

A Dirge for the Lion of Judah

Ezekiel 19:1-14

Veritas Adult Community

December 15, 2019

<p>^{19:1}But you, raise a dirge over the princes of Israel, ²and say: What is your mother? A lioness! Among the lions she reclined. Among the young lions she reared her cubs. ³She raised up one of her cubs; He became a young lion. He learned to capture prey; He devoured humans. ⁴The nations heard about him. In their pit he was caught. They dragged him off with hooks to the land of Egypt. ⁵When she realized her wait was in vain, And her hope had vanished, She took another one of her cubs, And appointed him a young lion. ⁶He strutted about among the lions, And he became a young lion. He learned to capture prey. And devoured humans. ⁷He consorted with his widows, And laid waste their cities. The land and all its inhabitants were appalled, at the sound of his roaring. ⁸The nations from the surrounding provinces took up arms against him. They spread out their net against him; In their pit he was captured.</p>	<p>⁹With hooks they put him in a neck-stock. And brought him to the king of Babylon. They brought him in cages, So his voice would never again be heard On the mountains of Israel.</p> <p>¹⁰Your mother was like a vine full of shoots, Planted by water; She was fruitful and luxuriant Because of abundant waters. ¹¹ The strong branches became for her scepters of rulers. It towered high among the clouds. And became conspicuous for its height, And its profusion of branches. ¹²But it was uprooted in fury; It was hurled down to the ground. The east wind caused her fruit to dry up; They were ripped off and dried up. As for the strong branch, Fire consumed it. ¹³And now it is planted in the desert, In an arid and thirsty land. ¹⁴Fire has gone forth from the bough of its shoots. It consumed its fruit. No strong branch, no ruler’s scepter, remained in it. This is a dirge. It was treated as a dirge.</p>
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A. Introduction

Gen 22:22; Gen 49:10-11; Num 24:17; Deut 17:15; Ruth 4:13; 1 Sam 2:10

2 Sam 7:12-16; 1 Kgs 10:8-9

1. The Nature of the Chapter

A Dirge

3:2 meter

Opening “How!” (*’ékā*)

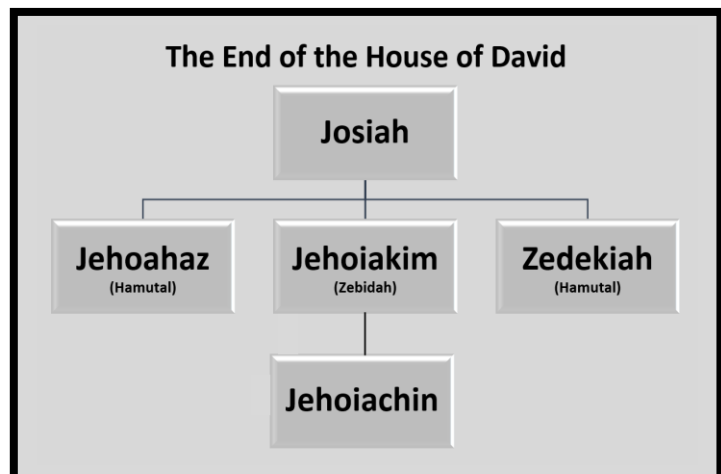
“Once — Now” pattern

A Metaphor

A Riddle

2. The Structure of the Chapter

- Introduction (v. 1)
- The Opening Question (v. 2a)
- The First Answer (vv. 2b-9)
- The Second Answer (vv. 10-14c)
- Colophon (v. 14d)



B. Exposition

1. The Opening Question: “What is your mother?”
2. The Two Cubs (vv. 2b–9)
 - a. **The First Cub (vv. 2b–4)**

Jehoahaz

³¹ Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ³² He committed the evil in YHWH's sight, just as his ancestors had done. ³³ Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath to prevent him from ruling in Jerusalem. He also demanded that Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold as tribute. ³⁴ Pharaoh Neco then installed Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, to reign in place of his father, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. *Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt as a prisoner, where he died.* (NLT)

- b. **The Second Cub (vv. 5–9)**

Jehoiakim

³⁴ Pharaoh Neco then installed Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, to reign in place of his father, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt as a prisoner, where he died. ³⁵ In order to get the silver and gold demanded as tribute by Pharaoh Neco, Jehoiakim collected a tax from the people of Judah, requiring them to pay in proportion to their wealth. ³⁶ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother was Zebidah, the daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah. ³⁷ He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his ancestors had done.

24:1 During Jehoiakim's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded the land of Judah. Jehoiakim surrendered and paid him tribute for three years but then rebelled. ² Then the LORD sent bands of Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite, and Ammonite raiders against Judah to destroy it, just as the LORD had promised through his prophets. ³ These disasters happened to Judah because of the LORD's command. He had decided to banish Judah from his presence because of the many sins of Manasseh, ⁴ who had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. The LORD would not forgive this. ⁵ The rest of the events in Jehoiakim's reign and all his deeds are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. ⁶ When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became the next king. (2 Kgs 23:34—2 Kgs 24:6, NLT)

Jer 22:18–23

Jehoiachin

⁶ When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became the next king. ⁷ The king of Egypt did not venture out of his country after that, for the king of Babylon captured the entire area formerly claimed by Egypt-- from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River. ⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem.

⁹ Jehoiachin did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his father had done. ¹⁰ During Jehoiachin's reign, the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up against Jerusalem and besieged it. ¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar himself arrived at the city during the siege. ¹² Then King Jehoiachin, along with the queen mother, his advisers, his commanders, and his officials, surrendered to the Babylonians. In the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. ¹³ As the LORD had said beforehand, Nebuchadnezzar carried away all the treasures from the LORD's Temple and the royal palace. He stripped away all the gold objects that King Solomon of Israel had placed in the Temple. ¹⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar took all of Jerusalem captive, including all the commanders and the best of the soldiers, craftsmen, and artisans-- 10,000 in all. Only the poorest people were left in the land. ¹⁵ Nebuchadnezzar led King Jehoiachin away as a captive to Babylon, along with the queen mother, his wives and officials, and all Jerusalem's elite. ¹⁶ He also exiled 7,000 of the best troops and 1,000 craftsmen and artisans, all of whom were strong and fit for war. ¹⁷ Then the king of Babylon installed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, as the next king, and he changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah. (2 Kgs 24:6–17 NLT)

3. **The Vine and the Branches (vv. 10–14c)**

Zedekiah

The Dynasty

C. Theological and Practical Application

1. The promises of God to the ancestors is no guarantee of divine blessing for their descendants.
2. The call to leadership is a call to servanthood.
3. The presence of God's chosen representative is no substitute for personal commitment **to him**.

Disputing the Justice of God Part II**Opening the Door to Hope****Ezekiel 18:19–32**

Veritas Adult Community

December 8, 2019

The Text**A. The People's First Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**¹⁹“But you say, ‘Why should the son not share in the guilt of his father?’

The son has practised justice and righteousness. He has observed all my statutes and kept them—He shall surely live!

B. The Reiteration of the New Thesis²⁰It is the person who sins who shall die!

A son shall not share in the guilt of his father;

nor shall a father share in the guilt of his son.

The righteousness of the righteous shall be credited to him alone;

but the wickedness of the wicked shall be charged to him alone.”

C. A Corollary Thesis²¹Now if the wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed, and observes all my statutes, and practises justice and righteousness, he shall surely live! He shall not die! ²²None of his rebellious acts that he has perpetrated, will be charged against him. On account of his righteousness that he has practised, he shall live.²³Do I really find any pleasure in the death of the wicked?—the declaration of the Lord YHWH—Is it not rather in his turning from his ways that he may live?**D. Two Case Studies on Divine Justice****1. The Case of the Person Who Begins Righteously**²⁴But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness, and practises evil, like all the abominable actions that the wicked practise—Shall he behave this way and still live? None of his righteous actions that he has performed, will be credited [to him]. On account of his treachery that he has perpetrated, and on account of his sins that he has committed—on their account he shall die!**2. The People's Second Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**²⁵But you say, “The Lord's action is unscrupulous!”Hear now, O house of Israel! Is my action really unscrupulous? Is it not your own actions that are unscrupulous? ²⁶If a righteous person turns from his righteousness and practises evil, he dies for his actions; On account of his evil that he has committed, he shall die.**3. The Case of the Person Who Begins Wickedly**²⁷But if a wicked person turns from his wickedness that has committed, and practises justice and righteousness, he shall preserve his own life. ²⁸He has taken heed and repented of all his wicked acts that he had committed. He shall surely live! He shall not die!**4. The People's Third Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**²⁹But the house of Israel insists: “The Lord's action is unscrupulous.”

Is my action really unscrupulous, O house of Israel? Is it not your actions that are unscrupulous?

³⁰Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, each one, based on his actions—The declaration of the Lord YHWH. Repent and turn away from all your rebellious actions, so that iniquity does not become a stumbling-block for you. ³¹Throw off all your rebellious actions that you have committed and create a new heart and a new spirit for yourselves.**E. The Concluding Appeal**Why should you die, O house of Israel? ³²I find no pleasure in any one's death—The declaration of the Lord YHWH. So turn around and live!**Exposition****Introduction**

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| (1) The Way of Life | (vv. 21–22) |
| (2) The Basis of Hope | (v. 23) |
| (3) The Way of Death | (v. 24) |

The Call of the Watchman (Ezekiel 3:17–21)

¹⁶At the end of seven days the following message of YHWH came to me: ¹⁷“Human, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a message coming from my mouth you shall warn them about me. ¹⁸If I announce to the wicked, ‘You shall die!’ and you fail to warn him—that is, you do not speak out to warn the wicked person to turn from his wicked way to save him that wicked man shall die for his iniquity, but I will hold you responsible for his death. ¹⁹As for you, if you have warned the wicked, but he does not turn from his wickedness that is from his wicked way, on account of his iniquity, he shall die, but you will have saved your own life. ²⁰And when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and practices evil, and I place a stumbling block in front of him—he shall die. Since you did not warn him, because of his sin he shall die (his righteous actions that he has committed not being remembered), but I will hold you responsible for his death. ²¹But you, if you warn him, the righteous man, so that he does not sin, and he refrains from sin, he certainly shall live because he took warning, and you will have saved your own life.”

A. The Case of the Formerly Wicked Person (vv. 21–23).

1. The Meaning of “unscrupulous” (*lō’ yittakēn*)
2. The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance (Part 1)
 - a. Turning from sin (*šûb*)
 - b. Observing YHWH’s Ordinances (*šāmar ḥuqqōtāy*)
 - c. Demonstrating Justice and Righteousness (*’āšā mišpāt’ ūšēdāqâ*)

B. The Case of the Formerly Righteous Person (v. 24)

The Rules Governing the Fate of Human Beings

- a. One generation cannot build up such a treasure for another.
- b. A person cannot build up a treasure of merit or demerit and bank on this later in life if his/her conduct changes.

C. The Concluding Rejoinder and Appeal (18:25–32)

Verse 19		Verse 25
But you say,		But the house of Israel says,
“YHWH’s action is unscrupulous.”		“YHWH’s action is unscrupulous.”
Listen, O house of Israel,	←	Is my action (יָדַי) unscrupulous,
Is my action (יָדַי) unscrupulous?	→	O house of Israel?
Is it not your actions		Is it not your actions
that are unscrupulous?		that are unscrupulous?

1. The Prophet’s Rejoinder and Reply (18:25–29)

2. The Concluding Appeal (vv. 30–32)

The Purpose of the Appeal

a. To underlines people’s own culpability for their judgment.

The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance (Part 2)

- (1) “Turning away” from rebellious behavior
- (2) “Casting off all rebellious actions
- (3) A mind/heart transplant.

Ezek 11:18–19; 36:26;

Deut 10:16; 30:6

b. To highlight YHWH’s burden for his people and his yearning for their obedience.

Application

1. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that would perceive God as primarily bent on judgment and death.
2. Ezekiel sends a warning to those who presume upon the grace of God, and a promise of hope to those who despair of life..
3. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine of eternal security and/or eternal damnation that would hold a person captive to the decisions of the past.

The Case of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1–17; 2 Chr 33:10–20; apocryphal “Prayer of Manasseh”)

The Case of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:1–5; 3; 10:8–10).

4. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that would accuse God of unscrupulosity and capriciousness.
5. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine of ministry that encourages a prophet to proclaim only what people want to hear.
6. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that claims that God’s covenant with Israel is over.

Disputing the Justice of God Part I
Closing the Door to Cosmic Fatalism

Ezekiel 18:1–20

Veritas Adult Community

November 17, 2019

The Text

A. The People’s Thesis

^{8:1}The following message of YHWH came to me: ²“What do you mean, you who are quoting this proverb concerning the land of Israel: ‘Parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are blunted!’”

The LORD’s Counter Thesis

B. The Principle of Divine Justice

³“As I live—the declaration of the Lord YHWH—, you shall never quote this proverb again in Israel. ⁴Look! Every living person belongs to me! Like the life of the parent, so is the life of the child; both belong to me. It is the person who sins who shall die.”

C. Three Case Studies in Divine Justice

<p>1. The Case of the Righteous Person</p> <p>⁵“Now if a man is righteous, and practises justice and righteousness—</p> <p>⁶He does not eat on the mountains; And he does not raise his eyes to the dung pellets of the house of Israel; And he does not defile his neighbor’s wife; And he does not have sexual relations with his wife during her menstrual period; ⁷If a man does not exploit anyone— He returns his debt-pledge; He does not commit robbery; He shares his food with the hungry; And he covers the naked with clothes; ⁸He does not lend money with interest, And he does not demand a profit; He restrains himself from injustice; He promotes true justice within the community; ⁹He conducts his life according to my ordinances, And he observes my judgments by acting with integrity— He is righteous! He shall surely live!</p> <p>The declaration of the Lord YHWH.</p>	<p>2. The Case of the Wicked Son</p> <p>¹⁰“Now, should he father a violent son—a murderer—who commits any of these [crimes] ¹¹(though he himself has not done any of these)— Instead he eats on the mountains; And he defiles his neighbor’s wife; ¹²He exploits the poor and needy; He commits robbery; He does not return the pledge; And he raises his eyes to the idols; He commits abominable deeds; ¹³He lends money with interest, And demands a profit— Shall he live? He shall not live! He has committed all these abominable deeds; He shall surely be put to death! His blood shall be upon himself!”</p>
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2. The Case of the Righteous Grandson

¹⁴“Now look! Should he father a son who observes all the sins that his father has committed, who takes heed, and does not behave the same way—

¹⁵He does not eat on the mountains;
And he does not raise his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel;

He does not defile his neighbor’s wife;

¹⁶If a man does not exploit anyone—

He does not accept a debt-pledge;

And he does not commit robbery;

He shares his food with the hungry;

And he covers the naked with clothes;

¹⁷He restrains himself from the poor;

He has not demanded interest or profit;

He carries out my demands;

He conducts his life according to my ordinances—

He shall not die for the iniquity of his father!

He shall surely live!

¹⁸As for his father—

If he practises extortion;

He commits robbery against his brother;

And he misbehaves in the midst of his people—

Look! He shall die for his own iniquity!”

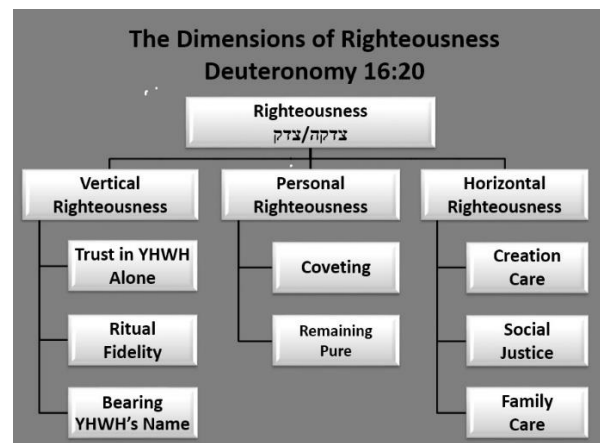
D. The Rejoinder and Reply

¹⁹“But you ask, ‘Why should the son not share in the guilt of his father?’ The son has practised justice and righteousness. He has observed all my statutes and kept them—He shall surely live!

²⁰It is the person who sins who shall die!

A son shall not share in the guilt of his father;
nor shall a father share in the guilt of his son.

The righteousness of the righteous shall be credited to him alone; but the wickedness of the wicked shall be charged to him alone.”



Exposition

Introduction

A. The People’s Thesis: The Illusion (vv. 1–2)

B. YHWH’s Counter-Thesis: The Reality (vv. 3–4)

1. We can never truly understand human experience if we do not recognize God’s claims to our lives.
2. We can never have a true understanding of human experience if we do not recognize the true relationship between guilt and punishment, sin and retribution.

C. Three Case Studies in Divine Justice (18:5–18)

1. The Case of the Righteous Person (vv. 5–9)
2. The Case of His Wicked Son (vv. 10–13)
3. The Case of His Righteous Grandson (vv. 14–18)

D. The Rejoinder and Reply

1. The Question of Divine Justice (v. 19)
2. The Answer (v. 20)

Theological and Practical Lessons

1. We must repudiate any systemic doctrine of sin and retribution that allows one person to blame another for his/her fate.
2. To claim the status of a *ṣaddiq*, a “righteous person” requires that we demonstrate that righteousness in life.