

How shall we sing the Lords song

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[0 : 00] This turn now to the book of Sanctus and to Psalm 137. Psalm 137, as some are sure many are familiar with.

We'll just read the old Psalm through the context. By the water to the bottom there will be sat down and wet, as you remembered Zion.

In the widows there will be hung up our riars or our harps, for there our captors required of us songs. And our tormentors' birthdays sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land, if I could get to you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill, let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joint.

Remember, O Lord, against thee, the minds of their Jerusalem, how they said, lay it bare, lay it bare down to its foundations. O daughter of Babylon, doom to be destroyed, lest it shall he be who pays you with what you have done to us.

[1 : 20] Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock. Now, one to look particularly perhaps at the Psalm in general, but especially at the four in the Psalm here, how shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

That is why the singing this evening have all been songs of exile from Jerusalem.

We don't know who wrote this, there's no inscription to tell us on it, and there are many opinions by commentators about who actually wrote it.

It's obviously written by someone who was involved in the exile, something that Ezra wrote it, others that it might have been Nehemiah and there's even a school of thought that says it could have been Davio who wrote it, others say perhaps the Seed here, but these are all speculations, we have no clear indication as to who wrote it.

But what is clear from it is that it is written in and during the exile. We see that so clearly in the first verse by the Walthers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.

[2 : 42] And you will find in several occasions the people of Israel, I shouldn't say Israel, because it's really the kingdom of Judah, those of Judah and Benjamin who had been taken into exile here, we'll clarify that in a moment, but several times we find for example, Ezekiel was sitting by the river Kedah when he sees his various visions and so on, and that they seem to have gathered together in exile by certain streams of rivers, perhaps round about the river of Babylon, Babylon itself, the Tigris River flowing through it, when we remembered Zion.

And again you can see the sadness that comes through in the second and the third verse. On the willows there we hung up our lines, but refutedly is what has given its name to the weeping willow from then on, that the willow is a symbol of the sign mix.

For there our captors required the songs and our tormentors' birthday, sing us one of the songs of Zion. Now we have to be very careful in our understanding of the term Zion in Scripture.

It's an initial reference in Zion, which you'll find early on in Scripture, is to a hill. It's not really a mountain, it was a hill.

And if you think of Jerusalem, I'm sure you're all familiar with modern day pictures of Jerusalem where you see the dome of the rock and the mosque in the middle, but originally on either side of this site there were two hills.

[4 : 28] One was Zion and the other one was Mount Moriah. And you will remember, of course, that Moriah was where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac.

And Zion in Scripture tends to be used interchangeably to refer to the place where later the temple will be built, the Temple of Solomon is built in the middle between the two hillocks, or what was left of them.

And very often it's simply used to refer to the holy place of the Lord God. You'll find New Testament references, again in the book of Revelation particularly, which we'll look at in a minute or two, that tend to take Zion as the place of God's presence, rather than referring to it as the geographical location, which was covered over eventually by the city of Jerusalem.

And it is here, sing us one of the songs of Zion, it is from this request that we get this verse, how shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

And we have to clarify here perhaps why the Jews, the people here, were in a foreign land. What the foreign land was.

[5 : 52] And this involves a little bit of a history lesson perhaps. But some of you might find evidently boring, but if you do, talk.

But it's very important to know the difference between the two. Judah and Benjamin had been taken into exile into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

Jerusalem fell in 587 BC, but that was not the first taking away of the people. As we read in the passage of Jeremiah, there are quite a number, just go back to the beginning of it for a second, you'll see this was after King Jehoniah and the Queen Mother, the Eunuchs, the officials, the craftsmen, and the Neckle workers had departed from Jerusalem.

And that was the first wave of exile. And among those who were taken away in that wave was Dan. But there was a second invasion later on when Cedekiah rebelled against the pain tribute to Nebuchadnezzar.

And Nebuchadnezzar came again, or he sent his armies with Nezap, Neberas, Adam, if I remember the name correctly, to actually destroy Jerusalem.

[7 : 11] That is where the city and the Temple of Solomon are completely destroyed. And virtually everyone then is eliminated from the city, the city is left desolate, and only the very poor are left around about the outskirts of what had been Jerusalem in order to cultivate the land.

And that is of course the warning that is given in the passage that we read again in Jeremiah 29-17. Thus says the Lord of hosts, behold I am sending on them.

That is those who are still dwelling there, warned about your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile, soared famine and pestilence, and I will make them like vile things that are so rotten they cannot be.

I will pursue them and make them a horror to all kingdoms of the earth, etc., etc. And one has to ask why? What was God's purpose in doing this to the people of Jerusalem, to the Jews, particularly to the time of Judah and Benjamin?

Because you will remember of course that the other ten tribes of Israel had already been taken into captivity in Assyria quite some considerable time before this, after the split of the two kingdoms under Red Abore.

[8 : 35] And the ten tribes have taken away into captivity, have settled throughout Assyria, and there they disappear.

We never hear of the ten other tribes again. None of them ever come back to Israel, geographic Israel again.

And the land of Israel there, the northern kingdom, is repopulated by people from Assyria, which leads to the mixed race problem that then brings the problem of the Samaritans.

That's why you remember in the New Testament how the Jews rejected the Samaritans. You should remember the parable of the good Samaritan, etc., because they maintained that the Samaritans were mixed race.

They were not pure Jews, they were mixed race with Assyrians and others, and therefore did not have the right to worship God in the same way as they did. And then that's another story called together.

[9 : 39] But at this point then, we don't know at what stage in the captivity that this land is composed, but it seems to be composed perhaps towards the end of the captivity.

And again we have to be careful with the word captivity here. Scripture tends to use, or to be more correct, the translations tend to use two words interchangeably. One, exile, and the other, captivity. But the two things mean quite different things. We take for example the children of Israel and Egypt at the time after Joseph, they are in captivity because they are slaves, they are being used as slaves.

But that is not the case in Babylon. In Babylon they are taken there as exiles, they are not slaves. And as you saw again from what God says to Jeremiah and the letter, they are encouraged not only to live there, but to multiply.

Take why build houses and live in them, plant gardens, seek their progress. Take wives and have sons and daughters, take wives for your sons, give your daughters and marriage so they may bear sons and daughters.

[10:53] Multiply there and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf. For in its welfare you will find welfare.

And that is a very different picture to the picture that you have of Israel, of the children of Israel in captivity in Egypt. Why did God send them into exile?

Well again if you go through the history of Israel, you will find that time and time again from the moment virtually that they leave Egypt, time and time again Israel worship idols.

It wasn't so very long after they had crossed the Red Sea, while Moses and Joshua are up on the mountain, you will remember that they worship the golden calf.

Which Aaron made from the earrings again, it was the golden calf, it was a symbol of one of the gods of Egypt, that God the Lord God had proved his superiority over in the various calves.

[12:07] And ever from then on, from the time they come into the Promised Land, if you look at the story of Israel in the Book of Judges, you find time and time again that Israel falls into idolatry.

It's quite an amazing thing really when you think of all that God has done for, all the promises that he has given of the fulfillment of bringing them into the Promised Land, of settling in there and blessing them, that one of the first things they do is worship the gods of the people around the world.

Why would that be? Well many suggest, many commentators suggest that one of the reasons for it was that when they saw how prosperous some of the nations round about them were, that they thought that was because of the gods that they worshiped.

But there were probably many other reasons as well. You can see in the last couple of chapters of the Book of Judges how the tribe of Dan falls gradually into idolatry, and how Dan is the first to introduce idolatry into Israel, and from there it seems to spread and spread and spread.

And as you go through the history of Israel, you find that time and time again, God pushed them all away to self-judges, then the prophets, the kings, etc.

[13:34] And the more kings there are, the worse some of them seem to be coming. There were of course glory days, the days of David, the days of Solomon, the temple, etc.

But the whole of Israel was united in the worship of God. But there were other times when the worship of Jehovah was almost eliminated from the people of Israel.

All you have to do is look at the reign of Manasseh, by these stories and kings, kings and chronicles. You find Manasseh that he attempts to eliminate the worship of God a hundred percent from Jerusalem, and the scripture puts it, he makes the streets of the city run with innocent blood. Among those that he killed, or had killed, was the prophet Isaiah. You will remember, again, I think George MacAskill touched on it on Sunday morning here, how Isaiah had been sawn in half by being tied to a tree.

And it was Manasseh who ordered his execution in that particular way. But Manasseh is then taken because of his rebellion and plain tribute. He is taken to Babylon, captured and taken to Babylon, and there he is converted.

[14:51] He, like his father, has a calf before him, attempts to re-establish the worship of the God of Israel. And so it goes on throughout the history of particularly Judah and Benjamin, the history of Jerusalem, the history of the temple, that the pendulum swings all the time.

The times they are worshipping God, almost, one would say, 100 percent of their hearts. And yet, very shortly afterwards, the pendulum swings the other side, and you find that they are worshipping all the idols of Jerusalem.

Idols that have been brought from those who are in the market. And you remember, of course, the veils and satyrs and the God Dagon and so on, and the various mollusks and the various other gods that the nations round about.

And it's a very relevant question. Why is it that people who had seen so much blessing from God turned to worshipping idols?

God wants time and time again. He wants them through the prophets. He sends prophet after prophet to them, but yet they refuse to listen.

[16:14] This is what he says. And God says in verse 18, he says, I will make them a reproach among all the nations that I have done because they did not pay attention to my words, nor that I persistently sent to you by my servants and prophets, but you would not listen.

One after the other, it's the same as spiritually through of what is going on in our own country nowadays. There was a time when Scotland, driven, would have been passed as a Christian country.

And yet, how the pendulum has swung away from that. If you read some of the statistics now in church attendance, people who say that they are Christians and the British idols, it makes frightening way how the pendulum has swung.

And yet, this is cyclical. It seems to happen, happens to the history of the Jews, and it seems to happen to places where Christianity was strong and at one time in the history of the world, no longer exists now.

Look at modern day Turkey, where Paul planted so many churches. It's hardly a Christian church. I believe there's one or two in Istanbul, but that's about all the Turkey.

[17:44] Look at North Africa, come through to the 9th century. Who do you find? You find Augustine of Hippo. Hippo was a city in North Africa in modern day Tunisia, by the way, where Christianity was strong.

How many centuries has it been since the Muslim world eliminated Christianity from North Africa? It's beginning to come back now again. You find the same thing in other places as well.

You see the cyclical swing throughout history of how Christianity seems to be strong in a place for a while and then moves on.

When did Christianity become strong here in our own island? Not really until midway through the 18th century. It's the pendulum beginning to swing again and that is beginning to disappear.

It's the same where our own island is simply a reflection of our own country. Yet the Lord's word is strong in other places in the world but it wasn't strong before.

[18:56] Look at the Americas, for example, North and South America. Look how the Lord's word is now getting ground in places like China and parts of Asia, where churches are growing stronger for there wasn't a Christian presence for many, many years.

This seems to be something cyclical but God had a totally different purpose in the exile here. His purpose was to cleanse the Jews from idolatry.

And time and time again he reminds them of the covenants the various covenants that he has made with him and yet so often again he accuses them.

God accuses the people of Israel of falling into adultery. That's the phrase that's used so often throughout scripture for the breaking of the covenant.

And you find throughout scripture that the marriage covenant is used as an illustration of this from very early scripture right through the look of Ephesians 5, for example, where Paul speaks about the marriage bond and then he says at the end of the chapter he says, but I speak, this is a great mystery, he says that I speak of Christ and his church.

[20:13] And it is this state of idolatry that God is cleansing. It's interesting that the Babylonians did not settle in Israel.

They left it desolate unlike the Assyrians, the Assyrians did. Sent out of there, but the Babylonians did. But yet all the time of the captivity, the 70 years of the captivity, those exiled never worshipped idols.

They were given the freedom to pursue their own worship. That was one of the great principles of the Babylonian empire that wherever it conquered it allowed it to not impose its own culture on top of those conquered, but allowed them to continue their own customs.

The Jews in Babylon continued their worship of God. Now if you look at the book of Daniels, of course you will find again various things there, how it points, there was objections to Daniel's worshipping, etc. but all these were overcome.

You find the same in the secret as well, if you want to study that in detail and have a look at that there. But it is in Babylon that the Jews worship good synagogues.

[21:34] There was no temple of course, they had no place of worship and it seems at first that they would gather together, as we see in the psalm, that they would gather in certain places

particularly by the banks of the rivers and there they would sit down and wait and weep and remember psalm.

What were they remembering? They were remembering of course the temple, they were remembering the destruction of the temple and they were remembering the fact that the destruction of the temple symbolized that the presence of God had gone from the nation.

Particularly they remembered the Ark of the Covenant. You remember in the temple where the Ark of the Covenant was the Holy of Holies, that the Shekinah Glory of the Lord was present there. The cloud, the cloud that had been with the children of Israel as they walked through the desert to the Promised Land, that the Shekinah Glory was again present when Solomon consecrated the temple.

And yet with the Ark of the Covenant being, I hesitate to say destroyed, I'll come to that in a minute, but with the Ark of the Covenant disappearing the sinful being destroyed, the glory has departed, the Lord's presence has departed from Jerusalem, from the actual place itself.

[23 : 00] It's a very interesting study if you have time to look at what happened to the Ark of the Covenant. There are some fascinating theories about this which you'll find pages and pages on the internet, some of them are probably quite ridiculous, but others are quite interesting.

Some maintain that the Jews before never had nets captured and destroyed the temple that the Ark of the Covenant was actually hidden underneath in a cave underneath the site of the temple, and that it is still there to this day.

Others maintain that it was taken by Jeremiah and others when they left Israel because they were attempting an alliance with Egypt, and Jeremiah among various others escapes to Egypt, and some maintain that the Ark was taken there and is in a church in Ethiopia which is carefully guarded up until this day.

And there are all sorts of other fanciful stories as well. But what the Ark signified was the presence of God, and the presence of God has gone.

But God is still present to this people. You still see that Daniel is seeking out the various others in Babylon that the presence of God is known to them.

[24 : 35] In fact, they have given great prophecies to me, and they couldn't have made them without the inspiration of God being present with them. The Book of Daniel closes really the canon of prophecy of the Old Testament in the way that the Book of Revelation closes the New Testament.

All you have to do is look at that, and you will see that the lost presence was there. Never again did the Jews worship idols. Never again in their history did they worship idols.

And if you are a student of history, if you read what's called the Intertestamental Period, that's 400 years approximately between the end of the Old Testament to the beginning of the New Testament when various atem, Moses ne Matipas, Herod Antipas, and trying to sacrifice priests on the site of the Temple of Serobomor, the Second Temple, the Temple of Adesra and Nehemiah, build over the term.

You will see how the Maccabees rose up against and revolt against that, and it's quite an interesting period of history that we don't tend to deal with very much in our study of Scripture because the books that contain these things are what are called apocryphal books.

They're not included in the canon of Scripture, but nevertheless, you know the full history of the Jewish nation, and that period of time. If you're not aware of these books and you don't read them, you're missing out on quite an important part, but that's another story as well.

[26 : 14] Sing us one of the songs of Zion. Why would they want to hear a song of Zion? Well, the crew perhaps is in the word of tormentors, that they would be tormented by those around them.

What was it simply curiosity? Sing us one of the songs of Zion, one of the songs of the Temple. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? And yet, you know, when people go into a foreign land, it's very often the songs of home that they remember.

All you have to do is look at that with the exile of the gales from various parts of Scotland, etc., to the United States, to Canada, to Australia, various other places, that the language of the culture is kept alive by people remembering the songs of their home.

It's very often the language of their home. And very often you get this feeling that's expressed here along with that, a kind of homesickness.

[27 : 24] Well, perhaps that's not the best word for it. I don't think the word in English expresses the same as Keanolus does in Gaelic. Keanolus, that sort of feeling of homesickness, which is more than just a place that includes the culture and everything else that's involved in it as well.

And that's what they're feeling here. Sing us one of the songs of Zion, as they remember everything and all the privileges that they had before. The privileges of worship in the temple, the privileges of God's presence there, and perhaps in many cases, in many individual cases, the knowledge of the priesthood and the presence of God.

Although it seems that Ezekiel was of the priesthood, the Mestra and the Emiah as well, were Levites, or if they were taken away, nevertheless it seems that the worship wasn't conducted in the same way.

And there are many who think that sacrifice was not allowed, that the Babylonians did not allow them to sacrifice in the way that they had done in Jerusalem, but they were still allowed to worship. And so they are told to sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land or in a strange land?

[28 : 46] Well, there are many similarities in a sense between you and I this evening and the exiles in Babylon.

The human race was exiled from its first temple in the Garden of Eden. And ever since then, every believer, every Christian, is singing the Lord's song in a strange land.

And that's what you and I are doing here at Ezekiel. It is a strange land to us, but it's the only land that we know. We don't know how the Lord's song was sung in Eden.

We don't know what it was like to live with God's presence around the bunters in perfect bliss and harmony with God.

We have no familiarity with that. There are times, of course, from the Lord's presence with us in a palpable way, but it's not there 100% of the time.

[30 : 00] And therefore you and I, in one sense, are exiles also in a strange land. The period of captivity, the period of exile, and again I'm using the words of the changeable, you will remember the difference between them, the period of exile in Babylon was 70 years.

And that again is quite remarkable because in Psalm 90 and verse 10 the Lord tells us through that Psalm that our life span, the life span that we can expect is three score and ten, 70 years.

And a dance perhaps with more strength, eight. And of course again with modern day living conditions, etc. that figure has changed.

But again, if you remember the time at which that was written, normal life expectancy was about 56, 50 to 60 years. Sing us one of the songs of Zion, how shall we sing the wrong song in a foreign land?

How many of those who went into exile would actually return? 70 years as a generation. Very, very few of those who returned to Jerusalem had ever been there before.

[31 : 18] There were a few, one or two, but very, very few. The majority of the people who returned had never seen Jerusalem before. But remember that not all returned.

Daniel, for example, was one of the ones who didn't return. Daniel died in Babylon, in exile in Babylon, an old man. He was taken away in his youth probably in his early teens. And he died according to calculations in his late 90s.

And you can still go and visit, well, if you ever get a visa to go to Iran, you can actually go and visit Daniel's tomb in Iran. And that is a sacred site to the Muslim faith.

That may surprise some of you, but you should remember that the Old Testament books form part of the Koran, form part of the Old Testament history of the, not only the Jews, but of course of the children of Israel, the Muslim faith and the Arabs that eventually descended down.

Again, that's another complicated story to go into just now. But you can google the burial site of Daniel, and you'll find pictures of it in well-known, well-visited shrine in southern Iran.

[32 : 44] How shall we sing the law on solving a foreign land while those who would return to sing it in Jerusalem, and probably the majority of them had never sung it there before. And it'll be exactly the same with you and I.

We are singing the law on some here in a foreign land. We are exiled at the moment from the Thomas land. And it will take perhaps 70 years, perhaps less for some, perhaps more for others. Some of us are getting closer to it and we perhaps realise before we come home to the promised land again. And you will remember of course that this is the imagery that you see from coming out

of the first captivity.

The first captivity from the captivity of sin, the symbolism of captivity of sin, through the wilderness to the promised land of Canaan. The imagery here is the same, except it's slightly different.

We are coming out of the exile and we have known nothing else because we have been in exile here ever since we were born. And all of us have to remember that we are merely pilgrims passing through this world.

[34 : 01] I wonder how many of us will still be here in another 10 years time. And again it's a sobering thought to reflect on this. A different generation in 70 years, the worship of God could well be eliminated from not only our island but from our country.

I wouldn't be surprised personally if that were to be the case, though I would not be here to see it, that's for sure. But if these words are being recorded, they may turn out to be perfectly given to you, who knows.

But that again is the cyclical story of biblical history. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land because we know no other way of doing it?

And you notice something here that during this exile, on the willows there, they hang up their hypes. They don't destroy them. They don't break them.

But they hang them up. And every so often they take them down and reach them. Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not send Jerusalem about my highest joy, if I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget in the skin.

[35 : 27] That's what you and I do so often. There are times when we hang our hypes on the willows. There are times when we sort of almost lay a sign, the praise and the worship of God and the way that we should.

There are times perhaps each day when we do not meditate on the Lord's word or spend time and pray with Him in the way that we should. We are hanging our hearts on the willows.

And yet every so often we take them down and we try and retune them. And sometimes the longer we leave them hanging on the willows, the more difficult it is to retune these hearts.

But yet, whoever woke their son was quite clear that the heart was hung up. It's not the start. It's taken down, it's retuned.

And you and I retune our worship every time we come to worship. That's why gathering together to worship is so important.

[36 : 37] Because we are retuning our hearts. We may still be in a strange land. We may still not have the full harmony that we should have.

Our right hands may have forgotten the part of this country. But there will come a time when that will change.

And all we have to do is look forward to the book of Revelation. And we find, I don't think we put this on screen, did we not? Revelation chapter 14.

And you find that John says something more, if you want to come with me to Revelation 14. Just a few words there.

Then I go to behold on Mount Zion. And you notice again how Mount Zion is used there in terms of the presence of God. Stood the Lamb and with them 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their psalms.

[37 : 45] And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many walkers and like the sound of low thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of heartless playing on their arms.

And they were singing a new song before the throne. And before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

It is these who have not defined themselves with woman, etc., etc. Now remember that the 144,000 is simply a symbolic number. Remember that it's 12 times 12 to the power of 10.

And 12 of course is a scriptural symbolic number. 12 times, you find in chapter Revelation 22 that the foundations of the city and so on. The 12 tribes, the 12 apostles, etc.

And 12 again in the symbolism of Revelation is a multiple of four by three. Three stands for the Trinity, four is the universal number. And Revelation is full of this kind of numerology.

[38 : 55] So this 144,000 is simply a symbolic group of people. But then you find in chapter 15, immediately afterwards, John says, I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing.

Seven angels with seven plagues. And again seven is the symbolic perfect number in Revelation. Always signifying God. Seven angels, seven churches, etc.

But remember that there were five more than seven angels and seven churches in the context in which it was written. Which in the last but with them the wrath of God is finished.

And I saw what appeared to be a seal glass mingled with fire. And also those who had conquered the beast in its image and the number of its name, that's the 666, standing beside the seal glass with hearts of God in their minds.

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty, Just and through are your ways, O King of the nations, Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name, For you alone and holy, all nations will come and worship you, For your righteous acts have been revealed.

[40 : 20] That is the song that you and I will be singing when we are passed from the exiled here, in this land, into heaven and seven. We will be singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb saying.

And these are wonderful words that we will be singing. That is what every believer looks forward to. And so very often you and I have a tendency to concentrate so much on our daily life and our daily living, and forget that we are near pilgrims in this one, we're just passing through.

And we forget that we are still singing the Lord's song in a strange land. Perhaps it's not surprising. It's the only land we own. It's the only song we know how to sing at this particular time. And it's the only way that we know how to sing.

But yet scripture is full of the promises that show us that in days to come, in time to come, we will be singing it in a totally different way.

[41 : 37] And that is something that every single believer should be looking for. It's so difficult for us at times to fix our minds and our eyes on the things that are to come.

And our Lord put it so well that when He said, lay not up pressure on earth, where the moth and the bush and the rocks destroys, but lay up pressure and heaven.

Because it is there that you will spend not one generation, but it is there that you will spend eternity. And that should be such a comfort to each and every one of us this evening that that is what we look forward to.

To a place that has been prepared for us. In my Father's house, like many nations, so fear not, I go to prepare at least one best friend.

And I thank you for your work this evening. And although we are poor in our attempts to what appear on earth the next time in the heavenly kingdom, nevertheless you have promised that you will produce a new song in our land, that we will sing the song of Moses in the land in your presence as we go around.

[43 : 00] We pray all around that you will help us this evening to glorify you dear honor, to magnify you and to praise you for all the blessings and for all the good that you have done and are doing to us every single day.

And we thank you especially for the gift of your Son, for the atonement that was made, for the blood that was shed, for the peace that we have through the law of Jesus Christ.

If you would make Jesus Christ more precious to us every single day, then we would come together. We would come to the Lamb that will slay and the blood that will show.

Be with us now as we come to conclude our worship. Bless our time of fellowship together. Pardon the sins that Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us conclude then by singing the words of that very song. Psalm 137. We will sing it in the Psalter version.

[44 : 04] By Babel's streams we sat in wet and silent we thought on. In midst thereof we hanged our hearts, the will of trees upon. I'm sorry, I didn't explain the last two verses.

The verses about the destruction of Babylon. I suppose what you thought, most of us think as we read it first about, yes, happy surely shall he be thy tender little ones who shall they hold upon and them shall dash against the stones.

It's quite clear to see why of course the writer of the Psalm had referred to Edom. Edom were the descendants of Esau and if you remember again, they had refused entry to the children of Israel on the Exodus from Egypt into Canaan and had fought against them various times during the history.

Babylon, the reference is quite clear. What did it mean by happy shall he be who dashes the little ones against the stones. When the children of Israel were taken into exile in Babylon or taken into captivity, the custom was, and it may seem to us a particularly brutal custom, but again if you consider today's world, when both goes on it, it wasn't brutal at all, well it was, but it's just by compats.

The custom was that little babies and young children who were unable to walk into the distance in captivity were simply taken by the shoulders, by the feet, and their heads smashed against the wall. [45 : 43] That was just a pragmatic, practical way of solving the problem because babies except a little children cost a fortune to feed. They were worthless, you couldn't sell them as slaves except or anything else and therefore the simplest solution was to get rid of them.

And yet the Samans in an old, not of revenge or retribution, but an old of God's justice, that's what it's about, the last two, three verses, that's what it means.

Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will reclaim, it's God's justice that's there in the last three verses. I will sing from the first four verses by Babel Street.