

EZEKIEL 14:1-19:14 | PROGRESSION OF JUDGMENT (PART 1)

EZEKIEL 19:1-14 | THE PRINCE OF ISRAEL

- Verse 1 –
 - The **lamentation for the princes of Israel** is because they have a king (Zedekiah) who has sold them out for his own reign and refused to obey the Lord. A puppet king with no convictions of his own will surely bring lamentation to the people.
 - The Septuagint makes a singular *prince* rather than the plural **princes**. This was likely done because the following verses speak in the singular of Zedekiah, and the translators assumed the lamentation to be about him. I think it better to retain the plural and see that the true lamentation is for the **princes of Israel** and their pain is the fruit of their leadership, the king.
- Verses 2-3 –
 - King Josiah had three sons of two mothers.
 - Jehoahaz, son of Hamutal, reigned three months - 2 Kings 23:31.
 - Jehoiakim, son of Zebudah, reigned eleven years - 2 Kings 23:36.
 - Zedekiah, son of Hamutal, reigned eleven years - 2 Kings 24:18.
 - However, the mother mentioned here is more likely Israel as a whole rather than the particular physical mother. Only a more allegorized view fits the details to follow.
 - The **young lion that learned to catch the prey and devoured men** (v. 3) is Jehoahaz.
- Verse 4 –
 - Jehoahaz was taken **with chains unto the land of Egypt**, recorded in 2 Kings 23:30-34. Jeremiah gave a lament for Jehoahaz in Jeremiah 22:10-12, where he is called Shallum.
- Verses 5-9 –
 - The second **young lion** is Jehoiakim, son of Zebudah. He was taken to Babylon, as described in verse 9, at the end of his reign.
 - His reign is described in 2 Kings 24:1-6 and his arrest to Babylon in 2 Chronicles 36:6. Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin took the throne, but was totally a puppet king.
- Verses 10-11 –
 - As stated in verse 2 notes, **Thy mother** (v. 10) is likely a simile for Israel.
- Verses 12-14 –
 - These verses give the heart of the lamentation. It is not so much for the various Kings, but rather for the mother, who once stood in strength but now is **cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit** (v. 12).

EZEKIEL 20:1-44 | ELDERS

Note: This section begins the *back half* of the book, corresponding to the first half. See Bullinger's full outline for detail.

EZEKIEL 20:1-26 | MESSAGE TO THE ELDERS

- Verse 1 –
 - Ezekiel 1:2 is dated at the fifth year. Now we are two years later, **in the seventh year**. Once again, the **elders of Israel** come to Ezekiel to hear a word from God.

- Verses 2-4 –
 - As we saw in the previous portion in which the Elders came for a word from the Lord (Ezek. 8:1ff) , the Lord will not receive their visit. Instead of a word from God, God pronounces a judgment upon them.
- Verses 5-10 - The rebellions of Israel - Part 1
 - From day one, Israel was commanded to **defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt** (v. 7). But the Lord rescued Israel from Egypt and the people **rebelled against me** and did not **forsake the idols of Egypt** (v. 8).
 - God would have destroyed them except **for my name's sake** (v. 9), because God had displayed Himself **before the heathen** (v. 9) and would have lost honor to destroy the people upon whose behalf He had worked tirelessly. Because of this, the people were spared, and God **brought them into the wilderness** (v. 10).
- Verses 11-17 - The Rebellions of Israel - Part 2
 - God gave commands, which they disobeyed (vv. 5-10). Now, in the wilderness, God gave **my statutes, and shewed them my judgments** (v. 11). Concerning these statutes, the Lord said that **if a man do, he shall even live in them**. Compare Leviticus 18:5, etc. These words must be taken at face value, the same as Habakkuk 2:4 (which were spoken prophetically of the future, not of the current day).
 - In addition to statutes and judgments, God also **gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign** that the Lord would **sanctify them** (v. 12). Sadly, the **house of Israel** (speaking of the whole) **rebelled against me in the wilderness** (v. 13) and **despised** both **my judgments** and **my sabbaths** (v. 13).
 - Once again, rather than destroy the people, God did not destroy them, but rather gave them the time of wilderness wandering (vv. 14-17). As in Egypt (vv. 5-10), God once again showed patience.
- Verses 18-22 - The Rebellions of Israel - Part 3
 - The Lord gave the new generation that had survived the wilderness a new opportunity to start fresh with God's **statutes** and **judgments** (v. 19) and **sabbaths** (20).
 - Just as before, however, they **rebelled against me** (v. 21). Also just as before, now for the third time God **withdrew mine hand** for His own name's sake (v. 22) and spared the lives of the people.
- Verses 23-26 - Punishments and Reasons
 - While the Lord did not destroy His people, He did punish them. The punishment was pronounced **in the wilderness** (v. 23) but related to days far in the future, when God **would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries** (v. 23). These words were not focused on the Babylonian captivity of Ezekiel's day, but rather with "the diaspora" that began with the Assyrian invasion of Israel (150 years earlier) and completed with the Jewish revolts and their defeat by the Romans that concluded in 135 AD. The diaspora was the fulfillment of the wilderness "promise" of scattering, found in Deuteronomy 28:64.
 - How did the Lord bring about the ultimate scattering of the people? The answer is in verse 25, and is shocking: **I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live**. Certainly the Lord is *not* talking about the giving of the statutes of the law, which were **holy, and just, and good** (Rom. 7:12). Rather He is talking about the statutes and judgments of their kings (which they insisted on having). God allowed these

deadly statutes and judgments to come through the kings, and thus God **polluted them in their own gifts** (v. 26).

- Why did God allow the people to be destroyed by their own devices? He did it **to the end that they might know that I am the Lord** (v. 26).

EZEKIEL 20:27-44 | MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

- Verses 27-32 - Accusation Against Israel
 - The Lord speaks now to the nation with clear evidence of their guilt. The Lord asked a question with double meaning in verse 29, **What is the high place whereunto ye go?** The answer *should have been* the Temple Mount, but instead it was **Bamah**.
 - Because of this, Ezekiel was to tell the nation, through the Elders that had come for inquiry before him, that **I will not be inquired of by you** (v. 31).
- Verses 33-38 - The Threat of Judgment
 - The Lord *threatens* the nation with purging, with a *face to face* meeting, and with the ultimate judgment, **they shall not enter into the land of Israel** (likely a reference to the coming Kingdom, the ultimate *country whose builder and maker is God*).
- Verse 39 - Final Warning
 - God says to the nation, **if ye will not hearken unto me then Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols**.
- Verses 40-44 - Restoration for the Remnant
 - Those who do not go (v. 39) will gather **in the mountain of the height of Israel** (v. 40) and God promises that **there will I accept them** (v. 40).
 - Assuming that this is a reference to the coming fulfillment of promises in the millennium, verse 40 speaks of millennial sacrifices, saying, **there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations** (v. 40).
 - While verses 42-44 sound similar to the gathering of Israel we have seen in the last 125 years, the order of events in this chapter does not fit the modern return of the exiles.
 - There is no Temple today, there are no sacrifices today, the people did not return because they repented of their sins (v. 43), nor, generally speaking, does the nation **know that I am the Lord** (v. 44).
 - If this is not speaking of the *modern* return to Israel, it must be speaking of the *ultimate* and *eschatological* return, the one that will take place when God will **gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other** (Matt. 24:31).