

## **Ezekiel 16-17**

Good evening, Church.

It is wonderful to be here with you all tonight.

On Wednesday Evenings we are going through the Old Testament.

We started in Genesis 9 years ago and have made it to the Prophet Ezekiel's writings.

We will be in Ezekiel Chapters 16 and 17 tonight if you want to go there.

I have a few announcements before we get into the Word.

This Saturday is our Seasoned Saints gathering.

This is for those of you over 50...

This will be a potluck, so bring a dish to share.

Then, there will be a time of prayer, Bible Study, and worship...

I have also heard that games are played.

I still have not been to one... but in 5 years, I will make the age cut...

I want to remind you, too, that we will be having a Family Skate Night at the Holiday Skate Center.

This will be on March 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30 to 9pm...

You can show up and pay at the door.

Now, for you, Men, I wanted to mention that on Wednesday morning at 5:30 a.m., there is a prayer time in Grace Café...

On Thursday evenings, there is Bible Study at 6 pm in Grace Café.

Last thing, I just wanted to mention again our Israel trip next January... we need to start planning and getting numbers together.

So, if you are interested, please sign up for the interest list on our Website or app or call the office, and they can add you to the list.

With that said, let's pray, and we will get into the Word.

There is not much I remember from High School Literature Class... Hunchback of Notre Dame, Romeo and Juliet I do remember engaging with.

There was another book that got my attention, more so because the teacher allowed us to watch the Movie that went along with it, starring Audrey Hepburn... who had a pretty face, and that grabbed my attention as an adolescent young man.

The story was My Fair Lady, about a young street girl named Eliza Doolittle...

She was uncultured and very ill-mannered, and she was taken off the streets by a British phonetics teacher who took on the task of teaching Eliza the finer parts of culture with proper etiquette and finer speech.

Professor Higgins falls in love with his project, Eliza, who has blossomed into a fine young lady who can shine among society's upper class.

She went from selling flowers on the street to high society because Professor Higgins brought her in and put her under his tutelage.

The movie was a musical; the Book was a little difficult to read, especially in the early days of Eliza's story with her ruff street talk.

But, the storyline is much like the first 14 verses of Ezekiel Chapter 16...

God will take the Jews, once rough, rebellious, and ragged, off the streets, lift them up, and bless them.

He teaches them the good path, dignity, and Grace.

The Jews are portrayed as a lady that God takes to Himself as a bride and gives her a life that she could never imagine.

The main difference between the Jews' story and Eliza Doolittle is there is no happy ending.

The Jews, in the end, will break God's heart... they refused to be a faithful wife and instead became an unfaithful harlot.

Here, in Chapter 16, we get some of the most descriptive writings in the Bible.

And if you have ever gone through the devastating anguish of having an unfaithful spouse, you can feel the heartbreak of God as these things are said.

Look now, starting in verse 1...

### **God's Love for Jerusalem**

16:1 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.

God is speaking to Jerusalem as a city... Before Abraham came to the Land of Canaan, the Amorites, and the Hittites possessed the city, very powerful nations...

So, Jerusalem was, first of all, a city of the Amorites, and its mother was a Hittite.

They were wicked and pagan, with very perverted and sensual acts of worship.

Idolatry was rampant...

Jerusalem had an evil and pagan heritage.

Verse 4...

4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.

6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!'

When a child is born, the first thing is to cut the umbilical cord, and in ancient times, they would salt the child to stop the spread of infections.

The child was salted, washed, and wrapped in swaddling clothes.

But the picture here is a cruel one.

The child was born and unwanted and left alone to die.

The cord had not even been cut from the placenta.

Just left, on the side of the road, all bloody, cold, and abandoned.

So, God found the child and gave life to these people, to this nation...

And God commanded them to "Live..."

Then, in verse 7...

7 I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.

8 "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God.

This is speaking of the birth of a nation...

God rescued the abandoned child, resuscitated it, and gave life to it.

He watched over it and cared for the child through its early development.

Then, one day came when the child was to become a nation.

They had been enslaved in Egypt and terribly mistreated.

And the time had come for them to be rescued and made into a nation.

God brought them out of Egypt and made a Covenant with them that if they kept His Law, He would be their God, and they would be His people.

Remember the response of the people, the nation... when the Covenant was made...

Ex 19:8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.

Both parties agreed to the relationship... they became His bride in this imagery.

And God began to bless His bride... God covered her nakedness.

Then in verse 9...

9 "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12 And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14 Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord God.

God clothed this nation with beauty, intricate ornaments, and perfumes.

And as they served the Lord, He prospered them...

Under David and Solomon, the nation reached its pinnacle...

Everyone was talking about the great city of Jerusalem.

Remember what the Queen of Sheba told Solomon...

1 Kings 10:6-7 "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7

However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.

But it was about this peak in her history where she would go wild and become consumed with selfishness and lust...

She will betray her vows and break God's heart...

It is also recorded in Solomon's rule 1 Kings 11:1-2

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites — 2

from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

And so the heartbreak begins...

Verse 15 now...

### Jerusalem's Harlotry

15 "But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. 16 You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be.

Here, God has brought the nation to its peak regarding blessings.

He desired this loving relationship with them...

God wanted to show the world His love for them...

But instead of returning love and loyalty to God, they began trusting in themselves and their beauty as if they had come to this high place on their own.

This mindset, pride, and selfishness led to them breaking the marriage covenant.

They played the harlot... and turned to other gods, not even gods but idols.

Verse 17...

17 You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. 18 You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. 19 Also My food which I gave you — the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey which I fed you — you set it before them as sweet incense; and so it was," says the Lord God.

And what a tragic turn of events... They took the blessings of God and used them on their own lusts and used them to worship these false gods.

Today, it is the Church that is betrothed to God...

And it is our responsibility to remain loyal to Him.

But if we take this blessed life, given to us solely by the Grace of God, and use it for worldly gain, fulfilling our lusts...

We commit the same tragic sins as ancient Israel.

James writes...

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Verse 20...

20 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, 21 that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire? 22 And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your

youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

They turned to the gods and goddesses that enflamed their passions.

They had a form of sexual revolution in their worship of these false idols.

And because of this, there were many unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.

Because of this, people also worshiped Molech and offered their own children as sacrifices.

This was their way of getting rid of the child; today, there is abortion... and all of it is an abomination to the Lord.

God tells them that when they were found, they were like a helpless child... God could have easily discarded them as they were aborting their own children.

But God spared them.

But we see the progression here when sin was aroused...

They were no longer bearing fruit unto the Lord, became unprofitable to Him; then they ultimately turned away from Him to their selfish desires...

And turning their backs on God, they destroyed their children, God's children...

God tells them to remember where they came from.

Verse 23...

23 "Then it was so, after all your wickedness — 'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord God — 24 that you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. 25 You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. 26 You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.

Everywhere you turned in Jerusalem, there was an idol in every street, as idolatry swept through the city's life.

The imagery becomes extremely graphic here.

They made their beauty abominable and spread their legs to every passerby...

They were sleeping around with every new idol that came around.

They left the One True and Living God for these exotic and toxic idols.

What about us here tonight...

When we are lonely and desperate for companionship, do we wait on the Lord for the right person or run to the first person who gives us attention?

When we are desperate for cash... do we wait for the Lord's provision or turn to greedy and manipulative ways?

When a big problem comes our way... do we look for the quick fix and easy way or God's path?

Will we let God's Word lead our lives or do it ourselves?

Verse 27...

27 "Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.

28 You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. 29

Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

30 "How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord God, "seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.

It is pretty bad when God's people act in such a way that even the wicked and unbelievers blush and are ashamed.

God calls them a "brazen harlot."

We know that when a woman is known to sleep around with the men in her workplace, in her school, and her neighborhood, we tend to think, "Man, she

has no respect for herself; she just gives herself to anyone.”

And this is what God’s people were doing in Jerusalem, committing adultery with the gods of Egypt, Assyria, and even Babylon.

Jerusalem was sleeping around with everyone....

Verse 31...

### **Jerusalem's Adultery**

31 "You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. 32 You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband. 33 Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. 34 You are the opposite of other women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."

They were not likened to a regretful spouse caught falling into temptation.

They were not likened to a working prostitute who at least earns a wage doing what she does.

She was a woman driven by her raw lust, just wanting to be with anyone who would give her attention.

She did the opposite of a harlot and paid for her own lustful experiences.

Verse 35...

### **Jerusalem's Lovers Will Abuse Her**

35 'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord! 36 Thus says the Lord God: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, 37 surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, and all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your

nakedness. 38 And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. 39 I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

40 "They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. 41 They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers.

The penalty for adultery under the Mosaic Law was death by stoning.

And this is the judgment God has pronounced upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They will be stripped, shamed, and stoned.

As we have discussed, this is the tragic result of Babylon's invasion of Jerusalem.

It was a massacre and decimation of the Holy City.

The walls were torn down, the Temple destroyed, and most were killed, and the rest of the people were taken into captivity.

You realize, too, that in the Last Days, the Antichrist will draw this world to worship himself.

He will steal their hearts away from God...

The Book of Revelation tells us that God will pour His wrath on this world from heaven...

Interestingly, part of that judgment looks like God is stoning this earth for their treachery against Him...

Rev 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

God will use 100lb stones and hurl them at the earth...

Verse 42...

42 So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more.

Once the sin is dealt with, God does not harbor bitterness or anger.

If you have ever dealt with a lover scorned by past sins of their spouse, it seems to be all-consuming for them.

As unforgiveness and wrath spew the worst kind of words.

They are relentless in their desire to inflict pain, and many spend the rest of their lives in that bitter and twisted state of mind.

But not God. He does get angry, but He will not remain that way forever...

We have the choice to repent, or justice will be meted out...

Verse 43...

43 Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me with all these things, surely I

will also recompense your deeds on your own head," says the Lord God. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

### **More Wicked than Samaria and Sodom**

44 "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' 45 You are your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

46 "Your elder sister is Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, is Sodom and her daughters. 47 You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

Her sisters were Samaria and Sodom...

Samaria was known for idolatry, and Sodom for immorality.

And God makes it clear here that Jerusalem was not of His bloodline as her parents were pagan nations, and her sisters were evil cities.

They were found and adopted into a new family but ended up living like their biological family.

Today, no one is born into God's family.

We are all born into the fallen race of humanity.

To have God as our true Father today, we must be Born Again of the Spirit to come into His family.

And there will be evidence or fruit as to what family you belong to.

If you assess your life, which is driven by your desires, your first father, the deeds of the flesh will be evident.

But if you can assess and see the fruit of the Spirit in your life... then God is your Father...

Jerusalem had become more corrupt than even her family, Samaria, and immoral Sodom.

Look at verse 48 now...

48 "As I live," says the Lord God, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49 Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

We see here that the sin of Sodom went much deeper than just sexual sin.

They are accused of pride, selfishness, and idleness...

And they closed their eyes to the poor and needy.

God is appalled by these things, to the same degree as sexual sins.

We often look at a person's sexual struggle and look down at them like they were living in Sodom and Gomorrah.

But, we might have pride in our hearts... to God, we are just as wicked as those in sexual perversions...

You can condemn the sin of homosexuality, but close your eyes to the poor and needy and be just as bad in God's eyes.

Verse 51...

51 "Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. 52 You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

53 "When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then I will also bring back the captives of your captivity among them, 54 that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them. 55 When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to

their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state. 56 For your sister Sodom was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride, 57 before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere. 58 You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the Lord. 59 For thus says the Lord God: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

Samaria and Sodom are shown here to be less guilty than God's City, Jerusalem...

But we also see in these verses a promise that all three sisters will be restored one day.

But it is to Jerusalem's shame that she even needs to be restored.

God promises to deal with them all... then He promises next in verse 60...

### **An Everlasting Covenant**

60 "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

Even though they brought shame and despised the marriage covenant with God, He promised never to forget or forsake them.

God will remember the Covenant that He made with the Jews, and He will pardon their sin and give them a new heart.

They will ultimately be His people, and He will be their God.

Verse 61...

61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you.

62 And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, 63 that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I

provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord God."

God promises something that has yet to be seen in modern times: a political unity between these three sisters, Samaria, Sodom, and Jerusalem.

He also promises that in the New Covenant, atonement will be made...

And God and sinful man within this New Covenant are reconciled by Christ and His Sacrifice on the Cross.

Not only the Jews can be reconciled to God through Jesus, but all nations and people...

The New Covenant is much broader than just the Jewish Nation; it definitely includes them.

Now, as we move into Chapter 17... we have to understand that it is another story or parable depicting what is happening in Jerusalem at the time of the Prophet Ezekiel.

Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city and took King Jeconiah back to Babylon.

In his place, Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah on the throne and made him take an oath declaring his allegiance to Babylon.

Jeremiah had already preached that for the Jews to surrender to God's Will, they needed to surrender to the Babylonians.

King Zedekiah was warned not to resist Babylon, or it would result in the final destruction of Jerusalem.

So, the first 10 verses tell the story, and the following 11 give the interpretation...

Verse 1 now...

### **The Eagles and the Vine**

17:1 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God:

"A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar the highest branch.

That great eagle is Babylon... we see this in Jeremiah and Daniel's writings and interpretations.

The highest branch here is the Davidic King... the heir to the throne, King Jeconiah...

The pinions of the eagle clip off the top branch as Jeconiah is dethroned....

Verse 4...

4 He cropped off its topmost young twig And carried it to a land of trade; He set it in a city of merchants. 5 Then he took some of the seed of the land And planted it in a fertile field; He placed it by abundant waters And set it like a willow tree. 6 And it grew and became a spreading vine of low stature; Its branches turned toward him, But its roots were under it. So it became a vine, Brought forth branches, And put forth shoots.

The land of trade and merchants is Babylon...

We see the vineyard, known as Israel, was transplanted in a place of willows...

Willows grew on the banks of the Euphrates River in Babylon, where the Jews would be relocated.

They would live there in exile for 70 years.

We know the vine is a symbol for Israel, as this has been a theme for us as we just studied John Chapter 15 and Ezekiel Chapter 15...

Verse 7....

7 "But there was another great eagle with large wings and many feathers; And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, And stretched its branches toward him, From the garden terrace where it had been planted, That he might water it. 8 It was planted in good soil by many waters, To bring forth branches, bear fruit, And become a majestic vine."

The other great eagle seems to be another rival superpower in Ezekiel's time...

It makes sense that this would be Egypt in the West...

Because instead of being loyal to Babel, the vine, or the Jews under Zedekiah broke their oath and stretched out toward Egypt...

If Zedekiah had remained loyal and committed to God's Will and the Babylonians, the Jews would have prospered.

But because Zedekiah turned to Egypt for help, the vine would be uprooted.

Zedekiah was destroyed and humiliated because he refused to accept God's sentence for the nation's sin.

Because he broke his oath with Babylon, the Babylonian army was enraged against the Jewish people.

Interestingly, we can tell how repentant a person truly is by how they react to the consequences of their sin.

Do they accept the consequences, or do they make excuses and become resentful?

The excuse maker will always blame others for their hardships...

True healing comes from owning up to it and repenting.

Look now at verse 9...

9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord God:

"Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots, Cut off its fruit, And leave it to wither? All of its spring leaves will

wither, And no great power or many people Will be needed to pluck it up by its roots. 10 Behold, it is planted, Will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it? It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew."'''

God now interprets the parable...

Verse 11...

11 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 12 "Say now to the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these things mean?' Tell them, 'Indeed the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon. 13 And he took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him, and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, 14 that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand. 15 But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such things escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?'

16 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke — with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. 17 Nor will Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons. 18 Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these things, he shall not escape.'"

Egypt had promised to help and even took payment to protect Jerusalem...

But when it came time, Pharaoh would not come...

Verse 19...

19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: "As I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. 20 I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. 21 All his

fugitives with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken."

Since Zedekiah's oath to Nebuchadnezzar was God's Will for the nation, breaking that oath was like breaking a treaty with God.

Because of this, Jerusalem would fall, and the Jewish people would be scattered.

Verse 22... the scene shifts again...

### **Israel Exalted at Last(cf. Ezek. 31:1-9)**

22 Thus says the Lord God: "I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought down the high tree and exalted

the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it."

This is the promise of the Messiah that God would raise up the low tree, a tender branch, and make it into a great tree.

This could even be a foreshadowing of Matthew 13 and the parable of the mustard seed.

Jesus said.... **Matt 13:31-32**

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

God's Kingdom begins as a tiny seed but ultimately grows into a huge tree that even birds can nest in...

From man's assessment, God's Kingdom had an almost obscure and small beginning... starting with a humble carpenter from an unknown village of Nazareth in a lost corner of the world.

The movement began with misfits, fishermen, societal outcasts, traitors, and rebels.

Yet, the Jesus Revolution is still taking this world by storm, conquering lands one soul at a time....

And one day, His Kingdom will come in the fullest sense, encompassing the whole world.

So, even today, we are watching Ezekiel's parable here come to pass.

Jesus is that low tree that God exalted.

You know still today, this is how God works...

**Ps 147:6 The Lord lifts up the humble;**

And in **James 4:6**

**"God resists the proud,**

**But gives grace to the humble."**

Remember how God found newborn Jerusalem, abandoned in a field, and God said, "Live, yes, Live."

And that is what He would say to you who come humbly before Him, honestly before Him...

If you have not heard Him speak those words, do so tonight...

If you are Dead in your trespasses, Doomed by your life's failures, and Destined for an eternity apart from God...

Tonight, you can be made right...

For many of us here, God found us when the world left us for dead. He fed us and nurtured us...

Jesus has clothed us in His Righteousness and Made Us His Bride...

If you are lost tonight, come to Jesus and be found...

Come to Jesus and Live, and be His for all eternity.

Amen?

Let's pray...