

**The Eagle and the Vine:
A Fable for the Davidic Dynasty**

Ezekiel 17:1–21

Veritas Adult Community

November 3, 2019

The Text

(See backside)

Interpretation

A. The Nature and Structure of the Text

A theological portrayal of
the future (vv. 22–24)

A theological interpretation of past events (vv. 19–21)

An historical interpretation of the fable (vv. 11–18)

An imaginative fabulous image (vv. 1–10)

B. The Fable Itself (vv. 1–10)

Act 1: The Eagle and the Cedar Crown (vv. 3–4).

Act 2: The Eagle and the Vine (vv. 5–6).

Act 3: The Second Eagle and the Vine (vv. 7–8).

C. The Interpretation (vv. 11–21)

1. Who is the Eagle?
2. Who/What is the Cedar of Lebanon?
3. Who is the Vine?
4. Who is the Second Eagle?
5. What will to Zedekiah?
6. Where are your Allies when you need them?

D. Theological and Practical Lessons

1. At the personal level, we learn how intense was Ezekiel's contempt for Zedekiah.
2. People's responses to crises must accord with their causes, not merely their symptoms.
3. Those who claim to be the people of God must take him seriously in all aspects of life, including our covenants/agreements.

The Fable (vv. 1–10)

1 The following message of YHWH came to me:
 2 Human, compose a riddle and make up a fable
 for the house of Israel,
 3 and say:
 Thus has the Lord YHWH declared:
 A certain great eagle
 with large wings and extended pinions,
 with full plumage and brilliantly colored,
 came to Lebanon.
 He took the crown of the cedar,
 plucked off the topmost shoot.
 4 He brought it to a land of commerce;
 In the city of traders, he set it.
 5 He took one of the seedlings of the land,
 and planted it in fertile soil—
 a slip beside abundant waters, like a willow he set it.
 6 It sprouted and became a vine,
 spreading out low to the ground,
 with its branches turned toward him,
 and its roots going down under it.
 So it became a vine.
 It branched out and split off into boughs.
 7 Now there was another great eagle,
 with large wings, and thick plumage.
 But look! This vine turned its roots toward him,
 And stretched out its branches to him—
 that he might water it—
 from the terrace where it was planted.
 8 It had been planted on a favorable plot,
 beside abundant waters
 that it might produce branches and yield fruit,
 and develop into a magnificent vine.
 9 Say: Thus has the Lord YHWH declared:
 Will it flourish?
 Will he not tear out its roots?
 Will he not strip off its fruit, so that it dries up?
 Will not all its sprouted leaves wither?

 (No great arm nor mighty army
 will be needed to uproot it.)

 10 So look! 19
 It has been planted,

 but will it survive?
 When the east wind touches it,
 Will it not wither up completely?
 On the terrace on which it sprouted,

 it will wither.

The Interpretation (vv. 11–21)

11 The following message of YHWH came to me:
 12 Say now
 to the rebellious household,
 “Don’t you know what these things mean?
 Say:
 Look!
 The king of Babylon

 has arrived in Jerusalem,
 and has captured her king and her officials,

 and brought them to himself
 to Babylon.
 13 He has taken a member of the royal line,
 and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath—
 he also took away the nobility of the land—
 14 to humble the kingdom,
 to prevent him from exalting himself,
 and to keep his covenant, that it might remain in force.
 by sending his envoys to Egypt.

 15 But he revolted against him,
 by sending his envoys to Egypt
 that he might provide him
 with horses and a large army.

 Will he flourish?
 Will the person who does these things escape?
 Can he break the covenant
 and still escape?
 16 As I live!—the declaration of the Lord YHWH—
 surely, in the territory of the king who installed him as king,
 whose oath he treated with contempt,
 and whose covenant with him he broke,
 in the midst of Babylon, he will die.
 17 Pharaoh will not join him in the battle
 with a mighty force or a large contingent [of troops]
 when they heap up siege ramps, and construct siege walls,
 to cut off many lives.
 18 He treated the oath with contempt by breaking the covenant.
 Look! Even though he had given his hand, he still did all these things!
 He will not escape!
 Therefore, thus has the Lord YHWH declared:
 As I live—
 Surely it is my oath that he has treated with contempt,
 and my covenant that he has broken.
 So I will bring it down on his own head.
 20 I will spread my net over him,
 and he will be captured in my snare.
 I will bring him to Babylon,
 and there I will enter into judgment with him for his treachery
 that he committed against me.
 21 And all his choice soldiers among all his battalions
 will fall by the sword.
 As for the remainder, they will be scattered in every direction.
 Then you will know that I am YHWH. I have spoken.