

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 15

The destruction of Jerusalem is again prophesied of in this chapter, and is set forth under the simile of a vine tree, which, for its uselessness, is committed to the fire. The simile is in (Ezekiel 15:1-5); the application of it in (Ezekiel 15:6-8).

**Ver. 1.** *And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] The destruction of Jerusalem had been represented under various types and similes before, as of a siege, and a sharp razor; and here of a fruitless and useless vine, only fit for the fire; which was delivered out by a spirit of prophecy. The Targum calls it the word of prophecy, as usual.

**Ver. 2.** *Son of man, what is the vine tree more than any tree, &c.*] Or, “the wood of the vine than any wood”<sup>f192</sup>; it is not better than other wood; it is not so good as any other wood; nay, it is good for nothing. The fruit of the vine tree is good, but its wood is of no use: a vine tree, if it bears fruit, is valuable; but if it does not, it is of no account. The people of the Jews are often compared to a vine, who, while they brought forth good fruit, were in esteem; but, when they became like an empty and fruitless vine, were rejected as good for nothing, (~~808~~ Psalm 80:8 ~~211~~ Isaiah 5:1,2 ~~247~~ Jeremiah 2:22 ~~300~~ Hosea 10:1); they were originally no better than others; what they had were owing to the grace and goodness of God; and when they degenerated, they were the worst of all people:

*[or than] a branch which is among the trees of the forest?* a vine tree that bears fruit is better than a tree of the forest, or than a branch of one that is unfruitful; but a vine tree that does not bear fruit is not so good; because the wood of the one may be useful when the other is not; though the words may be better rendered, even “the branch [of a wild vine] which is among the trees of the forest”<sup>f193</sup>; and so it explains what vine tree is spoken of; not a fruitful one in the vineyards, but a wild and barren one in the forest. So Jarchi paraphrases the words,

“not of the vine in the vineyards, which bears fruit, speak I unto thee; but of the branch of the vine which grows in the forests;”

and so Kimchi,

“I do not ask thee of the vine tree which beareth fruit, for that is valuable; but of the branch (of the wild vine) which is among the trees of the forest, and is as they that do not bear fruit, concerning that I ask thee; for even it is not as the trees of the forest; for the trees of the forest, though they do not bear fruit, they are fit to do work of them, to make vessels of them, and to floor houses with them; but the wood of this vine is not so.”

**Ver. 3.** *Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?* &c.] The carpenter and joiner, the house or ship builder, are employed in; as to build houses of, make beams, rafters, floors, &c. build ships with, make masts of, &c. or any vessel or utensil for the use of man? it never is; it is not fit for any such purpose. Pliny<sup>f194</sup> speaks of some rarities made of the wood of vines, but not things of common use; and these not of any vines, but of some peculiar ones, favoured by the air and soil

*or will [men] take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?* it is not fit to make a peg of to hang a hat on; and much less for anything that requires more strength.

**Ver. 4.** *Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel,* That is; a vine tree when cut down, or a branch when cut off, it is good for nothing else; and that is the use it is generally put to; (see <sup><4856></sup>John 15:6); and this, it is suggested, would be the end of the Jewish nation; who were become by their sins like a wild vine, and were fit fuel for the fire of divine wrath:

*the fire devoureth both the ends of it;* the branch cast into it, and so quickly consumed. Kimchi explains this by (<sup><2992></sup>Isaiah 9:12); “the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they devour Israel with open mouth”; and Abendana of the ten tribes; but it seems only to design how soon the fire takes it; and how inevitable the consumption is when it is fired at both ends:

*and the midst of it is burnt:* presently; it being dried, and reduced to a brand by the heat of the fire at both ends: this Kimchi interprets of the city of Jerusalem, which was in the midst of the land:

*is it meet for [any] work?* no; for if it was not fit for any work when cut down, or cut off, much less when burnt in the fire.

**Ver. 5.** *Behold, when it was whole it was meet for no work, &c.*] Before it was cut into pieces, and east into the fire, it was not fit to make so much as a pin of to hang anything on; so Israel, when all together, before the ten tribes were carried captive, or the Jews before the captivity of Jeconiah, were useless and unfruitful, and to every good work reprobate:

*how much less shall it be meet yet for [any] work when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?* as its wood is good for nothing before it is burned, its ashes are useless after.

**Ver. 6.** *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] Now follows the application of the simile:

*as the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel;* to be burnt, as other trees of the forest are, and along with them:

*so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem;* to be destroyed along with other nations by the Chaldeans; they being no better, but as bad, if not worse, like wild vines among forest trees; and therefore must fare no better: this was the decree and determination of the Lord.

**Ver. 7.** *And I will set my face against them, &c.*] In wrath to destroy them; (see <sup>348</sup>Ezekiel 14:8); and

*they shall go out from [one] fire, and [another] fire shall devour them:* from one calamity to another; those that escaped the famine and pestilence in the city fell by the sword; and those that escaped famine, sword, and pestilence, were carried into captivity, and there passed from one hardship and affliction to another. The Targum is,

“I will execute my vengeance on them, because of the words of the law, which were given out of the midst of fire; they have transgressed, and people who are strong as fire shall consume them.”

Some, as Abendana observes, interpret the fire, out of which they went, of Sennacherib, out of whose hand the Lord delivered them; and the fire which devoured them, of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and it may be rendered, “they have gone out”<sup>f195</sup>, &c.

*and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord, when I set my face against them;* he is known by his judgments to be the Lord God omnipotent, holy, just, and true.

**Ver. 8.** *And I will make the land desolate, &c.]* The land of Judea uncultivated, men and beast being cut off; (see <sup><39415></sup>Ezekiel 14:15,21);

*because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord God;* acted a treacherous and perfidious part; apostatized from God, having committed idolatry, which was the cause of their ruin; and therefore it was not without a cause that the Lord did what he did, in it; (see <sup><39423></sup>Ezekiel 14:23).