

Evening Sermon / February 27, 2022 / "Singing the Blues in Babylon!"
Psalm 137

I. *Weeping, remembering and forced singing -*

¹ **By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion.**
² **We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. ³ For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" Psalm 137:1-2 (NKJV)**

1. *A review of the history, it was Israel's own fault Jerusalem was destroyed, Babylon was the place they were dwelling, it was part of God's punishment that they were banned from the good land –*

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand... Daniel 1:1–2 A (NKJV)

2. *It was not only the king who was taken to Babylon but many others, their sadness is expressed here –*

A. *By the rivers –*

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept... :1

All languages know of brooks, or streams of tears, compare in Scripture, Lamentations 2:18; "Let tears run down like a river day and night"; 3:48; also Job 28:11, where inversely the gushing of the floods is called *weeping* (Marg.). The children of Israel placed themselves beside the streams of Babel because they saw in them the image and symbol of their floods of tears. —E W Hengstenberg

B. **we sat down - :1** --- *Not fighting, or running, walking, not moving much at all, but settled in their sadness, realizing escape is at least to a degree hopeless ...*

C. *Their weeping was in regard to better days – we wept When we remembered Zion. :1*

- *They are desiring what they had lost*
- *Probably realizing it was their own FAULT; how many who take church for granted today would miss it greatly if gone?*

D. *Their sadness made their harps seem useless – ² We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. :2 Harps were made for praising God! Created for that purpose!*

Some learn to joyously praise God even in the midst of persecution –

²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. Acts 16:23–26 (NKJV)

3. *Forced singing, mocked singing - and those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" Psalm 137:2 (NKJV) Psalm 46 & Psalm 48, are examples of Psalms that speak of the glories of Zion, Jerusalem, yet NOW all knew it was rubble ...*

II. How shall we sing?

⁴ How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? Psalm 137:4 (NKJV)

Note, the question is asked, and yet the Psalm, Psalm 137, a song they probably sung, is the answer to their question –

1. Sing appropriately to the circumstance –

God delights in honesty –

A. Jesus Himself quotes a Psalm from His cross –

¹ My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? Psalm 22:1 (NKJV)

B. When I preach, my preaching should be appropriate to the passage, so too if I preach about a circumstance in the world, so I should preach appropriately –

C. This applies not only to singing and preaching but to all our conversation –

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15 (NKJV)

What the Babylonians were demanding from the enslaved and beaten Israelites was the extreme opposite of what is commanded in Romans 12:15.

2. Sing remembering the best –

A. Jerusalem, but beyond Jerusalem God –

⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget *its skill!* ⁶ If I do not remember you, Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth— If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy. Psalm 137:5 (NKJV)

B. Jerusalem was destroyed, and yet not the BEST part of it ...

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, *In* His holy mountain. Psalm 48:1 (NKJV)

Jerusalem was destroyed and yet God was still alive and well, He would rule, even in Babylon and today we do not need Jerusalem to worship God –

²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:21–24 (NKJV)

3. Sing remembering in bad times, under cruel people, God is just –

A. He knows the fair weather, false brothers, who would cheer for your downfall -

⁷ Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, Who said, “Raze *it*, raze *it*, To its very foundation!” Psalm 137:7

¹⁷ A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV) *Esau, Edom was not a true brother ...*

B. He will destroy His and our enemies – see Matthew 5:44-48 & Romans 12:17-21

⁸ O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, Happy the one who repays you as you have served us! ⁹ Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock! Psalm 137:8-9

Arnold A. Brevick