

Adam Clarke:**Introduction**

This chapter contains two beautiful examples of the parabolic kind of writing; the one lamenting the sad catastrophe of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, Ezekiel 19:1-9, and the other describing the desolation and captivity of the whole people, Ezekiel 19:10-14. In the first parable, the lioness is Jerusalem. The first of the young lions is Jehoahaz, deposed by the king of Egypt; and the second lion is Jehoiakim, whose rebellion drew on himself the vengeance of the king of Babylon. In the second parable the vine is the Jewish nation, which long prospered, its land being fertile, its princes powerful, and its people flourishing; but the judgments of God, in consequence of their guilt, had now destroyed a great part of the people, and doomed the rest to captivity.

Verse 1

Moreover take thou up a lamentation - Declare what is the great subject of sorrow in Israel. Compose a funeral dirge. Show the melancholy fate of the kings who proceeded from Josiah. The prophet deplores the misfortune of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, under the figure of two lion whelps, which were taken by hunters, and confined in cages. Next he shows the desolation of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, which he compares to a beautiful vine pulled up by the roots, withered, and at last burned. Calmet justly observes, that the style of this song is beautiful, and the allegory well supported throughout.

Verse 2

What is thy mother? A lioness - Judea may here be the mother; the lioness, Jerusalem. Her lying down among lions, her having confederacy with the neighboring kings; for lion here means king.

Verse 3

She brought up one of her whelps - Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, whose father was conquered and slain by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt.

It learned to catch the prey - His reign was a reign of oppression and cruelty. He made his subjects his prey, and devoured their substance.

Verse 4

The nations also heard of him - The king of Egypt, whose subjects were of divers nations, marched against Jerusalem, took Jehoahaz prisoner, and brought him to Egypt. Thus: -

He was taken in their pit - Here is an allusion to those trap-pits dugged in forests, into which the wild beasts fall, when the huntsmen, surrounding a given portion of the forest, drive the beasts in; by degrees narrowing the inclosure, till the animals come to the place where the pits are, which, being lightly covered over with branches and turf, are not perceived, and the beasts tread on them and fall in. Jehoahaz reigned only three months before he was dethroned by the king of Egypt, against whom it is apparent some craft was used, here signified by the pit, into which he fell.

Verse 5

When she saw that she had waited - Being very weak, the Jews found that they could not resist with any hope of success; so the king of Egypt was permitted to do as he pleased.

She took another of her whelps - Jehoiakim.

And made him a young lion - King of Judea.

Verse 6

And he went up and down among the lions - He became a perfect heathen, and made Judea as idolatrous as any of the surrounding nations. He reigned eleven years, a monster of iniquity, 2 Kings 23:30, etc.

Verse 8

The nations set against him - The Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, and the king of Babylon - king of many nations.

He was taken - The city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; and Jehoiakim was taken prisoner, and sent in chains to Babylon.

Verse 9

That his voice should no more be heard - He continued in prison many years, till the reign of Evil-merodach, who set him at liberty, but never suffered him to return to the mountains of Israel. The unhappy fate of these princes, mentioned Ezekiel 19:4, Ezekiel 19:8, Ezekiel 19:9, is a just subject of lamentation. - Newcome.

Verse 10

Thy mother (Jerusalem) is like a vine in thy blood - Of this expression I know not what to make. Some think the meaning is A vine planted by the waters to produce the blood of the grape. See Deuteronomy 32:14. Others, for x'x"xžxš (bedamecha), in thy blood, would read x'x"xžx•xŸ (berimmon), in or at a pomegranate; like a vine planted by or beside a pomegranate-tree, by which it was to be supported. And so the Septuagint and Arabic appear to have read. Calmet reads x'x"xžxš (carmecha), thy vineyard, instead of x'x"xžxš (bedamecha), in thy blood. Here is no change but a x" (resh) for a x" (daleth). This reading is supported by one of Kennicott's and one of De Rossi's MSS.: Thy mother is like a vine in thy vineyard, planted by the waters. Though this is rather an unusual construction yet it seems the best emendation. Of the textual reading no sense can be made. There is a corruption somewhere.

Full on branches - Many princes. See next verse.

Verse 11

She had strong rods - Zedekiah, and his many sons.

Her stature was exalted - Zedekiah grew proud of his numerous offspring and prosperity; and although he copied the example of Jehoiakim, yet he thought he might safely rebel against the king of Babylon.

Verse 12

But she was plucked up in fury - Jerusalem; taken after a violent and most destructive siege; Nebuchadnezzar being violently enraged against Zedekiah for breaking his oath to him.

She was cast down to the ground - Jerusalem was totally ruined, by being burned to the ground.

Her strong rods were broken - The children of Zedekiah were slain before his eyes, and after that his own eyes pulled out; and he was laden with chains, and carried into Babylon.

Verse 13

And now she is planted in the wilderness - In the land of Chaldea, whither the people have been carried captives; and which, compared with their own land, was to them a dreary wilderness.

Verse 14

Fire is gone out - A vindictive and murderous disposition has taken hold: -

Of a rod of her branches - Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, who was of the blood-royal of Judah: -

Hath devoured her fruit - Hath assassinated Gedaliah, slain many people, and carried off others into the country of the Ammonites. But he was pursued by Jonathan, the son of Kareah, who slew many of his adherents, and delivered much of the people.

She hath no strong rod - None of the blood-royal of Judah left. And from that time not one of her own royal race ever sat upon the throne of Israel.

This is a lamentation - This is a most lamentable business.

And shall be for a lamentation - These predictions shall be so punctually fulfilled, and the catastrophe shall be so complete, that it shall ever remain as a lamentation; as this state of Jerusalem shall never be restored. Even to the present day this, to a Jew, is a subject of mourning.