

Lesson 145

Psalm 137

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 137 is a lament Psalm with an unknown author. It was written during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. It is a dark, sad, introspective, imprecatory Psalm which records the emotion of the captives of Israel as they suffer the consequences of their sin.
- B. In this Psalm, we can learn some great principles about suffering and how God uses it as a means to “grow us in grace.” The theme of this Psalm could very well be “do not forget Jerusalem.” Jerusalem was the city of the great King, God was in her palaces, He was known as her refuge. (Ps 48:2,3)
- C. We will spend much of our time looking at the parallels and applications to us, the church today, as we lament the condition of our world!
- D. John Bunyan said, “you that are called born of God, and Christians, if you be not criers, there is no spiritual life in you.” Scripture tells us we are to weep, mourn, be sorrowful for the conditions of our land, without forgetting God is our sovereign, our hope, our victor, the one who will finally and ultimately avenge Himself upon all His enemies!

II. The Great Lament (v1-4)

- A. A great distance from home-It was nine hundred miles from Jerusalem to Babylon. The Psalmist described the location of the captivity as being by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The Psalmist said “we sat down” this implies a resignation to being there for a long time, adding to the sense of despair, hopelessness, and futility. (Jeremiah 16:9-13; 14-21)
- B. We wept-A deep sense of sorrow was the prevailing emotion. The “nation was in servitude to the Babylonians, lived beneath the shadow of the temple of Bel, and was helpless under a cruel enemy. Everything reminded them of their banishment from the holy city.” (Spurgeon) (Lamentations 1:1-3,5-9,14-18, 2:4,6,8-9,14,17-19; Jeremiah 52; 2 Chron 36:17-21)
- C. When we remembered Zion. What did Jeremiah tell them to do while they were in captivity? (Jeremiah 29:4-14) What did Solomon tell them to do in his prophecy regarding the captivity? (1 Kings 8:46-53) What did Moses tell them to do? (Deut 28:47-67)
- D. Mockery of the enemy. They requested mirth, and mocked and humiliated them sarcastically by saying “sing us one of the songs of Zion.” (Ps 46,48,76,84,87,122) This reminds me of Samson! (Judges 16:23-30)
- E. How do we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land? This is a rhetorical question with an obvious answer of “we cannot.”

III. The Great Loyalty (v5-6)

- A. We cannot forget Jerusalem. (Ps 122:6-9, 102:18-22, 128:5-6,)
- B. We must exalt Jerusalem. (Ps 147:12-14; 68:28-30, 72:8-11,17-19) We notice that the remembrance of Jerusalem must be above my chief joy! This emphasizes what?

IV. The Great Imprecatory Prayer (v7-9)

- A. Against Edom-These references are the response of the Edomites in their alliance against Israel with the Babylonians. (Ezekiel 25:12-14, 35:11-13; Obadiah v10-15; Num 20:14-21)
- B. Against Babylon-This imprecatory is largely predictive; it warns Babylon that they will be avenged by God for their mistreatment of the nation of Israel. (Jeremiah 50:14-20, 51:5-10)

V. The Great Parallels and Applications to the Church

- A. Babylon, though a literal place and kingdom, also represents wicked systems of religion and economics! (Gen 11, Isaiah 14:3-23, Rev 17,18) It represents our current state in the church and our nation.
- B. We are to weep over the state of our church, nation, and world.
- C. We are to remember the promises of God toward us.
- D. We are to trust God that He will avenge our enemies.
- E. We are to look to the millennial kingdom and the heavenly Jerusalem.
- F. We are to do as Jeremiah commanded Israel: pray, not be deceived, grow our families and teach them God’s way, remember His promises to us.

