Part 1 – Weeping in Babylon

We've now come to the ***thirty-first*** chapter in the "Deuteronomy Book" (the *fifth*, and *final*, 'book' of the Psalms) which has the overall subject of "***God's Word is the Only Good***". And that means that all blessing *for man* (Genesis, 1st book), all blessings *for Israel* (Exodus, 2nd book), all blessing *in relation to sanctuary* (Leviticus, 3rd book), and all blessing for *the earth and nations* (Numbers, 4th book) **are bound up in the Living Word of God**! And that's *why* **the Living Word is the *root*, and *source*, of <u>all</u> blessings**. Now, let's also remember that, **Psalm 135** had the subject/title of "**Praise**" because reminded us of some of the (many) *reasons* we have to praise the *true* God (YHVH). For He truly is *far greater*, and *above all*, that is called 'god'. After all, He not only created heaven, and earth, but <u>us</u> too! And that's why the false gods of Egypt could not save them from the Ten Plagues the Lord (YHVH) brought upon them. Nor could the false gods of the other heathen nations save them when they fought Israel; for the Lord (YHVH) fought *for* Israel so they *could* inherit the Promise Land. And these few examples should remind us how vain (empty and useless) it is to worship false gods and idols. For, we truly *will become like what we worship*. That's why those who worship false gods, and idols, will eventually become as dead as they as they are. But those who worship the *Living* God (YHVH) will be given *eternal* life. And that's yet another reason to praise (bless) the *true* God, Yehovah! And then **Psalm 136**, also had the subject/title of "**Praise**" because it also reminded us of some of the (many) *reasons* we have to praise the *true* God (YHVH). Indeed, it is *only* Yehovah (who is the *only* Eternal, and self-existent One in existence, #3068) that is the "God of gods" (*Supreme* God, our *Creator*, #430), "Lord of lords" (*Sovereign* Ruler on earth, #113) and "God of heaven" (*Almighty* God who rules <u>all</u> things in heaven and earth, #410)! And the *many* 'great wonders' He has done (creating heaven and earth, freeing Israel from Egyptian bondage, giving them the victory over the heathen nations, saving us from our enemies, and giving us our daily provisions) *prove* this fact, i.e. that He truly is *far greater*, and *above all*, that is called 'god'. Yet, it *also* proves that "*His mercy endureth forever*"! And that's *why* He is *so very* **worthy** of our praise, thanks, love adoration and obedience.

And now we come to **Psalm 137**, which has the subject/title of "***Israel, Deliverance from Babylon***" because (not surprisingly) it's a prayer of deliverance from captivity to Babylon. Now, this Psalm is anonymous, so we are not told *who* wrote it nor *when* it was written. And, many scholars think it was written by someone who was taken captive, to Babylon, when the southern kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians (as 2 Chron 36 records). And, while this is an understandable assumption, it's not *necessarily* true. If you are fortunate enough to have a *Companion Bible* [https://t.me/BestStudyBible/6], you can read the notes to see some of the reasons *why* this Psalm *may not* have been written at that time. So, *if* this was *not* written then, *when* would it have been written? Was there any other time *any* part of the children of Israel (in the northern kingdom <u>or</u> the southern) were taken to Babylon? Well, actually, yes. As 2 Chron 33:10-13 tells us, Hezekiah's *son*, Manasseh (who was a *very* wicked king, *unlike* his father) was

taken captive (*literally* in chains), *by the Assryians*… yet they took him *to Babylon*, not Assyria. At that time, Babylon was under Assyrian control. And we know they moved people they conquered around *because* 2 Kings 17:23-24 tells us that: when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (which consisted of the *ten northern tribes* of Israel), they carried those ten tribes *to Assyria*. And then they brought men from "*Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof*".

Further, 2 Chron 33:10-13 also tells us, concerning Manasseh, that: when he was 'in affliction' (captive in Babylon) he *actually* besought the Lord (YHVH), humbled himself, and prayed to the Lord (YHVH) for help (the Apocrypha actually records his prayer). And the Lord (YHVH) *heard* his prayer, *because* he was *earnestly* repentant for the *many* wicked things he had done. And, in an *amazing* example of how the Lord's (YHVH) "*mercy endureth forever*" (as the last Psalm taught us), He caused the heathen to *free* Manasseh, and allowed him *to go back to* Jerusalem, where he was allowed to rule *again*! So, it is possible this Psalm was written by king Manasseh. After all, the Psalms that are *titled* (so we know *when* they were written) were all written *before the last* captivity of the southern Kingdom of Judah, to the Babylonians. So, we should keep this possibility in mind as we study. But, regardless of who actually wrote it, we know that ***all*** *scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is* ***profitable*** *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for* ***instruction in righteousness****: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Tim 3:16-4:1). Therefore, the Lord (YHVH) has a purpose for this Psalm being in His Word. In other words, we know this Psalmist was *divinely influenced* by the Holy Spirit when he wrote it. So, this Psalm (as with the others) is *still* an *incredibly* instructive Psalm - and is also *incredibly prophetical*, as most of the Psalms are - which makes it *well worth* studying…

Psalm 137
1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

So, the Psalmist begins by telling us about his experience in Babylon. And, it's not quite clear if he was actually in Babylon when writing this Psalm or, had been in Babylon, and was writing about his experience *afterwords*. But, either way, he specifically, states that he was (at some point in time) *by* the 'rivers' of Babylon. The word '**rivers**' here means ***a stream***, including the ***sea***; and it is *often* used specifically to refer to rivers such as the ***Nile*** (in Egypt) and the ***Euphrates***, which was (at that time) in Babylon (#5104). So, he may very well have been *by* the Euphrates River. Now then, the word '**Babylon**' is *very* important to understand. For the meaning of it is actually ***confusion***, although it's also used to refer to ***Babel*** (i.e. ***Babylon***), including ***Babylonia*** and ***the Babylonian empire*** (#894). Further, it comes from a prim root that means (by implication) ***to mix*** (#1101) which is *very* interesting in light of what "**Knowing Good and Evil**" [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/579] *really* means! Now, Gen 10:8-10 tells

us that Nimrod (a descendant of Noah's son Ham) founded Babel; and it was given that name after the Lord (YHVH) *confounded* the languages to scatter them about the earth (Gen 11:9). However, what's *most* important to know is *what* 'Babylon' represents. As Rev 17:5 tells us, '*Mystery Babylon, the Great'* **is** '*the mother of harlots and abominations on the earth*'. And, in Rev 17, this 'city' is represented *as whore* who sits upon a 'beast' (Rev 17:3), which was upon many waters (Rev 17:1, 13:1). And Rev 17:18 tells us this 'woman' **is** '*that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth*". And the 'waters' she 'sits upon' are "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Rev 17:15) while the 'beast' that 'carrieth' her is described in Rev 13 and 17:8-14 (among other Scriptures).

So, the point is that: 'Babylon' is not *merely* a physical location; it's *symbolic* (in the Bible) for a 'city' that governs *the earth* in a ***very evil* way** - that's *why* she's considered the "*mother of harlots and abominations on the earth*"! And, while the Lord (YHVH) scattered the people who first lived in Babel (Gen 11), **that 'city' has not died off**, not even after it was conquered by the Medes and Persians. And that's because, "Babylon" is *not just* a physical location; it's a *very* wicked (Satanic) *system* that governs the kings (rulers) of the earth (and the merchants as well) *to this very day*. Rev 18 also explains more about it, when detailing its destruction when Jesus Christ returns. You can also learn more about this 'great city', Babylon, in the study on: **Builders of Cities and a Good Repentance** [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/304], for there's truly *much more* to it than we can cover in this study. But, to *fully* understand the significance of this precious Psalm, we *must* understand that Babylon *symbolizes* **Satan's *wicked* system**. Not merely his *governing* system (which is the 'beast' with ten horns and seven heads) but, more so the *economic* side of his wicked system (as Ezek 28 and Rev 18 explains). It is the *economic* benefits of 'Babylon' that *spiritually* seduce the 'kings of the earth' to 'fornicate' (spiritually) with this 'whore' and, cause the inhabitants of the earth to be 'drunk' (spiritually delusional with lies) with the 'wine of her fornication' (Rev 17:2; Rev 18:3, etc.). And lastly, the 'king' of this wicked 'Babylonian system' is none other than *Satan himself*. So, when we read Scriptures about the 'king of Babylon', many times they are 'types' of the *soon coming* 'king of Babylon' who (to reiterate) is Satan himself. That' *why*, in Isaiah 14, while verse 4 tells Isaiah to '*take up this proverb against the king of Babylon*", the Lord (YHVH) then *goes on* to speak of 'Lucifer' (vs 12) and his 'fate' for being the 'king of Babylon'!

So then, this first verse (going back to Psalm 137) told us the Psalmist was by the rivers of Babylon (possibly the Euphrates). And, "***there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion***". The words '**there we sat down**' is one Hebrew word that means ***to sit down*** (specifically *as judge*, *in ambush*, or *in quiet*); and (by implication) it can also mean ***to dwell*** or to ***remain***; and (causatively) it can even mean ***to settle***, or ***to marry*** (#3427). In the context of this verse, it likely means *to sit down* but, the Psalmist could also have been encamped (temporarily dwelling) there for some purpose (i.e. such as he was being transported from one location to another). And then the word '**yea**' can mean several things, i.e. ***also, even, yea, though, both, and***, etc. (#1058).

So, the Psalmist was sitting at the rivers of Babylon (possibly the Euphrates) yet, he also '**wept**', which means ***to weep*** or to ***bemoan***, i.e. *complain* (#1058). And *why* would he have been weeping and/or bemoaning (complaining)? Because he 'remembered Zion'. The word '**remembered**' not only means ***to remember***, but also (by implication) ***to mention***, i.e. speak about (#2142). So, he might (or might not have been) literally weeping but, he was for sure thinking about (i.e. remembering), and possibly speaking to others about, 'Zion'. And, as we've learned in past studies, 'Zion' was simply ***a mountain in Jerusalem*** (#6726) where David lived, and judged, the nation of Israel when he became king (2 Sam 5:7-9). And, David not only made Zion (Jerusalem) the *capital* city, but also the *center of worship* for Israel. And, while the Ark of the Covenant was later moved to Mount Moriah (where Solomon built the Temple, 1 Kings 8:1; 2 Chron 3:1), Zion was *still* used to refer to the capital city *and* the center of worship. And that's simply because Zion was where Israel initially went to get judgment (from David) and worship the Lord (YHVH) at. So, in the Scriptures, **Zion and Jerusalem are *often* used *synonymously* for each other** (Ps 14:7, 51:18, 102:21, Ps 125:1-2, 128:5, 135:21, 147:12; Isa 37:32, 41:27, 52:1-2, 7-9; Jer 3:14-17, 6:2-8, Jer 26:18; Lam 1:4-8; Zech 1:14-17, 2:10-13, 8:3, 14-15; Mic 3:10-12, 4:8; Joel 2:32, 3:16-21; Amos 1:2, 6:1; Mic 3:10; Zeph 3:14-17). And this shouldn't be too hard to understand, for today we often use the capital of a nation (such as Washington, i.e. "D.C.") to refer to the entire nations (the USA).

So, while the Psalmist was stuck sitting (or dwelling) by the 'rivers of Babylon' (possibly the River Euphrates), he 'wept' (even bemoaned about) when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem). So, it's quite possible that Jerusalem was his home town. If Manasseh was the writer of this Psalm, then it *definitely* would have been. But, even if it was someone else who wrote this Psalm, and even if they didn't actually live in Jerusalem (Zion), this city was still *very* dear to most all Israelites, *especially* those who loved the Lord (Yehovah, i.e. YHVH). **Why**? Because Jerusalem was where the Ark of the Covenant was taken there during David's reign, and *remained there* until the Babylonians final invasion… note, however, that the Bible does *not* mention the Ark of the Covenant being one of the spoils the Babylonians took out of the Lord's (YHVH) Temple (2 Chron 36). Some people think that Jeremiah hid the Ark somewhere before they came, which is quite possible but, we don't know for sure where it is. Anyhow, the point is, that the Ark of the Covenant was *still in* Jerusalem when this Psalm was written. And thus, the city was *very* important to *most* Israelites *because* ***that's where they went to worship the Lord*** (YHVH), i.e. where His Ark was. And that's because the Ark of the Covenant *represented God's presence*, because that's where He did *literally* 'dwell' (at times) to communicate with Israel from (Ex 25:22; Lev 16:2, 13; Num 12:5, 16:42; 1 Kings 8:10-11).

And even today, Jerusalem holds a special place in the hearts of many Christians; and much for the same reasons. However, as Solomon explained, the Temple he built for God *only* served as a place the people could offer sacrifices to God (2 Chron 2:5-6). But truly, no physical building can 'contain' God because He goes *wherever* He wants to! After all, He has made the heavens

and the earth… so there's *no* reason He *needs* dwell in a physical building like we do. As Isa 66:1-2 says (and Acts 7:49-50 quotes): *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and those things have been, saith the LORD:* ***but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word***. In other words, in order for the Lord (YHVH) to hear our prayers, it's not important to be at Jerusalem anymore because we don't need to offer sacrifices (since Jesus Christ has already paid for our sins, once and for all times, Heb 10:10). But now, as back them, *those who God listens to are those who are of a humble and sincere heart*. So, the 'mobile' Tabernacle Moses built ,and the permanent Tabernacle Solomon built, were *only* built to give Israel a place to offer sacrifices. And the sacrifices themselves were simply a *teaching* tool to teach us *how* to worship the Lord (YHVH), as Paul explained in Gal 3:23-26.

And this is why Jesus told the Samaritan that *we don't need to worship* at any *specific* building anymore *once we accept* the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to pay for our sins. Heb 10:10 specifically tells us that Jesus Christ died for our sins *once and for all times*. That means blood sacrifices don't need to (and should not be) offered anymore because He has fulfilled them *forever* (Mth 5:17, 26:56; Lk 24:44-47). Therefore, ***we are now to worship God*** *wherever we are by putting truth* (His Word) *into our 'inner man'* (as He explained in Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10, 10:16) *and sincerely trying to obey it*. And, when we do that, His Holy Spirit *will literally* come to dwell in our flesh body, so that we can have the strength, and understanding, to *obey* Him. As Paul explained, **we are the Temple of God** *when* we accept Jesus Christ, *for His Holy spirit dwells within us* (1 Cor 3:16-18, 1 Cor 6:15-20, 2 Cor 6:14-18). And that again is why we don't need a physical building to worship in today [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/332].

So, while Jerusalem was very dear to the hearts of Israelites (and gentiles alike) wh*o loved the Lord* (YHVH) – because that's where they were *supposed* to worship *back then* – the Jerusalem of today is **not** something we should hold dear to our heart. Why? Because we Christians have something *much better* to look forward to. And what is that? NEW Jerusalem! So, the city of Jerusalem (Zion) that is on earth now, is not the one we should be looking towards dwelling in, for it's *terribly* corrupt. As Rev 21 tells us, it's *only* NEW Jerusalem that God will dwell at, with those who earnestly love (and obey) Him. It's *only* NEW Jerusalem where He will wipe our tears away and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain. Further, it is the Jerusalem that exists today where the *false* Christ (who is Satan himself) will appear, claiming to be 'God' our 'Savior' [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/440], which **is** the 'abomination of desolation' Jesus warned us about (Mth 21, Mk 13, Lk 21, Dan 9, 11, etc.), as does Paul (2 Thess 2). So, if our 'heart' is longing for Jerusalem today, we need to remind ourselves *what type of city* Jerusalem is *today* [Ezek 16 gives a *vivid* description of it, https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Ezekiel/293]. For it's *not* inhabited with those who love Jesus Christ but, (for the most part) those who *hate* Him. And thus, *our enemies are now dwelling there*, which is *why* the city will be cleansed *before*

Jesus Christ returns to dwell there (Zech 14; rev 11:13, 15:18-20, 16:17-21, etc.). If you'd like to learn more about 'Jerusalem' verses 'New Jerusalem' then check out this link, for it gives a *much more* detailed explanation that we can go into now [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/543].

So, what we've learned from this first verse (here in Psalm 137) is that the Psalmist was stuck sitting (or dwelling) by the 'rivers of Babylon' (possibly the River Euphrates) where he 'wept' (even bemoaned about) when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem). Yet, what this is *symbolic* of the *faithful* **Christians living today** under the 'Babylonian system' that *runs* our current world. And we, like the Psalmist, truly do weep (spiritually speaking) for it. Not only because of all the abominations going on there now but also when we think of what **New** Jerusalem will be like. And this is why Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt 5:4). And, as Isa 61:2 says, it is the "the day of vengeance of our God" that comforts all those that mourn for the wickedness going on in Jerusalem, yea, in the *entire* world! In other words, when you study God's Word, it's impossible to note how much of the world disobeys it. Many do so willingly but many others do so because they are very deceived. And even Christians unwittingly participate in Satan's wicked 'Babylonian' system because they are not taught the truth by their pastors [https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/212], but rather vain (useless) 'traditions of man' that make God's Word void (useless) to them (Mth 15; Mk 7)! And further, in the *prophetical* sense, those who love 'Jerusalem' (i.e. are looking forward to NEW Jerusalem) will indeed be morning when they see Satan's Babylonian system get *full* control over all the world (for a short while) … but that will only be *until* Jesus Christ returns to clean it!

So, this first verse isn't *only* speaking of how one man, in bondage at Babylon (a long time ago), wept when he remembered Zion (Jerusalem)… it's also quite *prophetical* of how those who are *currently* living under the wicked 'Babylonian system' *spiritually* 'weep' for New Jerusalem *yet to come*. For the current wickedness that controls our 'modern' world is *quite* evil; and that truly does 'vex' our hearts *just as much* as it did Lot when he lived in Sodom (2 Peter 2:7-). Truly, those perverts in Sodom don't 'hold a candle' to the sick, and perverted, things going on in the world today! It's no wonder Jesus said that the time shortly before He returns (at His Second Advent) would be just like the days of Noah, and of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:26-30)! But, as it is written, "*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*" (2 Peter 2:9). And that day IS coming… much sooner than many think…

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, ***but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.***
21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

*22 And **ye now therefore have sorrow**: but I will see you again, **and your heart shall rejoice**, **and your joy no man taketh from you**.*
John 16:20-22

*7 Rest in the LORD, **and wait patiently for him**: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*
8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
*9 For evildoers shall be cut off: **but** those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*
10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.
*11 But **the meek shall inherit the earth**; and **shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace**.*
Ps 37:7-11

We'll pick this up in part 2…

AMEN.