

Ezekiel 19 – Lamentation: No Hope of Scepters in the Wilderness

By Holly Effiom

VV1-4

What is a lamentation?

Who does God say is in need of a lamentation?

What does the lioness represent?

What is significant about the fact that this lioness nourished her whelps among lions?

What is significant about the whelp knowing how to catch prey and devour men?

What is significant about the nations hearing about this whelp?

What did the nations do to the whelp?

To what nations was this whelp taken?

What story does this resemble?

Is this story the lamentation?

LESSON: My Bible commentary likens this lamentation to a “parable”, and this part is a parable about a lioness and her whelp that is lost to Egypt. Though the story is sad, I don’t take it as the lamentation that God directed Ezekiel to sing.

I believe that God is using, particularly, the lion kingdom in describing the children of Israel as a lioness among lions, a king among kingdoms, raising up powerful kings and queens. When He describes the whelp being thrown in a pit and taken to Egypt in chains, we understand that this is an allusion to Joseph, and how his brothers, not wanting to kill him, threw him in a pit and sold him into slavery to a band of traveling Ishmaelites, who in turn re-sold him into slavery in Egypt.

While Joseph’s story is lamentable, it was in no way his whole story, as we all know. But there is something that we have to note from Joseph’s story – he had no notion that he was a king, which is made evident in his family’s reaction to the visions God had given him. Joseph’s family, even his father, did not view themselves in any way “royal”; nor had they any idea that those looking upon them from the outside – the nations – found them threatening in the least.

This reminds me of Job. Job had no understanding of what had befallen him – causing him to lose everything – but the reader is given a view of Job’s situation from the perspective of heaven. The reader understands that Job is living his life on the stage, with an audience watching; that audience is comprised of the sons of God – the angels – toward whom the lesson or message of the story is being directed. What lesson do the angels, who are eternal, need to learn from a flesh and blood man who is very finite?

VV5-9

What happened when the lioness saw that her whelp had not returned?

What did this lioness do?

Did this young whelp become a young lion? How do you know?

Were others intimidated by the young lion? How do you know?

Were the nations aware of this new young lion?

Why would the nations be watching this young lion?

Did the nations want to make friends with this young lion? How do you know?

To what nation was this whelp taken?

This time why was the whelp put into a stronghold?

Whose story is being told here?

Ezekiel 19 – Lamentation: No Hope of Scepters in the Wilderness

By Holly Effiom

Is this story the lamentation for the princes of Israel?

LESSON: This section of the lamentation is also a “parable” about the same lioness that gave up hope on the return of her first whelp, and raised her other child to be a young lion. This lion grew to be even greater than the first. And, the nations were once again threatened by this lion, and this time they thought to destroy him altogether, such that his voice was never again heard – this whelp was imprisoned in Babylon. This is the story of Jerusalem, and this time, the nation was conquered by Babylon.

The story of Joseph is the story of the world’s attempt to destroy Israel before it had any notion of its own greatness. The story of Jerusalem is that of the city destroying itself chasing after the world. But this is not the lamentation.

VV10-14

Who is the subject of this section of the lamentation?

To which parable is this section of the lamentation alluding? Ezekiel 15 or Ezekiel 17, both or neither?

To which parable is “...strong rods for the sceptres...” alluding?

To which parable is “...the east wind dried up her fruit...” alluding?

To which parable is “...the fire consumed them...” alluding?

Where is the tree planted now?

Is the ground where the tree is now planted hospitable?

Will the tree be producing any more scepters?

Is this a “parable” or a “lamentation”? Why?

LESSON: God brings all of the parables together toward a powerful, yet sad, denouement for Jerusalem. This section of Ezekiel is where Jerusalem gets consigned to the “wilderness” described in Revelation 12:6 and 14, where the ground is inhospitable, until a time, times, and the dividing of time. This is where we are made to understand that Jerusalem’s work is done, and God is moving on to work through the children of Japheth – the Gentiles – as described in Revelation 11:1 and 2 until the final 42 months of Gentile world power.

I believe, the manner in which God has, artfully, woven together the parables of 15, 17, and 19, in and of itself, is a pattern to be observed. Just as these stories of the Jerusalem are woven together into a completed tapestry, so, too, will the stories of Gentiles be woven into a tapestry that is just beginning in these chapters, and, unfortunately, will also have an end.

At this moment, it is important to remind ourselves of the goal of God’s work – the quality of the people who will inhabit and hold dominion in the earth.