**Faith Foundations 2023-2024**

**The Book of Ezekiel**

**Session 14—Ezekiel 23**

**For those of you who enjoyed the somewhat lewd themes of chapter 16, I have good news for you: here they come again! (And of course, this is conversely bad news for those of you who didn’t enjoy them.) This chapter of Ezekiel, probably even more than chapter 16, uses bridal and sexual metaphors to describe God’s relationship with His people, in rather explicit detail. As with chapter 16, if you tend to be scandalized by this type of language, this chapter may be a difficult read for you. However, it was an accurate description of what was going on at the time, and the truth is often hard to hear, especially when it is stated in these terms.**

**1.) Read Ezekiel 23:1-4. What are the names of the two women in this chapter’s parable? To whom did they correspond in actual history?**

**2.) How does God describe the actions of these women? What did this mean in real life?**

**3.) How does God describe the women’s relationship with Him?**

**4.) Read Ezekiel 23:5-10. How does God describe the actions of the older sister in these verses? Which nation is singled out in particular as the object of her lust, and why?**

**5.) What did this nation end up doing to the older sister? How did this happen in actual history?**

**6.) Read Ezekiel 23:11-21. How did the younger sister outdo the older sister in her sin?**

**7.) Which nations are singled out as objects of the younger sister’s lust?**

**8.) How do the younger sister’s relationships with her lovers become complicated?**

**9.) How did the younger sister’s actions affect her relationship with God?**

**10.) Read Ezekiel 23:22-27. What will the younger sister’s former lovers do to her?**

**11.) Why will these things happen to the younger sister? Who is orchestrating it, and why?**

**12.) Read Ezekiel 23:28-35. What would God do to the younger sister? According to verse 30, whose fault was this?**

**13.) What does it mean that the younger sister would “drink the cup” of the older sister?**

**14.) Read Ezekiel 23:36-42. What types of sins committed by the two sisters does God enumerate in this passage?**

**15.) How did the sisters invite sinful men into their houses?**

**16.) Read Ezekiel 23:43-49. What will happen to the sisters after their lovers have used them? What judgments will be passed upon them, and by whom?**

**17.) What will the host come and do to the sisters?**

**18.) How will other “women” learn from the example of the two sisters? Who are the other “women” who will learn from this?**

**If you can get past the lewd and raunchy language that God uses in this chapter, you’ll see that He is making a very important point about His relationship with His people. It is like a marriage, as St. Paul describes in Ephesians 5:22-33. He has made many wonderful promises to us, and we are to respond to those promises with our faithfulness toward Him. Forsaking His love and grace for us is just like committing adultery, because it is turning our backs on someone who has claimed us as His own and given us every blessing we have. Thankfully, by the power of the Holy Spirit, He keeps us faithful to Him and His Son Jesus Christ. May we always answer His call and ignore all the other potential lovers that seek to lead us astray!**