

## READING PLAN WEEK 7 for **The Epic of Eden – Psalms–The Anatomy of a Lament**

**Word from the Author:** “The story of Israel’s exile is the darkest day in all Israelite history. It is filled with myriad griefs and losses. Indeed, the very infrastructure of the people is destroyed down to the temple being destroyed, Jerusalem razed, and the children of Abraham laying slain in the streets. If ever there was a time for lament, it was this one. And Israel was agonizingly aware that what was happening was their own stupid fault. The laments of the people echo through the psalms and trace the following pattern; 1) an address of praise to God for his mighty acts in the past, 2) the complaint in distress, 3) a protest of innocence, 4) a petition for deliverance and 5) a declaration of confidence in God’s good character and a vow to praise him, regardless of the current crisis.”

**Day #1: Read Psalm 44.** Do you see the five components of the psalmic lament in these verses? Are there modern laments? Of course! The worship song “Is He Worthy” by Andrew Peterson is a powerful one. While it doesn’t have every component of the pattern above, it has many! You may want to look up the tune on YouTube and recall the words of this modern lament.

**Day #2: Read 2 Kings 25:1-2, 8-15, 21b.** Note who attacked Jerusalem, how long the siege lasted, what was destroyed and what happened to the temple. **Read Psalm 137.** Note the “voice” of this psalm. Who is singing? What did the singers long for? In this psalm, the survivors of all the trauma are recognizing their own agency in all this loss as they “sat and wept”. Have you ever seen the work of your own life go up in smoke? Have you ever taken an appraisal and seen elements of your own agency in the despairing event? And yet, in the midst of the despair and loss, reached out to the Lord for rescue, deliverance and, indeed, salvation from the mire? Have you, too, uttered the words of **Psalm 38:21-22**?

**Day #3: Read Psalm 74.** This psalm reflects on the Babylonian exile we discussed in yesterday’s meditation. What do you see as the core request of the psalmist. After 70 years in exile, the Israelites returned “home”. **Read Psalm 136.** How does it contrast with Psalm 74?

***This week’s reflection question:*** If you recall Dr. Richter’s fundamental observation from her original “The Epic of Eden” Bible study, you may remember that the story of God’s word begins in Eden and concludes in the New Jerusalem. And everything in between is the most amazing rescue story known to human history. How will Yahweh get humanity back into the Garden? How will the relationship be restored? The journey is traced through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and, finally, Jesus. The exile of humanity from Eden is not restricted to the Old Testament. **Read Hebrews 11:13-16** and recognize that we are also living in a fallen world and characterized as aliens, strangers, and exiles. Yet, God continues to hear his peoples’ cry – including our own – making ours, also a story of return.

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