



Handout for week of 6/11/18 Mk. 4: 26-34 & Ezek. 17:22-24

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Ezek. 17: 22 Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Moreover I will take, even I, of the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent; 23 in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a stately cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing, in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I HaShem 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 HaShem have spoken and have done it.'

### COMMENTARY:

The promise to which Ezekiel refers in 17:22 is the promise to revive the fallen Davidic empire back on Israelite soil after the exile carried out by Nebuchadnezzar. The messianic imagery of a “tender shoot” (Er<sup>^</sup>) in Ezekiel 17:22 is similar to Isaiah’s messianic designations of a young shoot (11:1, and Jeremiah’s and Zechariah’s “branch” Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12).<sup>3</sup> It is more likely that En<sup>^</sup> connotes humble origin rather than some aspect of moral weakness which does not fit the context. The scope of the rule of this figure will be universal. Bloch argues that the reference to (“every bird, every winged thing”) in v. 23 is not symbolic of the nations, but “as in 31:6-7 their presence in such vast numbers merely illustrates the tree’s expansiveness.” Alexander, on the other hand, suggests on the basis of passages like Dan 4:17, 32; 34-37 and Matt 13:31-32 that they are symbolic of the nations. ...As Cooke says, ““all the trees of the field’... they stand for the heathen in contrast to Israel. The kingdom of the future will tower over other kingdoms, as the cedar over other trees. The heathen shall be convinced of Jahveh’s divinity and power by the change in Israel’s fortunes.” Thus we have in these verses a universalism wherein the “tender shoot” from the revived house of David will rule over the nations. Even if the universalism is not explicit, as some would argue, it is nonetheless an easy development out of the language employed here.