

# The Book of Ezekiel

# Like the old saying goes

- ▶ Because of the way Israel has flagrantly disobeyed God's will, they will go down through the ages as an example for wisdom-seekers of what not to do
- ▶ In the proverb, God shows them how their lineage has been severed by their willful abandonment of the true God, only to be replaced by new family ties to surrounding nations
- ▶ Do you think following "old sayings" has a place in the Christian life? Is wisdom losing its place in today's world?



# Full-fledged

- ▶ Israel is not a reluctant family member either, because God says they have really leaned into their new identity in a very short time
- ▶ Israel's "sisters" from Sodom and Samaria, though they were prideful, haughty, and shunned the poor, could not compare to even half of what Israel had done and God removed Sodom from the earth
- ▶ How or when might you see people "leaning into" a particular sin? In those cases, what is missing on the path to forgiveness?



# No budging!

- ▶ Though the names of Sodom and her sisters were tarnished long ago, everybody has a chance at being redeemed, but one might expect that God's chosen people would be preferred or given the first chance
- ▶ Instead, God says that these enemies of Israel have jumped the line ahead of those who were formerly favored, because their iniquity was too much to ignore
- ▶ In our world, does it sometimes feel as though non-Christians "jump the line" ahead of us? If so, when do we see it? What comfort do we have in those times?



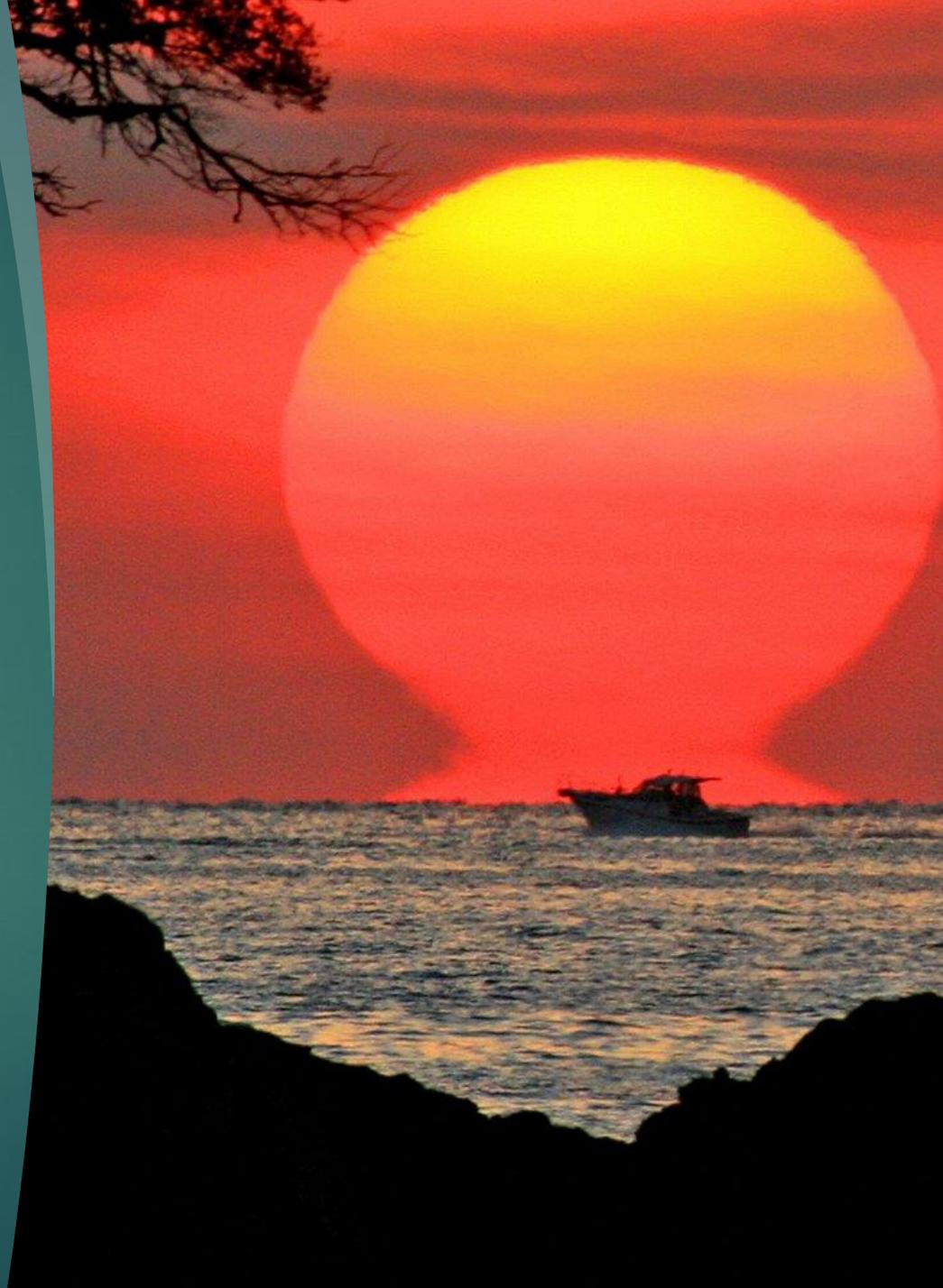
# City on a hill

- ▶ Jerusalem now takes on a much different role as a symbol of wickedness, much like Sodom, rather than a shining city on a hill which proclaims the true God to the nations
- ▶ Instead of leading the nations to the true God, their reputation gives relief to those who might be thinking they needed to repent and believe, because if this is how they act, they want no part in God
- ▶ What do you think Christianity “symbolizes” in America today? How about the world? How accurate or inaccurate do you think people’s assessments of us might be?



# More than they deserve

- ▶ After taking nearly the whole chapter to spell out for them the predicament they had gotten themselves into, God does an about-face and looks back through the weeds to the beginning of their relationship
- ▶ As soon as the accumulated debt has been paid off, God will not release them from the oath he made in her youth and he will instead add to his covenant by multiplying its length of time endlessly
- ▶ When might a person become more blessed than they expected, even in bad times? How about in good times?



# It's in the past

- ▶ Israel was made to stand out and be unsurpassed by any other nation, so being “sisters” with any other country was a shameful indicator of how far they had fallen, since sisters are equals
- ▶ Out of the blue, God restores Israel's status, demoting other nations to daughters, and says there is no need to bring up the past anymore, because it has all been atoned for
- ▶ How, specifically, can ours or others' pasts be used to trip us up? On the other hand, how does God frame the past to encourage and uplift us?

