

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part XX: God's Lamentation Over Israel's Decline Due To Her Wicked Kings

(Ezekiel 19:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The leaders of God's people have a great responsibility to trust and obey the Lord that He might bless their oversight and edify the people of the Lord.
- B. Ezekiel 19:1-14 contains a lament over Judah's three kings who went into captivity due to their sin and the respective harm that resulted for God's people. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1262). We thus view this passage for our insight and direction that we as leaders and God's people might enjoy His blessing:

II. God's Lamentation Over Israel's Decline Due To Her Wicked Kings, Ezekiel 19:1-14.

- A. The Lord told Ezekiel to lament for Israel's "leaders, rulers," (*nasi*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 837; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 601), in this case, three of her rulers who *functioned* as **kings**, Ezek. 19:1.
- B. That lament was to grieve over the rulers who went into captivity for sin to the harm of the nation Israel, *Ibid.*
- C. In this lament, the nation Israel is **initially** likened to a lioness that gave birth to cubs who grew up to be lions, representing Davidic kings, and Israel is **later** likened to a once fruitful vine with strong branches that ends up being uprooted with no strong branch, that is, with no one even fit and able to be her ruler, *Ibid.*, p. 1262-1263.
- D. The lament is presented in Ezekiel 19:2-14 as follows:
 1. God lamented over the fall of "cub" Davidic king Jehoahaz to Egyptian captivity for idolatry, Ez. 19:2-4:
 - a. Godly king Josiah's son king Jehoahaz chose not to follow the Lord like his father, but rather to revert back to the idolatries of earlier ancestors in the Davidic line, 2 Kings 23:30-32.
 - b. God thus punished him by sending him into Egyptian captivity, *Ibid.*, p. 1262; 2 Kings 23:32.
 2. God then lamented over the fall of "cub" Davidic king Jehoiachin to Babylonian Captivity for wickedly brutalizing his subjects in Judah, *Ibid.*, p. 1262-1263; Ezekiel 19:5-9:
 - a. Jehoiachin brutally mistreated his subjects in Judah when he rose to reign over them, Ezek. 19:5-7.
 - b. God accordingly punished him, giving him over to be taken captive to Babylon, Ezekiel 19:8-9.
 3. Shifting from viewing the nation as a lioness who produced Davidic kings to viewing her as a fruitful vine with a non-davidic ruler, God lamented over the fall of "branch" Zedekiah that Israel produced, for he and the people forgot to view God as their Source of blessing, Ezekiel 19:10-14; *Ibid.*, p. 1263:
 - a. Though the nation of Israel had once been productive and produced many strong "branches" or men capable of leading the nation, it was uprooted in the fury of the Babylonian invasion and taken into Babylonian Captivity where it languished as a nation, bereft of its power, Ezekiel 19:10-14.
 - b. The "east wind" in the context carries a double meaning (as follows):
 - i. The "east wind" that blew in from the Arabian Desert, otherwise known as the sirocco, was very destructive of Israel's crops due to its high heat and low humidity, *Ibid.*
 - ii. The "east wind" thus also figuratively pictures the Babylonian invaders who devastated the land of Israel of its produce by its avaricious army, *Ibid.*
 - c. In the end, Israel ended in Babylonian Captivity, being left no strong "branch," that is, no qualified strong and able man even to lead her as in her past, Ezekiel 19:14b. Only with the coming of Jesus Christ of the revived Davidic line to rule on David's throne forever (Luke 1:31-33) commencing at His Second Coming to earth (Revelation 19:11-20:6) will Israel again be restored to her former position of great divine blessing and dominance over the Gentile nations around her. (cf. Amos 9:11-12)

Lesson: (1) *Israel lamentably declined from greatness to entering captivity because her rulers sinned in (a) turning to idols, (b) abusing their subjects and (c) forgetting God as their Source of blessing. (2) Each such sin was a violation of the duties of Israel's kings in Deuteronomy 17:14-20: those kings were to read Scripture daily (a) in order to revere the Lord over other gods (Deut. 17:18-19b) (b) to view themselves as equals with their subjects in value so as not to abuse them (Deut. 17:18-19a, 20a) and (c) to depend on the Lord versus other sources for military protection. (Deut. 17:18-19a, 16) (3) In failing to read and heed Scripture, the rulers failed God's people.*

Application: *For the welfare of God's people entrusted to our care, may we who lead God's people in an institution, be it marriage, the home or the church, read and heed Scripture so as to (1) avoid idols that replace our reliance on God, (2) avoid abusing His people and (3) avoid forgetting that the Lord is our Source of blessing.*