**Psalm 137**

By the rivers of Babylon—  
    there we sat down and there we wept  
    when we remembered Zion.  
**2**On the willows[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+137&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-16225a)] there  
    we hung up our harps.  
**3**For there our captors  
    asked us for songs,  
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,  
    “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

**4**How could we sing the Lord’s song  
    in a foreign land?  
**5**If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
    let my right hand wither!  
**6**Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,  
    if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem  
    above my highest joy.

**7**Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites  
    the day of Jerusalem’s fall,  
how they said, “Tear it down! Tear it down!  
    Down to its foundations!”  
**8**O daughter Babylon, you devastator![[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+137&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-16231b)]  
    Happy shall they be who pay you back  
    what you have done to us!  
**9**Happy shall they be who take your little ones  
    and dash them against the rock!

*The writer of this Psalm was probably expressing a very common sentiment amongst his fellow Israelites. He probably thought it was good and proper to hate your enemies with such zeal. Reading this through the Jesus Filter we cannot condone such sentiment. But there is still much to learn from this violent Psalm…*

*What can we take from it?*

**1 Samuel 15.1-9**

Samuel said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. **2**Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did in opposing the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt. **3**Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”

**4**So Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers, and ten thousand soldiers of Judah. **5**Saul came to the city of the Amalekites and lay in wait in the valley. **6**Saul said to the Kenites, “Go! Leave! Withdraw from among the Amalekites, or I will destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites withdrew from the Amalekites. **7**Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. **8**He took King Agag of the Amalekites alive, but utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. **9**Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the cattle and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was valuable, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed.

1. *In light of the Jesus Filter what is troubling in this text?*
2. *How might this text act as a mirror for our society, church or selves?*
3. *Is there anything in this text that foreshadows Jesus’ attitude?*
4. *Can you think of a modern situation where someone might find their story in this story?*