

Ezekiel 17

Much of Ezekiel 17 was given in parabolic form and the main characters depicted as a political caricatures. Just as we would immediately recognize the elephant and donkey as representing the Republican and Democratic parties today, so too, the hearers of Ezekiel's prophecy would have immediately recognized the symbols he was using to caricaturize the main characters. These symbols are:

Eagle #1: Babylon/Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 48:40, 49:22; Dan. 7:4)

Lebanon: Judah/Israel (1 Kings 7:1-2; Jeremiah 22:23)

Cedar: The Davidic succession to the throne

Highest Branch: The reigning king at the time of the events (King Jehoiachin)

Land of trade: Babylon

Seed: Offspring of the cedar/royal family (specifically King Zedekiah in this parable)

Planting: establishing where it can flourish (Isa. 5:1-7; Ps. 80:8-11)

Fertile Field: Jerusalem

Low spreading vine: limited influence (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar's puppet/"lame duck" king)

Branches turned up towards him: Subservience

Roots under it: firmly planted on throne

Eagle #2: Egypt

Stretching out of branches: Pleading

That he might water it: Looking to Egypt to sustain him

Other Cross-references:

King Jehoiachin taken to Babylon: 2 Kings 24:8-20

Zedekiah's oath to Nebuchadnezzar: 2 Chronicles 36:13ff

Israel's kings commanded to never go back to Egypt: Deuteronomy 17:16

Davidic Covenant: 2 Samuel 7:16ff

Jesus as a shoot/branch: Luke 1, Isaiah 7, Isaiah 53:2, Zechariah 6:12, John 22

Ezekiel 17 Outline:

Division 1: The parable of the two eagles (1-15)

Application 1a: When God disciplines us we are to humbly accept His discipline.

Application 1b: Even in the midst of judgment God's law is binding and we are to submit ourselves to it.

Division 2: Judah will be judged for breaking covenant with Babylon (16 – 21)

Application 2: God's providence is so comprehensive that even events which we attribute to chance or to ourselves are orchestrated by God.

Division 3: A promise to restore the throne (22-24)

Application 3: Our failure does not derail God's plan or His faithfulness.