

## **Ezekiel 17:1-24—The Parable Of The Vine And The Two Eagles**

### **Memory Verse**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Revision: Last week we saw in:

**Ezekiel 15**—We are only useful if we are fruitful. Remembering all that God has done for us leads to gratitude, which leads to obedience, which leads to a fruitful life which glorifies God.

**Ezekiel 16**—We saw a practical demonstration of, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). After God had spend a long time detailing the gross sexual sins, the persistent unfaithfulness, and degenerate heart of the nation of Judah, God says, “Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. ...I [will] provide you an atonement for all you have done.” says the Lord God.”

This was not the ending we were expecting. Ezekiel 17 is probably the darkest and most graphic description of just how degenerate our sinful hearts can become, yet this is where God chooses to freely forgive—all they need to do is repent—no sin is too great for God to forgive.

### **The Parable of the Vine and the Two Eagles (Ezekiel 17:1-24)**

“In the allegory of foundling [young girl] in the previous chapter Ezekiel was dealing with the spiritual and moral malady of Israel. In this message he was concerned with her political folly and wickedness.” (Morgan)

The parable of the two eagles and the vine is a picture of Israel’s treachery and broken promises both to God and to Babylon.

#### **Ezekiel 17:1-24 NKJV**

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, <sup>3</sup> and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God:

“A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, full of feathers of various colours, came to Lebanon and took from the cedar the highest branch. <sup>4</sup> He cropped off its topmost young twig and carried it to a land of trade; he set it in a city of merchants.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> “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.

<sup>8</sup> It was planted in good soil by many waters, to bring forth branches, bear fruit, and become a majestic vine.” ’

<sup>9</sup> “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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.” ’ ”

<sup>11</sup> Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>12</sup> “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. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand. <sup>15</sup> 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?’ ”

<sup>16</sup> ‘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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.’ ”

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.”

<sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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.”

### **Ezekiel 17:1-2 NKJV—*A riddle and a parable***

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel,

v 2 **Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable:** God is using all kinds of means to get the attention of the people. Ezekiel has acted out various messages, but here God gives him a new way of delivering his message, a “riddle-parable”. Being a riddle, it was like a puzzle and they would want to try to solve it. Being a parable, it was a story that illustrated spiritual and material truth.

“The manner in which plants and animals relate in the story, carrying on as if they were humans, would have amused any audience, and undoubtedly contributed to the prophet’s reputation as a ‘spinner of riddles’ (Ezekiel 20:49).” (Block)

v 2 **To the house of Israel:** The context shows that this refers to the kingdom of Judah because it refers to the kings of Judah. The time it represents is shown in the chart supplied for context ([click here for chart](#) or use link at the end of the sermon):

“The parable describes the events between the time of King Jehoiachin’s exile (597 bc) [598 bc on the chart—second attack], when also Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah) and the year Zedekiah revolted against Babylon, because he trusted in the promise of Egypt’s help (588 bc) [just before the third attack in 587].” (David Guzik)

**A quick review of world history relating to Israel at the time; the rise and fall of the world powers—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and the Medes and Persians**

It was the Assyrians who were the world power when the northern kingdom of Israel was defeated back in 722 bc, after the Assyrians besieged Samaria (the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel) for three years. However, as usually happens, God used other nations to discipline the Assyrians and they were finally destroyed as an empire in 605 bc at the battle of Carchemish.

“The Battle of Carchemish was fought about 605 BC between the armies of Egypt allied with the remnants of the army of the former Assyrian Empire against the armies of Babylonia, allied with the Medes, Persians, and Scythians. This was while Nebuchadnezzar was commander-in-chief and Nabopolassar was still king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar became king right after this battle.” (Wikipedia)

About 70 years later, Babylon was defeated by the Medes and Persians in 539 bc, three years before the Israeli or Jewish exiles went home (See chart).

**A summary of the kings of Judah around the time of the three Babylonian exiles/invasions** (dates are when they ruled as king):

- **Josiah (last godly king)** (640-609 bc) killed in the battle of Megiddo by the Egyptians as they were on their way to fight with the Assyrians against the emerging Babylonians.
- **Jehoahaz** (609 bc—three months) Made king in place of his father Josiah, but taken to Egypt by the Egyptians after three months, where he later died.
- **Jehoiakim** (609-598 bc—11 years) Made king by Pharaoh (his vassal, he had to pay tribute to Egypt). But then in 605 Babylon defeated the Egyptians and Jehoiakim then became Nebuchadnezzar’s vassal (Nebuchadnezzar let him remain as the puppet king as long as he was faithful to him); *It was at this time, 605 bc, that Nebuchadnezzar took the first lot of captives to Babylon (including Daniel).* However, after three years Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. He died of natural causes in Jerusalem.
- **Jehoiachin** (598-597 bc—3 months) The son of Jehoiakim rules for three months *before the second captivity/invasion in 597 bc*, when Nebuchadnezzar comes to lay siege to Jerusalem because his dad Jehoiakim had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.
- **Zedekiah** (597-586 bc—11 years) Put in power by Nebuchadnezzar after the second invasion, but he also eventually rebelled, looking to make an alliance with Egypt. Thus Nebuchadnezzar comes for the third time in 586 bc and completely destroys Jerusalem and the temple. *This treachery with the Egyptians during the time of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah is what Ezekiel is describing in his riddle-parable—Zedekiah going behind the back of Nebuchadnezzar and breaking his oath.*

The Last Five Kings of Judah		
1. Josiah Reigned 31 years (640-609 B.C.)—Killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco		
2. Jehoahaz (Shallum) Reigned 3 months (609 B.C.) Taken prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco	3. Jehoiakim (Eliakim) Reigned 11 years (609-598 B.C.) Died in Jerusalem	5. Zedekiah Reigned 11 years (597–586 B.C.) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar
4. Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) Reigned 3 months (December 9, 598 – March 16, 597 B.C.) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the 2nd wave of captives (with Ezekiel)		

### **Ezekiel 17:3-6 NKJV—*The first eagle, Babylon/Nebuchadnezzar***

**<sup>3</sup> and say, 'Thus says the Lord God:**

**"A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, full of feathers of various colours, came to Lebanon and took from the cedar the highest branch.**

**<sup>4</sup> He cropped off its topmost young twig and carried it to a land of trade; he set it in a city of merchants.**

**<sup>5</sup> 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.**

**<sup>6</sup> 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.**

Can you figure out the riddle? A large eagle comes to Lebanon (representing Jerusalem) and:

1. Takes the highest branch (person with the most authority—king Jehoiachin)
2. To a land of trade (Babylon)
3. Then he plants some of the seed of the land and plants it to become a low spreading vine (a subdued Judah, under the authority of the first eagle—Babylon/Nebuchadnezzar)
4. The branches of the vine were turned toward this eagle (Nebuchadnezzar), but their roots weren't—in their hearts they hated Nebuchadnezzar but were willing to pay him lip service (pretend to like him) to survive.
5. While they remained loyal and continued to pay tribute, they grew and prospered (see v 6)

### **Ezekiel 17:7-8 NKJV—*The second eagle, Egypt/pharaoh***

**<sup>7</sup> "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.**

**<sup>8</sup> It was planted in good soil by many waters, to bring forth branches, bear fruit, and become a majestic vine." '**

Now we come to the second eagle, representing Pharaoh or Egypt. What can we figure out here?

1. This eagle (Egypt) does nothing for the people, it's just there.
2. The vine bends both its roots and branches to this other eagle—they are willing to be loyal to this king/kingdom
3. It had already been planted by the first eagle (Babylon/Nebuchadnezzar), but was completely ungrateful.
4. The vine (Judah) wanted the second eagle (Egypt/Pharaoh) to water it:

"The vine did this in the hope that the second eagle would care for the vine, protect it, and give it the right conditions for growth and prosperity—which *it already had under the first eagle*. The hoped for result was that it would **become a majestic vine.**" (David Guzik)

"In the absence of any explanation for the vine's action, the audience is left to reflect on the vine's ingratitude and stupidity." (Block)

**Application: Psalm 1**—We need our roots to go deep into the Word of God if we are to be able to survive the storms of life, and not only survive, but continue to bear fruit. If we sink our roots into anything else, we too will be vulnerable to the storms.

## Ezekiel 17:9-10 NKJV—*What happens to the vine?*

<sup>9</sup> “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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.” ’ ”

What do you think should happen to the vine (Israel)? (v 9)

1. Will it thrive if it has been unfaithful and disloyal? No way.
2. The first eagle (Nebuchadnezzar) pull up its roots, destroy its fruit, and leave it to wither. (v 9)
3. No much will be required to pull it up, because the roots didn’t go down deep into the soil. Instead, they were growing towards the second eagle (Egypt/Pharaoh). (v 9)
4. The second eagle will not be able to protect it from the coming storm (the third Babylonian invasion). (v 9)

## The meaning and application of the parable

### Ezekiel 17:11-15 NKJV—*The meaning of the parable of the two eagles*

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>12</sup> “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. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand. <sup>15</sup> 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?’

God here explains what the parable means:

- The first, *great eagle* represented **the king of Babylon**. (v 12)
- Lebanon represented **Jerusalem**. (v 12)
- The highest branch of the cedar represented Judah’s **king (Jehoiachin) and princes**. (v 12)
- The seeds and the vine represented **the king’s offspring (Zedekiah)**. (v 13)
- The first eagle **made a covenant** with Zedekiah and **put him under oath**. (v 13)
- The first eagle **took away the mighty of the land**, not only King Jehoiachin, but also other notable men such as Daniel and his companions. He did this to keep Judah **low**, and so that Zedekiah would keep **his covenant**. (v 13)
- The king of Babylon took **them with him to Babylon**, which was called the *city of merchants*. (v 12)
- Just as the vine stretched out its roots and branches toward the second eagle, so Zedekiah **rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt**, which represented the second eagle. Zedekiah hoped for **horses and many people** from Egypt. (adapted from David Guzik)

“Regarding the second eagle of Ezekiel 17:7: “This was Egypt, specifically Pharaoh Hophra who came to the throne of Egypt in 588 b.c. To him Zedekiah foolishly looked for help to throw off the Babylonian yoke after he had been befriended by Nebuchadnezzar.” (Feinberg)

v 15 **Will he prosper? Will he who does such things escape?** “When the vine in the parable turned to the second eagle, it had great hope of life and vitality (Ezekiel 17:8). These rhetorical questions reminded all that the vine would find no help from the second eagle, and Zedekiah would find no help from Egypt.” (David Guzik)

**Application: The world will never be able to help you in the way you really need help—it only offers bandaids, not permanent solutions (see Jeremiah 6:14)**

Egypt in the bible is a picture or type of the world. Many times Israel depended on Egypt, and many times they were let down. The world promises everything, but gives nothing. See v 17.

2 Kings 18:21 and Isaiah 36:6 NKJV

Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

Jeremiah 6:14 NKJV

They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly,  
Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’  
When there is no peace.

v 15 **Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?** Many times in Scripture, God commands us to keep our vows, and not be like Zedekiah, who was a covenant or promise breaker. We need to be faithful to keep our word, even to our own hurt or detriment.

Psalms 15:4 NKJV

In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honours **those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change;**

“Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel accused him of disloyalty, and urged submission to Babylon again (Jeremiah 37:6–10; 38:17–23).” (Wright)

“Zedekiah was surrounded by favourable conditions for his reign, represented in the parable by the fruitful soil, the many waters and the planting as a willow tree (Isa. 44:4). The benevolent attitude of Nebuchadnezzar helped Zedekiah to prosper in his rule. If he had remained faithful to his oath of fealty to Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom of Judah could have continued to prosper as a tributary kingdom.” (Feinberg)

**Ezekiel 17:16-18—How God saw Zedekiah**

**‘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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.’ ”**

v 16 **With him in the midst of Babylon he shall die:** Zedekiah did suffer because of his infidelity. He had his eyes put out, but only after watching his sons die right in front of him (2 Kings 25:7). He then remained in Babylon until his death.

v 17 **Nor will Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company do anything in the war:** Pharaoh’s army looked good and promised a lot, but could achieve nothing—a great picture of the world. Be careful about getting worldly counselling; it sounds good, but in the long run, it won’t help your walk with God (see application above).

v 18 **Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant..., he shall not escape:** When we seek our own way instead of God's way, we will always suffer for it—usually just the practical consequences of sin.

**Ezekiel 17:19-21 NKJV—God's judgement of Zedekiah**

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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.”

v 19 **My oath which he despised:** “God prophetically said of Zedekiah, **My oath which he despised**. God regarded it not only as an oath to Nebuchadnezzar, but to Him also. “The implications of this attitude are far-reaching. It indicates that agreements entered into and obligations incurred by worshippers of God are as binding as if they had been made with God in person.” (Taylor)

v 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:** This is the end for the nation of Judah. God's people still remain, but not in their homeland, and not with their own king.

“As plainly as he could declare it, Ezekiel showed that Judah's political disaster was traceable to moral weakness and deceit. When once the hand was given in token of agreement, that word should have been all the bond needed.” (Feinberg)

**Ezekiel 17:22-24 NKJV—The hope of future restoration, under the Messiah**

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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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.”

v 22 **“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:** Again, God's grace comes to the rescue. The southern kingdom of Judah, just like the northern kingdom, had failed completely. Everything that they had tried to do had failed. They had tried to do things the world's way, and had therefore ended up destroying themselves. God lets them have their way, let's them destroy themselves, lets them be completely ungrateful and discontent with the blessings that He gave them, and then at the end, promises a new kingdom, ruled by none other than the Messiah from Jerusalem.

v 22 **A tender one:** “The ‘tender one’ is the Messiah, the Son of David (see Isaiah 11:1; 53:2; Jeremiah 23:5–6; 33:15; Zechariah 6:12; Rev. 22:16).” (Feinberg)

v 22 **A high and prominent mountain:** “The ‘high mountain’ Ezekiel wrote about is probably Mount Zion, where Messiah will reign over His people.” (Wiersbe)

v 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:** This is another way of describing the Millennial kingdom, the 1,000 year rule and reign of Jesus on earth. Jesus' kingdom will be the end of all human government (see Daniel 2:34-35), with Jesus ruling from Jerusalem. Another similar verse is:

Isaiah 11:1 NLT paraphrase

Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.

The people would have thought of this situation as a tragedy; *the line of kings had ended*. But no, the Messiah, a descendant of king David, will someday come back to set up His own kingdom, and we will rule and reign with Him! The nation seemed to be dead, but God, in His time, would bring it back to life.

v 23 **I will plant it:** Where man fails, God succeeds.

“After the failure of the two great eagles to make a success of establishing the state of Israel under their extensive and powerful patronage, God says, *I myself* (emphatic) *will plant it* upon a high mountain where it will grow and be conspicuous and attract the birds of the air to shelter under its protection.” (Taylor)

v 23 **Under it will dwell birds of every sort:** “All nations, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, shall build, breed, and multiply under the kingdom of Christ; it shall be no more confined to the Jews, but extend to the Gentiles also. There they shall find peace and safety; and this repeated confirms the certainty of the promise.” (Poole)

v 24 **All the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree:**

“God is governing, and there is no escape from Him. Eagles, and vines, are under His control. Happy are they who frame their policies by consulting Him, and order their ways in fear.” (Morgan)

“The chapter began with judgment and punishment; it ends with mercy and grace. The dethroned and blind Zedekiah is overshadowed by God's King who is full of power and glory. Kingdoms are but the lengthened shadows of kings.” (Feinberg)

### **Application: Without Christ I can do nothing**

John 15:5 NKJV

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.**

When will we learn? Look at the effort that the leaders of Judah went to to save their nation—but all to no avail—*if only they had done things God's way, and not their own way!*

Our sinful nature can't please God, and following the desires of our sinful nature only leads to death (see Romans 8:7). We must be led by the Spirit, only then will we bear fruit for eternity.



**Application: Be grateful—“In everything give thanks”, is the opposite of being ungrateful and unthankful**

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

We need to learn the lesson of being content. God would have allowed Israel to survive as a nation in their homeland—that was His will, His command.

Jeremiah 38:17-18 NLT paraphrase

Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “This is what the Lord God of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you surrender to the Babylonian officers, you and your family will live, and the city will not be burned down. <sup>18</sup> But if you refuse to surrender, you will not escape! This city will be handed over to the Babylonians, and they will burn it to the ground.’”

If only Zedekiah had been content to be a vassal of king Nebuchadnezzar, then he could have lived on as a humble vine, bearing fruit and well looked after. But no, he, and the other princes, all wanted to be in charge again, to not be subservient to anyone. We can learn a lesson here. It’s never nice to be subservient to a foreign power, having to pay tribute and tow the line, but that’s what was best for them—God had told them that many times. As we have learned from today, it’s always better to be in the will of God. God put the Babylonians in charge. God was organising things to get the best possible outcome. God knows what He’s doing. If I really believe this, then I will be content in any situation. Consider Paul:

Philippians 4:10-13 NLT paraphrase

How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn’t have the chance to help me. <sup>11</sup> Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. <sup>12</sup> I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. **I have learned the secret of living in every situation**, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. <sup>13</sup> **For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.**

Philippians 4:11-13 AMP

<sup>11</sup> Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, **for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am.**

<sup>12</sup> I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. **I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation**, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want.

<sup>13</sup> **I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency].**

Hebrews 13:5-6 AMP

Let your **character or moral disposition** be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; for He [God] Himself has said, **I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!] [Josh. 1:5.]**

6 So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, **The Lord is my Helper**; I will not be seized with alarm [I will not fear or dread or be terrified]. What can man do to me? [Ps. 27:1; 118:6.]

1 Timothy 6:6-9 AMP

6 [And it is, indeed, a source of immense profit, for] godliness accompanied with contentment (that contentment which is a sense of inward sufficiency) is great and abundant gain.

7 For we brought nothing into the world, and obviously we cannot take anything out of the world;

8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content (satisfied).

9 But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish (useless, godless) and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction and miserable perishing.

It's not just money, but also other desires that we have—I won't be happy or content or satisfied: unless I get... or I watch... or I experience... or I get married, or I have one child, then two..., etc. Truly, if we can just learn to trust God that whatever we have at any given moment is all we need for that moment, then we are 99% there on our mission to overcome sin, especially habitual sin. Think about it, any addiction is really just a lack of contentment. We tell ourselves that we need this thing to feel good, to be happy. It's a lie—God has already given us everything we need to be completely fulfilled and content—if we would receive them.

Philippians 4:19 AMP

And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every **need [not want]** according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

[Link for Chart \(or copy and past address below into browser\):](https://www.bible.ca/maps/bible-archeology-maps-timeline-chronology-babylonian-captivity-70-years-shiloh-70-weeks-sabbaths-490-years-nebuchadnezzar-daniel-darius-cyrus-persia-605-536bc.jpg)

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