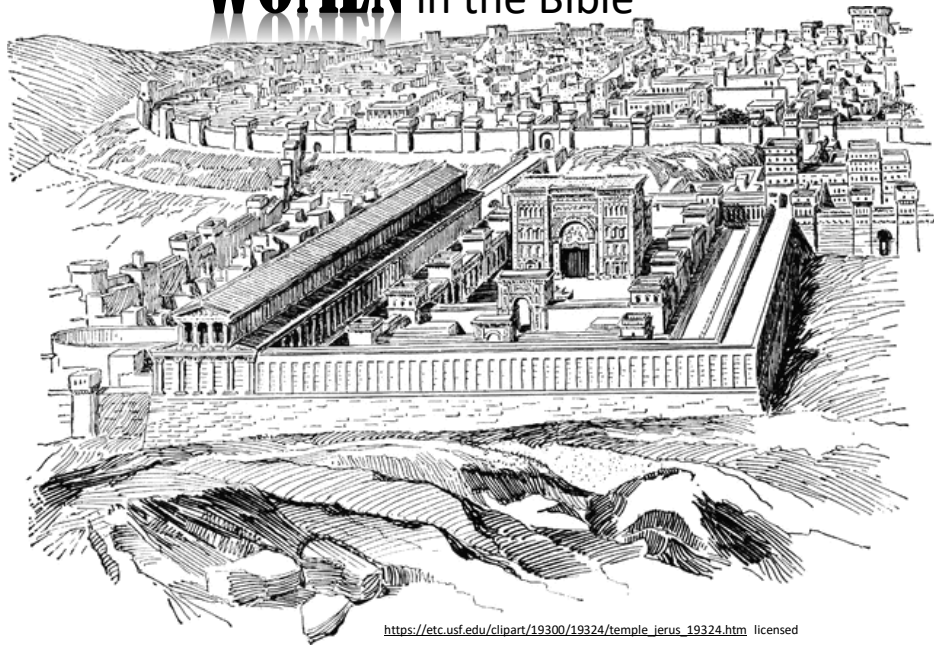


WOMEN in the Bible



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Jerusalem, “You were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, **‘Live!’**” (Ezekiel 16:5b-6).

Birthered in a place of the unruly godless, Jerusalem was left to die. She was not valued worthy to live, but God found her and He had mercy. He cleaned her up and cared for her. The story of Jerusalem is a spiritual story about the Creator God saving a people and molding them into a holy kingdom of royal priests—His royal church. Jerusalem is imaged as a woman in the Bible—a city-church.

She “grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels” (Ezekiel 16:7). When she became of age, God married her. He said, “I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you... and you became mine” (Ezekiel 16:8). He covered her unrighteousness with his garment. He taught her His ways, His commandments and He shared His most intimate thoughts with her. God adored her and lavished her with embroidered dresses of fine linen, leather sandals, jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, rings, earrings, a beautiful crown and “she rose to be a queen” (Ezekiel 16:10-13). Her beauty and fame became world renown. God brought her to perfection.

Jerusalem is the city, then and today, that God has chosen for Himself, forever. “But to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in **Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name**” (I Kings 11:36).

God vowed, “**My name will remain in Jerusalem forever**” (II Chronicles 33:4b).

This beautiful city-church was filled with the blessings from God: teachings of the ways of love and humility. She was comforted by God Almighty's protection and transparency. She rose to be a queen. But, along the way, she lost sight of truth and wisdom. She saw the pagan religious teachings: outward beauty—large buildings and enormous gatherings; direction—independent thought and theology of man and adoration—preferential treatment and self-glorify. All these promises were made by their ruling gods who commanded only—their worship. She looked at herself in the mirror and saw the work of her own hands. Then, it wasn't long and she saw humility as weakness, truth as concessions, and wisdom as opposition to her husband—her Creator.

“You trusted in your beauty [no longer trusted in God] and used your fame to become a prostitute [no need to advertise her trade for she was already well-known]. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his... you took your sons [national leaders] and daughters [churches] whom you bore to me and sacrificed them to the idols [handed them over to the gods who commanded their spiritual death and destruction by worshiping them; they became treasonous] (Ezekiel 16:15, 20).

The church, Jerusalem “built a mound for herself and made a lofty shrine in every public square” (Ezekiel 16:24). Her love for adoration and self-glory was an uncontrolled cancer covering and consuming her, without her realizing that she was dying.

“What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For **you love to sit in the seats of honor** in the synagogues and **receive respectful greetings as you walk** in the marketplaces” (Luke 11:43).

God sent prophets to correct her, but she would not listen. Jesus came to teach her, but she would not listen.

“**Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you**, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37).

The priests of Israel at the highest level, dressed and behaved like pagan priests. “The women [priests] of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles” (Isaiah 3:16).

But, she is not alone. She has two sisters.

Before she fell in 70 A.D., her older sister and her younger sister had already fallen into prostitution. “**Your older sister was Samaria**, who lived to the north of you with her daughters; and **your younger sister**, who lived to the south of you with her daughters, was **Sodom**” (Ezekiel 16:46).

God is describing these churches using the female gender because He is differentiating between national and religious leadership. The message from God is spiritual. Samaria was the capital city

of the northern tribe of Israel—the ten tribes. God was talking about the ministry of the northern ten tribes of Israel. Her daughters are the churches schooled by that wayward ministry.

Sodom was the name, in God's disgust, which He gave to the religious leaders of Judah.

"Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them **they parade their sin like Sodom;** they do not hide it" (Isaiah 3:9).

"Hear the word of the LORD, **you rulers of Sodom;** listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!" (Isaiah 1:10)

The religious leaders and the churches of both the northern and southern tribes of Israel were entrenched in the doctrines and ways of the pagans.

Ezekiel recorded the details of the story. **"The older sister was named Oholah, and her younger sister was Oholibah... Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem"** (Ezekiel 23:4).

God said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even at the same time they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths... Then, I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.' And they slept with her. As men sleep with a prostitute, so they slept with those lewd women, Oholah and Oholibah. But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands... So, **I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women [churches] may take warning and not imitate you"** (Ezekiel 23:36-38, 43-45, 48).

Using the same style of imagery, Hosea recorded his life story, which was a re-enactment of the wayward and treacherous people of the northern tribe of Israel—the house of Israel. Hosea was instructed by God to marry a prostitute and so, he married Gomer.

Three children were born in the relationship of Hosea and Gomer. The first child, a son was called Jezreel. **Lo-Ruhamah a daughter** and **Lo-Ammi a son**, were born in harlotry. **Lo-Ruhamah means 'not loved/pitied'** and **Lo-Ammi means 'not my people.'**

The daughter represents the church of the ten tribes and the son represents the nation. Both the church and the national leadership rebelled against God. They became a godless people through and through, worshiping and serving rogue gods. The consequences of serving the dark powers and principalities in high places include being cut off from God and cursed because of their disobedience. God will not show love or pity to these people; He eventually cut them out of the covenant family. They became Gentiles.

God uses imagery, mirroring, parallels and parables to tell His stories. He also uses His creation to teach mankind about heavenly things. Women refer to churches and mankind in general. In the

beginning, God created the heaven and the earth—at the same time. The earth remained formless and void, until God created mankind. God was busy creating in heaven, where He has created countless beings. Then, He created mankind—second, after the creation in heaven. The first creation resides in heaven, while the second creation resides on earth. The purpose for the creation of two genders on earth was to mirror the first and second creation. God said, “it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18). God created the woman from the rib of the man to mirror the birth of the faithful spiritual church who will come from the rib of Christ, the man. She is the church that Christ will marry.

Mankind, in general, when viewed from the spiritual realm is seen as female. Mankind have all sinned; they have all been deceived—like their mother, Eve. Hence, as God sentenced, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing,” that is, bringing a righteous congregation into God’s kingdom will involve persecution and martyrdom and “your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you,” that is, the church will desire Christ, her husband and he will rule over the church (Genesis 3:16). That was the profound mystery Paul spoke of in Ephesians 5:32—the meaning of the two genders: male and female—the man and the church, planned from the beginning.

The act of adultery is the spiritual image of the blatant desecration of a binding covenant that brought two together as one, into an intimate relationship between honorable national leadership intertwined with faithful religious leadership, forming a tight and unbreakable union of justice and righteousness, honesty and truth, goodness and purity. God considers all pagan practices and rituals as adultery because they were instituted by the sons of God, who were given rulership over the nations at the time of Babel. These heavenly rulers turned against God and practicing their theology is treason.

It may befuddle 21st century Christians how the churches of ancient Israel fell into spiritual decay from the barbaric rituals and sacrifices of the pagan religions. But, a time will come which rests on our near horizon, when Babylon—the mother of all prostitutes, will open her doors—again. The Apostle John said, “When I saw her, I was greatly astonished” (Revelation 17:6b). On the outside, she will appear amazing and a marvel. She will be a great center for learning—trading new ideas, molding beliefs, selling her supernatural science, promoting the engineering of powerful technologies, encouraging life-extending medical treatments, and promoting the preservation and growth of the theology of man. Mankind will not be silent; they will be broadcasting with all their might, their theology for all to embrace. It will appear to be enlightening and freeing.

God foretold the dim future for this cosmic learning center. “**Sit in silence**, go into darkness, Daughter of the Babylonians; **no more will you be called queen** [ruling church] of kingdoms” (Isaiah 47:5). Their theology will be silenced and she will be dethroned.

Not all of the churches of ancient Israel are a bitter disappointment. Rachel, the wife Jacob loved, walked in the shoes of the church loved by God. She mirrored the mother of the loved prophets.

Jesus was the last prophet, who like the prophets before him, died at the hands of the treacherous religious leaders in Jerusalem.

In ancient times and during the lives of the apostles, the language of God was not a mystery. Matthew understood what Jeremiah wrote in 31:15, "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, **Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted**, because they are no more" (Matthew 2:18).

Rachel had long since died before Jeremiah wrote. Matthew understood that Rachel's children mirrored the prophets—the righteous teachers. Her name is used by Jeremiah and understood by Matthew as the one crying for the death of the prophets. Jesus was the last prophet and Herod was seeking his life. Matthew recognized the prophecy and quoted Jeremiah as his prophecy was being fulfilled.

The righteous nation that would come from the prophets throughout the ages, would be a small remnant who keep the commandments of God and His Sabbaths. God knew it would take a miracle, that is, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, which images the opening of the womb by God—for the righteous church to birth a righteous congregation. The prophets died before they could see the fruits of their labor. Rachel named Benjamin, 'Benomi,' which means, 'son of my sorrow.' She, like the prophets, saw only sorrow. But, Jacob saw differently and immediately changed his name to 'Benjamin,' which means, 'son of the right hand.' Christ sits on God's right-hand. Benjamin will not disappoint his mother. He mirrors a righteous nation of men and women—a holy nation of royal priests, who are the direct result of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit through Christ's sacrifice and his teaching of the word of God.

God promised this metaphorical Rachel that her children would return to the Holy Land. "This is what the LORD says: 'Keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for **the reward for your work will come**, declares the LORD. **Then your children will return** from the land of the enemy'" (Jeremiah 31:16). The reward of the prophets is for the righteous to be living in God's holy place—a place separated from wickedness, living in peace and safety.

God intentionally did not open Rachel's womb until after Leah and the two handmaids had given Jacob children to inform the 21st century Judo-Christians about the birth of the righteous congregation that will take place in the latter days after God's Holy Spirit is available. "So, the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matthew 20:6).

Rachel's two children: Joseph mirrors the life of Christ in many, many ways and Benjamin mirrors the life of the saints, Christ's bride. Rachel died in childbirth. She was given a walk that mirrored the life of a mother to a loved ministry: short and bitter-sweet.

The Bible is written through forty different authors and preserved during captivities, raging wars, devastation, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the scattering of both houses of Israel. The stories are written in God's multi-layered language using metaphors that paint a spiritual story that flows across multiple dimensions into a three-dimensional picture for mankind to see.

God encoded His plan of salvation, every detail, every warning is painted with imagery rich in depth and color, clues and evidence climaxing into a mystery movie solved by the viewer.

The women in the Bible play the most important role of all. From within women, a bride will be revealed; she will marry the King of kings, Lord of lords. Together, they will reign over two realms: heaven and earth. Who is she?

In God's great mercy, He has given grace to the people He took for His own. His original plan has not changed. He took a people for himself to mold them into a holy kingdom of royal priests (Exodus 19:6, I Peter 2:9). This kingdom of physical men and women have been chosen to be God's church—a holy kingdom of royal priests. God's people are the woman He has always loved and He plans to restore her.

God will restore Jerusalem. **“For Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.** The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But **you will be called Hephzibah and your land Beulah** for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married” (Isaiah 62:1-4).

“Your land will be married” may appear a strange use of language to 21st century Christians, but the imagery of intimacy is the visual God is painting. God added, “As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you” (Isaiah 62:5a). God is forecasting the union between the national leaders being one with Jerusalem, their religious centre. The national leaders today have devised a corrupt economic system, financial products of mass destruction, judges and lobbyists who accept bribes and promote injustice, politicians and the wealthy who make money from wars, liars who manipulate history to hide the truth will all have to be corrected. God further added, “as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you” (Isaiah 62:5b). This magical relationship of butterflies and sparks will be felt intensely by God and His religious leaders in Jerusalem who will give birth to a righteous congregation.

“Break forth in joy, sing together, **O ruins of Jerusalem,** for the LORD has comforted His people; **He has redeemed Jerusalem**” (Isaiah 52:9).

God will also restore the two houses of Israel. The two sisters with Jerusalem will worship the Almighty God and live the ways of God. All of the “traditions of men” that Jesus urged the Jewish leaders to remove and the Christianized pagan traditions will be seen for what they are and eradicated.

The doubters will look foolish before God. His prophecies are absolute. “I will bring **Judah and Israel back from captivity** and **will rebuild them as they were before**” (Jeremiah 33:7).

Ezekiel prophesied the re-unification of the two houses. “I will take the stick of Joseph—which is in Ephraim's hand—and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick,

making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand... There will be one king over all of them and **they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms**" (Ezekiel 37:19, 22b).

This re-unification has been the greatest mystery of all among the Hebrew religious scholars. The kingdom of Israel fractured over 3,700 years ago. The northern house, the ten tribes known as the house of Israel, was divorced by God, cut out of the covenant family because of their relentless disobedience and their passion for wickedness: corruption, dishonesty, injustice and craving for self-glory.

The Jewish house knew from the scriptures that their kingdom would be re-united, but there stood an impenetrable barrier. Their brothers were cut out of the covenant family. The mystery hidden for generations was **how would God redeem them**. The Jewish house knew that God could not re-marry them; it was written in the law (Deuteronomy 24:4). God was their husband who divorced them. This intimate relationship that mirrors a marriage cannot be possible again without a resolution—a resolution that adheres to the law of God. How could the divorced woman (the ten tribes) re-enter an intimate relationship with God?

"The husband who divorced her first **may not marry her again after SHE HAS BEEN DEFILED**, for that is an abomination to the LORD. You must not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance" (Deuteronomy 24:4).

The Apostle Paul discovered the answer to the great mystery. "**The mystery that was hidden for ages and generations** but is now revealed to His saints, to whom **God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles** [the divorced Gentiles/10 tribes of Israel] the glorious riches of **this mystery**, which is **CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory**. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present **everyone PERFECT IN CHRIST**" (Colossians 1:26-28).

There lies God's solution to the matter. With Christ in us, the repentant are no longer "defiled." She has been restored as a virgin as if she had never married or committed adultery. It is like all the sins that she has ever committed have been washed away and totally forgotten. **This is a one-time opportunity.**

"I will build you up **again**, and you, **Virgin Israel**, will be rebuilt. **Again**, you will take up your timbrels and go out to dance with the joyful" (Jeremiah 31:4).

The house of Judah and the house of Israel will be heirs together. "**This mystery is that through the gospel, the Gentiles [the divorced ten tribes] are heirs together with Israel [the Jews]**, members **together of one body**, and **sharers together** in the promise in Christ Jesus... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!" (Ephesians 3:21).

The greatest love story ever told is the enduring love God Almighty has for His church—the holy kingdom of royal priests.

“Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, **you will not be forgotten by me**” (Isaiah 44:21).

“The LORD appeared to him from afar: **“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with loving devotion”** (Jeremiah 31:3).

With the work of His hands and the infinite generosity of payment for sins by their Savior, this church will be saved—all twelve tribes.

“All of Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26). Unlike, the mother of prostitutes, Babylon who will open her doors for business in the 21st century. She will do all she can to steal the faith that Christians hold of the gift of grace and the wonderful promise of adoption as sons of God. She will work relentlessly to replace it with faith in her, as if she was ever willing to suffer the crucifixion to give mankind eternal life. She desires only to enslave and afflict mankind, even the wicked who have long served her.

Christ has paid the price for the sins of mankind. When his sacrifice is accepted, all sins are wiped away. Don’t turn back. Enter the race of chastity. Join the saints. God has already declared them as the victors and co-rulers with Christ, his bride in the kingdom of God.

“But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever” (Daniel 7:18).

The radiance of the saints will be a sight to behold. “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband... the bride, the wife of the Lamb... shone with the glory of God, brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:2, 9b, 11).

This woman is the body of Christ comprised of layers and layers of righteous strength: the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, and the saints throughout time. She is radiant and glorious. The righteousness of these people is a stunning sight. They have suffered, some severely persecuted and others martyred while on earth. They held fast to the testimony of Jesus, waiting patiently for their transformation to be intimately close to their Creator and their Husband. She is the redeemed women in the Bible whose story is often hidden with only mere fragments of understanding coming to light. Her story is rarely told in all its glory.

God will not allow her to die. He passed by and said, **“Live!”**

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich