

EZEKIEL 17:1-24 – “THE EAGLE AND THE VINE; ISRAEL EXALTED AT LAST”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:30pm, H 106 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by doughnut/vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell # 714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PARABLE (an allegory) (VS. 1-10)

1 - *The Worthless Vine* (Ez. 15:1-8); 2 - *the Unfaithful Wife* (Ez. 16:1-63); 3 – *Two Eagles and Three Shoots* (Ez. 17:1-24)

Eze 17:1 *And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

Eze 17:2 *"Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel,*

Eze 17:3 *(The position of the first great eagle) and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar (Represents the house of David and the promise of a Deliverer, the Messiah Himself!) the highest branch.*

Eze 17:4 *He cropped off its topmost young twig And carried it to a land of trade; He set it in a city of merchants.*

Eze 17:5 *(He planted the seed of the land) Then he took some of the seed of the land And planted it in a fertile field; He placed it by abundant waters And set it like a willow tree.*

Eze 17:6 *And it grew and became a spreading vine of low stature; Its branches turned toward him (Babylon), But its roots were under it. So it became a vine, Brought forth branches, And put forth shoots.*

Eze 17:7 *"But there was another great eagle (Egypt) with large wings and many feathers; And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, And stretched its branches toward him. From the garden terrace where it had been planted, That he might water it.*

Eze 17:8 *It was planted in good soil by many waters, To bring forth branches, bear fruit, And become a majestic vine. " "*

INTERPRETATION

1 Ezekiel, after describing by a figure the circumstances and conditions of the Jews and Zedekiah, the vassal of the Assyrian monarch, warns them of the delusive character of their hopes of help from Egypt, protests against the perfidy which must accompany such alliance, and points out that the restoration of the people of God will be effected by a very different son of David. The close of this chapter is a striking prediction of the kingdom of the Messiah. (*Ps. 78:1-8; Eze 12:22*)

2 *"Pose a riddle* (refers to anything that is hidden that needs to be explained), *and speak a parable to the house of Israel!"*—because they would not listen to him, Ezekiel had to come to these people in a strange and unusual way.

3 And say, Thus says the Lord GOD; A great eagle (That is, Nebuchadnezzar who had great power, riches and many countries under him, will come to Jerusalem and take away Jeconiah the king) with great wings, large wings, full of feathers, which had various colors, came to Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: (*Jer. 48:40; 49:22*)

4 He cropped off the top of its young twigs, and carried it into a land of¹ trade (Babylon); he set it in a city of merchants. (King Jehochin (Coniah – *Jer. 22:24, 28; 37:1*; Jeconiah - *Mt. 1:11-12; Ps. 132:11*)

5 He took also of the seed (That is, Zedekiah who was of the king's blood and was left at Jerusalem and made king instead of Jeconiah, for 11 years, (*2Ki 24:17; Jer 37:1*.) of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree.

This great eagle is none other than Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, the present king of Babylon. The eagle is a figure that is used as a symbol for Babylon elsewhere in Scripture. Jeremiah used it in *Jer 48:40* as he wrote of Nebuchadnezzar: "For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab." Then in *Jer 49:22* he wrote, "Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs." Daniel saw the Babylonian Empire rising up out of the sea, and it was in the form of a lion with eagle's wings (*Dan 7:4*). Therefore, what we have here is a picture of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who is going to come and crop the top of the tree.

Who is the tree? It is the nation Israel and specifically, the royal house of David. Nebuchadnezzar is going to clip it off and bring it to naught. That is exactly what he did with Zedekiah. **The “seed of the land” that was “planted” in a “fertile field” refers to King Zedekiah, the uncle of Jechoiachin (Mattaniah), the youngest son of good King Josiah!**

6 And it grew, and became a spreading vine (Zedekiah's kingdom) of low stature (not Davidic - that is that it might not have power to rebel against Babylon), whose branches turned toward him, and its roots were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

7 There was also another great eagle (the king of Egypt from whom Zedekiah sought comfort against Nebuchadnezzar) with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

8 It was planted in a good soil by great waters (thought to be moistened by the River Nile), that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a well favored vine.

APPLICATION

We must listen to the LORD as He speaks to us! Here we see a parable used to show the coming destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar – the LORD is the source.

Can you see the similarities of the behavior of Israel then to the United States today?

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Eze 17:9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots, Cut off its fruit, And leave it to wither? All of its spring leaves will wither, And no great power or many people Will be needed to pluck it up by its roots.

Eze 17:10 Behold, it is planted, Will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it? It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew." ' "

INSTRUCTION OF THE PARABLE (VS. 11-21)

Eze 17:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Eze 17:12 "Say now to the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these things mean?' Tell them, 'Indeed the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king (Jehoachin or Jeconiah or Coniah) and princes, and led them with him to Babylon.

Eze 17:13 And he took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him (Zekeiah), and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land,

Eze 17:14 that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand.

Eze 17:15 (Conspiracy with Egypt) But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such things escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?

Eze 17:16 (Consequences that Israel will face) 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke—with him in the midst of Babylon he (Zedekiah) shall die.

INTERPRETATION

9 Say, Thus says the Lord GOD; "*Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots, Cut off its fruit, And leave it to wither?*" Shall' he (Nebuchadnezzar) not pull up its roots, and cut off its fruit, that it may wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by its roots.

10 Yes, behold, being planted, will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither, when the east wind (by this east wind, he means the Babylonians) touches it? It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew.

11-21 The parable is explained, and the particulars of the history of the Jewish nation at that time may be traced. Zedekiah had been ungrateful to his benefactor, which is a sin against God. In every solemn oath, God is appealed to as a witness of the sincerity of him that swears. Truth is a debt owing to all men. If the professors of the true religion deal treacherously with those of a false religion, their profession makes their sin the worse; and God will the more surely and severely punish it. The Lord will not hold those guiltless who take his name in vain; and no man shall escape the righteous judgment of God who dies under un-repentant guilt.

12 Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these [things mean]? tell [them], Behold, the king of Babylon hath come to Jerusalem, and hath taken its king (Jeconiah, (2 Ki 25:15), and its princes, and led them with him to Babylon;

13 And he took the king's offspring, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath (for his subjection and obedience) from him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: That they would never revolt against him.

14 That the kingdom might be brought low as to national elevation by being Nebuchadnezzar's dependent; but, at the same time, safe and prosperous, if faithful to the "oath." Nebuchadnezzar dealt sincerely and openly in proposing conditions, and these moderate ones; therefore Zedekiah's treachery was the baser and was a counterpart to their treachery towards God.

15 The interesting thing is that Nebuchadnezzar kept his side of the covenant. God's people broke the covenant, but the pagan nation kept their side of it. What a picture! In some churches you will find people still carrying their Bibles, but their hearts are far from God and you cannot believe what they say. On the other hand, there are businessmen who, although they are unsaved, are men of integrity. Nebuchadnezzar is going to come and destroy Zedekiah:

16 in the place where the king dwells — righteous retribution. He brought on himself in the worst form the evil which, in a mild form, he had sought to deliver himself from by perjured treachery, namely, vassalage

APPLICATION

Can you see the similarity today between Babylon and Iran? Between Assyria and Iraq?

It's always so interesting to see pagan men more honorable than those of the LORD. Nebuchadnezzar kept his side of the agreement with Zedekiah. But Zedekiah didn't! How about us. What kind of witnesses are our lives to the world?

Can you see the similarities of the behavior of Israel then to the Egypt today?

EZEKIEL 17:1-24 – “THE EAGLE AND THE VINE; ISRAEL EXALTED AT LAST”

OBSERVATION

Eze 17:17 Nor will Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons.

Eze 17:18 Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these things, he shall not escape.' "

Eze 17:19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "As I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head.

Eze 17:20 I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me.

Eze 17:21 All his fugitives with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

IMPACT OF THE PARABLE (VS. 22-24)

Eze 17:22 Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar(and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. (Is. 53 – a root out of dry ground!!-a prophetic implication!)

Eze 17:23 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell.

Eze 17:24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it."

INTERPRETATION

17 Pharaoh-hophra (Jer 37:7; Jer 44:30), the successor of Necho (2Ki 23:29). Nor will do anything — literally, “*effect* (anything) *with* him,” that is, be of any avail to Zedekiah. Pharaoh did not *act in concert* with him, for he was himself compelled to retire to Egypt. **by casting up mounts, etc.** — So far from Pharaoh doing so for Jerusalem, this was what Nebuchadnezzar did *against* it (Jer 52:4) - “when Nebuchadnezzar shall cast up mounts.”

18 Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, in fact, he had given⁷ his hand, and hath done all these things, **he shall not escape.** (Because he took the name of God in vain, and broke his oath which he had confirmed by giving his hand: therefore the prophet declares that God would not permit such perjury and infidelity to escape punishment.)

19 The “covenant” being sworn in God’s name was really *His* covenant; a new instance in relation to man of the treacherous spirit which had been so often betrayed in relation to God. God Himself must therefore avenge the violation of *His covenant* “on the head” of the perjurer (compare Psa 7:16). My oath made for Me by Nebuchadnezzar.

20 **My net** — God entraps him as he had tried to entrap others (Psa 7:15). This was spoken at least upwards of three years before the fall of Jerusalem (compare Eze 8:1, with Eze 20:1). **plead with him** — by judgments on him (Eze 20:36).

21 **All his fugitives** - All who attempted to escape with him, and all that ran to Egypt, etc., shall fall by the sword.

22 The unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of none effect. The parable of a tree, used in the threatening, is here presented in the promise. It appears only applicable to Jesus, the Son of David, the Messiah of God. The kingdom of Satan, which has borne so long, so large a sway, shall be broken, and the kingdom of Christ, which was looked upon with contempt, shall be established. Blessed be God, our Redeemer is seen even by the ends of the earth. We may find refuge from the wrath to come, and from every enemy and danger, under his shadow; and believers are fruitful in him. **Note – After Babylon fell in 520 BC, Persia under good king Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and rebuild. One of their leaders was Zerubbabel, the great, great grandson of the godly King Josiah. Zerubbabel means “shoot or twig of Babylon) The “twig or branch” is also an allusion to the Messiah Himself -- (Is. 11:1-10; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-17; Zech. 3:8, 6:12-13)-** (Wiersby)

23 **On the mountain height of Israel** –(Probably Mt. Zion). He shall make his appearance at the temple, and found his Church at Jerusalem. **It will bring forth boughs** - Apostles, evangelists, and their successors in the Gospel ministry. **And bear fruit** - Multitudes of souls shall be converted by their preaching. **And under it will dwell birds of every sort** - All the nations of the earth shall receive his Gospel. **In the shadow of its branches they will dwell** - Trust in him alone for salvation, and be saved in their trusting. Zech. 4:1-14; Rev. 11:3

24 And all the⁷ trees of the field (All the world will know-understand and realize - that I have plucked down the proud enemies, and set up my Church which was low and contemned) shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree (Is. 53:1-2) to flourish: **I the LORD have spoken**

APPLICATION

We have a Messiah! Through a little Twig out of Babylon – 70 years later!
Here we see the church! All the nations shall receive Him! May we exalt His name!

This is the promise of the Messiah, that God would raise up the low tree, the tender branch, and make of it a great tree, that the world will find it’s place of refuge under its branches. That Jesus is coming again, and He’s going to set up God’s kingdom upon the earth, and it’s a kingdom that shall last, and shall stand, shall flourish, and shall bring forth fruit.

It was a dark day for the people of Israel, but when the day is the darkest, the Lord’s promises shine the brightest! We, God’s people, today need to take heed to this prophetic Word, which is a light that shines in our dark world (2 Peter 1:19). Just as Jesus fulfilled prophecy and came the first time to die for the sins of the world, so He will come the second time and reign over His righteous kingdom. The tender “shoot” of David will be the might monarch, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!!!