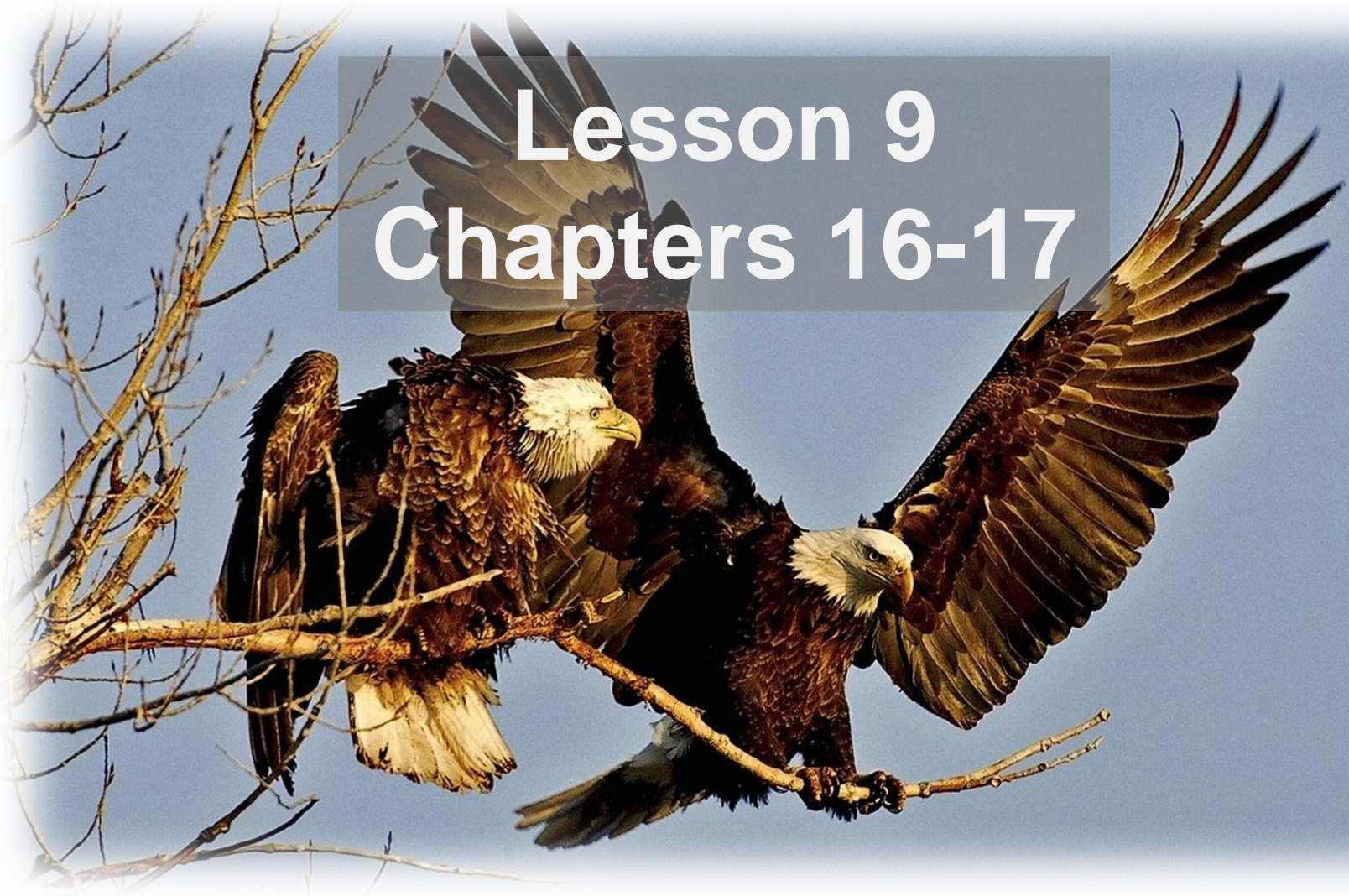


Lesson 9

Chapters 16-17



Overview: Ezekiel 16-17

- How do we discuss this section?
 - The next two chapters (16-17) consist of a series of parables.
- For purposes of the class, I've broken it down to four parables.
 - Parable of the unwanted baby
 - Parable of the three sisters
 - Parable of the eagles and the vine
 - Parable of the lofty cedar

Overview: Ezekiel 16-17

- What exactly is a parable?
 - a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.
 - Allegory:
 - Illustrating an abstract idea by something concrete.
 - Figurative treatment of one subject by using another.
 - A symbolic narrative.
 - Parables are designed to make you think.
 - The narrative poses questions for you to answer, or concepts for you to ponder.

Overview: Ezekiel 16-17

- Why do these parables come now, on the heels of the discussions in 14-15?
- They may be completely unrelated discourses, but I think God is expanding upon his previous discussion
 - God “**answered**” their questions... Now He proposes some of His own in the guise of parables.
 - He rehearses the **symbolic** history of Israel as seen from His point of view
 - Did it make you uncomfortable to read? It was supposed to.
 - The people should have been appalled to hear such language and descriptions of themselves.
 - He reiterates – **again symbolically** – Why Zedekiah will suffer his fate.
- At the end of it all He offers hope for the future

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

The Parable of the unwanted baby

(16:1-43)

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- The “Word of the Lord” (16:1)
 - This is a difficult parable to read, yet it is from the Lord
- The baby’s origin (16:2)
 - Clearly this parable is aimed at Jerusalem.
 - Their ancestry comes from Abraham, not the Amorites and the Hittites.
 - God is speaking, I believe, of the influence these cultures had on them.
 - He might just as well have said, you act just like the Amorites and Hittites.
 - See John 8:39-44

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- Another idea being conveyed is that they came out of Canaan (God called Abraham to live there)
 - They were unwanted in Canaan
 - They were enslaved in Egypt
 - After leaving Egypt no nation wanted them, none would help. They were despised by all.
 - Only through God's love and kindness did they go from Abraham and his family to the great nation they became.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- The baby left to die (16:3-6)
 - Think of a baby being born and cast into a field to die.
 - We read about things like this and weep. No one wept over Israel
 - One person (God) did have compassion.
 - The fact is, a baby left in the open field to squirm in it's own blood **WILL NOT live**. That is a fact.
 - God saved the baby.
 - That act alone should have brought a lifetime of gratitude.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- Coming of age (16:7-9)
 - 16:7 clearly indicates to me that God took an active role in bringing the child to adulthood.
 - Think of Israel as a fledgling nation. They had nothing, no land to call home, no wealth, no anything.
 - We can see God's blessing even as they came out of Egypt with treasure.
 - God led them through the wilderness and "clothed them" with a homeland, cities and homes to live in, good food to eat, prosperity, etc.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- Adorning the bride (16:10-14)
 - God adorned this beautiful woman for her wedding
 - She was the envy of nations. Israel under David and Solomon.
 - 2 Chron 9:1;5-8
- The infidelity of the bride (16:15-34)
 - **Amazing how quickly we forget to be grateful.**
 - How many times do we hear stories about people who make it big and then forget those who helped them.
 - It is so easy to become arrogant about success.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- We need to understand that the sexual metaphors used here refer to spiritual things.
 - We see this from the view of a rightfully jealous, hurt and angry husband who gave his wife everything and still she turned away.
 - We might find this metaphor and language disturbing.
 - it was intended to be.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- God levels **eight charges** against the bride here
 - (15) She trusted her beauty
 - (15) She had affairs; played the harlot (with other nations)
 - (16-19) She misused what God had blessed her with.
 - (20-21) She murdered (sacrificed) her children.
 - (22) She was ungrateful. She did not remember her youth as a bloody discarded baby.
 - (23-25) She built high places (for idolatry) on every street.
 - (25-30) She made herself sexually available to any passerby.
 - (27) She was so bad that even other nations that practiced similar things were ashamed of her
 - (30-34) She became worse than a harlot, actually paying others to have relations with her.
 - (32) She would sleep with anyone except – it seems – her own husband.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- Punishment of the harlot (16:35-43)
 - (35-36) God summarizes the reason for the punishment; ***because...***
 - Israel may have thought she was something special, but the nations viewed her as a harlot, and worse. They had no respect for her.
 - God would gather them all together and give her over to them
 - She would find out what they truly thought of her

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- God would punish her in keeping with her behavior
 - The punishment for physical adultery is death (Lev 20:10)
 - The punishment for spiritual adultery was the same (Deut 13:6-10)
- A town that turns to idolatry was to be put to the sword How much more Jerusalem herself (Deut 13:12-15)
 - If we think God is ignoring half of Lev 20:10, He will pronounce judgment on her lovers later in the book.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

Parable of the three sisters

(16:44-63)

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **Like mother like daughter (16:44-47)**
 - **We already know her mother was a Hittite**
 - **Israel's conduct is compared to that idolatrous nation.**
 - **He identifies the sisters: Samaria is the older sister; Sodom the younger.**
 - **She acted as they did, and even worse.**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The record of the sisters (16:48-52)**
 - (49-50) Sodom was arrogant yet blessed. She didn't help the poor and needy and she committed abominations.
 - The conduct of Samaria was well known to them.
- **Hard to believe that Jerusalem acted worse than both of these...**
 - They were destroyed for their conduct.
 - How could Jerusalem expect to be spared.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The future of the sisters (16:53-63)**
 - **Sodom and Samaria disappeared from history as a result of their conduct yet they have a future, as does Jerusalem**
 - **Punishment would certainly come**
 - **“I will do with you as you have done...” Punishment in keeping with the crime.**
 - **God won't forget His covenant.**
 - **It seems interesting that God's mercy will cause Israel to be ashamed, not threats and punishment (60-61).**
 - **Mercy is powerful to the one convicted in his mind.**
 - **Mercy can triumph over judgment (James 2:13).**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem will all be restored (symbolic of course)**
 - **Sodom and Samaria will become daughters of Jerusalem**
 - **I suspect that Sodom represents the gentiles and Samaria the fallen northern kingdom**
- **This seems to be Messianic in pointing to the time when salvation will come from the Jews and spread out to the whole world.**
 - **Dan 7:13-14; Zech 14:8-9; Micah 4:2; John 4:22**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

Parable of the eagles and the cedar

(17:1-21)

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The great eagle (17:1-5)**
 - **A majestic eagle came and took away the top twigs from the cedar tree.**
 - **He planted it in fertile soil so it would grow.**
 - **He placed it in a very favorable condition**
 - **One would think the twig (vine) would be grateful**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The condition of the vine (17:6, 8)**
 - It sprouted (took root) and grew.
- **The second eagle (17:7, 8)**
 - The second eagle did nothing for the vine. Yet it bent its roots toward the second eagle.
 - It had been given everything it needed been taken care of by the first eagle, yet the vine turned to another.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The fate of the vine (17:9-10)**
 - **So what will the first eagle do? He will pull it up and let it wither**
 - **What use is a vine that is not faithful to the one who planted it?**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The meaning of the parable (17:11-21)**
 - **We might be inclined to try and find a connection between Jerusalem and God.**
 - **In fact this deals with Babylon and Zedekiah.**
 - **The cedar seems to represent the family of David.**
 - **The eagles are Babylon and Egypt.**
 - **This parable describes what happened between 597BC and 586 BC**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **The people were carried away into exile in 597 BC and Zedekiah was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar.**
 - **As part of that, he swore an oath to Babylon.**
 - **Expected him to honor that oath. Ezekiel and Jeremiah both called for it.**
- **Zedekiah rebelled and turned to Egypt.**
 - **Babylon came and destroyed Jerusalem capturing Zedekiah in 586 BC**

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

Parable of the lofty cedar tree

(17:22-24)

(Some consider this a part of the previous parable)

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- God intervenes to save a sprig (17:22)
 - The eagles notwithstanding, God will take His own small sprig (a living tender piece)
- The high mountain haven (17:23)
 - Some think the high mountain is a barren and inhospitable place, thus implying that only by God's intervention can the sprig survive... Maybe...
 - The sense I get is that it is a place of protection and security. A place where no enemy can get to it.

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- The line of David will not disappear with Zedekiah.
 - There is a clear messianic idea being presented
 - The Messiah will be from the line of David.
 - Psa 89:3-4; 132:10-11; Jer 23:5-6
 - In Isa 11:1; 53:2 we see similar imagery.
 - The Messiah is described as a branch.
 - Isa 9:9; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8; 6:12

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- The lofty cedar tree (17:23-24)
 - With God's help, it will grow into a lofty cedar.
 - The birds will nest (an allusion to the kingdom of God?) (Mark 4:30-32)
 - The proud will be humbled, the lowly lifted up (James 4:6; Psa 138:6)

Discussion: Ezekiel 16-17

- **Thoughts about the parable**
 - It seems clear to me that this is looking forward to the Messiah.
 - His lineage will be protected by God and eventually bring about the kingdom of God.

*I am the LORD;
I have spoken, and I will perform it.*