Paul Copan "Bashing Babies Against the Rocks?"

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Preacher: Paul Copan

[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Well, it's good to be with you all. It's been a while since I preached in a theater, but good to be back. I love this sort of a setting. And I think of Paul at Ephesus when he was also meeting at a theater and introducing people to the gospel for three years there. So may the Lord bless your ministry and give great opportunities for the gospel here in Ottawa. I'm going to be speaking about the topic, Dashing Babies Against the Rocks. We'll look at this Psalm 137. And more generally, at what a set of Psalms called the imprecatory Psalms. And imprecation is a prayer curse, a call for judgment. So as we read this, you know, and go through this passage, the imprecations are staggering. So let's unpack this. And before I get into that, I don't know if you're familiar with that cartoon called Gary Larson's The Far Side cartoon strip. Well, there's one cartoon strip where you have the proverbial kind of caricatured version of God, long hair, white hair, beard, white robe. And he's in this case sitting at a computer. And there is on the screen on the monitor there. There's a piano being lowered and or lifted up, hard to tell. But there's a hapless guy just walking aimlessly underneath this piano that has this rope attached to it. And God has his finger at the computer poised, ready to hit the smite key. God is about to smite this guy who's just walking, minding his own business, but not paying attention to the piano right over his head.

And so when people look at this, they think, oh yeah, maybe some of those imprecatory psalms, they're praying for God to hit the smite key to rescue the psalmist perhaps and to bring judgment upon the enemies of the psalmist. What I'd like to do in this morning's message is to, first of all, look at the very setting of Psalm 137. It's important to understand that to have a context.

And then that troubling portion at the end of Psalm 137, what does it mean to dash babies or little ones against the rocks? What is that referring to? And then what we want to do is kind of broaden out a little bit to understanding more of the theology behind the imprecatory psalms.

[3:54] And then finally, what do the imprecatory psalms have to do with us? Should we pray them? Should we avoid them? Should they be, as some prayer books have, just basically just removed? There's a, you know, some editors perform these psalmectomies, removing certain passages of Scripture because it just looks too harsh. It just sounds too, perhaps even traumatizing. If you're interested in getting a bit more background on this, there's the book that was mentioned, Is God a Moral Monster? And specifically, I'm referring to material from my book, Is God a Vindictive Bully, that seeks to reconcile portrayals of God in the Old Testament and the New, and to say that these are one and the same God, that the God of the Old Testament is the God whom Jesus represents, who is, you know, this is, Jesus is God incarnate, the Old Testament God incarnate who comes to reveal Himself in the Word became flesh and dwelling among us.

My wife and I were in Oxford for a sabbatical at Oxford University, and so from January through June, we were there in Oxford, and it was a real privilege to be able to give tours at the home of C.S.

Lewis, at his home, the Kilns, in Oxford, so it was a real thrill to be there. And I'm a big fan of C.S. Lewis, he's so quotable, he has a remarkable story, he's had such a great impact on so many, you know, not only in the 20th century, but also continuing into the 21st. But C.S. Lewis was troubled by some of these psalms, and he writes these things about the imprecatory psalms. He writes, these psalms, which strike us in the face like the heat from a furnace mouth, are terrible, or dare we say contemptible prayers, with the one we just read, Psalm 137, being more devilish, though, and he refers to another imprecatory psalm, with Psalm 109 being perhaps the worst. That's C.S. Lewis there. And he says that these harsh-sounding psalms are part of an undeveloped antiquity, but he admits that from these same fanatic and homicidal Hebrews may for brief moments reach a Christian level of spirituality, such as loving your enemy, mentioned in Proverbs 25 that Paul quotes in Romans chapter 12.

So that's C.S. Lewis's strong reaction to the imprecatory psalms. Can we make sense of these things? Should we agree with C.S. Lewis on these things? And I think that there is something important about letting the Word of God speak to us, even in its harshness and severity, that there may be some things that may strike us as harsh, but people, followers of Jesus Christ in other parts of the world may say, thank you. This is a portion of Scripture that gives me courage, that helps me to cry out to God, to rescue me, to help me against my enemies. So what may for us in a Western setting seem harsh and ruthless, for Christians, for believers in other parts of the world, it may actually be a source of strength and giving courage. But before we go in that direction, let's examine the setting of Psalm 137.

And we get a sense of oppression here as we walk through the psalm. Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem in 587, 586 B.C. Many of the exiles earlier on had been taken on in waves to Babylon, in three waves basically.

[7:48] And they were by the Euphrates River here, as the psalmist is writing, or one of its tributaries or irrigation canals. The Babylonian captors were now mocking the exiles to sing a song of their beloved or destroyed Jerusalem. And as we read the psalms, we do see these songs of praising, elevating, exalting Jerusalem. Psalm 46, God is in the midst of Jerusalem. She will not be moved. 482, beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great king.

Psalm 76, God is known in Judah. His name is great in Israel. His tabernacle is in Salem. His dwelling place also is in Zion. You are radiant with light, more majestic than mountains, rich with game. So all these songs of praise, loving the place where God dwells, the city of Jerusalem. But now it's been raised to the ground. And to add insult to injury, Edom, the nation coming from Esau, Jacob's brother, is acting treacherously against Judah. The Edomites aided the Babylonians, cheering them on against Jerusalem by pillaging Jerusalem with them and even blocking their own cousins from escaping Babylon, as the book of Obadiah tells us. And so the prayer is also saying, not just against Babylon, but saying, remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom, the day of Jerusalem, who said, raise it, raise it to its very foundation. Interestingly, the Babylonians were so brutal that when the Medo-Persian ruler Cyrus invaded Babylon, he actually brought an end to Babylonian tyranny, not just outside of the walls of Babylon, as it were, not outside the borders of Babylon alone, but even within Babylon itself, the Babylonians saw their rulers as tyrants. And so the Babylonians actually cheered Cyrus, not as a conqueror, but as a liberator. And they were spreading green branches before him. They were so enthusiastic that finally the tyranny was removed. That's the kind of nation we're speaking about, the brutality of Babylon.

Babylon. This brings us to directly addressing the question of the dashing babies reference, to what is the psalmist referring when he says these little ones? Well, as you read the various scholars and commentators, there are a number of different ways of looking at this text, actually. It's not as though it's just some sort of straightforward reading, you know, taking little children or something like that. No, it's actually something much more nuanced than that, that takes into account just the language of the scriptures themselves. One option that commentators note is that the little ones are actually Babylon's royal house. That the, when you're talking about the daughter of Babylon, you're not just talking about some woman in Babylon or the women of Babylon. You're talking about Babylon's rulers.

For example, in Isaiah 47, it says, Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans. So there's this connection with the daughter of Babylon to throne.

And the psalmist is basically saying here in Psalm 137, bring an end to the line of oppressors and tyrants, those royal oppressors. There's another alternative, that the little ones of Babylon are Babylon's soldiers commissioned by the king. So for example, we read in Jeremiah 51, the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is stamped firm. Yet in a little while, the time of harvest will come for her, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured me and crushed me. So there's this imagery of Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler, sending soldiers to crush anyone in their way. So there is that connection to soldiers who are bringing forth their tyranny from, again, under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar and other rulers. And so in this case, the psalmist would be praying, bring an end to those armies that tyrannize and destroy. So in one case, the daughter of Babylon, those little ones are the royal house, those who continue to perpetuate tyranny. Or it could be the soldiers who are commissioned, the instruments, the arm of oppression coming from the royal house.

[12:48] Another option is simply this, and we've talked a lot about this at the Dig and Delve conference, how the Old Testament scriptures are filled with hyperbole or exaggeration.

And so the Hebrews were very good at using hyperbole, speaking in black and white terms, speaking in extremes. It's like there's no middle ground at all. And so this would be an example of that, taking this heightened imagery that is not intended to be taken literally. So this psalmist, when he's speaking in these strong terms, speaking emotionally, he is assuming that he's not going to be taken literally. This is just the extreme language that is common, not just amongst the Hebrews, but also throughout the ancient Near East. Another option is this that commentators see, that the psalmist is simply calling for God's just recompense, calling for God to do to them, and we get a hint of that just before the last verse in Psalm 137, basically saying, Lord, as they have treated others, may you treat them. Just as they have done this to others, Lord, may it be done to them. There's yet another option.

Another alternative is simply this, that emotions in many passages of the Old Testament Scriptures, the Psalms, the prophets, and so forth, sometimes they'll express something without, you know, a moral or theological clarity. They're just, in a sense, venting. They're just getting their emotions out there without any sort of concern for theological precision. So in their deep emotion and trauma, the psalmist are going to use this extreme language. So we can expect some perhaps theologically imprecise language at times. For example, when the psalmist is saying, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Or Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 20 verse 7, he is crying out to God saying, Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived. Now, is that theologically accurate? No, but that's how Jeremiah felt. He had been commissioned, and the Lord told him it was going to be rough from the very beginning of chapter 1 of Jeremiah, but he is actually feeling it. He's actually facing it. And so he is calling out to God saying, this is not what I thought it would be.

This is not what I signed up for. And so he speaks in this way that is theologically imprecise. So those are a few considerations as we look at this passage, that it's not all a straightforward, just, you know, just kill babies. There's a lot more.

Well, what's going on here? And as we'll see in the next portion, does this have carryover into the New Testament? First of all, we see the principle of retribution, that what is behind these imprecatory psalms is calling on a just God, a just Redeemer, to take vengeance against the tyrants and oppressors. This is a theme repeated throughout the song of Moses from Exodus 15, where the Israelites have just come through the Red Sea, and the tyrants have been cast down and drowned and so forth. And we see this echoed even later on in the New Testament, in the book of Revelation, where the people of God are calling on God to bring justice, to bring down Babylon, this oppressive system that has been persecuting the people of God. There's something very fitting about that. Retribution is that first principle. There's also a second principle, and that is the principle of proportionality. And we've touched on this already. God, render to everyone according to what He has done. Even in the Old Testament, there is this principle of justice, of proportionality.

[17:13] Some people think it's brutal. It's called, you know, this lex talionis, the eye for an eye principle. Some people say that's really nasty. And we were just talking with someone, we were just talking about something with someone about this yesterday, that there is this concern, actually, even this morning, you know, talking about how in many parts of the world, there was, you know, if you steal my sheep, I'm going to burn down your village. And what this principle is calling for is a proportionality. And it wasn't as though it was literally gouging out eyes or knocking out teeth or anything like that, as we talked about at the Dig and Delve conference. But it's actually, it usually

takes the form of monetary payment when you're to pay eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It's just monetary payment that is called for. But it reflects that proportionality, that you don't overextend the response to wrongs that have been done to you. You don't multiply the harm that has come to you. But again, there is that proportionality principle in the Mosaic law that Jesus is not repudiating. Rather, He's repudiating a misuse of that law, that judicial law of retaliation, that law of justice. Thirdly, not just, not just retribution, not just proportionality, but also the language of covenant is behind these imprecatory psalms. That the covenant-making God who tells Abraham, I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you, this is something that is behind those imprecatory psalms. Lord, you said that if people would stand against us when we are living righteously, that you will intervene on our behalf, that you will stand up for us.

And so God is one who is going to stand against those who are in opposition to His kingdom and to the outworking of His purposes in this world. And so the psalmists are calling on God to act on behalf of His people. Now, the question then comes, how do we treat these imprecatory psalms for our own day? Aren't we supposed to live in light of the gospel, of loving our enemies, praying for those who persecute us and so forth? Well, I would say that the imprecatory psalms have value for us in our day and all the more in certain contexts in the world where what is going on with the psalmists and even those who are being persecuted in the New Testament, that these psalms are very much a part of the Christian liturgy. A lot of Western Christians are embarrassed by these psalms, but we are often embarrassed by them because we're coming from a position of privilege rather than a position of oppression. And so as we unpack this, we need to understand what is going on behind the New
Testament's use of the psalms because indeed, the New Testament doesn't ignore these psalms, doesn't say, oh, those psalms shouldn't use them anymore. But actually, the New Testament quotes the imprecatory psalms. So as we unpack that, let's remember, first of all, the New Testament is utilizing those psalms.
For example, Psalm 69 is quoted in Romans 11, where Paul says, let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution to them.
Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see and bend their backs forever. Paul is drawing on that language. Jesus, in several places, cites imprecatory psalms in John 2 and John 15.
[20:47] Also, Peter quotes two imprecatory psalms in Acts 1, verse 20. And he's quoting from Psalm 69, the same psalm that Paul is quoting from in Romans 11. And also Psalm 109, which C.S. Lewis calls the worst of the psalms. So again, this is the replacement of Judas. They're praying to the Lord to replace Judas. And in the psalms that are being quoted, it says, you know, let his place be made desolate and let another take his office. So the New Testament refers to these imprecatory psalms.

The New Testament, we also need to remember, contains severe texts as well. So not just imprecatory psalms, but just there's a language of severity that is here. Keep in mind what Paul says in Romans 11, 22. He says, behold then the kindness and severity of God.
A lot of times people want to emphasize the kindness, but they ignore that severity of God, the judgment of God, the wrath of God. And this is even true of, you know, when we look at the New Testament, Jesus himself is severe. In Jude 5, our best New Testament manuscripts have this reading.
It says, Jesus, after he had delivered the Israelites from Egypt, destroyed those who did not believe. Jesus destroyed those who did not believe. Just like Jesus was the rock, Christ was the rock that led the Israelites, 1 Corinthians 10, 4. Here in Jude, Jesus is the one who brings judgment upon these unbelieving Israelites. In Revelation 2, 20 to 23, in red letters in the book of Revelation, Jesus is speaking against this false prophetess Jezebel, and it says that he is going to strike dead her followers. That's Jesus. In Revelation 6, verse 10, these redeemed martyrs under the, their souls were under the altar in this vision that John has, and they're calling, they're saying, Lord, how long until you avenge our blood that has been shed by those who dwell upon the earth?
And in Revelation 18, 20, there is rejoicing when Babylon, that oppressive system, has finally fallen. Rejoicing that finally God has brought justice, that cosmic justice is being done.
[23:16] We also see further that cursing, even, the language of cursing does not disappear in the New Testament, but doesn't Jesus say, bless and curse not, and so forth? Doesn't He say, you know, don't, don't, don't, don't respond to, you know, curses with curses, but blessing instead of cursing, and Paul picks up on that theme in Romans chapter 12. Yes, there is that response of love,

of loving your enemies, and so forth, but it doesn't mean that curse is altogether obliterated in the New Testament. Paul speaks with curse, you know, language, severe language, in Galatians chapter 1, where people are preaching a false gospel. Let that person be condemned for twisting the gospel, for distorting it, and so forth. And Paul even said, wished that he could be cursed for the sake of his unbelieving Jewish brothers and sisters. But along with, you know, pronouncing or, you know, saying that those who preach a false gospel should be cursed. Paul is also one who is deeply concerned about those who, whose God is their belly, and so forth, in Philippians 3, that Paul says so. He speaks of this even with tears of those who are distorting the gospel, those who are undermining the cross of

Christ. There are other voices in the New Testament that use that very strong, that very severe language. It is there. And a lot of people want to say, well, Jesus is just kind and loving, and the New Testament is just all about kindness and love. They're often, they're just cherry-picking. There are plenty of verses that talk about the severity of God. Look at the parables of Jesus and the judgment that comes for those who reject the Son of God. And Jesus Himself prophesies the coming destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 by the Romans, that judgment will also fall. Judgment is going to fall on some of the cities that Jesus is preaching and where people refuse to believe in Him. In Matthew 11, where Jesus says, I'm gentle and humble in heart, that same chapter, Jesus says, woe to you, Bethsaida, woe to you, Chorazin. You know, if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. So when we compare the Old Testament to the New Testament, one scholar, John Day, says that the spirit of the imprecatory Psalms in the face of sustained injustice, hardened enmity, and gross oppression is consistent with the ethics both of the Old Testament and the New Testament, while at the same time recognizing the New Testament evidences a certain progress in the outworking of that essentially equivalent ethic. So even though you see more emphasis on blessing than curse and so forth, the curse has not gone away.

So this brings us to the very practical question, how should we pray these imprecatory Psalms? And I would say very carefully, but we get some clues from Psalm 139, and we have a very practical application here from the psalmist who, at the very beginning of this psalm, of course, you know, he talks about being fearfully and wonderfully made, about where can I go from your presence and so forth. So really glorying in the knowledge that God has for him, that this is an amazing knowledge.

Some people, sometimes you'll read about atheists who don't like, like Christopher Hitchens, he said he didn't want to believe in God because it would be like living in this celestial North Korea, where God is watching every move, He sees everything that I'm doing. Well, that's one perspective. Yeah, if you're living like a sinner, of course that's going to be troubling. But if you love God, if you love the presence of God, you know, for Him to know everything about you is just so precious. It's wonderful. Yes, it can be convicting too, don't get me wrong, but there is that marvelous knowledge that, you know, even when maybe things that we do go perhaps, you know, maybe certain sacrifices we make and people kind of just walk off and don't acknowledge or anything like that, you know, and that's okay. But the Lord sees, He knows that when you're praying in secret, when you're giving in secret and so forth, the Lord knows and the Lord, you know, what you do in secret will be rewarded openly by your Father. So there's a good thing about that knowledge. But then it goes to all of a sudden breaking out into this language of, do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with the utmost hatred. They have become my enemies. Where did that come from? We'll unpack that in a moment. But then there is a switch. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way. So you have this glorious language and then this sudden shift again and then a sudden shift again. Well, how do we put all of this together? Well, a few things to say as we unpack Psalm 139 as a kind of guide for us about the imprecatory Psalms. First of all, the hatred is not personal, and this is very important. Even when you read the imprecatory Psalms, it's not as though there is this, you know, personal animosity. It is something that is actually, you know, basically calling on God for one thing to do the work. And even these psalmists have tried to often try to show kindness to their enemies and so forth, and they simply have refused. So it's not as though it's a personal thing.

But when people continue to oppress, to tyrannize and so forth, you say, okay, Lord, bring justice. Do what you, you know, do what you promise to do. You know, and so it's kind of like the persistent

widow in Luke chapter 18 where she is crying out, give me justice against my enemy. So she is persistent.
[28:53] She's calling on this unjust judge in this parable to do something. And how much more will God bring justice for His people who are oppressed? So this hatred is not personal. And it sometimes could even be comparative, like Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated. It doesn't mean that God didn't love Edom. In fact, Jesus in Mark chapter 8 verse 3 is preaching to the descendants of Edom, you know, in Edomia. He's preaching there to those who are, you know, again, the relatives of the people of Israel. Also, this hatred simply in this case is expressing a kind of zero tolerance stance against those who oppose or hate God. And as the psalmist is saying, if people oppose you, then I'm opposed to them, Lord. I want to take your side in these things. I don't want to be a compromiser, compromising with the world. And we also keep in mind too that even though God loves sinners, as we read in John 3, 16, God so loved the world, at the same time, 20 verses later in John 3, 36, it says that His wrath remains on those who love darkness rather than light and so forth. And even in the book of Proverbs, we read there's the command to love our enemies, to do good to those who are persecuting us.

So this is not a new ethic that Jesus came up with. It's rooted in the Old Testament. But it says, you know, if your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink and so forth. But in the previous chapter, there is also a call for those to use coercive force when people are being oppressed and led away to the slaughter. It says, hold them back, you know, help those people who are being led away to slaughter. So there's, you know, even though we're called to love our enemies, there's also a place for using just coercive force to stop them from harming others. And this is a way of expressing love for neighbor. We love our neighbor by stopping those who are going to be, who want to brutalize them and harm them. The imprecatory psalmist furthermore don't take matters into their own hands. This isn't personal vengeance for them. They're calling on God to intervene and help them. And so when we are praying, you know, maybe using these psalms, we recognize that this is not a matter that we take into our own hands, but rather we leave it in the hands of God.
As Psalm 9 says, arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail. Let the nations be judged before you. Put them in fear, O Lord. Let the nations know that they are but men. But we also need to acknowledge, as the psalmist does in Psalm 139, that there is the potential danger of vengefulness that lurks in every human heart that cries out for justice. There may be a good impulse, but that can turn to bitterness, that can turn to rage, that can suddenly dominate our lives, and we eventually create a prison cell for ourselves that we can't get out of. Furthermore, we should always be open to and rejoice in God's mercy to people, repentant sinners, people who come. Like, remember, think about the relatives of those whom Saul had been oppressing in the book of Acts, taking people, putting them in prison, seeking to put them to death. And you can imagine the fear that came to people when they're saying, do you know what that guy Saul did to my family? He had them all put in prison. But there's also a cause for rejoicing. When Jesus had confronted Saul on the road to Damascus, he repented and now became a proclaimer of the good news of Jesus Christ. So we ought to be people who pray for those who are terrorists, people who are doing evil things, that they might come to know the reality of God's presence, the reality of the gospel, and forgiveness in their own lives. This should be our first impulse, to pray for them, that they might know the salvation of God. So we should always be open to God's mercy, but it doesn't mean that there is no, you know, that there is no room for praying for judgment upon the unrepentant as well. And so if we had to kind of summarize where things come from, where the psalmists are coming from, we could perhaps give this dictum. We could say, God, work in the heart of those who tyrannize and oppress. Work in their hearts, or stop their hearts, or maybe just neutralize the impact of the harm that they're bringing. Work in their heart, stop their heart, but examine my heart.
So we always need to search our hearts and have God search us in this case. And as I said before, these imprecatory psalms are often in places where Christians are persecuted in other parts of the world. It says, John Golden Gay, the Old Testament scholar, says that many people throughout the world who are believers may not find such psalms incongenial in places like Africa, where Christians face pernicious accusations of witchcraft, which bring them harm, devastation, and shame, to pray for the Lord to bring judgment. Or it says, in places where enemies will use spiritual forces to bring harm to others through charms and recitations, Christians have come to see the imprecatory psalms as psalms of protection and defense. The New Testament scholar N.T. Wright

says, if there is injustice, if the poor are being oppressed, then it is right to pray that God will rid the world of that. Part of our reaction to the so-called cursing psalms is that we think that the modern world has basically the problem of evil solved. The psalms bring us up short and say, no, evil is real. And some people are so wicked that we simply must wish judgment upon them. As we bring this to a close, we must remember that both
Old and New Testament refer to God as both kind and severe, that God prefers to be gracious over bringing wrath and judgment, but He will not leave the guilty unpunished. God, as 1 John says, is both light and love, that God is holy and righteous, but also loving, and we can't go to one extreme or the other. We see this is true of Jesus Himself, who is gentle and humble, but also, as Revelation 12 says, He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. And also in this world, Jesus said, you'll face hardship.
[35:19] This world will bring trouble to you, but be of good cheer. I've overcome the world. So, we will face that, and we may find more and more the need to bring those imprecatory psalms closer to our vision, but praying them in the right kind of way. As Paul said in Acts 14, we must go through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God. So, as we, as gospel people, think through these psalms, we don't get rid of them. We don't say, oh, those are terrible, those are anti-gospel. We put them in the proper perspective of the New Testament, although we see the trajectory of the greater emphasis on blessing and love over against cursing and so forth. So, this is the kind of context that we need to understand, and I trust that some of this unpacking of Psalm 137 has been helpful to you.

Thank you so much for listening. God bless you.