

Ezekiel Chapter 19

This lamentation (in verse 1), is the first of five laments found in the book. The lament was well known in the ancient Near East as a complimentary song on behalf of a deceased person. Often it is used in the Old Testament in a sarcastic sense. The imagery in the particular lament, is a vivid summary of Israel's history relative to Ezekiel's day. The lioness is the nation and her whelps are her kings. One of her whelps who became a young lion was Jehoahaz who succeeded the ill fated Josiah.

Jehoahaz reigned only three months when they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt, a reference to his deportation to Egypt by Pharaoh-nechoh II, where Jehoahaz died in humiliation. Another of her whelps who became a young lion is a reference to Jehoiachin, who reigned between Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, is not mentioned. Like Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin ruled only three months before he was deported, this time to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The statement that he laid waste their cities refers to the terrifying reign of Jehoiachin.

Ezekiel 19:1 "Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,"

"Lamentation" is a dirge, or the beating of one's breast in sorrow. This is saying then, be sorrowful for the princes of Israel. The king was the true downfall of the country. They had really evil men serving as king. As the king goes, so goes the nation. These kings were idolaters. They led their people into idolatry.

The second book of Kings tells of the downfall of the leaders of this country. Most of the kings and the princes were self-centered men who would not worship God. They were vicious killers in some cases. They treated Jeremiah and the other true prophets with very little respect. A king should be a leader of his people. An evil king leads them to destruction.

Ezekiel 19:2 "And say, What [is] thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions."

They were so evil; they were even thought to be the offspring of a lioness. The lions she lay with were the heathen kings around her. It is very true, that we become like those we associate with. She had taken up the evil false worship of these heathen kingdoms around her. The "her" here, is Israel. God had warned them over and over, to stay separate. They were not to intermarry with the heathens. They did not listen.

This scripture is referring to Judah as the "lioness" (just as in verse 10), she is the vine. Her cubs or whelps symbolize kings who were descendants of David exposed to the corrupting influences of heathen kings or young lions.

Ezekiel 19:3 "And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men."

This refers to Jehoahaz who ruled in 609 B.C. and was deposed by Egypt's Pharaoh Necho after reigning only 3 months.

2 Kings 23:31-32 "Jehoahaz [was] twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name [was] Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah." "And he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."

He was not the only one who was evil, but is probably, the one intended here. Zedekiah was evil also, but he was put into office by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian.

Ezekiel 19:4 "The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt."

2 Kings 23:33-34 "And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold." "And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there."

Ezekiel 19:5 "Now when she saw that she had waited, [and] her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, [and] made him a young lion."

We read in 2nd Kings, above, that Jehoiachin took the place of Jehoahaz, so this is the second whelp, spoken of here.

Jehoiachin (who in 597 B.C.), was carried to Babylon in a cage (as in verse 9). Though he reigned only 3 months, he was oppressive and unjust. God used the pagan nations of Egypt and Babylon to judge these wicked kings. The Babylonians kept Jehoiachin imprisoned for 37 years, releasing him at the age of 55.

Ezekiel 19:6 "And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, [and] devoured men."

Jehoiachin did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He was very evil. Jehoiakim reigned just before Jehoiachin. He was not the whelp, however.

Ezekiel 19:7 "And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring."

He was a very destructive king. He stripped the people of what little they had. He had no sympathy for even the widows. He was a selfish, greedy man. He was made king over the people to help them, and instead, he took everything they had. Perhaps some of the evil he did was because he was so young when he began to reign at the age of 18. The king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

Ezekiel 19:8 "Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit."

The Babylonians were not alone in their siege. This is possibly speaking of them. He actually gave himself up to the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 24:12 "And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign."

Ezekiel 19:9 "And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel."

This speaks of the 36 years he was in captivity in Babylon. He never returned to Israel. The "holds" are speaking of the prison where he was kept.

Ezekiel 19:10 "Thy mother [is] like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters."

The mother here, is speaking of the mother of all Israel. This is possibly, speaking more specifically to Judah.

They had multiplied to great numbers. They were always spoken of as the vine, or vineyard with strong power and eminence. They were like a vine near the water which grew profusely and produced much fruit. God had blessed them with a land of milk and honey. They had prospered and multiplied.

Ezekiel 19:11 "And she had strong rods for the scepters of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches."

Israel, in the past, had very strong kings, such as David and Solomon. Now, the kings had been drastically degraded. Israel, and more specifically Jerusalem, had risen to the very heights of heaven, and now have fallen. The wonderful heritage they had, did not stop God from pouring out His wrath upon them for their worship of false gods.

Ezekiel 19:12 "But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them."

This is speaking of the terrible siege on Jerusalem and Judah. The land, that had been so great, had now fallen. The fury of God's jealousy was what really brought the fall. God used Babylon to bring the fall, but it was God who really did it. They were killed with the sword, pestilence, and famine. Those who did not die were taken captive to Babylon. Their fall was great, because their sins were great. She no longer had the strong rod. The city was burned.

Ezekiel 19:13 "And now she [is] planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground."

The banishment is what is spoken of here. They were driven out. Most were taken captive in a spiritually barren land.

Ezekiel 19:14 "And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, [which] hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod [to be] a scepter to rule. This [is] a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

We see from this verse that the "rod" is the king or ruler. The blame for the catastrophe that came to Judah is laid on one ruler, King Zedekiah who was responsible for the burning of Jerusalem because of his treachery. The house of David ended in shame and, for nearly 2600 years since, Israel has had no king of David's line. When Messiah came, they rejected Him and preferred Caesar. Messiah still became their Savior and will return as their King.

This is very much like a funeral service. Jerusalem is gone. Their strength is gone. Their God has left. They are hungry and thirsty in the physical, as well as the spiritual. They can no more rule, they are ruled over. This is speaking of the ruin of the nation, the city of God, and the people. What had been so proud is gone.

Ezekiel Chapter 19 Questions

1. Take thou up a _____ for the princes of Israel.
2. What is a "lamentation"?
3. Who was the true downfall of the country?
4. Where do we read of this downfall?
5. How had they treated the prophets?
6. What is the mother called in verse 2?
7. What caused them to be called the offspring of a lioness?
8. Who is this lioness?
9. Who is the whelp of verse 3?
10. How old was he, when he began to reign?
11. What was his mother's name
12. What kind of a king was he?

13. Where did Jehoahaz die?
14. Who was the second whelp?
15. How many years did he spend in captivity?
16. Jehoiachin did what was _____ in the sight of the Lord.
17. How old was he, when he began to reign?
18. What year of his reign was he captured?
19. Who surrendered with Jehoiachin?
20. Who was the vine, or vineyard?
21. Who were two of Israel's very strong kings of the past?
22. Why did God pour His wrath out on them?
23. How were some of the ways they were killed?
24. What is spoken of in verse 13?
25. Verse 14 is very much like a _____ service.