

# Psalm 137

**The theme of this Psalm is thoughts of a person in exile who is finding it hard to sing songs of joy to the Creator God.**

**Psalms 137:1** [New King James] *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.”*

Israel’s captivity in Babylon is often associated with rivers, [**Ezra 8:15; Ezekiel 1:1**]. The captives may even have been used as slave labour on irrigation works.

But in this passage of scripture it is not their suffering as slaves but the mere sight of the Babylon landscape, so different from that of Zion, that prompts the tears.

A decisive laying aside of musical instruments was the reaction to a request from their captors for Hebrew music, [**verses 2-4**].

**Psalms 137:5-6** [New King James] *“If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! 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.”*

**In a foreign land the people had the sense of rejection and being cast off by the Creator God. Therefore they could not act as though nothing had happened and all was well.**

The Psalmist knew the seriousness of sin as alienating the Eternal God and separating His people from Him, [**Isaiah 59:2**].

Note the strong element of self-implication in these two verses.

**The things of God are intended to have priority, otherwise life becomes a curse involving loss of facilities.**

Forgetting Jerusalem or failing to treasure it above everything else was to side with the Babylonian and Edomite foes of the sacred city, and will experience the pain that these nations will presently receive from the Creator God, [**verse 7**] because they have joined themselves to the cruel Satan-controlled world, [**John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19**].

Our personal sin can place us in this evil world unless we acknowledge them before the Triune God, repent of them and ask for the sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ to replace our deserved death, [**Romans 6:23**] and free us from the captivity of sin, [**Romans 6:1-8**].

**Psalms 137:8-9** [New King James] *“O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us! Happy the one who takes and dashes your little ones against the rock!”*

These are **not** a statement of divine retribution but an acknowledgement of the Satan-inspired human methods of reprisal as found for example in Babylon and other evil human countries that are still in his power in our generation.