

Ezekiel 16:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

Analysis

Thine elder sister is Samaria—the Northern Kingdom destroyed by Assyria in 722 BC for covenant unfaithfulness. **At thy left hand** (northward from Jerusalem) positions Samaria geographically and theologically. **Thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom** (southward)—the archetypal city of judgment destroyed by fire (Genesis 19).

This geographical-moral mapping creates a shocking tableau: Jerusalem stands between two destroyed cities representing God's judgment on apostasy and moral corruption. The Hebrew kinship terms *achot* (אֲחֹת, sister) implies shared character, not just proximity. By calling Sodom her 'younger sister,' the text suggests Jerusalem had even less excuse—Sodom lacked Jerusalem's revelation, temple, prophets, and covenant privileges. This verse sets up the devastating comparison in verses 47-52.

Historical Context

Samaria fell to Assyria in 722 BC for idolatry and covenant unfaithfulness (2 Kings 17). Ezekiel's audience (circa 590 BC) had witnessed this judgment. Sodom's destruction circa 2000 BC (Genesis 19) was legendary. Positioning Jerusalem between these judged cities would shock hearers—the holy city now morally aligned with history's most notorious examples of divine wrath.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does greater spiritual privilege bring greater accountability for faithfulness?
2. What modern 'Samarias' and 'Sodoms' serve as warnings that we ignore at our peril?

Interlinear Text

פִּישָׁ בָּת וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ: הַ יְאֵשׁ שְׁמַרְון הַגָּדוֹל הַ תְּאַחַת הַ
sister And thine elder is Samaria H1931 and her daughters that dwell
H269 H1419 H8111 H1323 H3427

פִּישָׁ בָּת מִמֶּנּוּ: הַ קָּטָן הַ שְׁמָאוֹל הַ תְּאַחַת הַ שְׁמָאוֹל הַ עַל
that dwell at thy left hand sister and thy younger H4480
H5921 H8040 H269 H6996 H3427

וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ: סְדָם מִיְמִינֵךְ
at thy right hand is Sodom and her daughters
H3225 H5467 H1323

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 23:4 (Parallel theme): And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

Ezekiel 16:51 (Parallel theme): Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

Ezekiel 16:61 (Parallel theme): Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

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