

Even though Israel had broken their covenant with the Lord, He promised that He would make a new covenant with them. This prophecy remains to be fulfilled. But as certain as judgment was, so certain is this promise.

Note what Israel will receive in her everlasting covenant from the following verses:

Isaiah 45:17

Isaiah 51:11

Jeremiah 32:40

And they will live happily ever after. The story of the Lord and His beloved Israel comes to a close. The future of the beloved nation is bright and wonderful, even though her past is tainted. The same is true for you.

When the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7

LESSON FOUR *The Withered Vine and The Majestic Cedar* EZEKIEL 17

Pause to pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom to understand the Lord's purpose in His written record of Israel.

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We have had two days of being immersed in the history of Israel. Please keep in mind the truth of the following verse as you reflect on what we have studied and as you prepare to study the riddle posed by the Lord in Ezekiel 17.

What will you gain from studying even the most obscure passages of the Bible? Please apply Romans 15:4 to your answer.

It is probable that the exiled elders of Israel were unmoved by the Lord's analogy of His nation as a wild, unfruitful vine, and unresponsive to His story of Israel as His adulterous wife. Perhaps the Word of the Lord that we will study today was an attempt to stimulate the dull hearts and minds of the Israelites with a brainteaser. I think at first we will find it quite puzzling and then intriguing as we discover the explanation of it.

Please read Ezekiel 17:1-10.

There are three characters to examine in this riddle. Please list their descriptions below.

A great eagle (v.3)

The vine

Another great eagle

The characters are the two eagles and the vine, and the actual question posed by the Lord in the riddle is "Will it (the vine) thrive?" What message seems to be being communicated in this question? See Ezekiel 17:9, 10.

The key to solving this riddle is just to read a little further! Obviously the Lord did not intend for Ezekiel's audience to have any doubt regarding the explanation of the parable.

Please read Ezekiel 17:11-21.

The riddle is unraveled by matching the symbolic elements to the real-life characters. Look at the historical accounts in 2 Kings 24:8-17, 2 Chronicles 36:9-14 and Jeremiah 37:5-7, then review the explanation from the Lord in Ezekiel 17:11-21. You will probably also want to look at a commentary to determine the explanation of the following:

The great eagle (v.3)

Lebanon (v.3)

The topmost young twig

The land of trade

The seed

The fertile field

Another great eagle

The vine

What is the point of this riddle and its interpretation? What did the Lord want to communicate to the Israelites? Make sure you notice the repetition of the word “covenant” in this chapter.

I must admit that even though the riddle is intriguing and I do enjoy puzzles, I feel like the message that the Lord has conveyed in this chapter is old news. But wait! We haven't read or studied the complete Word of the Lord in this chapter! There is big news in the next few verses! Hang in there. Persevere with me through a little bit more symbolism.

Please read Ezekiel 17:22-24, quoted below. Underline what the Lord says He will do. Highlight what the Lord is going to plant and what it will become.

Ezekiel 17:22-24 ²²Thus 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. ²³On 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. ²⁴And 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.”

In the first riddle, King Jehoiachin was the highest shoot or branch in King David's family tree and he was planted in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. King Zedekiah was the seed that was planted in the fertile field of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar and grew into a spindly vine instead of a stately tree. He was the last king in Israel and saw his sons killed before his eyes. When he died in Babylon it seemed that the Davidic line had come to an end. This was not the case and the last words of the Lord in Ezekiel 17 were His words of hope for a future king from David's family as He had promised.

That king would be none other than Jesus!

Let's look at this passage now in light of this. Jesus is the tender one.

What do you learn about His coming reign from the following verses?

Isaiah 11:1

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Zechariah 6:12-13

Jesus Christ will return to the earth to reign as King of Israel one day in the future. But He is already on the throne! He is already King of Kings!

Please see this for yourself in these passages and describe what you observe.

Ephesians 1:20-21

Hebrews 12:2

“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” Yes, Jesus Christ is King. He is on the throne in heaven and will be on the throne on earth one day. But is He on the throne in your own life? Or are you on the throne? Is there evidence in your life that you are submitting to His reign?

There shall be a root of Jesse; and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust.” Romans 15:12 KJV
