ezk 16 in the American Christian churches in 1800's. She tells of how many years before 1844, the church in the United States had already been declining in conformity with worldly practices and

1. Craigie, 109.

2. Horn, see "Matrimonio."

3. Eichrodt, 219.

4. John Owen, "Lo que cada creyente debería saber acerca de la mortificación del pecado," in *La mortificación del pecado*, trans. Omar Ibáñez Negrete and Thomas R. Montgomery (Graham, NC: Publicaciones Faro de Gracia, 2001), 69.

5. McIver, 282-283.

6. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, ed. revised (Doral, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2007), 374.

customs, but that year (1844) the problem became more acute.⁷ Although, as in the account of Ezk 16, the church was warned (the message of the first angel) about her actions, but with greater anxieties they looked for the friendly alliance with the world.⁸ For the summer of that same year, says White, the message of the second angel was proclaimed. She comments that: “where the admonition of the trial had been more widely proclaimed ... it was more rejected.”⁹ White compared the infidelity of the church at that time with the violation of the marriage vow mentioned by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jr 3:20, Ezk 16: 8, 13-15, 32).¹⁰ She also points out that the Babylon of Rv 17 is the Roman church, which at one time was the Jewish church but made alliances with the pagans becoming a harlot and “that has persecuted so cruelly the disciples of Christ.”¹¹ Thus, the story of Ezk 16 seems to be repeated in various ways at various historical moments.

Recommendations

1. The message of Ezk 16 should be studied more carefully and less fearfully.
2. The reading of Ezk 16 should be promoted constructively for the church and not in a negative or destructive way.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 378.

9. Ibid., 385.

10. Ibid., 379.

11. Ibid., 379-380.

3. An emphasis should be placed on the study of eschatological prophecy that contains Ezk 16: 59-63 for a better evaluation of the present and future of the people of God.
4. “The fall of Babylon will not be complete except when the church is in this state, (of clearly identifying who is on God's side and who is not) and the union of the church with the world has been consummated throughout the entire Christendom.”¹² Since, the fall of Babylon seems to be approaching, it would be useful to elaborate further in the study of the history of the woman of Revelation in the light of Ezk 16 and 23.¹³

12. Ibid., 386.

13. Lo, 223, also recommends a deeper study of the traditional posture on the prostitute in Rv 17 in the light of Ezk 16 and 23.

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