

Ezekiel 17 – Parable of the Two Eagles

By Holly Effiom

VV1-6

What did God ask Ezekiel to do?
Is this similar to chapter 15?
What had taken place, what had we learned, right before being told a parable in chapter 15?
What had we learned right before this chapter 17?
Can a pattern be observed in the organization of Ezekiel?
What was the chapter 15 parable about?
What is this chapter 17 parable about?
What did the eagle look like was it small?
What is significant about the long wings?
What is noteworthy about his feathers?
What is significant about the color of his feathers?
Why did the eagle go to Lebanon in particular?
From what kind of tree was the sprig taken? Was it the smallest among the cedars?
What is known about cedar?
To what kind of land was the twig taken; what kind of city?
Where was the tree planted?
What else was planted in a fruitful field?
Was the seed just planted anywhere?
What is significant about a willow tree?
What happened to the cedar twig and the other seeds?
Which way did the branches of the twig stretch?

LESSON: There is so much to glean in these first few verses:

1. It is noteworthy that we have another parable at this point, just as we were given a parable in chapter 15. Recall in chapter 14, God gave a hard message about the idolatrous elders of Israel; but God comforts Ezekiel in providing an explanation for all of Israel's, and the world's, suffering. Another parable is being provided, here in chapter 17, after God's hard message – making Jerusalem to know her abominations in chapter 16. Is this a pattern? Is God providing a respite from His very intense words in the prior chapters?
2. The great long-winged eagle with great wings and colorful feathers, went to Lebanon (the land of great cedar trees), to the tallest cedar and cropped off the top of the tree, and taking its sprig to a completely different land. This great eagle had the power and the will to make the tallest cedar in Lebanon less tall, and take the sprig of this tree to a totally different land to start anew. It was low in stature, but it grew; its branches eventually reaching toward the sky, toward the great eagle, and its roots taking hold in the new land. This eagle had also taken some seeds of Lebanon, and planted them in a fruitful field, near plentiful waters, like a willow tree, whose root system, is ever-seeking water (to the detriment of any construction around it) would be easily satisfied.
3. God specifies to where He takes the sprig of cedar and other seeds of the land – to a land of "traffick" or trade, a city of merchants. Of where is He speaking? Jerusalem has never been described as a city of merchants. Jerusalem is where the temple of God in the earth will reside – it was never intended to be a money-making operation. Why is God being specific about where the sprig was taken?

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VV7-10

Who else showed up?
Was this eagle different from the first? In what way?
What did the vine do?
What was the vine hoping to get from this other eagle?
But where was this vine planted? Was it in the desert?
And, why had it been planted in this particular land?
This being the parable, what is God asking the audience?

LESSON: Another great eagle appears, with nowhere near the wing-span, nor colorful feathers, and what do the roots and branches of the young tree do? They bend toward this new eagle, hoping to get a little water from this *lesser* eagle, when the greater eagle planted the sprig in excellent soil, right near an excellent water source, so that it would be fruitful, and bearing good fruit!

So, God asks the audience a question: Will this to prosper?

VV11- 15 (2 Kings 24:10-19; 25:1-10; Jer 38:17-28)

What is meant by God's question?
What does the king of Babylon do? 2 Chr 36:13
Did Jerusalem make a covenant with this king?
Why did the king of Babylon remove the mighty of the land?
What did Jerusalem do in response?
What was Jerusalem hoping to get from Egypt?
What is God asking again in this description?
What does God say Jerusalem is doing in running to Egypt for help?
How does Jerusalem's behavior track with the parable of the 2 great eagles?

LESSON: When reading the parable of the two great eagles, I thought it was about God's relationship with that final Gentile world power, because the first great eagle plucked it from the tallest cedar in Lebanon, and took the sprig and other seeds to a land of "traffick" – or trade – a "city of merchants", which describes the Babylon mentioned in Revelation 18. The first great eagle makes this city what it is, Babylon did not do this for Jerusalem. But then God describes what the king of Jerusalem (or Judah) was doing, in breaking his vow to Babylon – yes, he would have been in submission to this superior power, for a long while, but if he had kept his covenant he would have continued to exist.

But no, the king sent ambassadors to Egypt to gain an army, support, and supplies to fight Babylon. This made me wonder is if the parable was actually about this playing Egypt against Babylon. Was this not the behavior God was decrying in Ezekiel 16:26-29?

So, what is the point of this parable of the two eagles?

VV16-21

What does God predict will happen to the king of Jerusalem?
Whose oath did the king of Jerusalem despise?
Is this similar to the manner in which the king of Jerusalem despised his oath by breaking his covenant with God? Eze 16:59

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Will the gambit for support from Egypt work?
Why will it fail?
What does God plan to do with the king of Jerusalem in Babylon?
What will happen to those who are with the king in his rebellion?

LESSON: What a powerful section of scripture, with God commenting on Jerusalem's pattern of behavior! Through her actions, Jerusalem has shown her disdain for the oath she made with God Almighty. If she broken covenant with God, she would surely do the same with her fellow man – her "word" meant *nothing* to her, and will therefore mean nothing to anyone else. And, is this not the definition of harlotry or whoredom – one's body... your very *person* holds *no* value to you; so, why would anyone else value you?

Furthermore, when you don't value yourself, you can value no one else. The king of Jerusalem, when making certain decisions had no care... no thought in his mind for his supporters. He had no consideration for what will happen to his people, let alone those closest him.

Since reading chapter 7 of Ezekiel, we have understood that the audience for this message was not solely those already in exile in Babylon nor Jerusalem itself, who was already under judgment, but also Babylon, that first and final Gentile world power.

VV22-24

What does God explain he will do?
Where will He plant His sprig?
Will the sprig wither away and die?
Will benefit from this sprig?
What is meant by "dwelling" under the shadow of branches (in this case) or wings? Daniel 2:36-38
Who will be taught the lesson, according to V24?
Who are the "trees"?
What is the lesson that will be taught?

LESSON: God likens Himself to this great eagle, Who will again pluck off the top of the high cedar and will plan a new tree, but this time, He will not plant it in a land of "traffick", a city of merchants; He will plant this new tree on an eminent mountain in Israel – all will see it – and this sprig will grow into a mighty tree, under whose boughs all will dwell. Of Whom do you think God is speaking?

This scripture reminds me of Eze 14:22-23, and the quality of the remnant of the people who will dwell in the new earth, except in this section, He's talking about the quality of the leadership in the world – Jesus, ruling from the new Jerusalem – and it is marvelous to our eyes!

God said it, and it is done! Hallelujah!