

Ezekiel 16:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

Analysis

When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. This verse introduces an astonishing promise of future restoration even within a chapter dominated by judgment. The threefold repetition of qadmâ (קָדְמָה, "former estate") emphasizes complete restoration to original condition. The structure is conditional: "When" Sodom and Samaria are restored, "then" Jerusalem will be restored.

Scholars debate whether this promises literal restoration of destroyed Sodom or uses hyperbolic language to emphasize the certainty and comprehensiveness of Jerusalem's eventual restoration. The Hebrew allows both readings. What's clear is the theological point: **God's covenant faithfulness will ultimately triumph over human unfaithfulness.** Despite judgment, the chapter concludes with restoration promises (vv. 60-63). The "former estate" points beyond mere political restoration to eschatological renewal—the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22, where covenant unfaithfulness is forever ended through Christ's blood.

Historical Context

This restoration promise was given to exiles who had witnessed Jerusalem's destruction approaching (final fulfillment in 586 BC). The promise seemed absurd—not only would rebellious Jerusalem be restored, but even Sodom and Samaria, long-destroyed cities, would return to former glory. Yet this hyperbolic language conveyed God's unstoppable restorative purposes. The historical return from exile (538 BC onwards) under Persian decree partially fulfilled this, but the ultimate fulfillment awaits Christ's return. Early church fathers saw this verse as prophesying inclusion of Gentiles (Sodom/Samaria representing pagan nations) alongside restored Israel in God's eschatological kingdom.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to restore even Sodom challenge your assumptions about who is "too far gone" for redemption?
2. What does this restoration promise reveal about God's character—His mercy triumphing over judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְאַחُותֵי יְהוָה	שְׁדָם	וּבְנֹתֵי יְהוָה	תָּשַׁבְכְּ יְהוָה	לִקְדָּמָתְכֶן:	וְאַתָּה
When thy sisters	Sodom	and her daughters	shall return	to their former estate	
H269	H5467	H1323	H7725	H6927	
וְאַשְׁמָרוּן	וְאַבְנָתֵי יְהוָה	וּבְנֹתֵי יְהוָה	תָּשַׁבְכְּ יְהוָה	לִקְדָּמָתְכֶן:	וְאַתָּה
and Samaria	and her daughters	shall return	to their former estate		H859
H8111	H1323	H7725	H6927		
וְאַבְנָתֵי יְהוָה	וּבְנֹתֵי יְהוָה	תָּשַׁבְכְּ יְהוָה	לִקְדָּמָתְכֶן:		
and her daughters	shall return	to their former estate			
H1323	H7725	H6927			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 16:53 (Parallel theme): When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:

Ezekiel 36:11 (Parallel theme): And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Malachi 3:4 (Parallel theme): Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.