

The Tender Sprig: Longing for the Messiah

Ezekiel 17:1–4, 22–24

Veritas Adult Community

November 10, 2019

The Text

^{17:1}The following message of YHWH came to me: ²“Human, compose a riddle and make up a fable for the house of Israel, ³and say: ‘Thus has the Lord YHWH declared:

“A certain great eagle with large wings and extended pinions, with full and brilliantly colored plumage, came to Lebanon. He took the crown of the cedar, ⁴and plucked off the topmost shoot. He brought it to a land of commerce: in the city of traders he set it.

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²²Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: I myself will take a sprig from the highest crown of the cedar, and plant. . . . From the top of its shoots I will pluck a tender sprig, and I myself will plant it on a high and towering mountain. ²³On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it that it may bear branches, and produce fruit, and become a magnificent cedar. Every winged bird will nest under it; in the shelter of its boughs it will perch. ²⁴Then all the trees of the countryside will know that I am YHWH.

I bring down the tall tree;

I exalt the low tree.

I cause the green tree to wither;

and make the withered tree thrive.

I am YHWH, I have spoken, and I will perform [as I have declared.]

Interpretation

The Structure of Chapter 17

- A [The Riddle of the Cedar Sprig (vv. 3–4) [34 words]
- B [The Riddle of the Vine (vv. 5–8) [66 words]
- B' [The Interpretation of the Riddle of the Vine (vv. 9–21) [205 words]
- A' [The Interpretation of the Riddle of the Cedar Sprig (vv. 22–24) [63 words]

A. The Riddle of the Topmost Sprig (vv. 3–4, 22b)

“A certain great eagle with large wings and extended pinions, with full and brilliantly colored plumage, came to Lebanon. He took the crown of the cedar, ⁴and plucked off the topmost shoot. He brought it to a land of commerce: in the city of traders he set it. ²²Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: I myself will take a sprig from the highest crown of the cedar, and plant. .

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Clues to the Identity of the Cedar Sprig

1. It is a cedar sprig.
2. It is the topmost sprig of the cedar.
3. It is a fresh shoot (*yôneqâ*, lit. “suckling twig),
4. The twig was taken to Babylon by the great eagle.
5. God was the one who took the sprig from the lofty top of the cedar.
6. It took root and grew into a tree in its own right.

B. The Destiny of the Second Top-most Sprig (vv. 23c–24)

What is so special about this new tree?

1. It becomes a magnificent cedar,
2. It is also tender.
3. It will have cosmic significance.
4. Its mission is universal (Isa 11:1–10)
5. It is located on “the high mountain of Israel”
Psalm 78:68–72; John 12:20–21; 1 Sam 2:6–10; Luke 1:48–55

C. Lessons from “The Tender Sprig?”

1. From the house of David, the Messiah will come!
2. We need to have a new theology of exile.
3. YHWH is the Lord of history.
4. YHWH is always true to his word.