

Psalm 137

by Henry Law

The captive Jews' devotion to Zion is a powerful expression of their longing for their homeland, and their vow to remember Jerusalem is a testament to their faithfulness.

Scripture: Psalm 137:1-5, Psalm 137:7

Topics: "Exile And Lament", "Gods Justice"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the lament of the captive Jews in Babylon, expressing their deep sorrow and longing for Zion. Despite being mocked by their captors to sing songs of Zion, the captives refuse, unable to find joy in a foreign land. Their devotion to Jerusalem is unwavering, declaring that even their skills and speech should fail if they ever forget their beloved city. The captives call upon the Lord to remember the wickedness of Edom and Babylon, expressing confidence in God's justice and ultimate victory over their enemies.

Transcript

A plaintive ode bewails the misery of the captive Jews. Their devotion to their country is avowed. Woe on their enemies is called down in language of prediction.

1. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

A pensive group is pictured. We see the mourning captives seated by the banks of the waters of Babylon. Fast flowing tears betoken the anguish of their wounded hearts. Where does this pitiful grief come from? They are removed from their beloved Zion. Their thoughts uncaptured wander through their early haunts. Can reflection fail to weep? Hard are the hearts which mourn not when parted from their native land and the loved ordinances of God's house.

2. "We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

The harps once used in public service, and as the solace of their homes, now bring no joy. Their sight awakens pangs of regret. Therefore they hang untouched upon the neighboring trees.

3. "For there those who carried us away captive required of us a song; and those who wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

Their insulting captors mocked their misery. In derision they bade them tune again their harps, and for amusement to sing as in the happy days of Zion. Tender feeling is a stranger to the hearts of the enemies of God.

4. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

A sad response checks the taunting wish. The pensive captives reply that no melody could proceed from them. They are far distant from their much-loved Zion; and sounds of woe can be their only utterance.

5-6. "If I forget You, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember You, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The claims of Jerusalem on the warmest affections are forcibly expressed. It is desired that all intelligence may decline, if Jerusalem ever ceased to be the much-loved object of the heart. Forgetfulness of skill and silent lips should be the lot of those who could prefer any happiness to that of thought of Jerusalem. We should, indeed, rank as unworthy of any blessing, if ever we failed to exalt You, O blessed Jesus, as chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely.

7-9. "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to its foundations. O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed; happy shall he be, who rewards you as you have served us. Happy shall he be, who takes and dashes your little ones against the stones."

If the final issue be brought into view, it will be seen how happy are the captives as contrasted with their subjugators. The former suffer anguish for a brief period, the latter are doomed to everlasting destruction. Let us bless God that shelter is provided in Christ Jesus from the indignation and wrath ready to fall on mystic Babylon.

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