

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 361 – A Riddle Through The Lord Had Done It (Ezekiel 17:1-24)

1. In the riddle Ezekiel was to put forth, what did the great eagles do?

One great eagle took a high branch and set it in a city of merchants. He then took seed of the land and planted it in fruitful place to grow. It grew into a vine. Another great eagle appears and the vine bend towards him with an apparent desire to be watered by him. Thus, it was not doing what it was planted to do - serve the first great eagle. Notice: *“(1) And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; (3) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: (4) He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants. (5) He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree. (6) And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs. (7) There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation” (Ezekiel 17:1-7).*

- A riddle: “a puzzle, hence, a trick, conundrum, sententious maxim: — dark saying (sentence, speech), hard question, proverb, riddle” (Strong’s # 2420).
 - * **Numbers 12:8, Judges 14:12-19, I Kings 10:1, Psalms 49:4, Psalms 78:2, Proverbs 1:5-6, and Habakkuk 2:1-6.**
 - * Such thing should be cautiously considered and for the sure meaning, we should seek for the Scriptures to clarify what is meant (**Matthew 13:1-43**).
 - * The audience was the house of Israel for whom Ezekiel was a watchman (**Ezekiel 3:4; 3:17; 33:7**).
- A great eagle gives a certain sense of strength and awesomeness. Even the Lord used this to describe His empowered, renewed people and His work among them (**Deuteronomy 32:9-12 and Isaiah 40:31**).
- Being amongst merchants, that could be a good thing for the rebirth of a people (i.e. **I Kings 10:14-15**). This is especially true considering that they had faced famine and such during the siege (**Jeremiah 14:16 and Ezekiel 14:21**).
- We will discuss the other eagle and the meaning of it in verses 11-18.

2. After the vine bent towards the other great eagle, should it have been expected to prosper?

No: *“(8) It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. (9) Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the*

roots thereof. (10) Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew” (Ezekiel 17:8-10).

- God set them up, if they willingly went into captivity, to be well provided for in that captivity (**Jeremiah 29:1-14**).
- The uprooting and withering of the tree that doesn't do what it was planted to do (**Hosea 13:9-16** and **Matthew 21:18-20**).
- It is not just about bringing forth fruit, but the right fruit for the right cause (**Hosea 10:1-2**; cf. **Matthew 7:21-23** and **John 15:1-8**).

3. What was the explanation of the riddle?

“(11) Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (12) Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; (13) And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: (14) That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. (15) But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? (16) As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. (17) Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons: (18) Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape” (Ezekiel 17:11-18).

- The first great eagle - the king of Babylon. The second was Egypt. The account of all of this clarifies it (**II Kings 24:1-25:26**).
- Serve Nebuchadnezzar or perish as this was God's doing, His covenant (**Jeremiah 27:6-8**).
- Egypt had been looked to for salvation in the past, and it failed (**Isaiah 30:1-7**, **Isaiah 31:1-4**, and **Isaiah 36:6**). Why expect more now (**Jeremiah 37:5-10**; **43:7-13**)???

4. Was the Lord going to allow the king of Judah and his fugitives to go unpunished?

No: *“(19) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. (20) And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. (21) And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered*

toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezekiel 17:19-21).

- God said this all was going to happen (**II Kings 20:16-18**).
- Now the kings of Judah and Egypt want to try and undo God's will. That is ignorant (**Isaiah 14:24-27** and **Isaiah 46:9-13**).
- If it be of God... (**Acts 5:14-42**).
- Ye shall know... (**Deuteronomy 18:22**, **Jeremiah 28:9**, and **Ezekiel 33:33**).

5. Who was going to take down the high tree and plant a low tree that would flourish? The Lord: *"(22) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: (23) In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. (24) And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it" (Ezekiel 17:22-24).*

- God planned to replant His people (**Jeremiah 16:14-15** and **Jeremiah 24:1-7**) as was His pattern (**II Kings 19:30**).
- That replanting would lead to the ultimate fruit - Jesus coming into the world (**Jeremiah 23:3-8** and **Hebrews 7:14**).
- That brought forth the ultimate of all fruitful effects (**I John 2:1-2; 4:14**).