

A Riddle and Its Explanation

Ezekiel 17

Group ¹	C	V	Description
Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine	17	1-6	An eagle brings twigs to merchants and seed planted in fertile soil becomes a vine
		7-10	The vine is threatened by looking toward another eagle
11-21		Zedekiah's rebels against Babylon by turning to Egypt	
Zedekiah's Rebellion		22-24	God will bring down Zedekiah

Reflections

In this chapter, Ezekiel is told to use a parable and riddle to proclaim God's message to the people. Ezekiel describes how Jehoiachin and Zedekiah were treated and subsequently acted toward their Babylonian captors. The previous chapter ended (16:60-63) with God promising to remember His covenant with the Israelites and to establish an everlasting covenant with them when He is done disciplining them for their sins. This then sets the stage for Ezekiel to share God's message.

Questions

1. What are the elements of this first parable and what actions are described? v1-6, xref with v12-13
2. What are the elements of the second parable and what actions are described? V7-10, xref v13-15
3. What was to be the eventual fate of Zedekiah? V16
4. Who sets about to make a siege against Jerusalem and what is the end result? Will the Egyptians come to their aid? What reason is given for these events? V17-18
5. What does God proclaim that He would allow to happen to Zedekiah and his armies? V19-21
6. What then does God say He would do? V22-24
7. How does God make known that all of what Ezekiel said will come true? V21 and v24

Conclusion

These passages are best read in parallel with other texts like 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, and Daniel to help get the full picture of all that God was bringing about to fulfill His portion of the covenant made with the Israelites when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. Just as God has been faithful in keeping His covenant, He will continue until the covenant is completed with the establishment of a new king in the land that all nations will recognize as God's appointed king. Of course we know now that this was accomplished in the person of Jesus, God's Messiah, the king of His people from every nation.

There and Then: Here and Now

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this part of our study²: *my LOG vs others SPECK*. Here are some possible responses I've identified from the text that might apply to anyone.

- 1 (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.
- 2 *Navigator Bible Study Handbook* (The Navigators), with additions & Matthew 7:1-5.

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S - Are there *sins* for me to avoid or confess?

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P - Are there *promises* from God for me to claim?

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E - Are there *examples* for me to follow or avoid?

•

C - Are there *commands* for me to obey?

•

K - How has this passage increased my *knowledge* about God / Jesus / Holy Spirit?

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Response to Questions

1. A great eagle comes and took the top of the cedar of Lebanon and its young twigs and brought them to a land of merchants and a city of traders. The great eagle is the king of Babylon, the top of the cedar of Lebanon was Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and the young twigs were members of the royal family and other leaders, like Daniel (see v12-15). The king of Babylon then made provisions for the king and those he carried into captivity. IVP Bible Background Commentary describes how there are records from the Babylonian empire that record this deportation from Judea and their being settled in Babylonia and the provisions set aside for them.³
 2. In Jehoiachin's place, the king of Babylon set up another king, his uncle Mattaniah whose name is changed to Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:17; 2 Chronicles 36:5-14) and put him under a covenant but he rebelled and tried to flee to Egypt, the second eagle. Jeremiah prophesied during this time.
 3. Even though Zedekiah sought out an alliance with Egypt, they wouldn't be able to help them when the Babylonians came to overthrow Jerusalem completely.
 4. The Babylonians would come and set up siege ramps and prepare for a long protracted war against the city of Jerusalem. All of this would come about because of Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon.
 5. He would be captured and taken captive to Babylon and punished there. The army would die by the sword and the few survivors would be "scattered to the wind."
 6. God would choose His own king to be an eternal king over Israel and those of every nation who will come to rest in his protection. As a result all the leaders of the nations will know that He is God's king and is greater than all others.
 7. When it happens, all will know that it was God who proclaimed this and made it come about and because He has spoken, *it will happen*. That can be counted on.
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Key Words: Old Testament, Prophecy, Ezekiel, Parables, Zedekiah, Jehoiachin, Egypt, Babylon



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³ (Walton et al. on Ezekiel 17)