

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The Eagles and the Vine (c. late 592 BC)**Ezekiel 17****The Parable of the Two Eagles**

1 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

2 “Son of man, propound a riddle and speak a parable to the house of Israel,

3 saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “A great eagle with great wings, long pinions and a full plumage of many colors came to Lebanon and took away the top of the cedar.

4 He plucked off the topmost of its young twigs and brought it to a land of merchants; he set it in a city of traders.

5 He also took some of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed *it* beside abundant waters; he set it *like* a willow.

6 Then it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine with its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and yielded shoots and sent out branches.

7 “But there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage; and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and sent out its branches toward him from the beds where it was planted, that he might water it.

8 It was planted in good soil beside abundant waters, that it might yield branches and bear fruit *and* become a splendid vine.”

9 Say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers—so that all its sprouting leaves wither? And neither by great strength nor by many people can it be raised from its roots *again*.

10 Behold, though it is planted, will it thrive? Will it not completely wither as soon as the east wind strikes it—wither on the beds where it grew?””

The Interpretation of the Parable

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*?’ Say, ‘Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and princes and brought them to him in Babylon.

13 He took one of the royal family and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land,

14 that the kingdom might be in subjection, not exalting itself, *but* keeping his covenant that it might continue.

15 But he rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt that they might give him horses and many troops. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Can he indeed break the covenant and escape?

16 As I live,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘Surely in the country of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke, in Babylon he shall die.

17 Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company will not help him in the war, when they cast up ramps and build siege walls to cut off many lives.

18 Now he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and behold, he pledged his allegiance, yet did all these things; he shall not escape.”

19 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “As I live, surely My oath which he despised and My covenant which he broke, I will inflict on his head.

20 I will spread My net over him, and he will be caught in My snare. Then I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there *regarding* the unfaithful act which he has committed against Me.

21 All the choice men in all his troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to every wind; and you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken.”

Epilogue—The New Cedar

22 Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also take *a sprig* from the lofty top of the cedar and set *it* out; I will pluck from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one and I will plant *it* on a high and lofty mountain.

23 On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a stately cedar. And birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches.

24 All the trees of the field will know that I am the LORD; I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree, dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will perform *it*.”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Individual Responsibility and Retribution (c. late 592 BC)**Ezekiel 18****Israel’s Proverb**

1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 “What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying,

‘The fathers eat the sour grapes,
But the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

3 As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore.

4 Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

A Righteous Man’s Wicked Son

5 “But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness,

6 and does not eat at the mountain *shrines* or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor’s wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period—

7 if a man does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, does not commit robbery, *but* gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing,

8 if he does not lend *money* on interest or take increase, *if* he keeps his hand from iniquity *and* executes true justice between man and man,

9 *if* he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully—he is righteous *and* will surely live,” declares the Lord GOD.

10 “Then he may have a violent son who sheds blood and who does any of these things to a brother

11 (though he himself did not do any of these things), that is, he even eats at the mountain *shrines*, and defiles his neighbor’s wife,

12 oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, but lifts up his eyes to the idols *and* commits abomination,

13 he lends *money* on interest and takes increase; will he live? He will not live! He has committed all these abominations, he will surely be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

A Wicked Man’s Righteous Son

14 “Now behold, he has a son who has observed all his father’s sins which he committed, and observing does not do likewise.

15 He does not eat at the mountain *shrines* or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor’s wife,

16 or oppress anyone, or retain a pledge, or commit robbery, *but* he gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing,

17 he keeps his hand from the poor, does not take interest or increase, *but* executes My ordinances, and walks in My statutes; he will not die for his father’s iniquity, he will surely live.

Each Individual Stands On Their Own

18 As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed *his* brother and did what was not good among his people, behold, he will die for his iniquity.

19 “Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity?’ When the son has practiced justice and righteousness and has observed all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live.

20 The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son’s iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

The Salvation of the Wicked Who Repent

21 “But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live.

23 Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?

The Destruction of the Righteous Who Rebel

24 “But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die.

25 Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not right.’ Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?

26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die.

27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life.

28 Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

29 But the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not right.’ Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?

Repent!

30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,” declares the Lord GOD.

“Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

31 Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live.”