

# Psalms 137:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

## Analysis

**We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof** (עַל-טְּרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ) (תְּלִינוּ כְּנֹרוֹתֵינוּ)—The instruments of worship become silent memorials. Kinnor (lyre/harp) accompanied temple praise; hanging them on aravim (willows/poplars) along Babylonian canals symbolizes worship's suspension. Not destroyed but dormant—hope's stubborn refusal to adapt.

This gesture protests forced assimilation. Babylon wanted Israel's music without Israel's God (v. 3)—entertainment divorced from devotion. The silenced harps testify that true worship cannot be commodified or coerced. They wait for legitimate context—temple, Zion, freedom.

## Historical Context

Babylonian reliefs show musicians in royal courts—conquered peoples provided cultural entertainment. The exiles' refusal to perform represents cultural resistance. The willows likely refer to Euphrates poplars, trees associated with Mesopotamian waterways.

## Related Passages

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

### Study Questions

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1. What instruments of joy hang silent in your life because proper conditions for celebration don't exist?
2. When has your faith been reduced to 'performance' for others' entertainment?
3. What stubborn hope refuses to normalize exile and demands homecoming?

### Interlinear Text

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עַל	עַרְבֵי יָם	בְּתוֹךְ הָ	תָּ לַ יָּנוּ	כְּנִירוֹתֵינוּ:
H5921	upon the willows	in the midst	We hanged	our harps
	H6155	H8432	H8518	H3658

### Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 24:8** (Parallel theme): The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

**Ezekiel 26:13** (Parallel theme): And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.