

Home Group Notes 3

Psalm 137

How can we sing if others take the mick?

****Context** Psalm 137 shows us the main context in the first line. 'By the rivers of Babylon' means this is the song of the Old Testament people of God who had been taken away into exile.

- 1. Read Ezekiel 3:12-15** Here it describes the presence of God with them in exile in Babylon by the river system, but make a list of the words which are used to describe how Ezekiel is feeling?
- 2. Why do you think Ezekiel is feeling such strong negative feelings when the presence of God is with him so demonstrably?**
- 3. **Text** Read Psalm 137v1-4 Why does the psalm say they are feeling such strong negative feelings?
- 4. How does this affect their worship of the Lord? Why did they hang up their harps?**
- 5. How is your praying and singing to the Lord affected when other people try to make you do it, or try to take the mickey?**
- 6. One of the issues was the demand to sing some songs of Zion. Read v3-6** The songs of Zion were those psalms which had a particular focus on Jerusalem as the city at the centre of God's purposes. Everyone in the group could read one of the different songs of Zion: Psalms **46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122**. Can you understand why they couldn't sing these in captivity in Babylon at that time?
- 7. Do your special memories of good times in church in the past compromise your enthusiasm for church now? Should they?**
- 8. Could the exiles in Babylon have decided to sideline the mockery by singing some of the other types of psalms instead? Should they?**

- 9. The Old Covenant people of God had Jerusalem as part of the focus of their hope for the future, but the New Covenant promises are to do with the New Jerusalem. Eg Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelation 21** Where is the New Jerusalem for us, the New Testament people of God? Is that where you invest your hope and treasure?
- 10. There is still a lot of feeling for Jerusalem in today's world, particularly amongst many Muslims, many Jews, many Christians, for varying reasons. This was illustrated when President Trump recently enacted the long-standing US policy of moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem. Then many English people like singing the rousing hymn which says Jerusalem is to be built here in our green and pleasant land. Do you have views about Jerusalem and by whom are they informed?**
- 11. Read v.7-9** Some say these verses should not be part of the psalm and choose to miss them out or ignore them. Are you someone who chooses to bypass bits of scripture you don't like?
- 12. How would you have felt if Poynton was reduced to rubble by foreign invaders, egged on by enemies closer to home? How would you have felt if local children had been killed in front of you in a cruel way? Are feelings of revenge understandable? Are they not part of a cry for justice? Is it helpful for understandable feelings of revenge to be expressed in songs of worship to God?**
- 13. Is this prayer like the Christian way: 'vengeance is the Lord's'?**
- 14. Are you able to express your raw emotions in prayer? Can the psalms help you to do so?**
- 15. If you were visiting the hospital bedside of a Christian from Mosul who had lost everything, might you choose to read this psalm?**

Prayer Points

Pray for God's people who are experiencing gut-wrenching sadness
Pray for the PF in India, facing difficult times of government interference and pray for Thomas and his family seeking to help and encourage
Pray for those you know who are facing difficulties in life, that we/they may know the Lord's presence and strength to continue, and find good psalms to express their feelings in a faithful helpful way