

Ezek. 19:1 Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,
Ezek. 19:2 And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

Ezek. 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.

“princes” = properly, an exalted one, i.e. a king or sheik

This is the only place in scripture in which the word *lioness* is used. Judah is described early on as a lion's *whelp* (cub or young one).

Gen. 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp...

Israel appears to represent the whole nation and is compared to a lioness. One of her whelps is Judah (the Southern Kingdom). The *lions* would seem to represent other nations. The fact that she “lay down” among them would indicate that she identified with them and raised her cubs to blend in with the crowd so to speak. In other words, there was no distinct difference in the way they lived when compared to the nations around them. I believe this is a direct reference to the fact that they embraced the morals and gods of the other nations. In scripture the reference to the king and /or kingdom are interchangeable (e.g., as in Daniel).

In consideration of the content of recent chapters and the reference to “him” in the next verse, I think the “young lion” is a reference to one of the princes referenced in verse 1. The best fit I could find would be Josiah or his son Jehoahaz. The nation experienced a spiritual cleansing of sorts under the leadership of this young king. (He assumed the throne at age 8 and reigned for 31 years.)

Ezek. 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.

Josiah wasn't taken captive to Egypt; he was killed in battle with the Egyptians at Megiddo. His son, Jehoahaz, however, was anointed king and after a short reign of only three months was taken captive by Pharaohnechoh, and it is recorded that he died in Egypt.

2Kings 23:34 And Pharaohnechoh 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Because of verse 9, I think this section has to reference Jehoiachin since he was the King of Judah first taken captive to Babylon. He was eventually lifted up to a

position of respect in Babylon by Evilmerodach, but he was never allowed to return to Judah.

Ezek. 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 nation of Israel is again compared to a mother. God had planted her in a prime area of real estate on planet earth and blessed her abundantly.

Ezek. 19:11 And she had strong rods for the sceptres 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.

In looking at the Hebrew for the word *rods*, it would seem to be a reference to the twelve tribes. Maybe it is better to consider the rods as representing the royal line of succession for the kingship. The Lord had blessed Israel/Judah with material blessings and strong leaders, but they had taken the blessings for granted and their leaders for the most part had ruled in pride and rebellion.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 19:13 And now she *is* planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

Ezek. 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 sceptre to rule. This *is* a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

The direct address is regarding Judah, who would experience the anger of her captors. Jerusalem as well as the rest of the land would experience great destruction. The “east wind” of the Babylonian Empire ended up destroying the royal line through killing the sons of Zedekiah. The remnant of Judah that was taken captive was now planted in the wilderness of Babylon. Several of the commentaries make reference to Zedekiah as the “fire” that destroyed her “fruit,” the royal line through his pride and rebellion. A “dirge” is a reference to a funeral song. The wording indicates that the time of mourning would continue—“is.....and shall be.”

This turned out to be one of the hardest chapters to complete to this point. I think the truth that stood out to me the most was the lack of appreciation the people expressed to God for His many blessings. As is human nature, we prefer not to be “beholden” to anyone. It’s easier to look at what *we* have done with a spirit of pride than to acknowledge that we only have because we have been given. How perverse we are to want to act according to our own flawed judgment rather than to submit to a loving and far wiser God Who wants to give us the very best.

God only punished His children because they deserved it. They were obviously given many opportunities to repent and obey, but they chose not to.