

## Tehillim / Psalms 137 | ספר תהילים קלז

MATSATI.COM Ministry | <http://www.matsati.com>

### The Reminder to Not Forget

א על-נהרות | בְּכֶל שָׁם In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 137:1-9*, the psalm opens saying  
 137:1 *By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion. (NASB)* Sin always comes back to bite us in the back even after having repented, we must bear the consequences of our sins. The Psalmist states, ב על-עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תָּלִינוּ כְּנַרְוֵינוּ: ג כִּי  
 137:2 *Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps. 137:3 For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentors mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'* (NASB) Why do you think the Babylonian captors requested songs from Zion? Their captors probably saw their sorrow, were they asking to help them to remember the promises of God for encouragement? Or, were they asking so to grind in the idea they are their captors and are to do as they request? The psalmist continues saying, ד אֵיךְ נָשִׂיר אֶת-שִׁיר יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נְכָר: ה אִם-אֶשְׁכַּח  
 137:4 *How can we sing the Lord's song In a foreign land? 137:5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill. 137:6 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. (NASB)* The psalmist speaks of the nature of forgetfulness. Zion is not a place to forget. Forgetting Zion is as unnatural as the hand forgetting her skill, and the tongue clinging to the roof of the mouth. The Psalmist concludes saying, ז זְכַר יְהוָה | לְבַנֵּי אָדָם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים, עָרוּ | עַד הַיְסוּד בָּהּ: ח בַּת-בְּכָל הַשְּׂדוּדָה אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁישָׁלֶם-לָךְ אֶת-גְּמוּלָךְ שֶׁגָּמַלְתָּ לָנוּ: ט אֲשֶׁרִי | שְׂיֵאָחֵז וְנִפֶּץ  
 137:7 *Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, 'Raze it, raze it To its very foundation.'* 137:8 *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. 137:9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the rock. (NASB)* In the midst of their sorrow, is there a sign of their having repented? They seek the Lord's help from the recesses of His mercy!

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק קלז	ספר תהילים פרק קלז	ספר טוביה פרק קלז	ספר טוביה פרק קלז	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 137	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 137
א על-נהרות   בְּכֶל שָׁם יִשְׁכַּח-נוּ גַם-בְּכִינוּ בְּזַכְרָנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן: ב על-עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תָּלִינוּ כְּנַרְוֵינוּ-תִינוּ: ג כִּי שָׁם שָׁאֲלוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינֵנוּ דְבָרֵי-שִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׁמָחָה שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מְשִׁיר צִיּוֹן: ד אֵיךְ נָשִׂיר אֶת-שִׁיר יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נְכָר: ה אִם-אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי:	א על-נהרות   בְּכֶל שָׁם יִשְׁכַּח-נוּ גַם-בְּכִינוּ בְּזַכְרָנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן: ב על-עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תָּלִינוּ כְּנַרְוֵינוּ-תִינוּ: ג כִּי שָׁם שָׁאֲלוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינֵנוּ דְבָרֵי-שִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׁמָחָה שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מְשִׁיר צִיּוֹן: ד אֵיךְ נָשִׂיר אֶת-שִׁיר יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נְכָר: ה אִם-אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי:	א על נהרותא דבבל תמן יתבנא לחוד בכינא כד הוינן הוינא דכירין ית ציון: ב על ערבין במציעהא תלינן כינרנא: ג ארום תמן שיילו יתנא בבלאי דשבו יתנא למימר מילין דשיריא ובזונא על עיסק חדוא אמרין שבחו לנא מן שיר-תא דהוייתון אמרין בציון: ד מניד קטעו ליואי אליוניהון בככיהון ואמרין היכדין נשבח ית תושבחה דיהוה על ארעא חיי-לוינתא: ה מתיבא קל רוחא דקודשא ברת קלא משמיא ואמרה דאין אנשיינא ליד ירושלם אנשייה לימיני:	א על נהרותא דבבל תמן יתבנא לחוד בכינא כד הוינן הוינא דכירין ית ציון: ב על ערבין במציעהא תלינן כינרנא: ג ארום תמן שיילו יתנא בבלאי דשבו יתנא למימר מילין דשיריא ובזונא על עיסק חדוא אמרין שבחו לנא מן שיר-תא דהוייתון אמרין בציון: ד מניד קטעו ליואי אליוניהון בככיהון ואמרין היכדין נשבח ית תושבחה דיהוה על ארעא חיי-לוינתא: ה מתיבא קל רוחא דקודשא ברת קלא משמיא ואמרה דאין אנשיינא ליד ירושלם אנשייה לימיני:	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 137 137:1 τῷ Δαυιδ ἐπὶ τῶν ποταμῶν Βαβυλῶνος ἐκεῖ ἐκαθίσασαμεν καὶ ἐκλαύσαμεν ἐν τῷ μνηστῆναι ἡμᾶς τῆς Σιων 137:2 ἐπὶ ταῖς ἰτέαις ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκρεμάσαμεν τὰ ὄργανα ἡμῶν 137:3 ὅτι ἐκεῖ ἐπηρώτησαν ἡμᾶς οἱ αἰχμαλωτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς λόγους ᾠδῶν καὶ οἱ ἀπαγαγόντες ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ᾄσατε ἡμῖν ἐκ τῶν ᾠδῶν Σιων 137:4 πῶς ᾄσωμεν τὴν ᾠδὴν κυρίου ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλλοτρίας 137:5 ἔὰν ἐπιλάθωμαι σου Ἱερουσαλημ ἐπιλησθεῖη ἡ δεξιὰ μου	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 137 137:1 τῷ Δαυιδ ἐπὶ τῶν ποταμῶν Βαβυλῶνος ἐκεῖ ἐκαθίσασαμεν καὶ ἐκλαύσαμεν ἐν τῷ μνηστῆναι ἡμᾶς τῆς Σιων 137:2 ἐπὶ ταῖς ἰτέαις ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκρεμάσαμεν τὰ ὄργανα ἡμῶν 137:3 ὅτι ἐκεῖ ἐπηρώτησαν ἡμᾶς οἱ αἰχμαλωτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς λόγους ᾠδῶν καὶ οἱ ἀπαγαγόντες ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ᾄσατε ἡμῖν ἐκ τῶν ᾠδῶν Σιων 137:4 πῶς ᾄσωμεν τὴν ᾠδὴν κυρίου ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλλοτρίας 137:5 ἔὰν ἐπιλάθωμαι σου Ἱερουσαλημ ἐπιλησθεῖη ἡ δεξιὰ μου

<p>ו תדבֹק-לְשׁוֹנֵי   לְחִפֵי אִם-      לֹא אֲזַכְּרֶכֶּי אִם-לֹא אֲעֲלֶה אֶת-      יְרוּשָׁלַם עַל רֹאשׁ שְׁמֹחֶתָּ: ז      זְכֹר יְהוָה   לִבְנֵי אֲדוֹם אֵת יוֹם      יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים עָרוּ   עָרוּ עַד      הַיָּסוֹד בָּהּ: ח בֵּת-בְּבַל הַשְּׂדוּ-      דָה אֲשָׁרֵי שְׁיִשְׁלֵם-לָךְ אֶת-גְּמוּלָךְ      שְׁגָמְלָתָ לָנוּ: ט אֲשָׁרֵי   שְׁיֵאֲחֶזַח      וְנִפְץ אֶת-עַלְלֵיךְ אֶל-הַסֶּלַע:</p>	<p>ו תדבֹק לישני למוריגי אין לא איד-      כר יתייכי אין לא אסיק דכרן ירושלם      על שירוי חדוות בית שמשי: ז אמר      מיכאל רבה דירושלם אידכר יהוה      לעמא דאדומא דאחריבו ירושלם      דאמרין צדו צדו עד דשיתאסא בה:      ח אמר גבריאל רבה דציון לאומא      בת אימא בבליתא בזוזיתא טב ליה      די שלם לך ית גומליך ביש טבוהי      דמאן דפרע לך ית תשלומת גומליך      די גמלת לנא: ט טב ליה דאחיד טו-      בוהי דמאן דיוחד ומרטיש ית טלייך      על כיפא:</p>	<p>137:6 κοληθεῖη ἡ γλῶσσά μου τῷ      λάρυγγί μου ἔὰν μὴ σου μνησθῶ ἔὰν      μὴ προανατάξωμαι τὴν Ἱερουσαλημ      ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς εὐφροσύνης μου      137:7 μνήσθητι κύριε τῶν υἱῶν      Ἐδωμ τὴν ἡμέραν Ἱερουσαλημ τῶν      λεγόντων ἔκκενοῦτε ἔκκενοῦτε ἕως      ὁ θεμέλιος ἐν αὐτῇ 137:8 θυγάτηρ      Βαβυλῶνος ἡ ταλαίπωρος μακάριος      ὃς ἀνταποδώσει σοι τὸ ἀνταπόδομά      σου ὁ ἀνταπέδωκας ἡμῖν 137:9      μακάριος ὃς κρατήσῃ καὶ ἔδαφιῇ τὰ      νηπία σου πρὸς τὴν πέτραν</p>
--	---	---

**Tehillim / Psalms 137**  
 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon,  
 There we sat down and wept,  
 When we remembered Zion.  
 137:2 Upon the willows in the  
 midst of it We hung our harps.  
 137:3 For there our captors  
 demanded of us songs, And  
 our tormentors mirth, saying,  
 ‘Sing us one of the songs of  
 Zion.’ 137:4 How can we sing  
 the Lord’s song In a foreign  
 land? 137:5 If I forget you, O  
 Jerusalem, May my right hand  
 forget her skill. 137:6 May my  
 tongue cling to the roof of my  
 mouth If I do not remember  
 you, If I do not exalt Jerusa-  
 lem Above my chief joy. 137:7  
 Remember, O Lord, against  
 the sons of Edom The day of  
 Jerusalem, Who said, ‘Raze it,  
 raze it To its very foundation.’  
 137:8 O daughter of Baby-  
 lon, you devastated one, How  
 blessed will be the one who re-  
 pays you With the recompense  
 with which you have repaid  
 us. 137:9 How blessed will be  
 the one who seizes and dashes  
 your little ones Against the  
 rock. (NASB)

**Toviyah / Psalms 137**  
 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon, there  
 we sat down, also we wept, as we  
 were remembering Zion. 137:2 On  
 the willows in her midst we hung  
 our harps. 137:3 For there the Bab-  
 ylonians who captured us asked us  
 to utter the words of songs; and our  
 despoilers, because of [their] joy,  
 were saying, “Sing for us some of  
 the songs you used to utter in Zion.”  
 137:4 At once the Levites cut off  
 their thumbs with their teeth, and say,  
 “How can we sing the praise of the  
 Lord on profane land?” 137:5 The  
 voice of the Holy Spirit replies and  
 says, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
 I will forget my right hand.” 137:6  
 My tongue will cleave to my palate,  
 if I will not remember you; if I will  
 not elevate the memory of Jerusalem  
 above the principal joy of my temple.  
 137:7 Said Michael, prince of Jerusa-  
 lem, “Remember, O Lord, the people  
 of Edom, who laid waste Jerusalem,  
 who say, ‘Destroy, destroy, to the  
 foundations of it.’ ” 137:8 Said Ga-  
 briel, prince of Zion to the despoil-  
 ing Babylonian mother, “Happy he  
 who gives back to you evil for what  
 you did to us.” 137:9 Happy he who  
 takes and smashes your children on a  
 rock. (EMC)

**Psalmoi / Psalms 137**  
 For David, a Psalm of Jeremias.  
 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon,  
 there we sat; and wept when we  
 remembered Zion. 137:2 We hung  
 our harps on the willows in the  
 midst of it. 137:3 For there they  
 that had taken us captive asked of  
 us the words of a song; and they  
 that had carried us away asked  
 a hymn, saying, Sing us one of  
 the songs of Sion. 137:4 How  
 should we sing the Lord’s song  
 in a strange land? 137:5 If I for-  
 get thee, O Jerusalem, let my right  
 hand forget its skill. 137:6 May  
 my tongue cleave to my throat, if  
 I do not remember thee; if I do not  
 prefer Jerusalem as the chief of  
 my joy. 137:7 Remember, O Lord,  
 the children of Edom in the day of  
 Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase  
 it, even to its foundations. 137:8  
 Wretched daughter of Babylon!  
 blessed shall he be who shall re-  
 ward thee as thou hast rewarded  
 us. 137:9 Blessed shall he be who  
 shall seize and dash thine infants  
 against the rock. (LXX)

א על-נהרות | בקל שם  
137:1 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion. (NASB) Sin always comes back to bite us in the back even after having repented, we must bear the consequences of our sins. The final consequence of sin is death. Paul wrote that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). The idea of sin leads to death is not only a reference to physical death, but to eternal separation from God. This is the imagery we receive when the Lord took Israel out of the land of Israel to the land of Babylon. Isaiah said “*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear*” (Isaiah 59:2). This is the final result of sin which is defined as man’s rebellion against the Lord God in heaven. The doctrines we have been taught today however have led many to believe the Lord God is so loving that he will overlook our little faults, lapses, and indiscretions and so we do not have to repent and turn from our sins. Though our Father in heaven loves us, His mercy allows us time to repent and turn from our sins. His holiness is such that He will not live with evil and wickedness. The prophet Habakkuk describes the Lord this way saying, “*Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong*” (Habakkuk 1:13). The Lord is not ignoring our sin by delaying the consequences. On the contrary Moshe wrote in the Torah, “*you may be sure that your sin will find you out*” (Bamidbar / Numbers 32:23). Note also even those secret sins that are hidden in the inner recesses of our hearts will one day be brought to light. The author of the book of Hebrews wrote, “*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account*” (Hebrews 4:13). Paul also wrote, “*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows*” (Galatians 6:7). Paul then describes the end of those who indulge in sinful behavior saying, “*The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction*” (Galatians 6:8). The phrase “sinful nature” refers to giving in to the fleshly desires and giving one’s self over to such things without the attempt to turn and do them no more. Paul wrote, “*the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other ...*” (Galatians 5:17). The book of Galatians then lists the behavior of the one who sins and Paul writes, “*Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (see Galatians 5:19-21). The reason being, sin is lived out in one’s life. The same is said of faith. Faith is lived out in one’s life as being faithful. Those who live in debauchery and sin sow the seeds of destruction in their present-day life and forfeit the hope of eternal life. Those who live by faith in faithfulness to the Lord and His commands sow the seeds of life and attain the hope of eternal life. God’s Word describes those who choose to indulge in sin as being “*darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*” (Ephesians 4:18-19) This tells us indulging in sin leads to more sin. Paul wrote there’s an insatiable “*lust for more,*” attended by a dulling of the conscience and a blindness to spiritual truth. (1 Corinthians 2:14) The one who sins suppresses the truth. The consequence of suppressing the truth is that the Lord God gives the sinner over to “*the sinful desires of their hearts,*” “*shameful lusts*” and “*a depraved mind.*” (see Romans 1:24, 26, 28) This behavior leads one to serve as his own god as opposed to humbling our lives according to God’s Word and serving the Lord in His will. Take care to keep watch against the destructive nature of sin that leads to the destruction of both the body and the soul. This is not simply an action that leads to this destruction, but also is a deception that deceives a man at his heart and mind. It should be a fearful thing to be “*given over*” to our own destructive ways. The Lord has spoken again and again that “*the soul who sins will die.*” (Ezekiel 18:4) These are the ones who habitually live their lives outside of the Messiah. Note that the counterpart to this is the soul that lives righteously will live. Those whose hearts have been convicted by the gospel of the Messiah, should follow the example of the Messiah Yeshua walking according to God’s Torah. This is the foundation of Teshuvah as we read in the book of Acts, “*They were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’*” (Acts 2:37-38) The message of the Torah is repentance. This is the entire nature of Torah that is found in the Tabernacle service. Yeshua’s first words when He began His ministry were, “*The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!*” (Mark 1:15). What is the good news? The Lord God our Father in heaven is merciful and full of love for His people.

John wrote, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) The consequence of sin is death, but “the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

The most significant point that we find here in the psalm **א על-גְּהָרוֹת | בְּבָל שָׁם יִשְׁבְּנוּ גַם-בְּכִינּוּ בְּזַכְרָנוּ** **אָת-צִיּוֹן:** 137:1 *By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion.* (NASB) The people were sitting and weeping over their sin but it was too late. They remembered Zion, the Lord’s great mercy but in the time of their rebellion they would not listen. Today is the day to repent, not tomorrow. The Torah describes the Lord God moved in the heart of Sihon, king of Cheshbon, in order to bring about his destruction (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 2:30*). Similarly, the Lord hardened Parahoh’s heart who stubbornly refused to listen to the message of God’s salvation (*Shemot / Exodus 13:15*). We were given these examples for us to remember, and to draw us back to the Lord, and so we do not walk in the futility of our minds (*Shemot / Exodus 4:17*). The Scriptures speak of the people being darkened in their understanding, those who are alienated from the life of God because of ignorance and due to their hardness of heart (*Ephesians 4:18*). The hardened heart leads to a callous attitude, the inability to feel, which is the opposite of compassion and love towards others. The point is the people hardened their hearts which led to being darkened in their understanding, they do not know the ways of God, and then they are alienated from God. The people in Babylon had their hearts tenderized as they realized the error of their ways as they wept. It is interesting that the psalm does not mention their repentance. It is the heart, the inner man, that determines whom we serve, what we do, and what we ignore. Paul wrote salvation is a matter of believing the truth of the gospel message from the heart (*Romans 10:8-10*) which leads to producing fruit in our lives.

### **Romans 10:8-10**

*10:8 But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (NASB)*

Note how Paul wrote in *Romans 10:10*, for with the heart a person believes resulting in righteousness. This righteousness is the fruit of the spirit.

The Psalmist states, **ב על-עַרְבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תִּלְיֵנוּ כְּנִרוֹתֵינוּ: ג כִּי שָׁם שָׁאֲלוּנוּ שׁוֹבְיָנוּ דְבָרֵי-שִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ** **אָת-צִיּוֹן:** 137:2 *Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps. 137:3 For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentors mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’* (NASB) Why do you think the Babylonian captors requested songs from Zion? Their captors probably saw their sorrow. Were they asking to help them to remember the promises of God for encouragement? Or, were they asking so to grind in the idea they are their captors and are to do as they request? The Lord God is a God of Justice. *Tehillim / Psalms 137* may be paralleled to the prophet Habakkuk. In Habakkuk we know that Judah was judged due to her own sins and that Jerusalem was destroyed because of the wickedness of both its rulers and its people. In Habakkuk, the Lord God also spoke of the sins of Babylon and of its future destruction, and those who do not join themselves with the Lord will also be found in this destruction that will consume all the earth. What we find at this point in the psalm is the Babylonian captors wanting to hear in song the service of God (the Temple service in song). The people who wept over the destruction of the city and the Temple, their captors request suggests a lack of seriousness on behalf of the Babylonians. They may have been playing with the Jewish people in this request, and mocking the Lord God in heaven. A parallel may be found in the book of Daniel where a similar request from Belshazzar to use the temple’s vessels of gold for mirth in a party with his wives and concubines. This led to a prophecy of immediate destruction against his rule that was fulfilled that very night. Likewise, the similar request of the Babylonian captors for the Lord’s song as mirth also prompts a harsh request for judgment against those who treat with lightness the seriousness of God’s word, even its songs. How important do you believe it is to always be considerate

of the seriousness of God, His word, His service, His music, and our lifestyles which are to reflect His glory and His testimonies? The way of the wicked is to blaspheme and mock the way of God. The Babylonian captors to hear the song of Zion for their amusement is consistent with the unrighteous use and misuse of the holy things of God. The goblets of the Temple were taken for the kings drunken banquet as a show of disrespect for the Lord God of Israel. This is a claim of superiority over God because of the destruction of God's people due to their sins. The Babylonians were treating the servants of God and the music disrespectfully. To ridicule God's servants is to disrespect their Master.

The psalmist continues saying, ד אֵיךְ נִשְׁרַח אֶת-שִׁיר יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נְכָרִ: ה אִם-אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח, 137:4 *How can we sing the Lord's song In a foreign land? 137:5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill. 137:6 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.* (NASB) The psalmist speaks of the nature of forgetfulness. Zion is not a place to forget. Forgetting Zion is as unnatural as the hand forgetting her skill, and the tongue clinging to the roof of the mouth. Forgetfulness is a common problem among God's people however. This is why the Lord gives us so many warnings in His word to emphasize the importance of remembering. Much of Moshe's message to Israel in the Torah, and specifically in the book of Devarim / Deuteronomy is a reminder to not forget the Lord God of Israel and His ways. King David wrote two Psalms on the bringing to remembrance (*Tehillim / Psalms 38 and 70*). We read a similar emphasis in the Apostolic Writings. Just as Moshe warned the people in Parashat Haazinu, we read the author of Hebrews reminding the disciples of Yeshua the Lord disciplines the one's He loves. (*Hebrews 12:5*). Peter states to "add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self control, to self control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." He then explains "he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:5-9) The Lord reminds us to remain faithful, to remember His promises, and to live as His people. Paul wrote to the Romans, "I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you..." (*Romans 15:15*). He wrote to Timothy in Corinth to "remind" the people of God's ways in the Messiah (*1 Corinthians 4:17*). Peter plainly declared his purpose in writing to his fellow believers, "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you..." (2 Peter 1:12-13). *Tehillim / Psalm 78:39-42* reveals ancient Israel's forgetfulness:

***Tehillim / Psalms 78:39-42***

*78:39 Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return.  
78:40 How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness And grieved Him in the desert!  
78:41 Again and again they tempted God, And pained the Holy One of Israel. 78:42 They did not remember His power, The day when He redeemed them from the adversary, (NASB)*

This is a warning for us today. Note how the psalmist contrasts man to the Lord God in heaven. The Lord God in heaven remembers and keeps His part of the covenant, and men, who so easily forgets Him. Our forgetfulness leads to the neglect of the commandments and our responsibilities before God. We are however called to seek God diligently by faith and to live according to His commands. It is only when we come to the Lord do we turn from this world's way of thinking. On the other hand, forgetting the Lord God in heaven ultimately leads us back to the state at which we come from. Solomon wrote of wisdom personified (*Mishley / Proverbs 8:17*) saying "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me." The Hebrew word translated as diligently means "busily; with persistent, persevering effort; industriously." In *Tehillim / Psalm 119:10*, the psalmist declares, "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!" David pursued God wholeheartedly and steadfastly. In *Tehillim / Psalm 27:4*, David adds that he did this "all the days of my life." The Lord God of Israel knew the tendency of man to forget. Moshe had also seen this tendency in the people. As a result, he reminds them repeatedly in Deuteronomy to be careful not to forget all that the Lord their God had done delivering them

from Egypt, with a mighty hand, and saving them up until this point.

The Psalmist concludes saying, זָכֹר יְהוָה | לְבִנְיָ אֲדוֹם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים עָרוּ | עָרוּ עַד הַיְסוּד בָּהּ :  
ח בַּת-בְּבֶל הַשְׁדוּדָה אֲשֶׁרִי שְׁשָׁלְמָ-לָהּ אֶת-גְּמוּלָהּ שָׁגַמְלָתָ לָנוּ: ט אֲשֶׁרִי | שְׁיֵאֲחֹז וְנִפְץ אֶת-עַלְלֶיהָ אֶל-הַסְּלֵעַ:  
*137:7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, 'Raze it, raze it To its very foundation.'* *137:8 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.* *137:9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the rock. (NASB)* The psalmist speaks in the end of the destruction of Babylon and the blessing of the one who dashes their little ones against the rock. The idea of dashing children against rocks, is this what the psalmist is attempting to say, or is he referring to the Lord God of Israel as “the Rock” of Israel’s Salvation upon whom many are dashed to pieces? The bible translators do not appear to have this interpretation based upon the English translation “rock” is not capitalized in the NASB. In the book of Revelation, John is shown the vision of the destruction of Babylon, as representing every false way, by one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and is invited to behold the judgment of Babylon, described as the great whore (Grek.: *porne*’, usually translated “harlot”), who is seen sitting on many waters. The interpretation of “waters” is that these are the many nations ruled by Babylon.. The woman is further described as having committed fornication and adulteries. The inhabitants of the earth are declared to have been made drunk with the wine of her sexual sins. The picture of Babylon as utterly evil signifies spiritual adultery, portraying those who inwardly, outwardly, and religiously appear to be joined to the true God but who are untrue to their relationship. The symbolism of spiritual adultery is not ordinarily used to describe the heathen nations who do not know the God of Israel, but always is used of people who outwardly carry the name of God while inwardly worshiping and serving other gods. The concept of spiritual adultery is frequently used in describing the apostasy of Israel (see *Ezekiel 16 and 23 and all of Hosea*). The Tanach describes HaShem as the husband of Israel (*Isaiah 54:1-8, Jeremiah 3:14, 31:32*). In the Apostolic Writings the people of God are viewed as a virgin destined to be joined to their husband in the future (*2 Corinthians 11:2*), but are warned against spiritual adultery (*James 4:4*). The idea of the exportation of Israel into Babylon has the imagery of the tarnishing the testimony and character of God’s people that is found in compromise and unfaithfulness. This was devastating to the people, and having realized this they wept (*Tehillim / Psalms 137:1*). False ways have a devastating effect on a child of God. The moral wickedness that is accompanied with compromise imposes a stupefying drunkenness on the part of God’s people in the sense that common sense goes out the door and is replaced with a moral wretchedness, such that the sins of homosexuality and immorality, and a number of other things are acceptable today. The concept here presented, expanding upon the *Revelation 14:8*, makes plain that the apostate church has eagerly sought and solicited the adulterous relation with the world. Studying *Tehillim / Psalms 137*, in the midst of their sorrow, is there a sign of the people having repented? Are there signs of repentance of the people of God who take hold of the wicked ways of the world? There is a great danger to unrepentance. It is the giving over to a deceived mind and ultimately to the destruction of the soul! Let’s Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 137* has 11 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 3, 7, 8, and 11. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 137, Part 3, 7, 8, and 11*.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 137, Part 3, 7, 8, and 11

#### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*There we sat down, yes, we wept (Tehillim / Psalms 137:1).*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Why does Scripture say that it was There we sat down?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the meaning of what it means to sit down by the river and weep.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis lead then into the discussion on the various things the people did and the various things that happened to them in Babylon.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*They became the comely of people. It is said that when a man comes among the people of Beri, he does not wish to leave without committing a sin of the body. What is meant by the word gam, “also” in the sentence, Also we wept? That the children of Israel, by their weeping, caused the Holy One blessed be He, also to weep with them.*”

### Part 7

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Rabbi Dosa taught The verse If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let My right hand forget her cunning (Tehillim / Psalms 137:5) means that if Jerusalem is forgotten, never again will miracles be performed.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Zeera taught in the name of Rabbi Simeon son of Levi, You find that when the nations came into Jerusalem because of Israel’s sins, they seized the mighty men of Israel and bound their hands behind their backs.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of forgetting Jerusalem and Zion.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), speaking of Daniel and the slavery of the people. Note how the Torah command was fulfilled, when they are sent out into another land they will be forced to bow down to foreign gods.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*The Holy One blessed be He, replied, I will serve them, as it is said The Lord has made visible His holy arm in the eyes of the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:10), and also His right hand, and His holy arm has gotten Him the victory (Tehillim / Psalms 98:1).*”

### Part 8

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem (Tehillim / Psalms 137:7).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The earth, what does it stand upon?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of Edom having a part in the Babylonian exile.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), explaining how the Lord remembering Edom will result in His glory for saving Israel.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*But rabbi Levi said, Aru, Aru means Empty it, empty it, as in the verse, And she hastened and emptied (te’ar) her pitcher into the trough (Bereshit / Genesis 24:20).*”

### Part 11

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Rabbi Leonti inquired of Rabbi Jonah, It is understandable that a priest’s daughter who marries an Israelite (commoner) and has a children by him is not permitted even if her husband dies to eat Terumah again.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*But an Israelite’s daughter who marries a priest and has a child by him is entitled even after her husband’s death to eat Terumah.*”

- The מִשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָה (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the Levites wife eating and not eating Terumah, the priests free will contribution.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשַּׁל (mashal), explain the proper time for family of the priest to eat Terumah.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Hence, when Scripture speaks of the daughter of Babylon (Tehillim / Psalms 137:8), does the phrase mean that Edom was actually the daughter of Babylon? No; it means that Edom continued doing the very things Babylon had done.*”

Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying, “*There we sat down, yes, we wept (Tehillim / Psalms 137:1).*” The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Why does Scripture say that it was There we sat down?*” The reason the rabbis mention having “*sat down*” was “*To show that from the time the exiles went forth from Jerusalem until the time they came to the Euphrates, they had not been allowed to sit down.*” The midrash states the Babylonians recognized that the God of Israel is merciful. The midrash states the Babylonians realized the following, “*If they show signs of wanting to please Him, He will turn to them and befriend them. If they do unite and turn, all of them in repentance, calling upon their God, He will help them and we will not have availed at all. Therefore the Babylonians pressed close upon the exiles, compelling them to hustle along, as is said, To our necks we are pursued; we labor, and have no rest (Lamentations 5:5), and as is also said Our Pursuers were swifter than the eagles of the heavens (Lamentations 4:9).*” The Scriptures state that God is merciful and that He is willing to forgive if we repent and turn from our ways. The Lord God of Israel’s patience is that which allows a time for repentance and not rebellion. James wrote in *James 1:4* that the point of being patient is to “*let patience have its perfect work.*” The reason the Lord God is patient with us is that He gives us opportunity to repent. The Lord wants to forgive wrongdoing and desires for us to live repentant lives. Just as we read in Parashat Ki Tisa, Peter wrote in *2 Peter 3:9, 3:15* “*God is longsuffering toward us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” In *Revelation 2:21* we read the Lord saying of Jezebel, “*I gave her time to repent but she does not want to.*” What this teaches us is the Lord did not want Jezebel and her followers to continue in sin, nor does he want to punish them. He wants them to repent. However he warns of “*great tribulation unless repentance comes with sincerity coupled to the action of turning from unrighteousness.*” (*Revelation 2:20-23*). Paul writes of something similar saying, “*Do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?*” (*Romans 2:4*)

The Midrash continues saying, “*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept (Tehillim / Psalms 137:1).* What made the children of Israel sit down and weep by the rivers of Babylon? Rabbi Johanan explained, *It was the Euphrates which slew more of the children of Israel than the wicked Nebuchadnezzar had slain. While the children of Israel were living in the Land of Israel, they drank only rain water, running water, or spring water. But when they were exiled to Babylon, they drank from the waters of the Euphrates, and many of them died. And so the exiles wept, wept for the dead whom their enemies had slain, wept for the dead who had perished in the way and whom the Babylonians had not permitted to be buried, and wept for the dead whom the Euphrates had slain.*” The phrase “*By the rivers of Babylon*” refers to living in a repressive society and the longing for freedom. The rabbis reference the rivers of Babylon in this way as having slew more of the children of Israel than Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. Note how the midrash speaks of the children of Israel drinking from the rivers of Israel, but while in Babylon they drank from the rivers of Babylon and died. From a hebraic context, just as Solomon wrote in *Mishley / Proverbs 8*, the consumption of something is taking that thing and making it a part of our bodies. This is analogous to incorporating sin into one’s life that results in death. The kind of oppression that is being described here is to the disrespect to God’s Torah. The Midrash describes this in the following way:

*No, they had cause to weep even more. For Nebuchadnezzar was seated in a ship, he and all his nobles and all his princes, and they had with them all kinds of instruments to sing to, as is*



*said, The Chaldeans, in the ships of their singing (Isaiah 43:14); and at the same time, all the kings of Judah, who had been put into iron chains, were walking naked along the edge of the river. The wicked Nebuchadnezzar looked up and saw them. He said to his servants, why are such as these walking with their heads held high and without burdens? Have you no burdens to load upon their necks? Instantly, the servants brought scrolls of the Torah and shaped them into sacks, filled them with sand, and loaded them upon the shoulders of the kings of Judah until their heads were bowed down. Thereupon, the kings of Judah said of themselves, To our necks we are pursued (Lamentations 5:5). And in that hour all Israel moaned loudly until their cry came up to heaven. Rabbi Akha son of Abba taught, It was at this moment that the Holy One blessed be He, wished to return the world to chaos and emptiness, for the Holy One blessed be He, said, All that I created, I created only for the sake of Israel. In the verse I will also strike My hands together; and I will satisfy my fury (Ezekiel 21:22), it is as though God were saying, The world I created I created with my two hands alone, as is said, My hand has laid the foundation of the earth (Isaiah 48:13), and now I will return it to chaos. (Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 3)*

The idea here is they took the Torah scrolls in a sacrilegious manner and sowed them up into bags which was then filled with sand to weigh down the necks of God's people. This illustrates a complete disrespect for God's ways. The connection to the world, the Lord God gave His Torah for His people which would then effect the world for righteousness sake. This is the end goal or outcome that was expected of the people of God. Sadly this outcome failed due to the weaknesses of the people.

Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 7 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Rabbi Dosa taught The verse If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let My right hand forget her cunning (Tehillim / Psalms 137:5) means that if Jerusalem is forgotten, never again will miracles be performed.*” The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Zeera taught in the name of Rabbi Simeon son of Levi, You find that when the nations came into Jerusalem because of Israel's sins, they seized the mighty men of Israel and bound their hands behind their backs.*” The binding of the hands of the mighty men of Israel is paralleled to forgetting Jerusalem and the Temple mount. The way this text is written, it sounds as if forgetting Jerusalem leads to forgetting to live in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. The rabbis say in the Talmud Bavli the following:

***Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 3b***

*“I do not remember you” (Tehillim / Psalms 137:5-6). This is also inconclusive, as perhaps there is no forgetting of Jerusalem for God, but in any event there is still making sport.*

The rabbis in the Talmud describe forgetting Jerusalem to forgetting God. How many Christians today believe this statement? Do you believe forgetting Jerusalem is synonymous to forgetting God? When studying the Scriptures, there is a continuity of the people of Israel and of those who would join themselves with Israel. When we place our faith in Yeshua as God's Messiah, that he laid his life down for ours, he was raised from the grave, are we joining ourselves with Israel? Have you forgotten Jerusalem and the significance of Jerusalem as the apple of His eye?

The entire Midrash states the following:

### מדרש תהלים פרק קלז סימן ז

ז רבי דוסא אמר אם אשכחך ירושלים תשכח ימיני מלעשות נסים, רבי זעירא אמר בשם רשב"ל, את מוצא כיון שגרה מן העונות, ונכנסו גוים לירושלים, נטלו גבורי ישראל וכפתו ידיהם לאחוריהם, אמר הקב"ה עמו אנכי בצרה (תהלים צא טו), בני נתונים בצרה ואני רואה, כביכול השיב אהור ימינו מפני אויב (איכה ב ג), ובסוף גלה אותם לדניאל ואתה לך לקץ (דניאל יב יג), א"ל ליתן דין וחשבון, א"ל ותנוח (שם דניאל י"ב), א"ל ליעולם, א"ל ותעמוד (שם דניאל י"ב), [אמר לפניו רבון העולמים עם מי, עם הצדיקים, או עם הרשעים, א"ל לגורלך (שם דניאל י"ב) עם הצדיקים כיוצא בכך א"ל אימתי], א"ל לקץ הימים, או לקץ הימין, א"ל לקץ הימין שהיא משועבדת, א"ל הקב"ה קץ נתתי לימיני כל זמן שבני משועבדים תהא ימיני משועבדת עמהם, גאלתי בני גאלתי ימיני, הוא שדוד אמר למען יחלצון ידידיך הושיעה ימינך וענני (תהלים ס ז), רבון העולמים עשה להם בשביל ידידיך אברהם יצחק ויעקב, וכל זמן שאין להם זכות, עשה להם בשביל ימינך ועננו, א"ל הקב"ה אני עושה, שנאמר חשף ה' את זרוע קדשו [וגו'] (ישעיה נב י), וכתוב הושיעה לו ימינו וזרוע קדשו (תהלים צח א).

### Midrash Tehillim 137, Part 7

7. Rabbi Dosa taught The verse If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let My right hand forget her cunning (Tehillim / Psalms 137:5) means that if Jerusalem is forgotten, never again will miracles be performed. Rabbi Zeera taught in he name of Rabbi Simeon son of Levi, You find that when the nations came into Jerusalem because of Israel's sins, they seized the mighty men of Israel and bound their hands behind their backs. And so the Holy One blessed be He, said I will be with him in trouble (Tehillim / Psalms 91:15), as if to say, When My children are seized by trouble, can I just look on? Thereupon, if one dare speak thus, God put His right hand behind His back in the presence of the enemy (Lamentations 2:3). But at the end God will again make His right hand visible, for He said to Daniel, you go your way till the end be (Daniel 12:13). Daniel asked To give an account of myself? God said, You will rest. Daniel asked Master of the universe, with whom? With the righteous or with the wicked? God said, In your lot, with righteous men like yourself. Daniel asked When? God said, At the end of yamin. Daniel asked At the end of yamim, days, or at the end of yamin, the right hand? God said, At the end of My right hand's being found behind My back. By this the Holy One blessed be He, meant to tell Daniel, I have set an end to the time that My right hand will be bound. As long as My children are bound in slavery, My right hand will be bound with them. When I deliver My children, I will deliver My right hand. David had this in mind when he said, That Your beloved may be delivered, save for Your right hand's sake, and answer me (Tehillim / Psalms 60:7) that is, Master of the universe, save Israel for the sake of Your beloved, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But as long as Israel have no merit, save them for Your right hand's sake, and answer me. The Holy One blessed be He, replied, I will serve them, as it is said The Lord has made visible His holy arm in the eyes of the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:10), and also His right hand, and His holy arm has gotten Him the victory (Tehillim / Psalms 98:1).

Kedushat Levi on Shemot / Exodus Parashat Pekudei 12 states "the Midrash Shocher Tov explains that just as man's actions are reflected by his shadow, so God also acts in a manner that reflects what man had done. For example; God says that "when you (the collective soul of the Jewish people) cry, I too join in your cries." Therefore, as long as we (the collective soul of the Jewish people) do not forget Jerusalem (while we are in exile), we can be assured that God will not forget Jerusalem either. (Tehillim / Psalms 137:5). Keeping this in mind we learn how important it is that we carefully consider every step we take in life, as if it is in the wrong direction, God may follow our footsteps to our detriment. This is not only a warning but also a compliment, so that we do not consider our actions as insignificant in this great universe, believing that what we do or do not do, does not matter to God anyways." The concept here is the Lord God is dwelling in the midst of His people and goes with them, joining in their cries and in their happiness. In addition, this illustrates how important it is that we live what we believe. Consider what would happen if the Lord who dwells within us is following along as we go through life and we frequent the path of sin? The rabbis say this would go to our detriment. The point is no matter what we do we do so for the sake of the Lord, for His glory, and to bear His testimonies for His glory. Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 7 goes on to say the following:

*Thereupon, if one dare speak thus, God put His right hand behind His back in the presence of the enemy (Lamentations 2:3). But at the end God will again make His right hand visible, for He said to Daniel, you go your way till the end be (Daniel 12:13). Daniel asked To give an account of myself? God said, You will rest. Daniel asked Master of the universe, with whom? With the righteous or with the wicked? God said, In your lot, with righteous men like yourself. Daniel asked When? God said, At the end of yamin. Daniel asked At the end of yamim, days, or at the end of yamin, the right hand? God said, At the end of My right hand's being found behind My back. By this the Holy One blessed be He, meant to tell Daniel, I have set an end to the time that My right hand will be bound. As long as My children are bound in slavery, My right hand will be bound with them. When I deliver My children, I will deliver My right hand.*

This illustrates Man's weakness and the Lord's strength. Because of the sin of the people, the Lord's hands were tied and then the people went into slavery, into exile. The Apostle Paul wrote that he had a thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7), it made Paul weak and he had prayed about the matter three times asking the Lord to remove this thorn. The Lord said however, "My grace is sufficient for you" (see 2 Corinthians 12:8-9). The power of God is made known in the weakness of man. This point is to keep us on our knees before God in prayer. Note how the Midrash shows Daniel praying and speaking to the Lord concerning the end of days (yamim) verses the power of the right hand (yamin) of God. The Lord gives us various gifts and strengths, but He also created us in weakness in order to cause us to walk in His ways, to seek His help, and to get on our knees before Him. Following through on the manner in which we were created, our having dependence upon the Lord, only then will we be able to do all things through him that strengthens us!

Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 7 concludes saying, "The Holy One blessed be He, replied, I will serve them, as it is said The Lord has made visible His holy arm in the eyes of the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:10), and also His right hand, and His holy arm has gotten Him the victory (Tehillim / Psalms 98:1)." The point of the midrash appears to be centered upon the power of God in the lives of His people. This moving and working of God in our lives is said to be apparent before all nations and peoples to the ends of the earth. The victory is the Lord's and we should count ourselves thankful for having a part of that victory in the Lord in heaven and in His Messiah Yeshua!

Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 8 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem (Tehillim / Psalms 137:7)." The פתיחה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "The earth, what does it stand upon?" The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק קלז סימן ה</b>  ח זכור ה' לבני אדום את יום ירושלים.  אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה רבונו ש"ע אתה  אומר לנו זכור אנו שכחה מצויה בנו, אתה  זכור שאין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, האומ"ר  רים ערו ערו עד היסוד בה, ר' אבא בר  כהנא אמר פגרו פגרו, כד"א חומת בבל  [הרחבה] ערער תתערער (ירמיה נא נח),  ר' לוי אמר פינן פינן, כד"א ותער כדה אל  השוקת (בראשית כד כ).</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 137, Part 8</b>  8. Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem (Tehillim / Psalms 137:7). The children of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe. You did tell us Remember (Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:17). But of us forgetfulness is to be expected of us. Do You remember since there can be no forgetfulness before the throne of Your glory. The children of Edom said Aru, aru to me, Rase it, Rase it, as in the verse The broad walls of Babylon will be rased (Arer) (Jeremiah 51:58). But rabbi Levi said, Aru, Aru means Empty it, empty it, as in the verse, And she hastened and emptied (te'ar) her pitcher into the trough (Bereshit / Genesis 24:20).</p>
--	--

The rabbis speak of the day when Edom stood against Israel and Jerusalem and say the psalmist is seeking

the Lord's help to remember a past event in which the Lord had helped to bring deliverance to the present day in saving them from the Babylonian captivity. This is related to how the Lord remembering Edom will result in His glory for saving Israel. We read in 2 Chronicles 28:17 *For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.* (NASB) When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem the Edomites joined him and took an active part in the plunder of the city and slaughter of Israel. Their cruelty is drawn out in the Psalmists comments saying, זָכֹר יְהוָה | לְבָנֵי אֲדוֹם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים עָרוּ | עָרוּ עַד הַיְסוּד :137:7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, 'Raze it, raze it To its very foundation.' (NASB) It was on account of these acts of cruelty the Edomites committed against Israel that in the day of their calamity the Edomites were so denounced by the prophets (Isaiah 34:5-8, 63:1-4, Jeremiah 49:17, Lamentations 4:21, Ezekiel 25:13-14, Amos 1:11-12, and Obadiah 8-10,15). When Judah was conquered, the Edomites, may have been rewarded for their services during the war, and were permitted to settle in southern Israel and the whole plateau between Israel and Egypt. Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 8 concludes saying, "But rabbi Levi said, Aru, Aru means Empty it, empty it, as in the verse, And she hastened and emptied (te'ar) her pitcher into the trough (Bereshit / Genesis 24:20)." The people are asking the Lord for justice by emptying them. To empty means to become void, to loose everything, or to become destitute.

Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 11 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "Rabbi Leonti inquired of Rabbi Jonah, It is understandable that a priest's daughter who marries an Israelite (commoner) and has a children by him is not permitted even if her husband dies to eat Terumah again." The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "But an Israelite's daughter who marries a priest and has a child by him is entitled even after her husband's death to eat Terumah." The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק קלז סימן יא</b>  יא [רבי ליונטי] בעון קומי רבי יונה בת כהן שנישאת לישראל חוזרת [ואוכלת], בת ישראל שנישאת לכהן הואיל והיא ראויה לאכול למה אינה אוכלת, אמר לו [כן אמר] ר' זעירא רב ענן בשם רב מהו בת כהן למדת של כהן, כמד"א בת בבל השדודה (תהלים קל"ז פסוק ח) וכי בת בבל היתה אלא שמע מינה שעשתה כמעשה בבל.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 137, Part 11</b>  11. Rabbi Leonti inquired of Rabbi Jonah, It is understandable that a priest's daughter who marries an Israelite (commoner) and has a children by him is not permitted even if her husband dies to eat Terumah again. But an Israelite's daughter who marries a priest and has a child by him is entitled even after her husband's death to eat Terumah. The question is, If she remarry, an Israelite this time, have a child by him, and then be widowed again should she not be permitted to resume the eating of Terumah? No, Rabbi Jonah replied for Rabbi Zeera and Rabbi Anan taught in the name of Rab, What is the full implication of the phrase, A priest's daught (Vayikra / Leviticus 22:12)? It means that she continues with the priestly way of life. Hence, when Scripture speaks of the daughter of Babylon (Tehillim / Psalms 137:8), does the phrase mean that Edom was actually the daughter of Babylon? No; it means that Edom continued doing the very things Babylon had done.</p>
--	---

The midrash is speaking of the Torah command to allow only those who are of the tribe of Aaron to eat of the sacred things, in this case the Terumah, the freewill offering. Parshat Terumah introduces us to the Mishkan (Tabernacle) in which God commanded Israel to build as a resting place for the Divine Presence. The Lord God instructed Moshe regarding all of the vessels of the Mishkan, detailing their appearance, dimensions, and the material from which they should be made. For each of the vessels, the Lord gave the command to Moshe in the first-person singular for saying, "You shall make a Menorah," "You shall make an Altar," "You shall make a Table," etc. The Jewish commentaries point out one exception which is the command regarding the construction of the Aron (the Holy Ark), which housed a Torah scroll and the Tablets which Moshe received at Mount Sinai. This command to construct the Ark of the Covenant was given in the third-person plural, saying, "And they shall make an Ark." The question is why was the Ark of the Covenant different? Writing in third person is writing from the third-person point of view, or outsider looking in.

Why did the Lord emphasize that all of the people should be involved in its construction? The context is found within the meaning of the covenant which is both community and individually based. As the people of God we are to work together to bring about the will of God in this world, to serve one another with love and respect. We are called to walk in God’s ways and to do the things the Lord God says we should be doing. This seems to be the point the midrash is making saying, *“What is the full implication of the phrase, A priest’s daughter (Vayikra / Leviticus 22:12)? It means that she continues with the priestly way of life. Hence, when Scripture speaks of the daughter of Babylon (Tehillim / Psalms 137:8), does the phrase mean that Edom was actually the daughter of Babylon? No; it means that Edom continued doing the very things Babylon had done.”* Israel is called the daughter of priests in the sense that she is to be about the service of the Lord. The Scriptures speak of the daughter of Babylon and the rabbis parallel this to Edom who continues in doing the things of Babylon. Remember, Babylon is paralleled to the harlot that is full of adulteries and all sorts of sin. We are called to something greater than this, to walk in God’s ways, to be righteous, holy, and just, and to bear the testimonies of God for His glory! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You Lord for Your mercy and the great work that you are doing in our lives. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek you all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve You and to do what is expected, to be humble and to pray and to remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

\*\*\*\*\*

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

## Notes