

**Ezek. 17:1** And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

**Ezek. 17:2** Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

**Ezek. 17:3** And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar:

**Ezek. 17:4** He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants.

**Ezek. 17:5** He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed *it* by great waters, *and* set it *as* a willow tree.

**Ezek. 17:6** And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

**Ezek. 17:7** There was also another great eagle 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.

**Ezek. 17:8** It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

**Ezek. 17:9** Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof.

**Ezek. 17:10** Yea, behold, *being* planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

It is important to note that the Lord is giving a message through Ezekiel to the people in the form of a riddle or parable, a story with a moral or specific meaning. The meaning of the parable is explained below. Some of the keys that emerge are:

“great eagle” (v3) = King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar (v12)

The Hebrew for the word eagle makes reference to “a large bird of prey.” The fact that he is described as having great, long wings that are full of feathers is a description of his power. “Divers colours” could be a reference to the different nations that had come under his rule.

“Lebanon” (v3) = The temple and Jerusalem (v12) This was a bit confusing until I came across a note from JFB that shed some light, “The temple at Jerusalem was called ‘Lebanon’ by the Jews [EUSEBIUS], because its woodwork was wholly of cedars of Lebanon.” I have no reason to doubt this, and it fits in correctly with the context of the rest of the passage.

“highest branch of the cedar” (v3) = Jehoiachin (v12)

**2Kings 24:12** And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

**2Kings 24:13** And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the

vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

2Kings 24:14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

2Kings 24:15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2Kings 24:16 And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

"seed of the land" (v5) = Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle (v13)

"another great eagle" (v7) = the ruler of Egypt (v15)

**Ezek. 17:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek. 17:12 Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these *things* mean? tell *them*, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon;**

Beginning in this section is where the keys are being revealed to understand the parable. The message is important, so the Lord ensures that the captives can understand exactly what He is saying. The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, came to Jerusalem and captured King Jehoiachin and most of the nobility of the land as related in the passage from 2Kings above.

**Ezek. 17:13 And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:**

**Ezek. 17:14 That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might stand.**

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah as the king with the understanding that he was being allowed to rule under his authority as part of his kingdom. As long as Zedekiah didn't try to usurp his position, he would basically be left alone.

**Ezek. 17:15 But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such *things*? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?**

After recovering from the initial invasion by Babylon, Zedekiah sought to make an alliance with Egypt and escape the controlling hand of Babylon. In doing so, he was again leading the people in defiance of God.

2Chr. 36:13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, **and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.**

When his rebellion was made known, Neb sent his armies to take control.

Evidently, Egypt did try to come to the rescue of Judah, but was defeated by the

armies of Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah was also prophesying at this time in Judah, and gives a bit more explanation.

Jer. 52:3 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Jer. 52:4 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.

Jer. 37:5 Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

Jer. 37:6 Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

Jer. 37:7 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

Jer. 37:8 And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

**Ezek. 17:16 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place *where* the king *dwelleth* that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, *even with him in the midst of Babylon* he shall die.**

This is a statement that Zedekiah would die as a captive in the land of Babylon as a consequence of his rebellion.

**Ezek. 17:17 Neither shall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:**

**Ezek. 17:18 Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these *things*, he shall not escape.**

The Lord is declaring that Egypt will be of no help or protection for Judah.

**Ezek. 17:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.**

This verse is emphasizing the truth of the verse in 2Chronicles above. It is God against whom they are rebelling, and it is God who will ensure that His judgment is carried out.

**Ezek. 17:20 And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.**

“plead” = to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against)

It is God who is bringing about his purposes through the actions of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Ezek. 17:21 And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it*.**

Those fugitives from Zedekiah's forces who do escape will be dispersed among the nations. Zedekiah will know (from the prophecies of Jeremiah) that it is God's hand of judgment in action.

**Ezek. 17:22 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set *it*; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* upon an high mountain and eminent:**

**Ezek. 17:23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.**

**Ezek. 17:24 And all the trees of the field 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 to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done *it*.**

God declares that the time is coming when He will take of the "highest branch of the high cedar and will set it." I believe the *cedar* is a reference to the royal line of David, and the "tender one" that He will plant is none other than His Son Jesus when He establishes His earthly kingdom for 1,000 years. This is the same terminology employed by the prophet Isaiah.

Is. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Is. 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Is. 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground:

"All the trees" would be a reference to all the other nations as represented by their leaders. The once mighty nation of Israel will once again be made prosperous and flourishing. When that time comes, all nations will know that it will be a result of the mighty hand of God acting according to His declared Word.