

Title: Covenant Broken; Covenant Fulfilled

Text: Ezekiel 17: 1-24

Date: June 2, 2011

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

The everlasting covenant of God is the covenant God promised with himself, fulfilled by himself in Christ Jesus the GodMan, and the covenant he reveals himself to the hearts of his people. It is the word of God's promise that everything God requires of his people, God has already accomplished himself.

This word of promise is ordered by God himself and made sure by God himself, so that there remains nothing left for the sinner to do. By his grace, by God-given faith, we receive this promise, believing God has, is and shall save us. It is by God granting us repentance that we turn from ourselves to Christ, by whose faithfulness this word is sure. Though we fail to even simply live by faith, God is faithful to keep us, not by works of righteousness which we have but by his word of promise. The everlasting covenant of God is the gospel. This sure-word of promise, of salvation accomplished. It is the law written on the heart whereby God makes us his God and makes us to follow him.

Proposal: What the king of Babylon did in our text, along with what the king of Judah did, was the work of an evil heart bent on making himself as the most high God. But what each did in our text, was under the direct hand of the Most High God, and even the wrath of these kings, is used of God to teach his elect remnant then, and his elect remnant today, that the only word of sure mercy is God's word!

Ezekiel 17: 1: And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2: Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; 3: And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: 4: He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants. 5: He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed *it* by great waters, *and* set it *as* a willow tree.

The first eagle is called the "great" eagle. God is the true great One! This first eagle represents the king of Babylon. He took the highest branch from the cedar, from Judah. He planted it in a prosperous land. He took also seed from this cedar and planted it in a fruitful land, by great waters. Not to be a mighty cedar—but a willow tree—a humble tree.

Ezekiel 17: 6: And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

But another eagle came along.

Ezekiel 17: 7: There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

Here is the offense.

Ezekiel 17: 8: It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

Here is the question.

Ezekiel 17: 9: Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. 10: Yea, behold, *being* planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

Here is the riddle explained by the LORD

Ezekiel 17: 11: Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12: Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these *things mean*? tell *them*, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon;

The king of Babylon is represented by this first eagle—he came to Jerusalem, and took the king of Judah--(2 Ki 24:12)—the top most tender branch of the cedar. He carried them into Babylon, a land of traffic, a city of merchants, a prosperous land.

Ezekiel 17: 13: And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:

The king of Babylon took Zedekiah, the king's uncle, and made him king. He made a covenant with Zedekiah and made Zedekiah make an oath to the king. Here is why?

Ezekiel 14: That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might stand.

Nebuchadnezzar promised that as long as the king of Judah looked to no other kings, he would remain a king and the nation would be prospered by Babylon. And Nebuchadnezzar made good on his promise, Israel prospered as long as they looked to him alone.

Ezekiel 17: 15: But he {Zedekiah} rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people.

The king of Egypt is the other eagle. Again, here is the question.

Ezekiel 17: 15: Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such *things*? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?

Here is the answer.

Ezekiel 17: 16: As I live, saith the Lord GOD, 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. 17: Neither shall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounds, and building forts, to cut off many persons: 18: Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these *things*, he shall not escape.

No doubt, the king of Babylon is trying to be like God and rule over all, keeping all in subjection to him even as Satan. But here God is using the wrath of man, to declare again, man's great offense in the garden and our need of God to fulfill his word himself on behalf of his elect people.

I. MAN HAS BROKEN GOD'S COVENANT.

Ezekiel 17: 19: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.

When Zedekiah revolted against the king whom God had put in place over him, he broke God's covenant and broke his oath to God. Let's go back.

God set Adam in a well-watered garden, in a prosperous land—to be a willow tree—not mightier than God, but to serve God, as a humble willow. God made a covenant with Adam—“of all the trees though mayest eat, but in the day though eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, thou shalt surely die.” Yet, left to fulfill that covenant himself, Adam was taken captive by Satan, as easily as the king of Judah was taken by the king of Babylon—like a bird gathering twigs out of a tall cedar to make a nest. All men died in Adam. We cannot keep covenant with God and God yet be glorified. God must fulfill his covenant himself.

Again, in like manner as the king of Babylon made a covenant with Zedekiah and Zedekiah made an oath to him, so God made a covenant with Israel and Israel vowed to obeyed God. God promised he would bless them and keep them as long as they looked to no other kings but him. Not because God thought they could. God gave the law that the offense of that broken covenant in the garden might abound, that he might teach his true spiritual seed that we need Christ to fulfill all the promises of God and justify us from the word of God which we have broken. And just like Zedekiah, Israel looked away from God back to Egypt. God said, *Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? I will recompense it on his own head 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 plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.*

Have you been taken in God's net? Do you hear what he says: “your trespass you have trespassed against me.” All died in Adam, we are breakers of God's covenant. God's promise of salvation is accomplished: by the faithfulness of Christ himself, given to us through the faith operation of God, through God-given faith whereby we receive this finished word of promise.

Galatians 3: 21: Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.

If we continue to try to come to God by our will and our works—thinking we have obligated God in some way, that we have fulfilled some promise to God--we need to know that we are nothing but promise-breakers—and we shall be broken and cast out by God. *Ezekiel 17: 21: And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it*

II. GOD'S COVENANT IS FULFILLED BY HIS SON, CHRIST JESUS, ORDERED IN ALL THINGS AND SURE AND THIS IS THE LAW WRITTEN ON THE BELIVER'S HEART. IT IS ALL THE BELIEVERS HOPE.

Ezekiel 17: 22: Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: 23: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it:

The High Cedar. God took Christ from the high cedar—before the world began God choose Christ. Years later after our text, God set a crown on the head of Joshua (deliverer Savior), and God said...

Zechariah 6: 12: And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 13: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Then Christ came as promised from the highest branch--the house of David, the tribe of Judah—the royal family.

The Tender One. He came forth the “tender one” the tender plant.

Isaiah 53:2: For he shall grow 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 shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

The High Mountain. Christ came forth from heavens Zion into that mountain in Jerusalem called Zion. He was made of a woman, made under the law. But unlike Adam, unlike Zedekiah, Christ did not turn his roots to another—but served God with all his holy heart and soul. He kept the covenant of grace made with his divine Father before the world was made. He fulfilled the law and the prophets. He laid down his life to justice. He did all because God put the whole covenant of grace into Christ's hands to save his people.

Note: Concerning one who has broken God's covenant, God said in verse **16** **As I live, saith the Lord GOD, 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.*** Christ is King. He obeyed. But his elect didn't. But when Christ obeyed the will of God, all his elect died with the King who makes us king. Every chosen child of God who broke God's covenant in Adam, died together with Christ the King when he laid down his life in the midst of this Babylon. So Christ fulfilled the covenant and the testimony in the room and stead of his people. So Christ finished the whole will and work of his Father, and in all things pleased him: and God raised him from the dead, says:

Ps 89:28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and **my covenant** shall stand fast with him.

Ezekiel 17: 23...and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar:

Christ is the Goodly Cedar—those he has made righteous by his covenant keeping, are born of him, and are his branches--he brings forth boughs—branches. The desire of his Father is that all whom he represented--His children—be brought to lay hold of him by faith and rest in his everlasting covenant of grace. So it is that God says,

Jeremiah 31: 31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34: And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

His whole church, perfect in Christ—*is a goodly cedar*.

2 Corinthians 1:20: For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Ezekiel 17: 23:...and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. {God's elect from among the Jew and Gentile} 24: And all the trees of the field shall know

God is called a Husbandman to his people and his people are called trees of his planting—he shall all shall know me.

Isaiah 60:21: Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified....61:3:...that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Jeremiah 17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Psalms 92: 12: The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13: Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; 15 To shew that the LORD *is* upright: *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him.

Ezekiel 17: 24: And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD 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 the LORD have spoken and have done it.

With men, saying and doing, are two different things, but not so with God. What he has spoken—purposed from eternity—he brings to pass, and not one word falls to the ground.

Illustration: Verse 23 says, “In the shadow of the branches shall they dwell.” Cedar tree in the rain.

If you can rest under this goodly cedar—and wait patiently for the promise of his return by faith alone it because you are a high tree brought low, a low tree exalted and a green tree dried up and made to flourish by Christ.

For this is not only a description of what God does in his trees of righteousness, not only what God does to our enemies, but this is what God did in Christ. Christ is the righteous high tree who came low, the low tree exalted by God, the green tree dried up in place of his people (“I thirst” on the cross) and that tree which was made dry is now risen and made to flourish! So his people in him.

Do you trust his word of promise! He says, *I the LORD have spoken and have done it*. Every believer rests with David under this canopy of grace, saying, “*he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.*” (2 Samuel 23: 5) so as God promises, not one drop of wrath, shall ever fall upon us.

AMEN!