

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES
Part VIII: God's Sympathy For Those Who Suffer From Sin's Judgments
(Ezekiel 18:31-19:14)

I. Introduction

- A. Perhaps one of the greatest crises to face in life as a believer is the discipline of Almighty God. The fact that it comes is itself a shock, let alone the personal discouragement of self esteem problems that accompany such failure.
- B. How can one deal with this pain and survive to be renewed?
- C. A fascinating study of God's view of those who suffer from His judgments is supplied in Ezekiel's prophecy, and many lessons are to be drawn from it.

II. God's Sympathy For Those Who Suffer From His Judgments, Ezekiel 18:31-19:14.

- A. God called the people of Israel to turn from national sins as He had no pleasure in passing judgment upon the nation, Ezekiel 18:31-32.
- B. Demonstrating proof of His compassion, God commanded Ezekiel to take up a lamentation for the pains that His past judgments had inflicted, Ez. 19:1.
- C. That lamentation, a wailing song for the fallen princes of Israel, picture an intimate, vulnerable viewpoint of human suffering on God's part, Ez. 19:2-14c:
 - 1. Using poetic imagery for effect, God likened Israel as a powerful lioness who raised her whelps, the kings of Israel, 19:2.
 - 2. The first whelp was brought up to be a powerful male lion only to be snagged and taken by nose hooks into captivity in Egypt, v. 3-4 (Bib. Know. Com., O.T., p. 1262). This pictured the taking of Jehoahaz, prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh-nechoh in 609 B.C., Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, ftn. to Ez. 19:3-4.
 - 3. The second whelp came along to become a powerful lion, but it also was taken in captivity into Babylon, v. 5-9. This lion represented Jehoiachin, who was deposed with nose hooks by Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C., Ibid., ftn. to Ez. 19:5-9 (Ibid., B.K.C., O.T.).
 - 4. Finally, Judah is treated like a vine which was uprooted from a marvelous orchard and transplanted in dry, unfruitful wilderness ground where it could not bear fruit, Ez. 19:10-13. This pictured the removal of Judah to Babylon in 586 B.C. in Zedekiah's rebellion, Ibid., ftn. to Ez. 19:10-14. As the vine could no longer bear fruit, no additional kings would rise again from Judah. The hope for the fulfillment of the Davidic Kingdom rests in the coming Messiah, the sprout of Jesse.
 - 5. Summary: The poignant grief of seeing men likened to royal male lions being led as dumb animals with hooks through the nose; the tragedy of a luxuriant, high-bred grapevine being taken out of a cultivated ground to be planted in a wilderness to bear no fruit--these pictures convey the sense of **loss** that Israel and Judah felt. They reveal a **divine awareness** of that sense of loss as well!!
- D. Accordingly, God assigns this lamentation for those who grieved the national loss through judgment, 14d.

Lesson: *God clearly understands the human suffering that people have when His judgment for sin is administered. This is why He takes no pleasure in judgment.*

Applications: *(1) If we are facing troubles because we were raised in families where the parents were in deep sin (like substance, verbal, or physical abuses) and suffered for it, God is aware of our pain and He wants to remove it. Our part is to avail ourselves of His grace and escape the sins of our forefathers, cf. Ez. 18:31-32 with 18:14-17. (2) If we used to be on "top" in God's blessing but have suffered failure and defeat, be assured that God will restore us to blessing if we repent, Ez. 18: 21-23. God isn't any more happy that we are uncomfortable in discipline than He is to have to administer it to us. (3) Feel free to share our grief and sense of loss over sin with the Lord, for He understands as is proved by the command to write a lamentation in Ez. 19:1,14d. Let Him lead us unto a solution and a state of comfort.*