

The Riddle, Parable.

Ezekiel 17.

April 7, 2024

Eze 17:1

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- The message was not Ezekiel's. The message was from God.

Eze 17:2

Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

- The message was not given clearly and plainly. It was contained in contained in a symbolic form.

Eze 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:

- The great eagle is Nebuchadnezzar. Lebanon is the northern border of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar came by way of Lebanon. The highest branch of the cedar may be the tribe of Judah or possibly the family of David.

Eze 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.

- Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin, king of Judah, back to Babylon.

Eze 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.

- Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king in Judah. Zedekiah took an oath to serve Nebuchadnezzar.

Eze 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.

- Zedekiah reigned for eleven years. He kept the oath for a time and prospered for that time.

Eze 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.

- The other great eagle is Pharaoh of Egypt. The vine is Zedekiah. Zedekiah reached out to Pharaoh for help against Babylon.

Eze 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.

- It was the will of God for Zedekiah to keep the oath he made to Nebuchadnezzar. If Zedekiah would keep the oath he could have prospered under that arrangement.

Eze 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.

- Because Zedekiah did not keep the oath to serve Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar would come and destroy Jerusalem. He would kill the sons of Zedekiah before Zedekiah's eyes. He would put out Zedekiah's eyes and carry him bound to Babylon.

Eze 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.

- Zedekiah did not prosper because he disobeyed God by not keep the oath he made to Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel 17:11-21.

These verses give the meaning of the riddle, parable. Zedekiah was an evil king. He was given a chance to keep the oath and prosper under Nebuchadnezzar's rule; but he refused and rebelled and brought severe consequences on himself and on the nation of Judah. The lesson is we are better off to submit to the will of God even if that will is not our first choice. Also, when we take an oath, it is a serious matter to keep the oath.

It was not the will of God for Israel to have a king. See 1 Samuel 8. A king was not part of the covenant plan. They insisted on a king knowing that it was not God's plan. Over time Judah and Israel had many evil kings, and the nation suffered as a result. The northern tribes were carried away by Assyria never to return, and finally Jerusalem is destroyed and the people carried captive to Babylon. Only a remnant returned from Babylon to the land. Ezekiel 17 concerns the fate of the last two kings of Judah, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. They were both evil. The nation suffered and Jerusalem was destroyed. We can imagine God saying, "How did that king work out for you".

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 1 Corinthians 10:6-11.

One purpose in studying the Old Testament is to learn by their examples of wrong doing. God's plan for our lives is always the best plan. Life is a gift from the Lord to be used as He direct. Finding and doing His will should be our primary concern. He knows the future, and we don't. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

Ezekiel 17:22-24.

Even though the kings Israel wanted resulted in a bad end, God had another plan. That plan is Jesus as the king. This plan is given in verses 22-24.

Verse 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: Eze 17:22.

- In the parable Nebuchadnezzar took the high branch on the cedar. In verse 22 God takes the highest branch of the high cedar. The cedar is either the nation of Israel or the tribe of Judah. According to prophecy Jesus was to come from the tribe of Judah. The high Branch that God “crops off” is Jesus. Cropping off must have to do with the crucifixion. The crucifixion is not the end. God plants it upon a high mountain. The high mountain is the “mountain of the Lord’s house” as in Isaiah 2:2. Jesus is the King of that house. He is the “tender one”. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isa 53:2.*

Verse 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. Eze 17:23.

- The Branch of Jesus bears fruit. The fruit He bears is the believers that follow Him in obedience. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. John 12:24.*
- The fowls that dwell under the tree of Jesus is repentant sinners that come to dwell in Him. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:*
- *Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Matthew 13:31-32.*

Verse 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. Ezekiel 17:24.

- God brings down those that the world considers high, and exalts the meek and lowly. In this verse Jesus is the low tree. He was born in a stable to parents that were poor in this world’s goods. Jesus described Himself as meek lowly. After His crucifixion Jesus was exalted. He was the dry tree in the eyes of the world.
- *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isa 53:2.*
- *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isa 53:3.*

Jesus is the Branch.

In Ezekiel 17:22 Jesus is described as a “branch of the high cedar”. There are several Old Testament scriptures that speak of Jesus as the Branch. Consider the following scriptures.

Isaiah 4:2.

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. Isa 4:2.

- The preceding verses describe the destruction of Jerusalem. This verse begins “In that day”. Jesus is the Branch that would be beautiful and glorious. I think the “fruit of the earth” is Jesus. He is “excellent and comely to them that are escaped of Israel.” Those that escape is the remnant that escape the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus is excellent and comely to the remnant.

Isaiah 11:1.

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

- Jesus is the rod and Branch that grows out of the roots of Jesse. Jesse is the father of David, and Jesus as the Son of Man is a descendant of David.

Jeremiah 23:5-6.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. Jeremiah 23:5.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:6.

- The Branch in these verses can be none other than Jesus. He descended from David. He is a righteous Branch. He reigns and prospers, and executes judgment and justice. No one else is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”.

Jeremiah 33:15.

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

- Again, Jesus is the only “Branch of Righteousness”. Jesus executes judgment.

Zechariah 3:8.

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Zechariah 6:12-13.

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

- Only Jesus builds the temple of the Lord.
- Only Jesus bears the glory.
- Only Jesus sits and rules upon His throne.
- Only Jesus is a priest upon His throne. Jesus is the Great High Priest.