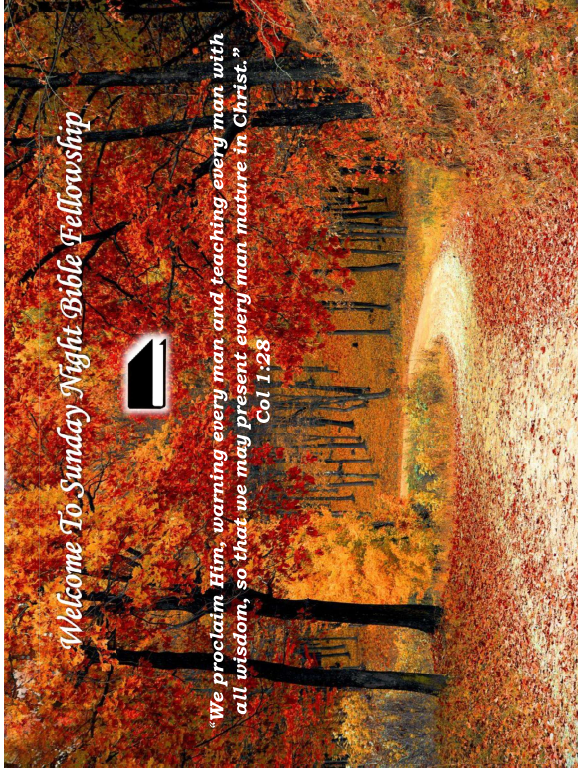




7 categories of the Psalms:

1. Praise and adoration (hymns that glorify the power, character, and majesty of God.) Ps. 131
2. Thanksgiving (express gratitude to God) Ps. 136
3. Royal (exalt the kingship of the Messiah) Ps. 110
4. wisdom (offer practical instruction) Ps. 1
5. Trust (declare confidence in God) Ps. 125
6. Lament (are cries for help. Most common – 1/3) Psalm 13
7. **Imprecatory (a call for God's judgment, justice and wrath on the wicked) Ps. 137**

Ps 137

1 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion.

- 2 Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps.
- 3 For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentor's mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
- 4 How can we sing the Lord's song In a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill.
- 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.
- 7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, "Raze it, raze it To its very foundation."
- 8 O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, How blessed will be the one who repays you With the recompense with which you have repaid us.
- 9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the rock.

"How Blessed Is The One Who Repays You."

Psalm 137

Oct. 25, 2026

1 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion.

- This is an "orphan psalm." One of the musicians wrote it,
- The historical context takes place when Israel had been captured and exiled in Babylon.
- This is so sad.
- The opening reminds us of the opening in the book of Lamentations . . .

Lam 1:1-2

- 1 How lonely sits the city That was full of people! She has become like a widow Who was once great among the nations!
- She who was a princess among the provinces Has become a forced laborer!
- 2 She weeps bitterly in the night And her tears are on her cheeks; She has none to comfort her Among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies.

1 *By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion.*

- The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers run through Babylon.
- Map . . .



1 *By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion.*

- It is here that the musicians of Israel wept.
- Their sadness is due to the memories they had of Zion, a name for the land of Israel and specifically Jerusalem.
- The author is setting the stage for what will be said at the end of the psalm.

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"Every line of this psalm is alive with pain, the intensity of which grows each strophe, all the way to the appalling climax."

- Derek Kidner

2 *Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps.*

- Why did they hang their harps? Because they did not want to play their instruments.
- The willows provided a safe storage space.



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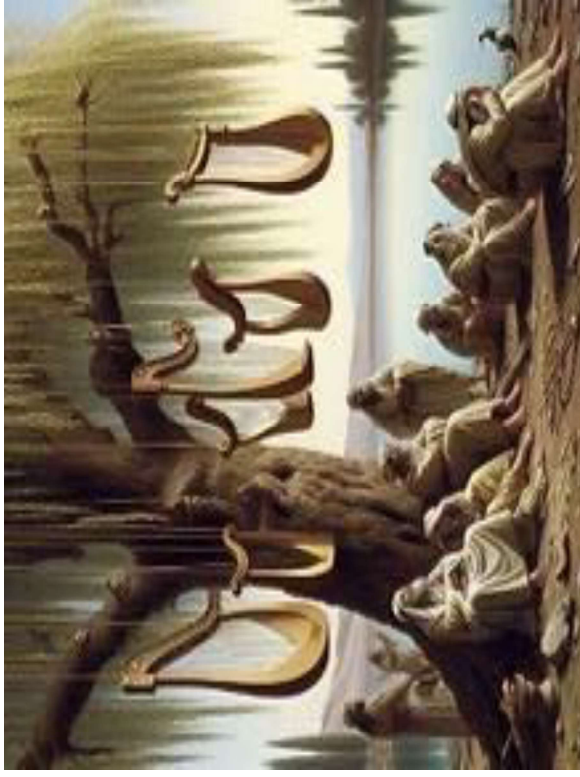
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3 For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentor's mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

- To make matters even worse, they were tormented by the Babylonians who were giddy over those captured.

"mirth" - מִיִּמְחָה **simchah** (sim-khaw') - exceeding joy and gladness, glee, to rejoice, taking great pleasure.

- This was rubbing salt in the wound.

- **Remember:** The Babylonians (Chaldeans) were a ruthless, ungodly, wicked, evil people.

- Israel was known for their festivals, joyous celebrations. There was much instrumental music, singing, dancing.

- Now they are taunted – "Come on Jews, let's hear a little of that festive music."

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4 How can we sing the Lord's song In a foreign land?

- However, there was no rejoicing.

- "We are here against our will, we are in a foreign land."

- **Note:** It is interesting to see that this is the "Lord's" song. An indication that they understood who the singing is for.

- There is a lot of music and singing in the world.

- But there are songs which are set aside for our worship of God. Don't try to pattern godly music after worldly music.

- Our music should be in some way different.

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- **Option:** Israel could have put Jerusalem in the "rearview." Kind of a "that was then, this is now" mentality. Some kind of change in life can produce that – move to a different place, job, new phase –college to career.
- **"Jerusalem"** represents, not just the physical location, but the Temple, the feasts, the festivals, the sacrifices, the fellowship, the celebrating, etc.
- So now the musicians declare a 2-fold curse upon themselves.
- The first involves the ability to play their instruments.
- "May I lose my skill."
- In other words, if I can't play to exalt God, then I'll remain silent.

6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.

2. Second curse involves singing. A clinging tongue prevents singing.
- Would it bother you if you could no longer sing?
- Apparently, they came to the realization of what they had lost.
- What they had in Jerusalem was their greatest joy above all else.
- Sometimes God has to take something away from us in order for us to appreciate it.

7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, "Raze it, raze it To its very foundation."

- Now the psalm shifts.
- It now becomes imprecatory.
- The author begins with Edom.
- Here is a nation that descended from Esau, which was and is the perpetual enemy of Israel, even to this present day.
- Edom stood on the sidelines and cheered while Babylon overtook and captured Israel (Judah).
- They cheered to "level" Jerusalem. To take it right down to the studs and then burn the studs. All that would be left would be the foundation.
- So, the cry is to "remember" Edom and to do to Edom likewise, as Edom desired to do to Israel.
- The entire book of Obadiah is about God's judgment on Edom for this incident.

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Isa 13:17-19

17 Behold, I am going to stir up the **Medes** against them,

Who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold.

18 And their bows will mow down the young men,

They will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, Nor will their eye pity children.

19 And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride,

Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

8 O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, How blessed will be the one who repays you With the recompense with which you have repaid us.

- Now the author turns to Babylon.
- **Note:** This is not a personal vendetta. This is not personal vengeance. This is a plea for justice. Like the justice we desire for one who murders, or against a child-molester.
- The psalmist is invoking God for the judicial punishment of the wicked.
- **"Blessed . . ."** – you can really feel the emotion.
- The author is calling for justice on a national basis. Notice the equality he desires.

Ex 21:23-25

23 "But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,

24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

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- This has been a difficult verse for some.
- "Where is the love for your enemies, especially for little children?"
- **Note:** No one is born innocent.
- **Ps 51:5**
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin, my mother conceived me.
- **Rom 5:12-21.**
• Again, this is a call for justice.
- A plea to God for retributive justice.
- **Remember:** Pharaoh ordered all Hebrew boys to be thrown into the Nile River. God, in turn, therefore in the 10th plague killed all Egyptian firstborn male babies.
- Back to Lamentations . . .

Lam 2:11-12

11 My eyes fail because of tears,

My spirit is greatly troubled;

My heart is poured out on the earth

Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,

When **little ones and infants** faint

In the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,

"Where is grain and wine?"

As **they faint** like a wounded man

In the streets of the city,

As their life is poured out

On their mothers' bosom.

Lam 2:19-20

19 "Arise, cry aloud in the night
At the beginning of the night watches;
Pour out your heart like water
Before the presence of the Lord;
Lift up your hands to Him
For the life of **your little ones**
Who are **faint because of hunger**
At the head of every street."
20 See, O Lord, and look!
With whom have You dealt thus?
Should women eat their offspring,
The **little ones** who were born healthy?

Lam 4:4,10

4 The tongue of the **infant** cleaves
To the roof of its mouth because of **thirst**;
The **little ones ask for bread**,
But no one breaks it for them.
10 The hands of compassionate women
Boiled their own children;
They became food for them

During 7-year Tribulation

Isa 13:16

16 Their **little ones** also will be dashed to pieces
Before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ravished.

Application

1. Our chief joy must be in the Lord and His Church.
2. We should have a passionate desire for justice.
3. Our enemies should be familiar with the songs that we sing.
4. Be careful of changes in your life and their effect upon your spiritual life.

"Let those find fault with it. who have never seen their temple burned, their city ruined, their wives ravished, and their children slain; they might not, perhaps, be quite so velvet-mouthed if they had suffered after this fashion."

- Spurgeon