**Ezekiel 17-20**

Two Eagles and a Vine

**17**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to the Israelites as a parable. **3**Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon. Taking hold of the top of a cedar, **4**he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.

**5**“‘He took one of the seedlings of the land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, **6**and it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs.

**7**“‘But there was another great eagle with powerful wings and full plumage. The vine now sent out its roots toward him from the plot where it was planted and stretched out its branches to him for water. **8**It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.’

**9**“Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Will it thrive? Will it not be uprooted and stripped of its fruit so that it withers? All its new growth will wither. It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it up by the roots. **10**It has been planted, but will it thrive? Will it not wither completely when the east wind strikes it - wither away in the plot where it grew?’”

**11**Then the word of the Lord came to me: **12**“Say to this rebellious people, ‘Do you not know what these things mean?’ Say to them: ‘The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon. **13**Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, **14**so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty. **15**But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

**16**“‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke. **17**Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives. **18**He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Because he had given his hand in pledge and yet did all these things, he shall not escape.

**19**“‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: As surely as I live, I will repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant. **20**I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there because he was unfaithful to me. **21**All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken.

**22**“‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. **23**On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. **24**All the trees of the forest will know that I the Lord bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

“‘I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.’”

The One Who Sins Will Die

**18**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

“‘The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

**3**“As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. **4**For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

**5**“Suppose there is a righteous man  
    who does what is just and right.  
**6**He does not eat at the mountain shrines  
    or look to the idols of Israel.  
He does not defile his neighbor’s wife  
    or have sexual relations with a woman during her period.  
**7**He does not oppress anyone,  
    but returns what he took in pledge for a loan.  
He does not commit robbery  
    but gives his food to the hungry  
    and provides clothing for the naked.  
**8**He does not lend to them at interest  
    or take a profit from them.  
He withholds his hand from doing wrong  
    and judges fairly between two parties.  
**9**He follows my decrees  
    and faithfully keeps my laws.  
That man is righteous;  
    he will surely live,  
declares the Sovereign Lord.

**10**“Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things **11**(though the father has done none of them):

“He eats at the mountain shrines.  
He defiles his neighbor’s wife.  
**12**He oppresses the poor and needy.  
He commits robbery.  
He does not return what he took in pledge.  
He looks to the idols.  
He does detestable things.  
**13**He lends at interest and takes a profit.

Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he is to be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

**14**“But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:

**15**“He does not eat at the mountain shrines  
    or look to the idols of Israel.  
He does not defile his neighbor’s wife.  
**16**He does not oppress anyone  
    or require a pledge for a loan.  
He does not commit robbery  
    but gives his food to the hungry  
    and provides clothing for the naked.  
**17**He withholds his hand from mistreating the poor  
    and takes no interest or profit from them.  
He keeps my laws and follows my decrees.

He will not die for his father’s sin; he will surely live. **18**But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.

**19**“Yet you ask, ‘Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?’ Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. **20**The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.

**21**“But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. **22**None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. **23**Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

**24**“But if a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, they will die.

**25**“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? **26**If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. **27**But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. **28**Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. **29**Yet the Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

**30**“Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. **31**Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? **32**For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

A Lament Over Israel’s Princes

**19**“Take up a lament concerning the princes of Israel **2**and say:

“‘What a lioness was your mother  
    among the lions!  
She lay down among them  
    and reared her cubs.  
**3**She brought up one of her cubs,  
    and he became a strong lion.  
He learned to tear the prey  
    and he became a man-eater.  
**4**The nations heard about him,  
    and he was trapped in their pit.  
They led him with hooks  
    to the land of Egypt.

**5**“‘When she saw her hope unfulfilled,  
    her expectation gone,  
she took another of her cubs  
    and made him a strong lion.  
**6**He prowled among the lions,  
    for he was now a strong lion.  
He learned to tear the prey  
    and he became a man-eater.  
**7**He broke down their strongholds  
    and devastated their towns.  
The land and all who were in it  
    were terrified by his roaring.  
**8**Then the nations came against him,  
    those from regions round about.  
They spread their net for him,  
    and he was trapped in their pit.  
**9**With hooks they pulled him into a cage  
    and brought him to the king of Babylon.  
They put him in prison,  
    so his roar was heard no longer  
    on the mountains of Israel.

**10**“‘Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard  
    planted by the water;  
it was fruitful and full of branches  
    because of abundant water.  
**11**Its branches were strong,  
    fit for a ruler’s scepter.  
It towered high  
    above the thick foliage,  
conspicuous for its height  
    and for its many branches.  
**12**But it was uprooted in fury  
    and thrown to the ground.  
The east wind made it shrivel,  
    it was stripped of its fruit;  
its strong branches withered  
    and fire consumed them.  
**13**Now it is planted in the desert,  
    in a dry and thirsty land.  
**14**Fire spread from one of its main[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+17-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-20896d)] branches  
    and consumed its fruit.  
No strong branch is left on it  
    fit for a ruler’s scepter.’

“This is a lament and is to be used as a lament.”

Rebellious Israel Purged

**20**In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat down in front of me.

**2**Then the word of the Lord came to me: **3**“Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Have you come to inquire of me? As surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign Lord.’

**4**“Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their ancestors **5**and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, “I am the Lord your God.” **6**On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. **7**And I said to them, “Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

**8**“‘But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt. **9**But for the sake of my name, I brought them out of Egypt. I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites. **10**Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. **11**I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, by which the person who obeys them will live. **12**Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.

**13**“‘Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws - by which the person who obeys them will live - and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the wilderness. **14**But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. **15**Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands— **16**because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths. For their hearts were devoted to their idols. **17**Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the wilderness. **18**I said to their children in the wilderness, “Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. **19**I am the Lord your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. **20**Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.”

**21**“‘But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws, of which I said, “The person who obeys them will live by them,” and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. **22**But I withheld my hand, and for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. **23**Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, **24**because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes lusted after their parents’ idols. **25**So I gave them other statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not live; **26**I defiled them through their gifts - the sacrifice of every firstborn - that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the Lord.’

**27**“Therefore, son of man, speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In this also your ancestors blasphemed me by being unfaithful to me: **28**When I brought them into the land I had sworn to give them and they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices, made offerings that aroused my anger, presented their fragrant incense and poured out their drink offerings. **29**Then I said to them: What is this high place you go to?’” (It is called Bamah to this day.)

Rebellious Israel Renewed

**30**“Therefore say to the Israelites: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Will you defile yourselves the way your ancestors did and lust after their vile images? **31**When you offer your gifts - the sacrifice of your children in the fire - you continue to defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. Am I to let you inquire of me, you Israelites? As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will not let you inquire of me.

**32**“‘You say, “We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone.” But what you have in mind will never happen. **33**As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will reign over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. **34**I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered—with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. **35**I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. **36**As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign Lord. **37**I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. **38**I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

**39**“‘As for you, people of Israel, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Go and serve your idols, every one of you! But afterward you will surely listen to me and no longer profane my holy name with your gifts and idols. **40**For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord, there in the land all the people of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices. **41**I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will be proved holy through you in the sight of the nations. **42**Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your ancestors. **43**There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done. **44**You will know that I am the Lord, when I deal with you for my name’s sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, you people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.’”

Prophecy Against the South

**45**The word of the Lord came to me: **46**“Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest of the southland. **47**Say to the southern forest: ‘Hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am about to set fire to you, and it will consume all your trees, both green and dry. The blazing flame will not be quenched, and every face from south to north will be scorched by it. **48**Everyone will see that I the Lord have kindled it; it will not be quenched.’”

**49**Then I said, “Sovereign Lord, they are saying of me, ‘Isn’t he just telling parables?’”