

**The Toughness of God's Love:  
Perverting God's Boundless Grace**

**Ezekiel 16:15–43**

**Veritas Adult Community**

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**The Text**

**Jerusalem's Shamelessness: Her Response to Grace (16:15–34)**

**a. Her Pursuit of Divine Lovers (vv. 15–22)**

<sup>15</sup>But you trusted in your beauty and became promiscuous on account of your fame. You lavished your promiscuity on every passer-by—so he could enjoy it. <sup>16</sup>You took some of your garments and made gaudy shrines for yourself. On them you committed your promiscuous acts. To him you went, and his it became! <sup>17</sup>You took your beautiful jewelry, made from my gold and my silver that I had given to you, and made for yourself male images, with which you committed promiscuous acts. <sup>18</sup>Then you took your finely embroidered garments and covered them. My oil and my incense you presented to them. <sup>19</sup>My bread, which I had given to you—the fine flour, oil and honey that I had fed you—you presented it before them as a pleasing fragrance. That is how it was! —The declaration of the Lord YHWH.

<sup>20</sup>You took your sons and daughters, whom you had borne for me, and sacrificed them to them as food. Was your promiscuity not enough, <sup>21</sup>that you had to slaughter my children, offering them by having them pass through [the fire] for them?

**b. Her Pursuit of Earthly Lovers (vv. 23–24)**

<sup>22</sup>Along with all your abominations and your promiscuity, you failed to remember the days of your youth, when you were stark naked, when you were flailing about in your blood, <sup>23</sup>and with all your wickedness—Woe! Woe to you! —the declaration of the Lord YHWH—<sup>24</sup>you built yourself a mound and made yourself a platform in every square. <sup>25</sup>At every street crossing you constructed your platform. You prostituted your beauty by spreading your legs to every passer-by and increasing your promiscuity. <sup>26</sup>You committed promiscuous acts with the Egyptians, your neighbors with the huge organs. You increased your promiscuity to provoke me.

<sup>27</sup>Look! I have stretched out my hand against you. I have reduced your rations. I have handed you over to the passion of your enemies, the Philistine women, who were embarrassed by your lewd behavior. <sup>28</sup>Then you committed promiscuous acts with the Assyrians, because you were not satisfied. You engaged them in your promiscuous acts, but still you were not satisfied. <sup>29</sup>You increased your promiscuity all the way to the country of merchants, Chaldea, but even with this you were not satisfied.

<sup>30</sup>How furious I am with you!—the declaration of the Lord YHWH—that you behaved this way, acting like a brazen harlot—<sup>31</sup>for building your mounds at every crossroad, and constructing your platforms in every square. But you were not like ordinary harlots; you scorned payment. <sup>32</sup>O adulterous woman! Instead of her husband she takes in strangers! <sup>33</sup>Men always present a gift to harlots, but you offered your gifts to all your lovers. But in your promiscuity, you bribed them to come to you from all around. <sup>34</sup>In your promiscuity, you are the opposite of other women; no one solicits your services as a whore; you are the one who presents the gift instead of the gift being given to you. You have indeed become the opposite!

**C. THE SENTENCING OF JERUSALEM: THE SUSPENSION OF GRACE (16:35–43)**

**1. A Summary of the Charges (vv. 35–36)**

<sup>35</sup>Therefore, O whore! Hear YHWH's sentence! <sup>36</sup>Thus has the Lord YHWH declared; "Because your passion was poured out, and your nakedness was bared, in your promiscuity with your lovers, and with all your abominable dung pellets, and in accordance with the blood of your children, which you offered to them—

**2. YHWH's Response (vv. 37–42)**

<sup>37</sup>Therefore look out! I will gather all your lovers, whom you charmed— all those whom you loved, as well as all those whom you hated, I will gather them against you from all sides, I will expose your nakedness to them, so they may gaze on you completely naked. <sup>38</sup>I will sentence you with the sentence of adulteresses and murderers, I will make you a bloody victim of wrath and jealousy. <sup>39</sup>When I deliver you into their hands, they will demolish your platform, pull down your mounds, strip off your clothes, take away your beautiful jewelry, and leave you stark naked. <sup>40</sup>They will summon a mob against you, to stone you, and hack you to pieces with their swords. <sup>41</sup>They will burn down your houses with fire and execute judgments against you in full view of many women. I will put an end to your harlotry, and you will never offer gifts to anyone again. <sup>42</sup>When I have spent my wrath against you, and my passion has subsided, then I will be calm, and I will not be outraged any longer.

**3. Concluding Summary (v. 43)**

<sup>43</sup>Because you have not remembered the time when you were young but have infuriated me with all these activities—aha! —I will have brought your conduct down on your own head myself—the declaration of the Lord YHWH. Have you not acted obscenely, above and beyond all your abominations?

## Exposition

**Introduction****A. THE CALL FOR JERUSALEM'S ARRAIGNMENT (16:1–3A)****B. THE INDICTMENT OF JERUSALEM (16:3b–34)****1. Jerusalem's Lowly Origins: Her Desperate Need for Grace (16:3b–5)****2. Jerusalem's Shamelessness: Her Response to Grace (16:15–34)****a. Jerusalem's Pursuit of Other Divine Lovers (vv. 15–21).**

(1) Instead of trusting in YHWH, her loving husband, Jerusalem she put her confidence (בְּטַח) in her beauty (v. 15a).

(2) She dispensed her harlotries indiscriminately on all who pass by (כָּל עוֹבֵר, v. 15).

(a) Jerusalem used the luxury clothing YHWH had given her to make gaudy shrines on which to commit her harlotries (v/ 16).

(b) Jerusalem melted down the gold and silver jewelry she had received from YHWH and recast them into male images.

(c) Jerusalem sacrificed the children she had borne to YHWH to these images (vv. 20–21).

**b. Jerusalem's Pursuit of Earthly Lovers (vv. 22–29).**

(1) She erected her brothels out in the open where the arteries of human traffic were the busiest—in every square and at all the intersections.

(2) She invited the passers-by in with lewd gestures (v. 28).

(3) The lewdness of her behavior embarrassed Philistine women.

**c. Further Reflections on Jerusalem's Shocking Behavior (vv. 30–34).****C. THE SENTENCING OF JERUSALEM: THE SUSPENSION OF GRACE (16:35–43)****1. A Summary of the Charges (vv. 35–36)****2. YHWH's Response (vv. 37–42).****a. The Divine Reaction (vv. 37–39a).**

(1) YHWH will gather all those whom Jerusalem had charmed—her pseudo-lovers and her enemies.

(2) YHWH will put Jerusalem on display before her lovers and her enemies.

(3) YHWH will execute the death sentence on Jerusalem.

(4) YHWH will deliver Jerusalem into the power of her suitors and enemies (v. 39).

**b. The "Lovers" Response (vv. 39b–41a).****c. YHWH's Apologia (16:41b–42)****3. Concluding Summary (v. 43)****Concluding Reflections**

1. The judgments of God are always just and in keeping with the offense.
2. The harshness of divine judgment can only be appreciated against the backdrop of his grace.
3. This chapter provides the most shocking picture of human ingratitude (vv. 15–34).