

## **Review**

We have come to chapter nineteen in our study of Ezekiel.

### **19:1 A Lamentation For The Princes Of Israel**

A lamentation is a dirge, a song of grief that is sad, slow, and mournful. Lamentations were typically sung at funerals. This funeral song was going to be sung for the princes of Israel

### **19:2-9 The Lions**

The first part of the lamentation was a story about a lioness. This lioness was the nation of Israel. The lioness had cubs who grew up to be strong young lions, but were ultimately captured.

The first young lion (Eze. 19:3-4) was taken to Egypt. We assume that this cub refers to King Jehoahaz, who was taken captive to Egypt (2Kings 23:31-34).

The second young lion (Eze. 19:5-9) was taken to the king of Babylon. This sounds like King Jehoiachin, who was taken captive to Babylon (2Kings 24:15).

### **19:10-14 The Vineyard's Branches**

The second part of the lamentation compared mother Israel to a vine. This time, instead of cubs, the offspring are branches. The offspring of Israel became prideful and haughty, exalting themselves above the clouds, and so God plucked them in His fury, and cast them to the ground.

He has transplanted them to Babylon, a place where they will survive, but not thrive.

Although the imagery seems to speak of the Jews as a whole, it is interesting to note the parallel with the downfall of the king who was sitting on the throne at the time of Ezekiel's prophecy. Just as the lion cubs represented specific kings, many Bible commentators believe that King Zedekiah - who would soon prove to be Judah's final king - is being spoken of specifically here.

He had been appointed as king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, the

king of Babylon. And God had told Zedekiah to submit to him. Through Jeremiah, He said,

**Jer. 27:6** “Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant...

**Jer. 27:8** “It will be, that the nation or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine and with pestilence,” declares the LORD, “until I have destroyed it by his hand.

**Jer. 27:11** “But the nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let remain on its land,” declares the LORD...

But instead of submitting to Nebuchadnezzar as God had commanded, Zedekiah had rebelled (2Kings 24:20) in his pride. This was about to prompt the final destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, and Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon to die, blinded and defeated (2Kings 25:6-7).

The vine would be plucked in fury, so that there would be no more strength, that there would be no more scepter to rule.

### **20:1-3 I Will Not Be Inquired Of By You**

Back in chapter 14, some of the elders of Israel had come to Ezekiel to consult God. But the Lord told Ezekiel,

**Ezek. 14:3** “...these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?”

He then warned that anyone who did not remove the idols from their heart before consulting God would be cut off. He would die.

Now, the elders come again to Ezekiel. Have they repented of their idolatry? Have they made their hearts right before God? Not at all. And God tells them through Ezekiel, "I will not be inquired of by you."

### **20:4-10 Bringing Israel Out Of Egypt**

God is sick and tired of the continual sin of the Jews. From the time He selected them as His chosen people, they have been in rebellion. And He begins to review for these elders exactly what He has endured over the generations.

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and had fallen into the Egyptians' idolatry. God told them to rid themselves of their idols, but they did not. He wanted to pour out His wrath on them for their rebellion, but He knew that it would be detrimental to His own name's reputation. The nations would profane His name, for not saving His people. Instead of smiting the Jews, He smote the gods of the Egyptians (Num. 33:4), and - in spite of their idolatry - He delivered the Jews from their bondage in Egypt.

### **20:11-26 Israel In The Wilderness**

God brought the Jews into the wilderness, and gave them His Law. But they rebelled against Him by creating a golden calf, an idol to worship. They repeatedly rejected the Law which had been given through Moses. They kept the idols in their hearts and would not repent of their idolatry. That generation died in the wilderness, not entering into the land which God had promised to bring the Jews. And so He tried with the next generation, the children of those He'd led out of Egypt. But they also rebelled against Him and practiced idolatry.

Again, God wanted to destroy them, but did not because the nations would say, "Their god wasn't powerful enough to save them." And so for the sake of His name, He spared them again.

### **20:27-31 Israel's Idolatry In The Land**

When God finally brought the Jews into the Promised Land, they looked at the high hills and leafy trees and thought that it was the perfect place to practice their idolatry. And now God is saying to the generation that was taken out of the land in exile, "Do you really expect that if you continue doing the same thing that every one of your past generations has done that I will be inquired of by you? Don't you think that I'll judge you the same as I did the previous generations if you keep practic-

ing the idolatry of the previous generations?"

### **20:32-33 I Will Be King Over You**

Israel has wanted to be like the other nations for a long time. In Egypt, they wanted to be like the Egyptians, with their false gods. Then, in the Promised Land, they wanted to be like the nations around them, with their false gods. Then, they decided that they wanted a king over them, like the nations around them (1Sam. 8:5). But here, God tells them that - in spite of their continual rebellion - He will be king over them.

### **20:34-38 I Will Make You Pass Under The Rod**

God says that a day is coming when He will call the Jews out into the wilderness for a face-to-face judgment. There they will pass under the rod.

What does "passing under the rod" mean? Most people know that the shepherd's rod was used for discipline. But "passing under the rod" was not a disciplinary position. In fact, it was a way for the shepherd to examine the sheep individually. The book of Leviticus describes passing under the rod as the shepherd's process of counting sheep:

**Lev. 27:32 'For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.**

This seems to be the same thing that Jeremiah talks about:

**Jer. 33:13 "...the flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who numbers them," says the LORD.**

It is also possible that this refers to a wider application, that of the shepherd evaluating or examining his sheep as they passed under the rod.

Not all of them will make it through. God promises to purge the rebels and the transgressors from them at that time. They will not survive this judgment and will not enter into Israel for the Millennial Kingdom.

### **20:39-44 Serving Me And Loathing Yourselfes**

When God brings those true Israelites into the land, they will serve Him on the holy mountain. But they will not forget the rebellion that they practiced against God in former times. They will remember and be ashamed.

### **20:45-48 Sign Of The Forest Fire**

This is a bit cryptic on first reading. Why is Ezekiel told to turn his face toward Teman? Teman was in the Negev, at the south end of Judah. Although the Negev is an arid desert today, there were forests in biblical times. God describes the impending judgment as a forest fire, consuming every tree, from south to north.

### **20:49 Is He Not Just Speaking Parables?**

Ezekiel is distraught. As he brings the Word of the Lord to the elders who have come to inquire of the Lord, they are discounting what he's saying. They're saying, "Aw, he's only speaking parables. This doesn't mean anything. This isn't from God."

But it was very much from God. Next week, we will see God repeat the same truth in a far more brutal and plain manner.