

# The Visions of Ezekiel

## Lesson 17

Ezekiel's Thirtieth Assignment from the LORD

### 8. Two Daughters of One Mother

**23:1 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 23:2 "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother; 23:3 and they played the harlot in Egypt. They played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and there their virgin bosom was handled.**

To end the third vision, the LORD spoke to Ezekiel about two women, blood sisters of the same mother. The LORD's description of these two women did not address their wholesome characteristics; rather, He focused on their outright unrighteousness as harlots (prostitutes) exhibiting their godless actions in the neighboring land of Egypt and the other countries that surrounded Israel. Harlots they were in the days of their youth, flaunting their breasts against foreign men and seeking the touch of their hands. These two women did not use their bodies according to the will of Almighty God. Nothing is wrong with a woman pressing her breast against her husband, not in the slightest. Nothing is wrong with the husband caressing the breast of his new bride, not in the slightest. But these women were not interacting with their husbands; they were interacting with foreign men for pay, for favors, for compensation, for hire. Needless to say, after the first foreign man touched the **"virgin bosom,"** it was no longer virgin. From that point on, no future husband would ever be able to touch the **"virgin bosom"** of these harlots as new brides because they were not virgins; they were simply surplus, and the husbands had been robbed of the joy that was intended to be his and his alone. Where did they learn to flaunt themselves as harlots? In Egypt, when they were in the tender developing years of their lives.

#### a) Two Names of the Two Daughters

**23:4 "Their names were Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister. And they became Mine, and they bore sons and daughters. And as for their names, Samaria is Oholah and Jerusalem is Oholibah.**

But now we come to the names of these two women and we find that they were not women at all. They were cities. The older was named **"Oholah"** and the younger was named **"Oholibah."** The first was Samaria, the second was Jerusalem; Samaria was the older, Jerusalem was younger than Samaria. This passage matches the sequence presented of the age of these two found in Ezekiel 16:46. These were not actual women. These women were used as metaphors for two cities. If these were both blood sisters of one mother, who was that mother? It was the land on which they were established, land that belonged to the Canaanites before it was given to the *nation of Israel* as its Promised Land. To say that the land belonged to the Canaanites was from an earthly perspective; the Canaanites were the first to live on the land. From an earthly perspective, when the *nation of Israel* obtained the land, it belonged to *Israel*. However, from a heavenly perspective, the land always belonged to the LORD. When the land was given to the *Israelites*, these two areas became the property of the LORD from an earthly perspective. They both were filled with men and women. They both became capitals as the offsprings of the original *Nation of Israel*. Neither Samaria nor Jerusalem was the original capital of Israel. Jerusalem, the Canaanite city of Jebus was captured by David and turned into the capital of Israel in seventh year of his reign. The old hill that was purchased by King Omri of the Northern Kingdom after the *nation of Israel* divided following the death of Solomon

became the capital of the north and Jerusalem remained the capital of the south. Both were unfaithful to the LORD. Neither trusted the LORD; both sought to find trust in another land, outside the Promised Land.

The word “**Oholah**” meant *she who has a tent*. The word “**Oholibah**” meant *my tent is in her*. The names were appropriate and purposeful. The LORD called Samaria “**Oholah**” because she had a tent, she had a place of worship, but it was a place of false worship, it was not the LORD’s tent. In Jerusalem the LORD called her “**Oholibah**” because His tent was in that city and it had been the place of true worship. For both, worshipers were involved, “**sons and daughters**” as indicated in the text.

(1) Oholah, Samaria and Her Lovers

(a) Her Lust for Assyrian Lovers

**23:5** "Oholah played the harlot while she was Mine; and she lusted after her lovers, after the Assyrians, her neighbors, **23:6** who were clothed in purple, governors and officials, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses. **23:7** "She bestowed her harlotries on them, all of whom were the choicest men of Assyria; and with all whom she lusted after, with all their idols she defiled herself.

With the establishment of the two cities as the property of LORD, He announced in this passage that Samaria became totally unfaithful to His instructions. Her unfaithfulness was that she trusted in Assyria, the nation resting to her northeast rather than putting her trust in Him alone. She lusted after her Assyrian lovers “**with all their idols**.” Here we have the reason for the LORD’s disgust – idols. In the Ten Commandments the LORD said to this group, “You shall have no other god except me.” All earthly gods were represented by images called idols. Here was the Scripture history of Samaria’s harlotry with Assyria.

**2 Kings 16:** <sup>5</sup> Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to *wage war*; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. <sup>6</sup> At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath and have lived there to this day. <sup>7</sup> So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me.” <sup>8</sup> Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. <sup>9</sup> So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried *the people of* it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death. <sup>10</sup> Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar which *was* at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship. <sup>11</sup> So Urijah the priest built an altar; according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, thus Urijah the priest made *it*, before the coming of King Ahaz from Damascus. <sup>12</sup> When the king came from Damascus, the king saw the altar; then the king approached the altar and went up to it, <sup>13</sup> and burned his burnt offering and his meal offering, and poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. <sup>14</sup> The bronze altar, which *was* before the LORD, he brought from the front of the house, from between *his* altar and the house of the LORD, and he put it on the north side of *his* altar. <sup>15</sup> Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, “Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering and the evening meal offering and the king’s burnt offering and his meal offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land and their meal offering and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. But the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire *by*.” <sup>16</sup> So Urijah the priest did according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

(b) Her Training with Egyptian Lovers

**23:8 "She did not forsake her harlotries from the time in Egypt; for in her youth men had lain with her, and they handled her virgin bosom and poured out their lust on her.**

Where did Samaria learn her trade? It was in Egypt. It was during her developing years of her youth – before Moses was called to take her out of Egypt. In Egypt she learned to love idols, the idols of Egypt.

(c) Her Exile to the Assyrian Lovers

**23:9 "Therefore, I gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, after whom she lusted. 23:10 "They uncovered her nakedness; they took her sons and her daughters, but they slew her with the sword. Thus she became a byword among women, and they executed judgments on her.**

Because the Northern Kingdom and her capital city of Samaria returned to the sins of her youth rather than remaining a faithful follower of the LORD in her mature years, the LORD allowed her long-time partner, friend and lover, the nation of Assyria to enter her, destroy her, lead a her remnant to the land of Assyria and bring an end to the Northern Kingdom and the homeland of the ten northern tribes. To do so, Assyria had to strip the Northern Kingdom bare. This action occurred in 722 BC.

(2) Oholibah, Jerusalem and Her Lovers

(a) Lust for Assyrian Lovers

**23:11 "Now her sister Oholibah saw this, yet she was more corrupt in her lust than she, and her harlotries were more than the harlotries of her sister. 23:12 "She lusted after the Assyrians, governors and officials, the ones near, magnificently dressed, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men. 23:13 "I saw that she had defiled herself; they both took the same way.**

Now the LORD turned to accuse the younger sister, “**Oholibah**,” Jerusalem, because over the one hundred and sixteen years since the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom had begun to follow in the same path of her older sister. She thwarted the advance of Assyria at the beginning during the days of Hezekiah in the Southern Kingdom. But with his death, his son, Manasseh, who reigned for fifty-five years, led the Southern Kingdom and the capital city of Jerusalem headlong into horrendous idolatry. Then, with the following kings there were ebbs and flows of righteous attempts to steer the kingdom toward the LORD but all failed. With the defeat of the Assyrian Empire by the Babylonians in 612 BC, the Southern Kingdom began to flirt with Assyria again in defiance of Babylon. Finally, six years later, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Southern Kingdom and put it under his control. Jehoiakim was put in place to rule as King of Israel for Nebuchadnezzar and he would hold that place for eleven years. When he was removed by Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin was his replacement but he lasted but ninety to one hundred days. Zedekiah was then placed on the throne and had been there for nine years at this point in the story. It was all too late. Even Zedekiah lusted for the help of Assyria in opposition to Babylon.

(b) Thirst for Babylonian Lovers

**23:14 "So she increased her harlotries. And she saw men portrayed on the wall, images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, 23:15 girded with belts on their loins, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, like the Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their birth. 23:16 "When she saw them she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea.**

The Southern Kingdom could not ignore the great success of the Babylonian Empire. Frankly, it was a blessed empire. With Daniel in charge of the administration of the empire, the kingdom and specifically Zedekiah and his capital city of Jerusalem could not bear to miss out on the great possibility of reward by participating in trade with her. Notice that the Babylonians were not the primary target group of the

*Israelites* in this passage. It was the “**Chaldeans.**” As we saw in Ezekiel 16, they were enamored of the merchants of Chaldea who were Babylonians but, in reality, businessmen more than Babylonians. What was the primary widget that they sold? Household idols to be sure. Who would the Southern Kingdom sell those household idols to? The Israelites of the Southern Kingdom. What would they do with the idols? Worship them in secret and in public.

(c) Disgust for the Babylonian Lovers

**23:17** “**T**he Babylonians came to her to the bed of love and defiled her with their harlotry. And when she had been defiled by them, she became disgusted with them.

**23:18** “**S**he uncovered her harlotries and uncovered her nakedness; then I became disgusted with her, as I had become disgusted with her sister.

The king and the people of the Southern Kingdom must have invited the Chaldeans of Babylon to their land. But when they arrived, she could not satisfy their desires, their needs, their wants, their expectations. They stripped her of all her wealth. What could she do? Where could she turn? She remembered Egypt.

(d) Desire for Egyptian Lovers

**23:19** “**Y**et she multiplied her harlotries, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the harlot in the land of Egypt. **23:20** “**S**he lusted after their paramours, whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys and whose issue is like the issue of horses. **23:21** “**T**hus you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians handled your bosom because of the breasts of your youth.

The LORD used extremely descriptive words in this passage. He did so also in chapter 16. At this point, I think it best not to delve into the words used to describe the lewdness, the evil plan of the Southern Kingdom. Rather, we might remember the story that related to this passage found in Jeremiah.

**Jeremiah 44:** <sup>20</sup> Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and women—even to all the people who were giving him *such* an answer—saying, <sup>21</sup> “As for the smoking sacrifices that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your forefathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them and did not *all this* come into His mind? <sup>22</sup> “So the LORD was no longer able to endure *it*, because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed; thus your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as *it is* this day. <sup>23</sup> “Because you have burned sacrifices and have sinned against the LORD and not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in His law, His statutes or His testimonies, therefore this calamity has befallen you, as *it has* this day.” <sup>24</sup> Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt, <sup>25</sup> thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, as follows: ‘As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled *it* with your hands, saying, “We will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her.” Go ahead and confirm your vows, and certainly perform your vows!’ <sup>26</sup> “Nevertheless hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who are living in the land of Egypt, ‘Behold, I have sworn by My great name,’ says the LORD, ‘never shall My name be invoked again by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, “As the Lord GOD lives.”’ <sup>27</sup> ‘Behold, I am watching over them for harm and not for good, and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone. <sup>28</sup> ‘Those who escape the sword will return out of the land of Egypt to the land of Judah few in number. Then all the remnant of Judah who have gone to the land of Egypt to reside there will know whose word will stand, Mine or theirs. <sup>29</sup> ‘This will be the sign to you,’ declares the LORD, ‘that I am going to punish you in this place, so that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for harm.’ <sup>30</sup> “Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I

am going to give over Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt to the hand of his enemies, to the hand of those who seek his life, just as I gave over Zedekiah king of Judah to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *who was* his enemy and was seeking his life."

The Southern Kingdom thought Pharaoh Hophra could save them from Nebuchadnezzar, but he was hopeless and helpless because Egypt had been taken under the thumb of the Babylonian king too. The Southern Kingdom had reached out to another lover, the one from her youth – Egypt, a futile gesture.

### (3) Attack from All Lovers

#### (a) The List of Lovers

**23:22** "Therefore, O Oholibah, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold I will arouse your lovers against you, from whom you were alienated, and I will bring them against you from every side: 23:23 the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them; desirable young men, governors and officials all of them, officers and men of renown, all of them riding on horses. 23:24 'They will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons, and with a company of peoples. They will set themselves against you on every side with buckler and shield and helmet; and I will commit the judgment to them, and they will judge you according to their customs.

Thus, the LORD listed the lovers of the Southern Kingdom that were about to turn on her and tear her to pieces.

*Pekod* meant *punishment or judgment*.<sup>41</sup> It was an *Aramean* tribe, the old name for a *Syrian* tribe that had moved from Syria and established a home southeast of the mouth of the Tigris River.

*Shoa* meant *help*.<sup>42</sup> We also know it as the *Sutu* tribe. In this passage, God used this tribe to punish His people.

We do not know the meaning of the name *Koa*; however, we do know that God would use this tribe to bring the His judgment on these people.

To this group, the *Assyrians*, *Babylonians*, *even the merchants of Chaldea*, with the royalty of all would join in one army with Nebuchadnezzar to end the rebellion in the Promised Land – sent by the LORD to do His will.

#### (b) The Injury by Lovers

**23:25** 'I will set My jealousy against you, that they may deal with you in wrath. They will remove your nose and your ears; and your survivors will fall by the sword. They will take your sons and your daughters; and your survivors will be consumed by the fire. 23:26 'They will also strip you of your clothes and take away your beautiful jewels.

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* says this about the passage.

In Mesopotamia facial mutilation was a frequent punishment for adultery. A guilty woman would be rendered so grotesque that she would be forever undesirable to anyone else; she would be forced to bear her shame and guilt publicly. Similarly, Jerusalem would be rendered unattractive to any more potential lovers. Also some of Jerusalem's children would be carried away as slaves, others would be burned by fire, and her possessions (clothes and jewelry) would be stripped away. God's punishment would cure Judah's lust; she would no longer look to Egypt for help.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

## (c) The Memory of Lovers

**23:27** 'Thus I will make your lewdness and your harlotry brought from the land of Egypt to cease from you, so that you will not lift up your eyes to them or remember Egypt anymore.'

Thus, the love affair with idolatry that began in Egypt in the developing years of *the nation of Israel* would be terminated by the LORD. That process would start in just four years from this vision. True to the point, once exiled to Babylon and then returned to the land, Egypt would never again have the draw on *Israel* that it had at this point in the story line.

## b) Oholibah, Jerusalem and Her Punishment

## (1) Given to the Lovers

**23:28** "For thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will give you into the hand of those whom you hate, into the hand of those from whom you were alienated.'

Jerusalem was facing the wrath of the LORD. He foretold their fate in four oracles. Here the LORD stated that they would be given into the hands of their haters. We know these haters because they are listed in 23:22-24.

## (2) Stripped by the Lovers

**23:29** "They will deal with you in hatred, take all your property, and leave you naked and bare. And the nakedness of your harlotries will be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotries.

The second oracle warned that the haters of *Israel* would strip her bare of all her worldly possessions, all property, leaving nothing for her to own.

## (3) Defiled by the Lovers

**23:30** "These things will be done to you because you have played the harlot with the nations, because you have defiled yourself with their idols.

The third oracle warned that the haters would have the authority to destroy *Israel* because she *defiled herself with the idols of all the nations of her lovers*.

## (4) Lived Like Her Sister

**23:31** 'You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will give her cup into your hand.'

Jerusalem, a righteous city, was virtually blameless when the nation divided under Solomon's son. Then the Northern Kingdom went sour and paid the penalty for her idolatrous sin. Then, Jerusalem followed in the ways of her older sister, but to a greater extent. Therefore, the wrath that brought down the Northern Kingdom was passed on to bring down the Southern Kingdom and her capital.

## (5) Mocked Like Her Sister

**23:32** "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'You will drink your sister's cup, Which is deep and wide. You will be laughed at and held in derision; It contains much.'

Jerusalem would become the laughingstock of the world. The LORD had already proclaimed this in Ezekiel. The following examples should suffice.

**Ezekiel 5:** <sup>14</sup> 'Moreover, I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the nations which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by. <sup>15</sup> So it will be a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the nations who surround you when I execute judgments against you in anger, wrath and raging rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken.'

**Ezekiel 16:** <sup>56</sup> "As the *name* of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride, <sup>57</sup> before your wickedness was uncovered, so now you have become the reproach of the daughters of Edom and of all who are around her, of the daughters of the Philistines—those surrounding *you* who despise you. <sup>58</sup> "You have borne the *penalty* of your lewdness and abominations," the LORD declares.

**Ezekiel 22:** <sup>4</sup> "You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by your idols which you have made. Thus you have brought your day near and have come to your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the lands. <sup>5</sup> "Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you of ill repute, full of turmoil.

#### (6) Reacted Like Her Sister

**23:33** 'You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, The cup of horror and desolation, The cup of your sister Samaria. **23:34** 'You will drink it and drain it. Then you will gnaw its fragments and tear your breasts; for I have spoken,' declares the Lord GOD. **23:35** "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, bear now the punishment of your lewdness and your harlotries.'"

The destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians occurred in several campaigns over about seventy-five years. By the time of the last attack, the bloodletting was fierce. It was a cup the north could not avoid or deflect. As bad as it was, in this passage, the LORD promised that the Southern Kingdom would drink from the same cup and have the same results for the same reasons.

### 9. Judgment of the Two Daughters

#### a) Present the Abomination

**23:36** Moreover, the LORD said to me, "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominations.

The LORD had asked Ezekiel to make a determination about the two sisters, to judge them and say to the *elders of Israel* sitting in his home with him that both were guilty of abominations.

#### (1) Their Adultery

**23:37** "For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. Thus they have committed adultery with their idols and even caused their sons, whom they bore to Me, to pass through the fire to them as food.

The LORD had not changed His message. He was still speaking to the *elders* in terms of the harlotry of the two sisters. Their sin was adultery and human sacrifice. The LORD called it idolatry. The LORD had said from the very outset, "You will not have any other gods but Me." The two capitals had led their kingdoms to be unfaithful to their faithful God.

#### (2) Their Defilement of the Sabbaths

**23:38** "Again, they have done this to Me: they have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and have profaned My sabbaths. **23:39** "For when they had slaughtered their children for their idols, they entered My sanctuary on the same day to profane it; and lo, thus they did within My house.

In addition, the two sisters were guilty of defiling the LORD's temple with idol worship within and without its walls. Solomon started that with the gods of his many wives. Here we see the LORD recording for us that the people worshiped idols and then defiled the Sabbath and the Temple on the same day. It would be like a man who left the house early on Sunday morning to get to the Church to help set up the chairs but stopped by his mistress's house on the way for a sexual encounter and then continued on to the house of worship to set up the chairs and proudly donned a choir robe and took his place in the center of the back row in the loft. Classic profanity of the LORD's house.

**(3) Their Defilement of the Incense**

**23:40** "Furthermore, they have even sent for men who come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and lo, they came—for whom you bathed, painted your eyes and decorated yourselves with ornaments; **23:41** and you sat on a splendid couch with a table arranged before it on which you had set My incense and My oil.

The two sisters were guilty of blatant advertisement to the foreigners to come to their homes with their idols. They decorated their streets, their houses, their official buildings on the outside. On the inside they adorned their beds and their tables with evil purposes in mind – adultery. To add to the insult, they took incense that was to be used only in the Temple and filled their houses with the smell – defiance.

**(4) Their Defilement with the Common**

**23:42** "The sound of a carefree multitude was with her; and drunkards were brought from the wilderness with men of the common sort. And they put bracelets on the hands of the women and beautiful crowns on their heads.

To add to their sin, the two sisters did all that they indulged in with glee. They did it with worldly pleasures. They did it dressed in the ways of the world.

**b) Present the Question**

**23:43** "Then I said concerning her who was worn out by adulteries, 'Will they now commit adultery with her when she is thus?'

And then the LORD questioned Ezekiel. He asked if Ezekiel thought the lovers would continue to enter into adulterous relationships with the two sisters? Or, as lovers, would they be sick of them?

**(1) Present the Plan**

**23:44** "But they went in to her as they would go in to a harlot. Thus they went in to Oholah and to Oholibah, the lewd women.

When a person goes to a harlot, there is but one plan in mind. One goal, one purpose, one desire. The plan for the purpose of the meeting is void of the nicer things of life that occur in normal righteous relationships. The plan of action for the interaction with the harlot is singular in nature and the same across all humanity. Thus, when Assyria and Babylon entered the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, the same purpose was in view, no frills, no fineries.

**(2) Present the Reality**

**(a) Judgment of Adultery**

**23:45a** "But they, righteous men, will judge them with the judgment of adulteresses

The cause was that the two sister cities were harlots. They were the ones guilty of selling themselves to the ungodly nations that surrounded them. They were the ones guilty of being unfaithful to the LORD. Unfaithful, adulterers! But in the morality of the world, the LORD was sending men, "righteous men," to set them straight, to sit in judgment for their actions.

**(b) Judgment of Blood**

**23:45b** and with the judgment of women who shed blood,

The two sisters were guilty of adultery against the LORD and they were also guilty of bloodshedding before the LORD. Human sacrifice, a practice strictly forbidden by the LORD.

**(c) Judgment the Same**

**23:45c** because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.

The LORD's judges would judge the two sisters the same way. We know the timing of these judgments because we have the completed story in the Scripture. The northern older sister's judgment was completed in 722 BC. The southern younger sister's judgment would be completed by 586 BC.

(3) Present the Participants

(a) Terrifying

**23:46 "For thus says the Lord GOD, 'Bring up a company against them and give them over to terror and plunder.**

The participants in the judgment of these two sisters had been selected. The two sides were set. The victor had been chosen and in neither case was it one of the two sisters. The Hebrew word for “company” meant *the assembly*. The “company” that judged the northern sister had already completed its task. It was time for the “company” that would judge the southern sister to assemble and begin to make its way to inflict the punishment.

(b) Murderous

**23:47 'The company will stone them with stones and cut them down with their swords; they will slay their sons and their daughters and burn their houses with fire.**

Stones, swords and fire would be used by the LORD's judges to bring an end to the harlotry of the two sisters. It had already played out in the north. The same tactic would be used in the south.

(4) Present the Reason

(a) End of Lewdness

**23:48 'Thus I will make lewdness cease from the land, that all women may be admonished and not commit lewdness as you have done.**

Why would the LORD send the judges to kill these two sisters? The LORD had warned the Israelites to be faithful to Him at the foot of Mount Sinai when they were young. Within days of that warning, the Israelites began their unfaithfulness to Him as harlots. For more than a thousand years they lusted with evil plans and presented their intimate parts to those who had no right to see them. They entered into ungodly relationships as they turned their noses away from the one relationship that was Godly. It was not good enough for them. They had rather deal in the nasty instead of the holy. The LORD had had enough. The two sisters, the capitals of the two kingdoms, had been judged and the penalty for both their actions was death. It was time. The LORD was about to end their adultery and bloodshedding once and for all.

(b) Penalty of Lewdness

**23:49 'Your lewdness will be requited upon you, and you will bear the penalty of worshiping your idols; thus you will know that I am the LORD GOD."**

The word “**requited**” meant *to repay*. The penalty for the evil lewd plans of the harlot sisters, that same plan that all harlots participate in, the one purpose of harlotry, was judged by the LORD and He was about *to repay* them for their unfaithfulness to Him. Their adultery and bloodshedding was summed up in one activity that He abhorred – idolatry.