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Ezekiel 17

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Ezekiel 17.

Topics.

- The LORD tells Ezekiel to speak a riddle.
 - The first eagle with great wings and much plumage.
 - The second eagle with great wings and much plumage.
 - The rebellious house of Jerusalem.
 - Zedekiah king over Jerusalem commits' treachery against the LORD.
 - The promise of Jesus.
 - The LORD himself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar.
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem. After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (chpt. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins. For a greater overview of the entire book, visit the introduction to the book of Ezekiel in chapter one.

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FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

EZEKIEL 17:1-2

The LORD tells Ezekiel to Speak a Riddle.

- **Ezekiel 17:1-2:** The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, propound a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel.

This Riddle: is a puzzle in the form of a question or rhyme that contains clues to its answer, to speak in riddles is to intentionally speak in an obscure way.

A Parable: is a short simple story intended to illustrate a moral or religious lesson.

EZEKIEL 17:3-6

The First Eagle with Great Wings and much Plumage.

- **Ezekiel 17:3-6:** say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar. ⁴He broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants. ⁵Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig, ⁶and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So, it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs.

Lebanon: is included in God's promise; it is a snow-clad mountain range extending 100 miles with peaks reaching 10,200 above sea level. The melting snow creates great rivers including the Jordan River meandering through Palestine to the Dead Sea. Its isolated crags, supported watch towers and refuge-points and came to symbolize the exalted status of Judah's royal house. Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon's famous Cedar trees, their massive branches, their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance. The psalmists' speaks of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice. The Lebanon's were also famous for choice-wine the lion and the leopard.

- The first great eagle is Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon.
- The cedar trees are the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- The top twigs are the people of influence in the city of Jerusalem; Nebuchadnezzar took the people of influence to Babylon.
- The seed of the land is Zedekiah who Nebuchadnezzar made king over the remaining Jews at Jerusalem.
- The fertile soil is the remaining inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- Zedekiah's kingdom grew, but he turned against the king of Babylon.
- The roots are the people of influence they remained where they were in Babylon during Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.

EZEKIEL 17:7-8

The Second Eagle with Great Wings and much Plumage.

- **Ezekiel 17:7-8:** And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage, and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and shot forth its branches toward him from the bed where it was planted, that he might water it. ⁸It had been planted on good soil by abundant waters, that it might produce branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine.

The second eagle was the Pharaoh of Egypt, he rose up with his armies against Babylon. He was established on a great land and had grown mightily and become a noble nation.

EZEKIEL 17:9-10

The Noble Vine.

- **Ezekiel 17:9-10:** Say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Will it (the noble vine) (Egypt) thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots. ¹⁰Behold, it is planted; will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it sprouted?"

The noble vine: (Pharaoh of Egypt) will withdraw back to its roots (Egypt).

The east wind: is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

EZEKIEL 17:11-12

The Rebellious House of Jerusalem.

- **Ezekiel 17:11-12:** Then the word of the LORD came to me: ¹²"Say now to the rebellious house, Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them, behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon.

The rebellious house: refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL 17:13-14

The parable explained: the first time Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon entered Jerusalem he took the king his officials and all the people of influence into Babylon.

- **Ezekiel 17:13-14:** And he took one of the royal offspring and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath (the chief men of the land he had taken away), ¹⁴that the kingdom might be humble and not lift itself up, and keep his covenant that it might stand.

Nebuchadnezzar now having all the people of influence from Jerusalem held captive in Babylon appointed Zedekiah (a Jew) King over the remaining Jews at Jerusalem and King Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah made a covenant together that Zedekiah would not rise up against Babylon (v13).

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EZEKIEL 17:15

- **Ezekiel 17:15:** But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and a large army. Will he thrive? Can one escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape?

Zedekiah foolishly rebelled against the king of Babylon by going to Egypt to ask for an army to go against Babylon (v15). The LORD is saying, "Can Zedekiah break the covenant he made with the king of Babylon and succeed?"

EZEKIEL 17:16-18

- **Ezekiel 17:16-18:** As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant with him he broke, in Babylon he shall die. ¹⁷Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in war, when mounds are cast up and siege walls built to cut off many lives. ¹⁸He despised the oath in breaking the covenant, and behold, he gave his hand and did all these things; he shall not escape.

The LORD says king Nebuchadnezzar who Zedekiah made the covenant with will despise and kill him for breaking his oath, even the great armies of Egypt will not be able to save him in war when mounds are cast up and siege walls built. When King Nebuchadnezzar heard of Zedekiah's rebellion, he gathered his armies and marched upon Jerusalem. Pharaoh of Egypt withdrew his armies and returned to Egypt. The armies of Babylon entered Jerusalem burned the city, pillaged the temple of God, slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before him, blinded Zedekiah, and then in chains marched him and the remaining inhabitants of Jerusalem to Babylon.

Zedekiah King over Jerusalem Commits' Treachery against God.

- **Ezekiel 17:19-21:** Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: As I live, surely it is my oath that he despised, and my covenant that he broke. I will return it upon his head. ²⁰I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treachery he has committed against me. ²¹And all the pick of his troops shall fall by the sword, and the survivors shall be scattered to every wind, and you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken."

Zedekiah broke his covenant with the LORD, has the following two aspects:

1. The Bible tells us that God's nature is such that he cannot lie, deliberately breaking a promise to anyone is the same as breaking a promise to the LORD, it is lying and anyone who represents the LORDS name and lies brings a bad testimony to His Name.
2. The prophetic messages of Ezekiel (and Jeremiah at this time) were telling Zedekiah not to go against the king of Babylon, but submit to his authority and the LORD would watch over the people of Jerusalem while in Babylon captivity, refusing to listen to the LORD'S prophets is the same as refusing to listen to God.

THE PROMISE OF JESUS

EZEKIEL 17:22-24

The LORD Himself will take a Sprig from the Lofty Top of the Cedar.

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- **Ezekiel 17:22-24:** Thus says the Lord GOD: "I myself will *take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar* and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of *its young twigs a tender one*, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ²³On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and *become a noble cedar*. And under it will dwell *every kind of bird*; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. ²⁴And *all the trees of the field* shall know that I am the LORD; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it."

Now the LORD lifts our minds and by the spirit of the prophetic word transports us into the future and to a new and exciting age.

The meaning of the Symbols.

The sprig and tender one -- Jesus.

The lofty top of the cedar -- Israel and Jerusalem.

The young twigs ----- The lost sheep of Israel or common people.

The noble cedar ----- The Kingdom of God.

Every kind of bird ----- Jews and Gentiles.

All the trees of the field --- The nations of the world.

The symbols explained: the nation of Israel gave birth to the LORD Jesus Christ it was through the bloodline of Israel that Mary came. Jesus is the sprig and the tender one taken from the lofty top of the cedar (the nation of Israel). It was God who by His Holy Spirit brought Jesus into being and who gave him his ministry, his power, and who raised him from dead and exalted him above all powers, authorities and dominions it is in this sense that the LORD planted him. Jesus Christ began with twelve men,

but his Kingdom is now multiplied throughout the world and into every nation made up of Jews and Gentiles (every kind of bird). It is a nobler kingdom simply because its foundation is Christ and the Kingdom is built on love and grace. Christ will return a second time as King of kings and Lord of lords and exalt those who are humble and bring to ruin those who are full of pride ego and self, then all the nations of the world will know God is the only true God.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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