

Summer of Psalms
A Psalm of Lament – Psalm 137
August 26, 2018

O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed, blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us! **-Psalm 137:8**

I. THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

- Judah went into exile in 586 B.C. There were limited deportations in 605 and 597 B.C. as well (2 Kings 20; 23:26-27; 24:14-16, 25; Isa. 39; Ezek. 1:1; Dan. 1:1-7).
- The captivity lasted until 515 B.C., when the Jews rebuilt their temple (Ezra 1:1; 6:13-18). Jerusalem was secured with a wall under Nehemiah in 445 B.C. (Neh. 6:15).

II. A CORPORATE LAMENT (vss. 1-6)

- The Jews, while captive in a foreign land, lamented (remembered and wept) over the loss of their homeland, the holy city of Jerusalem, and in particular—Zion (Jer. 52; Lam. 1).
- Psalms of lament make up a full third of the Psalter.
- The Jews in exile were intent on never forgetting what they had left behind (vss. 4-6).

III. A CRY FOR JUSTICE (vss. 7-9)

- The Assyrians and Babylonians were particularly harsh in their treatment of conquered peoples (2 Kings 8:12; 2 Chron. 36:15-17; Jer. 52:25-27; Hos. 10:14; Nah. 3:10).
- The Edomites were relatives to the Jews, but they celebrated Jerusalem's destruction (Obad. 10-14).
- Babylon, the destroyer of Judah, would herself be destroyed in 539 B.C. (Jer. 51; Dan. 5:13-30).

IV. LESSONS FOR US

1. It is good and proper for us to appropriately lament (Matt. 23:37-39; Mark 9:14-29; 15:34; 1 Pet. 1:6-9).
2. We are in a spiritual war. War necessitates strong words and actions (Matt. 23; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:9; 3:1; 5:11).
3. Vengeance is for God, not for us. We may pray for justice, but (generally speaking) we are not called upon to enact it (Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:19).
4. It is right to pray for God's righteous judgment (Ps. 55:22; Rev. 6:10).

KNOW: There is no shame in crying out to God for vindication, but final justice lies in the hands of God, and no other.

DO: Seek comfort and justice from God alone.

Recommended Reading:

The Hidden Smile of God by John Piper (LifePoint Library #266 PIP)

When the Darkness Will Not Lift by John Piper (LifePoint Library #248.86 PIP)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Psalm 137

1. What is the "theme" of this psalm?
2. What are your thoughts on the "lament" section of this psalm (verse 1-6)? Is the lament justified?
3. Have you ever been called upon to rejoice when you were in a time of suffering or mourning? How did that make you feel?
4. What are your thoughts concerning the "imprecatory" or judgment section of this psalm (verses 7-9)?
5. When do you think it is appropriate to call on God to bring justice against someone or something? What precautions must be considered?
6. What is your takeaway from this psalm and this message?