

Ezekiel 17:22-24.

The Branch.

April 14, 2023

We are studying the Old Testament prophets; and we currently in the middle of a study of the book of Ezekiel. We have a method of study that has been very beneficial to. As a participant in our study, it is important to understand the method of study we are using.

Step One: Consider what Jesus said in His discourse on the end of the age.

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Luke 21:20-22.

The armies circling Jerusalem was the beginning of the very end for old Israel. The armies circling Jerusalem began the Roman wars against the Jews and Jerusalem that brought their covenant with God to an end within 3 ½ years. The traditional date of completion is 70 AD. Jesus said that the fulfillment of all prophecies would be brought to a completion during that period.

It takes much twisting to move Luke 21:20-22 two or three thousand years into the future; especially in view of verse 32:

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Luke 21:32.

Step two: We have identified many of the events that occurred during the last days of the old covenant age.

Step Three: Our method has been to connect those events to prophetic themes that are repeated many times by several prophets in the Old Testament. For me, this has proven to be a simple and effective way to read the prophets with some understanding rather than total confusion.

We used that approach for several months. Then we decided to see if we could study the book of Ezekiel with a satisfactory level of understanding.

So, here we are in the seventeenth chapter of Ezekiel. I believe we have found a sequence of prophetic events in Ezekiel that match the sequence of events that we find fulfilled during the last days. We are in the middle of the section of Ezekiel that is prophetic of the destruction of Jerusalem. Last week we studied the riddle or parable in Ezekiel 17:1-21. The riddle and the interpretation record the failure of the last two kings of Judah, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Both kings were evil. Their evil reigns over Judah resulted in Jerusalem being destroyed and the people of Judah being carried captive to Babylon. This failure is the result of a bad choice that the nation of Israel made many years earlier. They chose to have a king to reign over them. The choice was not God's plan. God said that by choosing a king they were rejecting Him. The prophecy of Jesus as the Branch comes immediately after the record of the failure of the king system. I think placing the failure of their kings next to the prophecy of God's king provides us with an intended contrast. Their kings (Jehoiachin and Zedekiah) are presented as a twig and a plant. Jehoiachin is "cropped off" by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah "wither in the furrows where it grew". Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon.

In Ezekiel 17:22-24 the word of God gives us a prophecy of Jesus as the Branch. The Branch is compared to Jehoiachin the twig and to Zedekiah the "plant". Jesus is King over spiritual Israel. Ezekiel chapter 17 compares Israel's choice of kings to Jesus as King. Their choice led to destruction and captivity. Jesus leads to righteousness, joy and peace in the kingdom of heaven.

We will look at Ezekiel 17:22-24 verse by verse.

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.

- The cedar is a figure of the tribe of Judah from which Jesus would come. See Genesis 49:10-12.
- The highest branch of the high cedar is the family of David. See 1 Samuel 7:4-17.
- The tender twig that is cropped off is a figure of Jesus. See Isaiah 53:2
- The “cropping off” of the twig is a figure of the crucifixion.
- The high mountain on which the twig is planted is the kingdom of heaven. See Isaiah 2:2. It is Mount Zion. See Hebrews 12:22. Jesus was tender by His human birth and being tender He was crucified. By way of contrast, after His crucifixion God planted Him on the high mountain. The high mountain is said to be “eminent”. There is no higher place on the earth than the kingdom of heaven. The crucifixion comes before being planted on the high mountain. After the crucifixion Jesus comes to His disciples and says, “.....All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”. Matthew 28:18. Also, see Revelation 11:15.

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.

- The “trees of the field” must speak of children of God that have spiritual eyes to see Jesus as the Son of God.
- 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.
- The “green tree” which was dried up seems to speak of those that occupied a high position in the nation of Judah.
- The “dry tree” which was made to flourish is Jesus.

Other Prophecies of Jesus as the Branch.

As we study these prophecies of Jesus as the Branch, I hope you will see that other last day events are prophesied to occur in the same time frame. These events are so locked together in prophecy, I know of no way to pull them apart and place their fulfillment in other time periods.

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 expression "in that day" in Isaiah 4:2 allows us to drive down a time frame stake. That day is the day in which the Branch of the Lord would be beautiful and glorious to them that are escaped of Israel. The Branch of the Lord is Jesus, and those that escape is the remnant of Jews that believed on Jesus and escaped the destruction of Jerusalem. The time frame of that day is the transition period between old covenant and the new covenant. In addition, those that escape would enjoy the fruit that came from the earthly ministry of Jesus, also defining the time frame.

The expression "in that day" occurs 43 times in the book of Isaiah, and it occurs 8 times in the first five chapters of Isaiah. "In that day" means in the same time period as that which precedes the expression. For this reason, we would expect the other events prophesied in the first five chapters to have also occurred in the same time frame, the last days of the old covenant.

The primary event prophesied in the first five chapters of Isaiah is the destruction of Jerusalem. The only destruction of Jerusalem in that time frame is the 67 AD until 70 AD destruction by the Romans; again in the same time period as the Branch being beautiful and glorious to the Jewish remnant.

There are other prophesied events in the first four chapters of Isaiah that are known to have occurred in the same time frame. The salvation of the Jewish remnant is prophesied in Isaiah 1:9. *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.* We know from previous studies that the salvation of the Jewish remnant occurred in the first century. In addition, this verse is quoted in Romans 9:29 and applied to that very time period.

The establishment of the Lord's house is recorded in Isaiah 2:1-5. This passage is a prophecy of the building of the New Testament Church as recorded in the New Testament. The Lord's house is the church.

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim 3:15.

The house of God and the Lord's house are expressions that describe the church. The house of God and the Lord's house is where God dwells with believers. In Acts 15 James applied the expression "tabernacle of David" to the church. He quotes from Amos 9:11-12 and applies it to the building of the New Testament church by carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, which is also a last day event. The tabernacle of David is also the church, God's house, the Lord's house. The expression "in that day" is in Isaiah 4:2. The coming of the Branch, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the church are all last day events occurring in the apostolic age in the first century.

Our prophecy of Jesus as the Branch is in Isaiah 4:2. Verse 3 begins, "And it shall come to pass". That which follows in the rest of Isaiah chapter 4 is descriptive of conditions in the kingdom of heaven. In the same time period in which the Branch was beautiful and glorious to the remnant, and Jerusalem was destroyed, and the church was established; the kingdom of heaven was established.

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. This relationship is confirmed in the very first verse of the New Testament.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1.

The expression “in that day” is in Isaiah 11 two times. It can be clearly established from Isaiah 11 that several prophetic events are prophesied to occur in the last days: the Branch out of Jesse, the Gentiles come to Jesus, the dispersed Jews are gathered again to Jesus.

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”.

All of this prophecy of Jesus as a righteous Branch was fulfilled during the last days of the old covenant. The prophecy was given during the same time period as the prophecy of the Twig in Ezekiel 17:22-24. Both prophecies are prophesying the same event.

The context of the prophesy in Jeremiah 23:5-6 confirms that the fulfillment was in the first century. Jeremiah 21,22, and 23 warn of the destruction of Jerusalem. The Branch prophecy in Jeremiah 23:5-6 is given as a blessing specifically to the remnant.

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. He is the only One that can be called the Branch of righteousness. He is the only One that can execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

The words “In those days, and at that time” tell us that the events described immediately before Jeremiah 33:15 occur in the same frame as the appearance of the Branch of righteousness. The language in Jeremiah 33:1-14 describe conditions of the kingdom of heaven and of the return of the Jews from captivity. There may have been an application for this prophecy when the Jews returned from Babylon, but the real fulfillment was in the first century during the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the apostles.

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.

In Zechariah 3:1-7 Joshua the high priest is dressed in filthy garments. Satan stands before Joshua to accuse him, but the Lord rebukes Satan. God says He will take away Joshua’s filthy garments and cause his iniquity to pass from him, and He will clothe him with change of raiment.

As the high priest, Joshua represented the people of Israel. As such he carried their sins into the holy of holies. As the representative of the people, Joshua’s garments were dirty with sin. God intervenes and announces he will give Joshua new clothes and take away his sins. In verse 8 God announces that He will bring forth the Branch. The Branch is Jesus. The lesson is that the Branch results in the cleansing of Joshua. Verse 9 gives a picture of Jesus as a stone with seven eyes. Again in verse 9, God says, “...and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”

Zechariah 6:12-15.

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.

And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

- 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.
- Crowns are given to those that serve in building the temple.
- Those that are far off who come and build the temple of the Lord are Gentiles that were brought into the church.

Conclusion.

Clearly, Jesus is the Branch. As the Son of Man, He is a Branch off of David. Jesus came as the Son of Man by His birth to Mary. His coming as the Branch is a last day first century event. The context of the prophecies of the Branch gives prophecies of other events that would occur in the same time frame as the coming of Jesus as the Branch: the coming of the kingdom of heaven; the building of the church; the cleansing of believers; the Gentiles come to Jesus; a remnant of Jews brought out of captivity; and the crucifixion of Jesus. Everywhere I am aware of, the Old Testament prophets confirm Jesus words in Luke 21:20-22.

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.