

*The Withered Vine and
The Majestic Cedar*

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the page, creating a modern, layered effect. The rest of the page is plain white.

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- ▶ **Romans 15:4** For whatever was written before was written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we may have hope.

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▶ ^{NKJ} **Ezekiel 17:1** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, ³ "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar the highest branch. ⁴ He cropped off its topmost young twig And carried it to a land of trade; He set it in a city of merchants.

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▶ ⁵ Then he took some of the seed of the land And planted it in a fertile field; He placed *it* by abundant waters *And* set it like a willow tree. ⁶ And it grew and became a spreading vine of low stature; Its branches turned toward him, But its roots were under it. So it became a vine, Brought forth branches, And put forth shoots.

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▶ ⁷ " But there was another great eagle with large wings and many feathers; And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, And stretched its branches toward him, From the garden terrace where it had been planted, That he might water it. ⁸ It was planted in good soil by many waters, To bring forth branches, bear fruit, *And* become a majestic vine."

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► ⁹ " Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Will it thrive?
Will he not pull up its roots, Cut off its fruit, And leave
it to wither? All of its spring leaves will wither, And no
great power or many people Will be needed to pluck it
up by its roots. ¹⁰ Behold, *it is* planted, Will it thrive?
Will it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it?
It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew." ' "

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- ▶ **A great eagle - in v 3** - had large wings, long pinions, it was full of feathers of various colors, it came to Lebanon and took the top young twig from the highest branch of the cedar tree
- ▶ **The vine - in v 5** – was from the seed of the land, it was planted in a fertile field, became a vine of low stature. Branches turned toward 1st eagle, had roots, branches and shoots. But then the vine turned roots to a 2nd eagle to be watered by it.
- ▶ **Another great eagle - in v7** – had large wings, many feathers (the vine turned towards it)

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► **Ezekiel 17:11-21** ¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹² "Say now to the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these *things mean?*' Tell *them*, 'Indeed the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon.'

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▶ ¹³ 'And he took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him, and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, ¹⁴ 'that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping his covenant it might stand.

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▶ ¹⁵ 'But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such *things* escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered? ¹⁶ 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely in the place *where* the king *dwells* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke -- with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die

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- ▶ ¹⁷ 'Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons.
- ¹⁸ 'Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these *things*, he shall not escape.' "

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▶ ¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "As I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. ²⁰ "I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. ²¹ "All his fugitives with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

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- ▶ **The great eagle (v.3)** - the king of Babylon – **Nebuchadnezzar**

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- ▶ **Lebanon (v.3)** - is **Jerusalem**
- ▶ **1 Kings 7:2-3** He also built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length was one hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. ³ And *it* was paneled with cedar above the beams that *were* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *to* a row.
- ▶ **1 Kings 6:18** The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone *to be* seen.
- ▶ **1 Kings 10:27** The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland.

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- ▶ **The topmost young twig** - Jehoiachin, taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon
- ▶
- ▶ **The land of trade** - Babylon
- ▶
- ▶ **The seed** - a member of the royal family – Matthanah, aka – Zedekiah
- ▶ **The fertile field** - Israel and Nebuchadnezzar's covenant with Zedekiah
- ▶ **Another great eagle** - Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt

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- ▶ **Jeremiah 37:5-11** ⁵ Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem. ⁶ Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ⁷ "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. ⁸ "And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire." '

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- ▶ ⁹ "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. ¹⁰ 'For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.' " ¹¹ And the army of the Chaldeans left *the siege* of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,

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- ▶ **The vine** - is King Zedekiah

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- ▶ What's the point of the riddle?
- ▶ Someone who breaks a covenant will reap the consequences.

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► **Ezekiel 17:22-24** Thus says the Lord GOD: “I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it.”

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- ▶ **Isaiah 11:1** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ▶ **Jeremiah 23:5-6** " Behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- ▶ **Zechariah 6:12-13** "Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; ¹³ Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory,¹ And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." '

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► **Isaiah 53:2-3** For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is no beauty that we should desire Him.* ³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

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- ▶ **Ephesians 1:20-23** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.
- ▶
- ▶ **Hebrews 12:2** ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Majestic Cedar

- ▶ 1. Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Ever-green
Have its branches been,
It is king of all the woodland scene;
For Christ our King is born today!
His reign shall never pass away.

- ▶ **Refrain**

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!

- ▶ 2. Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Once the pride
Of the mountain side,
Now cut down to grace our Christmas-tide;
For Christ from heav'n to earth came down,
To gain, through death, a nobler crown.

- ▶ **Refrain**

- ▶ 3. Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Ev'ry bough
Has a burden now,
They are gifts of love for us, we trow.
For Christ is born, His love to show,
And give good gifts to men below.

- ▶ **Refrain**

- ▶ 4. Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Gather around the Christmas Tree!
Tapers bright
In the branches light,
Till our eyes all shine at the goodly sight,
For Christ, our Light, is born to-day,
His glory ne'er shall fade away.

- ▶ **Refrain.**