

## I. Ezekiel 19 - A Lament for Judah

- 1     *And you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,<sup>2</sup> and say:  
What was your mother? A lioness!  
Among lions she crouched;  
in the midst of young lions  
she reared her cubs.*
- 3     *And she brought up one of her cubs;  
he became a young lion,  
and he learned to catch prey;  
he devoured men.*
- 4     *The nations heard about him;  
he was caught in their pit,  
and they brought him with hooks  
to the land of Egypt.*
- 5     *When she saw that she waited in vain,  
that her hope was lost,  
she took another of her cubs  
and made him a young lion.*
- 6     *He prowled among the lions;  
he became a young lion,  
and he learned to catch prey;  
he devoured men,*
- 7     *and seized their widows.  
He laid waste their cities,  
and the land was appalled and all who were in it  
at the sound of his roaring.*
- 8     *Then the nations set against him  
from provinces on every side;  
they spread their net over him;  
he was taken in their pit.*
- 9     *With hooks they put him in a cage  
and brought him to the king of Babylon;  
they brought him into custody,  
that his voice should no more be heard  
on the mountains of Israel.*
- 10    *Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard  
planted by the water,  
fruitful and full of branches  
by reason of abundant water.*
- 11    *Its strong stems became  
rulers' scepters;  
it towered aloft  
among the thick boughs;  
it was seen in its height  
with the mass of its branches.*
- 12    *But the vine was plucked up in fury,  
cast down to the ground;  
the east wind dried up its fruit;  
they were stripped off and withered.  
As for its strong stem,  
fire consumed it.*
- 13    *Now it is planted in the wilderness,  
in a dry and thirsty land.*
- 14    *And fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots,  
has consumed its fruit,  
so that there remains in it no strong stem,*

*no scepter for ruling.  
This is a lamentation and has become a lamentation.*

## I. Introduction

- A. Summary Statement: Ezekiel calls us to remember we are exiles and as exiles to remember that God is near and is infinitely concerned for His own glory. Therefore Ezekiel calls us to refuse the temptation to place our hope in an imagined past or an alluring present but instead to repent and to wait for God's future salvation.
- B. Outline:
  - 1. God is Present in Exile Ezekiel 1-3
  - 2. God is Present to Judge in Judah Ezekiel 4-24
  - 3. God is Present to Judge the Nations Ezekiel 25-32
  - 4. God is Present to Save His People Ezekiel 33-48
- C. Detailed Outline:
  - 1. God's Message: I am present Ezekiel 4-5
  - 2. God hates idolatry Ezekiel 6-7
  - 3. God will not dwell with idolaters Ezekiel 8-11
  - 4. How did we get here? Ezekiel 12-14
  - 5. Three Parables of Idolatry Ezekiel 15-17
  - 6. Justice and Mercy: A Call to Repent Ezekiel 18
- D. Continuing:
  - 1. So far, Ezekiel has spoken judgment on Judah's idolatry and called them to repentance
  - 2. But, as we continue, Ezekiel is going to take a break from his words of judgment and compose a lament, sorrowing over the destruction of His people
- E. Let's read Ezekiel 19 together
- F. **Proposition:** Ezekiel composes a lament, sorrowing over the corruption and destruction of his people, and Ezekiel's lament calls us to mourn over sin, to mourn over God's judgment and to eagerly await God's salvation.
  - 1. What is a lament?
  - 2. Why is lament good?
  - 3. What is Ezekiel's lamentation?
  - 4. Where did Ezekiel's lamentation point?
  - 5. What does this mean for us?

## II. What is a lament?

- A. A lament is a confession of deep sorrow and crisis - an expression intense and overwhelming sorrow
  - 1. Lamentations 1:1-2 - *How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.*
  - 2. Lamentations 2:11 - *My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city.*
- B. A lament is directed toward God - it cries out for God to see and to act because of our sorrow
  - 1. Psalm 79:1-5 - *O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the heavens for food, the flesh of your faithful to the beasts of the earth. They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us. How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealousy burn like fire?*
  - 2. In fact, lament should be considered a type of desperate prayer - a prayer that might not even be able to be well expressed, full of sorrow and confusion, but a crying out to God

## III. Why is lament good?

- A. Lament seems opposite of the command to "rejoice always" - so how can lament be a good thing?

1. Philippians 4:4 - *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice!*
  2. I Thessalonians 1:5 - *Rejoice always!*
- B. It confesses the reality of sin - sin has devastating consequences that we can't and shouldn't ignore
1. Lamentations 1:8-9 - *Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns her face away. Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her future; therefore her fall is terrible; she has no comforter. "O LORD, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed!"*
- C. It confesses God's sovereignty - we are crushed and we know God did it
1. Lamentations 1:5 - *Her foes have become the head; her enemies prosper, because the LORD has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe.*
  2. Lamentations 1:12-16 - *"Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of his fierce anger. "From on high he sent fire; into my bones he made it descend; he spread a net for my feet; he turned me back; he has left me stunned, faint all the day long. "My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; they were set upon my neck; he caused my strength to fail; the Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand. "The Lord rejected all my mighty men in my midst; he summoned an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord has trodden as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah. "For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed."*
  3. Lamentation 2:1-8 - *How the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the habitations of Jacob; in his wrath he has broken down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he has brought down to the ground in dishonor the kingdom and its rulers. He has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn from them his right hand in the face of the enemy; he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob, consuming all around. He has bent his bow like an enemy, with his right hand set like a foe; and he has killed all who were delightful in our eyes in the tent of the daughter of Zion; he has poured out his fury like fire. The Lord has become like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel; he has swallowed up all its palaces; he has laid in ruins its strongholds, and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. He has laid waste his booth like a garden, laid in ruins his meeting place; the LORD has made Zion forget festival and Sabbath, and in his fierce indignation has spurned king and priest. The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they raised a clamor in the house of the LORD as on the day of festival. The LORD determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion; he stretched out the measuring line; he did not restrain his hand from destroying; he caused rampart and wall to lament; they languished together.*
- D. It confesses God's wisdom - we don't understand why we are crushed, but we cry out to God who does
1. Lamentations 5:19-20 - *But you, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations. Why do you forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days?*
  2. Psalm 74:1 - *O God, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?*
  3. Psalm 22:1-2 - *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.*
- E. It confesses God's power - we are powerless against the situation, so we cry out to God
1. Psalm 74:10-18 - *How long, O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile your name forever? Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the fold of your garment and destroy them! Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter. Remember this, O LORD, how the enemy scoffs, and a foolish people reviles your name.*
- F. It confesses God's mercy - we need a savior to rescue us from our situation, so we cry out to God
1. Lamentations 3:16-33 - *He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the*

LORD." Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust--- there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.

- G. Finally, it deepens our joy - lament reminds us that our rejoicing in Christ is not one dimensional, but recognizes the realities of this world, the realities of sin, and yet still rejoices in Christ - our honest expression of even overwhelming sorrow points to the depths of our joy
1. II Corinthians 6:8-10 - *We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*
  2. Our honest expression of sorrow points to the depths of our joy - Christ is exalted more when we express our true lament over the sorrows of this world and yet testify to our joy in Christ

#### IV. What is Ezekiel's lamentation?

- A. Ezekiel lamented the corruption of Judah's kingship
1. Ezekiel 19:1-3 - *And you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say: What was your mother? A lioness! Among lions she crouched; in the midst of young lions she reared her cubs. And she brought up one of her cubs; he became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men.*
  2. Ezekiel 19:5-7 - *she took another of her cubs and made him a young lion. He prowled among the lions; he became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men, and seized their widows. He laid waste their cities, and the land was appalled and all who were in it at the sound of his roaring.*
- B. Ezekiel lamented the captivity of Judah's kings
1. Ezekiel 19:4-5 - *The nations heard about him; he was caught in their pit, and they brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt. When she saw that she waited in vain, that her hope was lost, she took another of her cubs and made him a young lion.*
  2. Ezekiel 19:8-9 - *Then the nations set against him from provinces on every side; they spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit. With hooks they put him in a cage and brought him to the king of Babylon; they brought him into custody, that his voice should no more be heard on the mountains of Israel.*
- C. Ezekiel lamented the coming destruction of Judah's kingdom
1. Ezekiel 19:10-14 - *Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard planted by the water, fruitful and full of branches by reason of abundant water. Its strong stems became rulers' scepters; it towered aloft among the thick boughs; it was seen in its height with the mass of its branches. But the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem, fire consumed it. Now it is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land. And fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots, has consumed its fruit, so that there remains in it no strong stem, no scepter for ruling. This is a lamentation and has become a lamentation.*
- D. Sin had corrupted God's representatives, had imperiled God's promise, and had destroyed God's people and Ezekiel laments

#### V. Where did Ezekiel's lamentation point?

- A. Ezekiel lamented because the current fulfilment of God's promise had failed - Judah's kings had failed and the kingdom was lost - God's people in God's place under God's rule had failed
- B. But Ezekiel's lament was pointing somewhere, and I think it pointed forward in two ways
1. First, Ezekiel's lament prefigured a deeper lament - Ezekiel could only lament in part, he could only lament what he knew, but there was one to come who knew the full depths of evil and lamented
  2. Second, Ezekiel's lament was answered - Ezekiel mourned the failure of the kingship and the loss of God's promised land, and God heard Ezekiel's lament and acted

C. Ezekiel's lament foreshadowed a greater lament:

1. Matthew 23:37-39 - *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*
2. Matthew 26:38-39 - *"Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.'" And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."*
3. Matthew 27:46 - *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*
4. John 11:35 - *Jesus wept*

D. Ezekiel's lament was heard and answered:

1. Matthew 1:1, 14 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham... So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.*
2. Matthew 3:16-17 - *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

## VI. What does this mean for us?

- A. We should mourn over sin and its consequences in this world
- B. We should consider whether we are quicker to mourn or to denounce other's sin
- C. In our mourning, we can hold onto a greater hope because God has heard and God has answered.
- D. We should consider what whether we should lament today.