

## Fire in the Forest

<sup>45</sup> Furthermore the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>46</sup> "Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South, <sup>47</sup> and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. <sup>48</sup> All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.'"

<sup>49</sup> Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! They say of me, 'Does he not speak parables?'"

- **Does He not speak in parables.....**
  - **How can we understand.....**
- **The south would be Judah, the southern kingdom, which in those days had many trees and forests....**
  - **The unquenchable fire kindled by the Lord would be so intense that it would burn the green trees**
- **All flesh, evil and righteous.**

**21** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; <sup>3</sup> and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I *am* against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. <sup>4</sup> Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north, <sup>5</sup> that all flesh may know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore.'"

- **The sword of the Lord in this case was Babylon**

- Both the righteous and the wicked from the north and the south
- I have drawn out... there will be no delay, judgment is immanent

<sup>6</sup> Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. <sup>7</sup> And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord GOD."

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<sup>8</sup> Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD!' Say:

'A sword, a sword is sharpened

And also polished!

<sup>10</sup> Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter,

Polished to flash like lightning!

Should we then make mirth?

It despises the scepter of My son,

*As it does* all wood.

<sup>11</sup> And He has given it to be polished,

That it may be handled;

This sword is sharpened, and it is polished

To be given into the hand of the slayer.'

• **The sword is made ready to be used**

<sup>12</sup> "Cry and wail, son of man;

For it will be against My people,

Against all the princes of Israel.

Terrors including the sword will be against My people;

Therefore strike *your* thigh.

- **Strike your thigh or breast is a gesture of grief... Quite natural...**

<sup>13</sup> "Because *it is* a testing,

And what if *the sword* despises even the scepter?

*The scepter* shall be no *more*,"

says the Lord GOD.

- **It is a testing that you have failed**

<sup>14</sup> "You therefore, son of man, prophesy,

And strike *your* hands together.

The third time let the sword do double *damage*.

*It is* the sword *that* slays,

The sword that slays the great *men*,

That enters their private chambers.

<sup>15</sup> I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,

That the heart may melt and many may stumble.

Ah! *It is* made bright;

*It is* grasped for slaughter:

- **Clap in approval or as a signal to attack**
  - **Approve of double or triple damage**

<sup>16</sup> "Swords at the ready!

Thrust right!

Set your blade!

Thrust left--

Wherever your edge is ordered!

17 "I also will beat My fists together,  
And I will cause My fury to rest;  
I, the LORD, have spoken."

- **Beat my fists together (clap), signaling an end!**

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: 19 "And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put *it* at the head of the road to the city. 20 Appoint a road for the sword to go to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a *siege* mound, and to build a wall. 23 And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear--because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand.

- **Appoint two ways...**

- **Mark on a map**

- **Two ways to go...**
- **Shaking arrows.**

- **Each arrow was marked with a choice and then slung around in a quiver until one fell out. They**

one that fell out revealed the answer of their god.

- Looks at the images....
  - Checks the liver, another form of divination that examined for a certain color or texture or marking to the will of the god they were seeking
- The king of Babylon winds up with the arrow to Jerusalem

<sup>25</sup> 'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity *shall* end, <sup>26</sup> thus says the Lord GOD:

"Remove the turban, and take off the crown;

Nothing *shall remain* the same.

Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.

<sup>27</sup> Overthrown, overthrown,

I will make it overthrown!

It shall be no *longer*,

Until He comes whose right it is,

And I will give it *to Him*."

- The wicked prince of Israel, Zedekiah,
  - Overthrown,
  - Until He comes whose right it is..... Jesus

<sup>28</sup> "And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say:

'A sword, a sword *is* drawn,

Polished for slaughter,

For consuming, for flashing--

<sup>29</sup> While they see false visions for you,  
While they divine a lie to you,  
To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain  
Whose day has come,  
Whose iniquity *shall* end.

<sup>30</sup> 'Return *it* to its sheath.

I will judge you  
In the place where you were created,  
In the land of your nativity.

<sup>31</sup> I will pour out My indignation on you;  
I will blow against you with the fire of My wrath,  
And deliver you into the hands of brutal men *who are* skillful to destroy.

<sup>32</sup> You shall be fuel for the fire;  
Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.  
You shall not be remembered,  
For I the LORD have spoken.'"

- **Judgment would come to the Amonites as well**

### Sins of Jerusalem

**22** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! <sup>3</sup> Then say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. <sup>4</sup> You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made. You have caused your days to draw near, and have come to *the end of your years*; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations,

and a mockery to all countries. <sup>5</sup> *Those* near and *those* far from you will mock you as infamous *and* full of tumult.

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<sup>6</sup> "Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. <sup>7</sup> In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. <sup>8</sup> You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. <sup>9</sup> In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness. <sup>10</sup> In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. <sup>11</sup> One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. <sup>12</sup> In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me," says the Lord GOD.

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<sup>13</sup> "Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst. <sup>14</sup> Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and will do *it*. <sup>15</sup> I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you. <sup>16</sup> You shall defile yourself in the sight of the nations; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."''''

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### Israel in the Furnace

17 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they *are* all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 *As men* gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt *it*; so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you.'"

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### Israel's Wicked Leaders

23 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 24 "Son of man, say to her: 'You *are* a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.' 25 The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26 Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known *the difference* between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. 27 Her princes in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain. 28 Her prophets plastered them with untempered *mortar*, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken. 29 The people of the land have used oppressions,

committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. <sup>30</sup> So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. <sup>31</sup> Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

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### Two Harlot Sisters

**23** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying:

<sup>2</sup> "Son of man, there were two women,  
The daughters of one mother.

<sup>3</sup> They committed harlotry in Egypt,  
They committed harlotry in their youth;  
Their breasts were there embraced,  
Their virgin bosom was there pressed.

<sup>4</sup> Their names: Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister;  
They were Mine,  
And they bore sons and daughters.

*As for* their names,  
Samaria *is* Oholah, and Jerusalem *is* Oholibah.

- **Oholah- her tent—set up their own tabernacle**
- **Oholibah- my tent- used my tablenacle**

#### The Older Sister, Samaria

<sup>5</sup> "Oholah played the harlot even though she was Mine;  
And she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring Assyrians,

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

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

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

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

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

- **Israel, AKA Samaria, the northern kingdom was taken in 722bc**

#### **The Younger Sister, Jerusalem**

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

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

13 Then I saw that she was defiled;  
Both *took* the same way.

14 But she increased her harlotry;  
She looked at men portrayed on the wall,  
Images of Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion,  
15 Girded with belts around their waists,  
Flowing turbans on their heads,  
All of them looking like captains,  
In the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea,  
The land of their nativity.

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

- **the political split between Egypt and Babylon**

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

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

19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry  
In calling to remembrance the days of her youth,

When she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

<sup>20</sup> For she lusted for her paramours,  
Whose flesh *is like* the flesh of donkeys,  
And whose issue *is like* the issue of horses.

<sup>21</sup> Thus you called to remembrance the lewdness of your youth,  
When the Egyptians pressed your bosom  
Because of your youthful breasts.

### **Judgment on Jerusalem**

<sup>22</sup> "Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the Lord GOD:

'Behold, I will stir up your lovers against you,  
From whom you have alienated yourself,  
And I will bring them against you from every side:

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

<sup>24</sup> And they shall come against you  
With chariots, wagons, and war-horses,  
With a horde of people.  
They shall array against you  
Buckler, shield, and helmet all around.

'I will delegate judgment to them,

And they shall judge you according to their judgments.

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

<sup>26</sup> They shall also strip you of your clothes  
And take away your beautiful jewelry.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Thus I will make you cease your lewdness and your harlotry  
*Brought* from the land of Egypt,  
So that you will not lift your eyes to them,  
Nor remember Egypt anymore.'

<sup>28</sup> "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will deliver you into the hand of those you hate, into the hand of *those* from whom you alienated yourself. <sup>29</sup> They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, and leave you naked and bare. The nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotry. <sup>30</sup> I will do these *things* to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols. <sup>31</sup> You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will put her cup in your hand.'

<sup>32</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'You shall drink of your sister's cup,  
The deep and wide one;

You shall be laughed to scorn  
And held in derision;  
It contains much.

<sup>33</sup> You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow,  
The cup of horror and desolation,  
The cup of your sister Samaria.

<sup>34</sup> You shall drink and drain it,  
You shall break its shards,  
And tear at your own breasts;  
For I have spoken,  
Says the Lord GOD.

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<sup>35</sup> "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

'Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back,  
Therefore you shall bear the *penalty*  
*Of* your lewdness and your harlotry.'

### **Both Sisters Judged**

<sup>36</sup> The LORD also said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominations. <sup>37</sup> For they have committed adultery, and blood *is* on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols, and even sacrificed their sons whom they bore to Me, passing them through *the fire*, to devour *them*. <sup>38</sup> Moreover they have done this to Me: They have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and profaned My Sabbaths. <sup>39</sup> For after they had slain their children for their idols, on the same day they came into My sanctuary to profane it; and indeed thus they have done in the midst of My house.

<sup>40</sup> "Furthermore you sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and there they came. And you washed yourself for them, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments. <sup>41</sup> You sat on a stately couch, with a table prepared before it, on which you had set My incense and My oil. <sup>42</sup> The sound of a carefree multitude was with her, and Sabeans were brought from the wilderness with men of the common sort, who put bracelets on their wrists and beautiful crowns on their heads. <sup>43</sup> Then I said concerning *her who had grown old in adulteries*, 'Will they commit harlotry with her now, and she *with them*?' <sup>44</sup> Yet they went in to her, as men go in to a woman who plays the harlot; thus they went in to Oholah and Oholibah, the lewd women. <sup>45</sup> But righteous men will judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women who shed blood, because they *are* adulteresses, and blood *is* on their hands.

<sup>46</sup> "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Bring up an assembly against them, give them up to trouble and plunder. <sup>47</sup> The assembly shall stone them with stones and execute them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn their houses with fire. <sup>48</sup> Thus I will cause lewdness to cease from the land, that all women may be taught not to practice your lewdness. <sup>49</sup> They shall repay you for your lewdness, and you shall pay for your idolatrous sins. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.'"