

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*

*Message 32*

*April 17, 2016*



The Eagle by Sarah W. Grangier Cir 2011

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Thirty-2

The Eagle Takes Zedekiah

April 17, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

ZEDEKIAH IS THE OBJECT OF THE FIRST EAGLE

Ezekiel 17:11-24

*<sup>11</sup>Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>12</sup>Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and brought them to him to Babylon. <sup>13</sup>And he took of the seed royal, and made a covenant with him; he also brought him under an oath, and took away the mighty of the land; <sup>14</sup>that the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand. <sup>15</sup>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? shall he break the covenant, and yet escape? <sup>16</sup>As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, 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. <sup>17</sup>Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company help him in the war, when they cast up mounds and build forts, to cut off many persons. <sup>18</sup>For he hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; and behold, he had given his hand, and yet hath done all these things; he shall not escape. <sup>19</sup>Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, I will even bring it upon his own head. <sup>20</sup>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 enter into judgment with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. <sup>21</sup>And all his fugitives in all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward every wind: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it.*

*<sup>22</sup>Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also take of the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain: <sup>23</sup>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 birds of every wing; in the shade of the branches thereof shall they dwell. <sup>24</sup>And all the trees of the field shall know that I, Jehovah, 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, Jehovah, have spoken and have done it (ASV, 1901).*

## GOD EXPLAINS THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR TAKES ZEDEKIAH

Ezekiel 17:11-12

*<sup>11</sup>Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>12</sup>Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and brought them to him to Babylon (ASV, 1901).*

God again addresses the prophet telling him to communicate with the “rebellious house.” He begins to answer the riddle by telling Ezekiel to tell them, by saying to them, “*Know ye not what these things mean?*” Now he goes on to explain the details of the riddle. First the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, came to Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and took the king of Judah, Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:10-16; Jeremiah 24:1; 29:1). He took with him a lot of other people from the ranks of the royalty. He brought them to Babylon as prisoners of war. This again was the second invasion that brought the prophet Ezekiel to Babylon.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR MAKES A COVENANT WITH ZEDEKIAH

Ezekiel 17:13-14

*<sup>13</sup>And he took of the seed royal, and made a covenant with him; he also brought him under an oath, and took away the mighty of the land; <sup>14</sup>that the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand (ASV, 1901).*

Nebuchadnezzar took the twenty one year old son of Josiah whose name was Mattaniah and made him the king (II Kings 24:18; II Chronicles 36:11; Jeremiah 52:1). His name meant “*Gift of The Lord*” in Hebrew as all Hebrew names have meaning. He was renamed Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar which means “*God is Righteousness*” or “*Justice of The Lord.*” It is apparent from the names that the dynamics associated with the taking away from Jerusalem of the captives and replacement of the king was for violations of the Mosaic Law which was given by the Righteous God of Israel. As Nebuchadnezzar took one king and replace him he made a covenant with the replacement. Zedekiah swore by the Lord to do his will (II Chronicles 36:13). The covenant basically meant that he would live in peace and be able to rule as he saw fit but nevertheless was subservient to Nebuchadnezzar. According to Josephus the mighty who were taken for captives, were three thousand in number.<sup>1</sup> The strong of the land (II Kings 24:15), whom Nebuchadnezzar took are not the heads of tribes and families (II Kings 24:15); but several classes of men of wealth, who are grouped together in II Kings 24:14-16, including masons, smiths, and carpenters (II Kings 24:14 and 16), whereas the heads of tribes and families are classed with the court officials (II Kings 24:15) under the title princes. The design of this practice was to make a weak kingdom, that could not revolt, so as to keep the vassal king Zedekiah from breaking the covenant. Zedekiah possibly saw these terms as humiliating to him.

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson (Antiquities X, vi 3).

## ZEDEKIAH REBELS

Ezekiel 17:15

*<sup>15</sup>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? shall he break the covenant, and yet escape (ASV, 1901)?*

So what Nebuchadnezzar tried to prevent by taking the royalty and the well to do people happened anyway. The Lord asks these rhetorical question to make the obvious answer apparent to the people in Babylon listening to Ezekiel. Josephus add insight to the rebellion.

Now when Zedekiah had preserved the league of mutual assistance he had made with the Babylonians for eight years, he brake it, and revolted to the Egyptians, in hopes, by their assistance, of overcoming the Babylonians. (109) When the king of Babylon knew this, he made war against him: he laid his country waste, and took his fortified towns, and came to the city Jerusalem itself to besiege it: (110) but when the king of Egypt heard what circumstances Zedekiah his ally was in, he took a great army with him, and came into Judea, as if he would raise the siege; upon which the king of Babylon departed from Jerusalem, and met the Egyptians, and joined battle with them, and beat them; and when he had put them to flight, he pursued them, and drove them out of all Syria. (111).<sup>2</sup>

Zedekiah, who did not regard the covenant he made with Nebuchadnezzar, rebelled. Ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, came to Jerusalem to see King Zedekiah (Jeremiah 27:1–2). They were contemplating a combined revolution along with Pharaoh of Egypt. He also sent ambassadors to Egypt. Zedekiah expected great help from Pharaoh, who was a grandson of Necho, named Hophra. He advanced through Phoenicia and caused the Babylonian army to temporarily abandon the siege of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 37:5–7). They were joyful in Jerusalem for the wicked, treacherous King Zedekiah expected that the Egyptian army would deliver them. But the relief only lasted a short time. The Egyptian army was beaten by the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar resumed the siege of Jerusalem. Zedekiah made one great sin. He was lifted up in pride and despised the oath so he broke the covenant.

## KING ZEDEKIAH SEALED HIS FATE

Ezekiel 17:16-20

*<sup>16</sup>As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, 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. <sup>17</sup>Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company help him in the war, when they cast*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid (Antiquities 10.108-111).

*up mounds and build forts, to cut off many persons. <sup>18</sup>For he hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; and behold, he had given his hand, and yet hath done all these things; he shall not escape. <sup>19</sup>Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, I will even bring it upon his own head. <sup>20</sup>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 enter into judgment with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me (ASV, 1901) .*

He tried to escape from Jerusalem, however he and his household were taken captives and carried to the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. Zedekiah was arraigned and sentenced. His daughters were set free, while his sons were slain before him. This was the last thing the oath-despising, covenant-breaking Zedekiah saw. He and Nebuchadnezzar had made a covenant before God.

## II Chronicles 36:13

*<sup>13</sup>And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart against turning unto Jehovah, the God of Israel (ASV, 1901).*

While Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer at that time, it was apparent that he did more to keep his end of the covenant than Zedekiah did. Which made him a more God acknowledging man than the Jewish king. So he was carried to Babylon, where he died a prisoner (Jeremiah 52:11). He had despised the name of Jehovah and brought dishonor upon the name by violating the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar. The Gentile King had a higher esteem of that Name than the Jewish King. And then Jehovah in His righteous dealings used the Gentile to extract His punishment upon Zedekiah. Thus the Gentile King was used in punishing a faithless Jewish king. This is a model of the judgment which came upon the whole nation Israel when they despised and rejected their own Messiah and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Since Babylon the Gentiles have trodden down Jerusalem and the nation is blinded.

## ZEDEKIAH'S TROOPS FAIL

### Ezekiel 17:21

*<sup>21</sup>And all his fugitives in all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward every wind: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it (ASV, 1901).*

All Zedekiah's troops fled and were killed by the invading army of Babylon. God did this because of Zedekiah's unfaithfulness to Him and the Jewish nation's apostasy. God let Zedekiah know that it was God Himself that orchestrated the whole divine retribution for Zedekiah's evil breaking of the covenant.

## THE PROMISE OF THE MESSIAH

### Ezekiel 17:22-24

*<sup>22</sup>Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also take of the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain: <sup>23</sup>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 birds of every wing; in the shade of the branches thereof shall they dwell. <sup>24</sup>And all the trees of the field shall know that I, Jehovah, 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, Jehovah, have spoken and have done it (ASV, 1901).*

The closing verses focus on a theme of Messianic hope for Israel. This is similar to the hope God gave them at the end of the last chapter. Whereas the “great eagle” would transplant Israel and their king to the “city of traders” in the “land of merchants” the Lord God Himself would provide a new Davidic king and transplant Israel again to a place of protection and prominence on “the mountain heights of Israel.” During the Messianic Kingdom Jerusalem will be on the highest mountain of the world (Isaiah 2:2-4; 27:13; 56:6-8; 66:20; Micah 4:1-2; Ezekiel 17:22-24; 20:40-41; 40:1-4; 45:1-8; 48:8-20). God provided in the Psalms that His covenant with David would never be void or annulled.

### Psalm 89:3-4

*<sup>3</sup>I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant: <sup>4</sup>Thy seed will I establish for ever, And build up thy throne to all generations. Selah (ASV,1901).*

Verse 22 reads (literally), “I will take from the high top of a cedar,” without actually identifying what God will take. But God adds the adjective “high,” together with the more “from,” points to an individual more prominent than any of the Jewish kings. By continuing to use the imagery of the “cedar” the Lord is saying that the new planting (*community/nation*) would be close in some fashion of the old.

The verb translated “break off” (*qāṭap*) says that a special shoot that will appear to provide a fresh new beginning. This is the Messiah as expressed by God through Isaiah and cut-off as explained by God to Daniel.

### Isaiah 53:1-3

*Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? <sup>2</sup>For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not (ASV, 1901).*

### Daniel 9:26a

<sup>26</sup> *And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing (ASV, 1901).*

Isaiah 53:2, where it is translated “tender shoot. The synonyms *ḥōṭer*, “shoot,” and *nēṣer*, “branch,” in Isaiah 11:1 and *ṣemaḥ*, “branch,” in Isaiah 4:2; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; and 6:12 are also used to represent the Messiah.

Enthroned on the highest mountain on earth which will be in Israel, God’s people will flourish beyond anything they experienced in the past and will provide shelter to “*birds of every kind*, all people of the world.” Furthermore, “*all the trees of the field*,” that is, all nations, will acknowledge what the Lord Jehovah has done in humbling the proud and in exalting and restoring the nation Israel and the Davidic line in the Messiah.

The concluding statement of the chapter affirms the certainty of the Lord’s promised restoration. This is a vast contrast between the vine of low nature and the godly cedar. The imagery is clear with God saying that he will bring down the Gentile nations of the world and restore the kingdom of Israel. Then and only then will all the nations and people of the world know the One who makes such bold promises. He is able to fulfill the covenants He has made. The story of the two eagles began with judgment and punishment. It ended with mercy, grace and promise. God’s promises to redeem the earth through the Lord Jesus the Messiah provide the only hope this fallen world has. Personal faith in the Redeemer provided personal assurance of Heaven and participation in the Messianic Kingdom when it will be established at the Lord Jesus’s return to earth.

NEXT MESSAGE: PERSONAL SIN IS CORRECT PERSONALLY

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