



**Review: Thieme's "The Perfect Design"; Adultery Illustrates Idolatry, Ezk 16:15-43 & Feinberg's Commentary; Jer 31:22, the Physiology of Right Man-Right Woman**

See Ezekiel 16:15-43 in the New American Standard Bible translation.

**Feinberg, Charles Lee. *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 88-90:**

THE MULTIPLIED FAITHLESS DEEDS OF THE FAVORED WIFE (Ezk 16:15-34).

Rebukes of Israel's sin by the prophets of Israel are many and well known, but none is so vivid, vehement, sordid and piercing as these words. God had bestowed beauty, majesty and renown upon His bride Israel, but soon her pride led her astray. Her beauty and renown were the material and spiritual blessings vouchsafed to Jerusalem. She played the harlot, that is, committed the sin of idolatry. In verses 15-22 Ezekiel showed that she gave herself to the worship and religious practices of the Canaanites, her neighbors. In all these actions she was most indiscriminate.

Israel was not long in making high places decorated with richly colored fabrics—an indication of the idolatry of the Phoenicians and Canaanites with the richly colored carpets of the high places (see II Kings 23:7). The images of men referred to may signify obscene worship.

With shameless abandon every gracious gift of the faithful Husband was taken and devoted to the insanity of idolatry. The brodered garments were taken to cover the worthless idols. As though the idols could partake of them, oil and incense ("mine" stated twice in v. 18 shows to whom they belonged and whence they came) were presented as offerings to the idols. Every thought and consideration were expended for the worthless images, and there was no denying it, said the Lord with a note of finality. (p. 88)

As though these enormities were not sufficient, the favored and faithless wife offered her own children to vain deities. Human sacrifice was a part of this wicked worship, called Molech worship (cf. II Kings 16:3; 21:6). The children were borne unto the Lord because Israel was in covenant relation with God, so He claims as "my children" (v. 21) those who had been sacrificed to the idols and were devoured by fire. The children were first slain in this heathen practice, then burned (see II Kings 21:6, 16; 24:4—Manasseh). The question of verses 20-21 shows that their sins were gradually getting worse, building up to a climax. The seat of the trouble was their ingratitude and thoughtlessness. The Lord in grace had remembered the early love, but Jerusalem was so occupied with her infidelities that she had no time nor inclination to think of her early history. (pp. 88-89)

The repeated woe (v. 23) is partly threat and partly lament. The second form of idolatry was the introduction of the gods and practices of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. Israel allied herself (vv. 23-34) with foreign powers and adopted their religions. In the last days of Judean kingdom there was an influx of foreign idolatry which brought the nation to an even lower spiritual level. The vaulted and lofty places which they built in every street and way were small shrines to foreign gods.

She went on to prostitute her every God-given endowment. She made an alliance with Egypt, who always seemed a willing ally against Assyria and Babylonia. Alliances with foreign nations included recognition in some measure of their cults and idols. The phrase "great of flesh" (v. 26) may have an obscene connotation, as Egyptian idolatry was particularly base and debasing.

In order to bring her to her senses the Lord in love laid His hand heavily on her food. Even the Philistines became ashamed of her lewd practices. They at least were content with their own idols and did not add those of other countries. "The daughters of the Philistines" is a phrase comparable to the "daughter of Zion" and refers to the Philistine cities. When the child of God wanders from the Lord, he even amazes the unbeliever and excites his contempt. There is no substitute for the path of faith and obedience.

Favoring Egypt was only a part of Israelite policy. In time and when it suited her pleasure, she turned to the Assyrians. The historical books recount the pro-Assyrian policy of both Ahaz and Manasseh (see II Kings 16:7ff.).



Finally the faithless wife, unsatisfied with her past performances and misdeeds, pressed her conquests to the land of traffic, which is here employed of the Babylonians who similarly excelled in trade. And still she was not satisfied. (p. 89)

Ezekiel here exclaimed over the heart of Jerusalem which was sick with desire and passion. She herself was called an impudent harlot, one unbridled and without control. Even more strange, she had departed from the custom of all other harlots in that she scorned hire. The statements of verse 32 are exclamations of extreme disdain and disgust meant to quicken the culprit into some realization of her unheard of position. Her giving of bribes to her paramours refers to the heavy tribute and exactions Israel had to pay as the price of her godless consorting with forbidden powers and practices (see II Kings 16:8-9). She had nothing to gain from those with whom she committed iniquity, so her action was likened to giving of bribes. In all this she was different from both ordinary harlots and adulterous wives. (pp. 89-90)

JUDGMENT DESCRIBED (Ezk 16:35-43)

In this portion is a figurative representation of the shame and suffering brought about by the Babylonian invasion and destruction of the Judean kingdom. In the severest terms she was addressed, "O harlot." The picture of the harlot is bad enough, but she was seen as a murderess of her children as well. The reference is, of course, to Molech worship. The first step in her retributive judgment at the hands of the Lord would be public exposure before both her lovers and her enemies. Public exposure of profligate women and stoning of them were well-known customs in ancient Israel. Those she "hated" (v. 37) may well have included the Philistines with whom Israel had never formed an alliance, as far as is now known. The gathering of a large company points to the invasion and destruction of 586 B.C.

For infidelity and the shedding of blood in the murder of her children (vv. 20, 36), God's wrath and jealousy for His honor would mete out a bloody death. After the divine sentence had been carried out against her, she would be left naked and bare, and would sink back to her original lowly position. Again public exposure of the adulteress was predicted. The penalty in the law of Moses for an adulteress was stoning. For a city, idolatry was punished by the sword. Both are mentioned here, a double judgment for double wickedness, as it were. All this judgment would take place before her neighboring countries; she would be a spectacle and warning for all nations. By exacting the full penalty on the sins which evoked it, the Lord would cause His wrath and jealousy toward Jerusalem to be placated.

In verse 43 there is a summary of the indictment thus far. Notice that the emphasis is similar to that in verse 22. If she had remembered, Israel would have had to be thankful; she did neither. (p. 90)

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. "The Perfect Design." In *Right Man~Right Woman*. Rev. ed. (Houston: Berachah Tapes and Publications, 1973), 19-20:**

But there is a secret to happiness in this passage that is so fantastic physiologically that when it occurs, the right man and the right woman might even rear back and say, "It's so great, there must be something wrong!" The secret is in this phrase: "a woman shall fit a man." It describes the design of the right man and the right woman. They have a perfect soul and physiological fit; and as a result, their relationship in sex becomes something which is utterly fantastic and cannot be duplicated with any other person in the world. Now, that is what is being taught here.

We understand that the man is the aggressor; but a man can be an aggressor with the wrong person, and it's no good. The woman must fit or embrace the man. The word for "man" in this verse is literally "hero" ("gever" [גֵּוֶר] in the Hebrew). In other words, when the woman encompasses the right man, he is no longer just a male, he is her hero—her right man! (p. 19)

If you are single, I want to inject an application at this point: promiscuity can lead to more unhappiness than almost anything, with the possible exception of mental attitude sins. It isn't worth it, because in all of this vast world, there is just one opposite number for you designed in eternity past—just one! And you don't have to worry—God isn't going to lose it in the computer. (pp. 19-20)



- (35) There are several key words in Jeremiah 31:22 that develop the doctrine of the physiological harmony between right man and right woman.

**Jeremiah 31:22 -** [NASB] “How long will you go here and there, O faithless daughter? For the Lord has created [בָּרָא *bara'*] a new thing in the earth—A woman [נִקְבָּה *n<sup>e</sup>qevah*] will encompass [Piel imperfect of the verb סָבַב *savav*], a man [גֵּוֶר *gever*].”

- (36) The creation verb here is *bara'* which refers to something that is created out of nothing, e.g., the Latin *ex nihilo*. The “new thing” that is created is the female physiology which did not previously exist. The emphasis here is on the divine design of the woman to complement the man.
- (37) We have observed in Genesis 2:18 the Lord’s statement, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him.”
- (38) The “creation” verb here is *asah* and means “to make according to a pattern.” Ishah was made according to the pattern used for Adam, i.e., Homo sapiens.
- (39) When the Lord takes Adam’s rib and used it as the resource for “making” Ishah the creation verb is *banah* which means “to sculpt,” “to fashion,” or “to build.”
- (40) What we learn from these creation verbs is that the Lord decreed to make a woman for Adam according to a pattern: Homo sapiens—*asah* (Genesis 2:18).
- (41) The actual creation of Ishah was out of existing materials provided by Adam’s rib from which the Lord built Ishah’s physical body—*banah* (Genesis 2:22).
- (42) In so doing the Lord created something new—*bara'* (Jeremiah 31:22)—that did not previously exist: a Homo sapiens so constructed that she would encompass the man.
- (43) The word for “woman” is not Ishah but rather נִקְבָּה *n<sup>e</sup>qevah* which means “female” and refers to the female physiology:

Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by David E. Green. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 9:551:

נִקְבָּה *n<sup>e</sup>qevah*. **Etymology.** The basic meaning of *naqav* is probably “make a hole, pierce.” The noun *n<sup>e</sup>qevah*, “female creature, woman,” is likely related.

- (44) The choice of this designation for the woman places emphasis on female physiology. What follows further emphasizes this concept. Next we have the word for encompass: סָבַב *savav* which is the Piel imperfect of the verb:
- סָבַב *savav* -** Refers to a circle: “to go around something, to encircle; to surround, to encompass”

- (45) These definitions coincide with *n<sup>e</sup>qevah* the noun for “female” which emphasizes the physiology of the woman. It is described as encompassing the male. This verse is referenced in:

Botterweck, Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 10:136:

סָבַב *savav*. (In) Jeremiah 31:22 ... the woman encompasses the man (*n<sup>e</sup>qevah t<sup>s</sup>ovev gever*). In addition, *savav* exhibits sexual connotations here.

- (46) Completing the physiological relationship presented in the words for “female” and “encompass” is the word for “male”:



גֵּוֶר *gever* - “male”

- (47) The etymology of this word is important to the interpretation of this verse and for it we again consult:

Botterweck, G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Translated by John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 2:367; 377-78:

גֵּוֶר *gavar*. I. In the Ancient Near East, Original Meaning. ... the emphasis lies on power and strength, and frequently also on excellence and superiority. Thus *gever* ... has specific noteworthy characteristics that someone else has to a lesser degree or not at all. (p. 367)

VI. *gever*. 1. *Man and Male*. A *gever* does not mean simply a man like אָדָם *'atham* or אִנּוֹשׁ *'enosh*, neither of which indicates a particular sex, nor does it mean man in general, for which the Old Testament uses the Hebrew אִישׁ *'ish*. In its place we find Aramaic *gevar*, which is widely used and means simply “man,” like Hebrew *'ish*. The word *gever* also contains the element of strength, especially in a general sense. The *gevarim* are always grown men ...but a *gever* is compared with a woman if he is a helpless man. It is important that a man, even if he is young, have a wife and children. If he has no children, he is designated childless. Childlessness is regarded as an evil omen: a man cannot be a *gever* without becoming a husband and having children. This ability is an essential part of the concept of *gever* from the beginning, and is never lost later. Jeremiah prophesies that God will create something new on the earth: “a woman (*n<sup>e</sup>gevah*) courts (attaches herself to) a *gever* (31:22). The word *n<sup>e</sup>gevah* refers directly to the sexual task of the woman, even if God's command to reproduce did not follow immediately. (pp. 377-78)

The word *gever* seems to have had this secondary sexual meaning, “male,” from the earliest time and to have always retained it, because in Rabbinic Hebrew it is the normal word for a (powerful) penis. (p. 378)

- (48) This analysis is also supported within the commentary on Jeremiah by:

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52*. Edited by Paul D. Hanson. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 195:

**Jeremiah 31:22.** Now the last colon. I propose the intersection of two meanings here, one in the forefront and one in the background. The first is sexual: “a female shall encompass a hero” suggests that the female shall be the initiator in sexual relations.

- (49) The context is the Tribulation and Holladay proposes that the roles of the males and females are reversed during this “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).
- (50) The point is that we have confirmation from other exegetes that support the Colonel’s contention that this passage refers to the physiological relationship of a male and a female.
- (51) The “new thing” has two meanings: (1) the creation of a female physiology to complement the male in Eden (Genesis 2:22-25) and (2) the creation of an unique situation in that women in the Tribulation take on the aggressive role of the man in sex.
- (52) It is the first “new thing” that we emphasize in the development of our doctrine of right man-right woman. Not only are the man and woman designed for each other in their souls but also in the physiology of their bodies.
- (53) Therefore, we have this corrected translation of:



**Jeremiah 31:22 -** “How long will you go here and there [ **deviate from wheel-tracks of righteousness** ] apostate daughter [ **Israel as the client nation of the Lord** ]? For the Lord has created a new thing on the earth—the female vagina will encompass the male phallus.”

(54) This is the consummation of the right man-right woman relationship that was first described in Genesis and then in Ephesians:

**Genesis 2:24 -** For this cause a man shall forsake his father and mother, and he shall be intimately united [ **sexual relationship** ] to his right woman.

**Ephesians 5:22 -** For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall have sexual relations face-to-face with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.