

## *PSALMS 137 and 138*

Taking into consideration the use of the past tense in verses 1-3, it may perhaps be that the Israelites had just returned from their captivity and are remembering what transpired during their degradation in Babylon; but in this we cannot be absolutely certain. However, we can be certain that these words speak of the undying love of a Jew for his country, and the overwhelming sorrow he felt when away from it and living among scoffing and hateful enemies. In this plaintive psalm he recalls the treachery of Edom and Babylon, and prays for Yahweh's vengeance against them. Let us not be quick to find fault with the harshness of the Psalmist's language, for we have never seen our church burned, our city ruined, our wives ravished, and our children killed. It is one thing to talk about the bitter feelings that moved captive Jews, and quite another to be captives ourselves under a savage and remorseless power that knew not how to show mercy but delighted in barbarities, not only to the defenseless, but to the most defenseless of all--infants.

### Psalm 137

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 2 Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps.
- 3 For there our captors demanded of us songs,  
and our tormentors mirth, *saying*, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
  
- 4 How can we sing YAHWEH'S song in a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget *her skill*.
- 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you,  
if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.
  
- 7 Remember, O YAHWEH, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem,  
who said, "Raze it, raze it to its very foundation."
- 8 O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one  
who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us.
- 9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock.

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Here is a psalm of David, according to Spurgeon, "exhibiting all the fidelity, courage, and decision of that King of Israel and Prince of Psalmists. In full confidence David is prepared to own his God before the gods of the heathen, or before angels or rulers (1-3); he declares that he will instruct and convert kings and nations, till on every highway men shall sing the praises of the Lord (4 and 5). Having thus spoken, he utters his personal confidence in Jehovah, who will help his lowly servant, and preserve him from all the malice of wrathful foes."

Psalm 138  
A Psalm of David

- 1 I will give You thanks with all my heart; I will sing praises to You before the gods.
- 2 I will bow down toward Your holy temple  
and give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth;  
for You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.
- 3 On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.
  
- 4 All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O YAHWEH,  
when they have heard the words of Your mouth.
- 5 And they will sing of the ways of YAHWEH, for great is the glory of YAHWEH.
- 6 For though YAHWEH is exalted, yet He regards the lowly,  
but the haughty He knows from afar.
  
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;  
You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies,  
and Your right hand will save me.
- 8 YAHWEH will accomplish what concerns me;  
Your lovingkindness, O YAHWEH, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Your hands.

PRAYER

*Almighty Lord God, we have been placed on this earth in a state of trial. Grant that our longings and desires may be raised above the fleeting concerns of this world and focused on singing your praises and showing forth your mighty works. You know that we are but dust, ready to fall when temptations come. Give us strength to stand firm, having our soul anchored on the rock of our salvation, Jesus our Messiah. Support and comfort us in all our dangers and stretch forth your right hand to save and deliver us. And let us daily rejoice in all the opportunities for serving you here on earth, that when our day of departure comes we may serve you with everlasting joy hereafter. Hear us now, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*