

Ezekiel 19:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse continues Ezekiel's prophetic lament over Israel's kings, where the mother lioness represents Judah and her whelps symbolize the successive kings. The phrase "when she saw that she had waited" (ra'ah yachal) indicates a period of expectation that ended in disappointment—likely referring to the failed reign of one king.

"Her hope was lost" uses the Hebrew tikvah abad (תִּקְוָה אָבָד), literally "hope perished," conveying utter despair and the collapse of national expectations. The taking of "another of her whelps" shows the nation's attempt to find deliverance through human leadership rather than repentance before God. "Made him a young lion" (kephir, כְּפִיר) depicts training in royal power and ferocity.

This tragic cycle reveals Israel's persistent reliance on earthly kings despite repeated failures. Each successive monarch was hoped to be the deliverer, yet each ultimately failed because they led in pride and wickedness rather than humble dependence on Yahweh. The passage anticipates the need for the true Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5), Jesus Christ, who alone fulfills the hope that earthly kings could never achieve. Where human kingdoms fail, Christ's kingdom endures forever.

Historical Context

Ezekiel prophesied during the Babylonian exile (593-571 BC), and chapter 19 is a lament over Judah's final kings. The "whelps" likely refer to Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin (or Zedekiah), who were successively placed on the throne only to be captured and exiled. Jehoahaz reigned only three months before Pharaoh Necho deposed him (2 Kings 23:31-34).

The "mother lioness" represents Jerusalem or the Davidic dynasty. Ancient Near Eastern iconography often depicted royalty as lions, symbols of strength and sovereignty. Judah's tribal emblem was indeed a lion (Genesis 49:9), making this metaphor particularly pointed.

The historical context reveals the desperation of Judah's final decades. After Josiah's death (609 BC), the nation lurched from one failed king to another, each raising hopes of deliverance that ended in exile. The Babylonian conquest of 597 BC took Jehoiachin captive, and Zedekiah's rebellion led to Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC. Ezekiel's exilic audience would have felt the weight of this lament—their hope in human leadership had indeed perished.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where do you place your hope—in human leaders and institutions or in God alone?
2. How does this passage warn against the cycle of looking for deliverance in the wrong places?

3. What does this verse teach about the insufficiency of earthly power without divine blessing?
4. How does recognizing Christ as the true Lion of Judah reshape your political and social expectations?
5. What contemporary parallels do you see to Israel's pattern of failed human hopes?

Interlinear Text

וְיֵתְר֙ כִּי	נִזְחָלְתִּי	אֵתְךָ הַ	תְּקִרְבָּתְךָ	וְיָתְקַלְתִּי
Now when she saw	H3588	that she had waited	was lost	and her hope
H7200		H3176	H6	H8615

אֶתְתָּם	מִגְרָא	יָתָר	כִּי	שְׁמַתְתָּהָנָה
another	of her whelps	him a young lion	and made	
H259	H1482	H3715	H7760	

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