Psalms Chapter 137 - Review

In chapter 137, part 1, we learned the subject/title of this Psalm is "***Israel, Deliverance from Babylon***" because (not surprisingly) it's a prayer of deliverance from captivity to Babylon. However, this Psalm is anonymous, so we are not told *who* wrote it nor *when* it was written. And, while 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), it's possible it was written by king Manasseh, who was a *very* wicked king of the southern kingdom of Judah. And, because of that, the Lord (YHVH) caused him to be taken captive (*literally* in chains), *by the Assryians*… yet they took him *to Babylon*, which was under their control at that time. Yet, because he *actually* besought the Lord (YHVH), humbled himself, repented, and prayed to the Lord (YHVH) for help, the Lord (YHVH) caused the heathen to *free* Manasseh, and allowed him *to go back to* Jerusalem, where he was allowed to rule again (2 Chron 33:10-13). 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).

So, we know the Lord (YHVH) has a purpose for this Psalm being in His Word. And we began to see that purpose when we studied the first verse in the Psalm, where the Psalmist began to tell us about his experience in Babylon. So, while the Psalmist was stuck sitting (or dwelling) by the 'rivers of Babylon' (possibly the River Euphrates, or even its extensive river, canal, and irrigation network), he 'wept' (even bemoaned about) when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem). And from this one verse alone we learned many things. First off, 'Babylon' means *confusion* and comes from prim word that means *to mix*… which is *exactly* what Satan's doctrine is all about, and *why* he's called the "tree of knowledge of good and evil' in Genesis 2:9. For Satan mixes 'good' (God's Word) with 'evil' (his words, which are lies) to *deceive people* into disobeying God. After all, when you mix evil with good, any 'good' that was there *becomes* evil! And that's why Satan's lies are *so* deceptive; because they are mixed with *just enough* truth to make them *sound* good. The way he deceived Eve, and the way he tempted Jesus (unsuccessfully) are both good examples of that (Gen 3, Mth 4, Lk 4). And sadly, that form of deception has worked *well* ever since Adam and Eve fell for Satan's lies in the Garden of Eden. Thus, we learned that 'Babylon' was *not just* a city, and not just an empire; it's Satan's *wicked system* that *continues to exist* yet today. And thus, this 'Babylonian system' continues to deceive many of God's children (even Christians) into thinking they are doing good, when they are really doing evil – thanks mostly to the 'traditions of man' which pervert God's Word! And then, we also learned that 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 *prophetical* 'types' of Satan himself (ex: Isa 14).

And then we learned that the Psalmist 'wept' (even bemoaned about) when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem) *because* that city 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*. However, we also learned that the Jerusalem of today is **not** something we should hold dear to our heart because the city is *terribly* corrupt. Further, the Jerusalem that exists today is where the *false* Christ (who is Satan himself) will appear, claiming to be 'God' our 'Savior' (Rev 12, 2 Thess 2), which **is** the 'abomination of desolation' Jesus warned us about (Mth 21, Mk 13, Lk 21, Dan 9, 11, etc.). So, if our 'heart' is longing for Jerusalem today, we need to remind ourselves *what type of city* Jerusalem is *today*. And if you need a reminder, Ezek 16 gives a *vivid* description of it. 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.). Further, Christians have something *much better* to look forward to, i.e. New Jerusalem! And that will only come *after* the false Christ (Satan) comes to the earth, which will be *before* the return of the *true* Christ, i.e. Jesus.

So, while we learned that the Psalmist was stuck sitting (or dwelling) by the 'rivers of Babylon' (possibly the River Euphrates, or even its extensive river, canal, and irrigation network) where he 'wept' (even bemoaned about) when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem), 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 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 – i.e. when Satan is kicked out of heaven, to earth, with his fallen angels (as Rev 12 and 2 Thess so clearly warns us) - *but* that will only be *until* Jesus Christ returns to clean it. So, the first verse was truly quite *prophetical* of how those who are *currently* living under the wicked 'Babylonian system' *spiritually* 'weep' for <u>New</u> Jerusalem *yet to come* <u>and</u> for the current wicked (Babylonian) system that controls our 'modern' world. And that truly does 'vex' our hearts *just as much* as it did Lot when he lived in Sodom (2 Peter 2:7).

In part 2 we learned that, while the Psalmist was by the rivers of Babylon, weeping when remembering (and/or speaking of) 'Zion' (i.e. Jerusalem), he 'hung up' his harp in the midst of the willows because of *how* defeated he felt and thus, no longer had *any reason* to play his harp. And we also learned that 'hung up' is a similar expression we use even today. For people often use the words 'hang up' to express the ending of some effort or practice; like when someone retires, they 'hang up' their hat, or cleats, etc. And, on a *spiritual* level, we learned this 'hanging up' *symbolizes* how *we* should 'hang up' (put away from us) Satan's wicked Babylonian system (*and* all of our 'lusts of the flesh') because it 'intermixes' 'good with evil' and thus, *corrupts all things*. Therefore, one has to 'traffic' (i.e. sell) their own 'soul' (Christian morals) in order to be a

part of it. And then we learned that the Psalmist's grief was made *even worse* by his captors *mockingly demanding* him to sing a *joyful* song about his beloved 'Zion', which is Jerusalem.

And that's why the Psalmist *rhetorically* asked how could he possibly sing the "Lord's song" in a 'strange' land. His point was clearly that, there's *no way* singing praise to the Lord (YHVH) was appropriate when the Psalmist was held captive in a foreign land. And that's because many of "the Lord's songs" *celebrated* God's delivering, and protecting Israel, from their enemies. Further, the request to sing was *not* sincere, i.e. he was being *ridiculed*. So, performing songs about the glory of God *so that others could mock him* (even mock the Lord, YHVH) would *not* be honoring to the Lord (YHVH). As Solomon so wisely wrote, "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*" (Eccl 3:1). So, while a song praying for deliverance (or even a lamentation) would have been appropriate for the Psalmist to sing, one of the songs about 'Zion' *wouldn't* have been, at that time in his life. And while Christians *are* supposed to be "*singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Eph 5:19-20), there will be a time when we will be mourning too. And that time will come when the 'king of Babylon' (Satan himself) is kicked out of heaven (with his fallen angels) *to this earth*!

So, while it's *always* good to praise (and thank) the Lord (YHVH), we know that the time to sing "the Lord's song" is *not* while we're in the midst of the 'great tribulation' (Mth 24:21). For, even though we (*through* Jesus Christ) **will** have the victory (when Jesus Christ returns to free us from this wicked Babylonian system), it's only <u>after</u> He actually does so that we'll be singing "the Lord's song", i.e. "*the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb*" (Rev 15:3). In other words, 'victory songs' won't be sung <u>until</u> the victory (via Jesus Christ) *actually comes*!

In part 3 we learned how the Psalmist made a personal declaration (even a promise) *not* to forget (from want of memory *or* attention) Jerusalem, nor to forget to keep it as his *top* joy in life. For he would rather have lost his ability to play music, and to sing, than to forget Jerusalem. And, because Jerusalem was where God's presence was symbolic of being (i.e. His Ark of the Covenant dwelt there), what this really means is that: the Pslamist was promising never to forget the Lord (YHVH) and to keep *Him* (and His will) as the *top* priority in his life. And this, of course, is something we should to too! Yet, he was also promising *not* forget what was done to his people *and* their capital city, which was *also* the place they *worshiped* the Lord (YHVH). And, while we too should not forget Jerusalem today, we should be looking for the ***New*** Jerusalem, which is still *yet to come* when the true Jesus Christ returns to rule the earth forevermore.

And then we learned that the Psalmist asked the Lord (YHVH) to remember how the 'children of Edom' (the descendants of Esau) said 'rase it' (twice, for emphasis), *even to* the 'foundation'. And this simply refers to *time frame* when the Edomites called for Jerusalem *to be destroyed*,

even to the *very* foundations. And, whether or not the Psalmist was actually referring to when Jerusalem *was* destroyed, or to another time (not written about) that the Edomites simply 'called for' Jerusalem to be destroyed, the Psalmist was clearly calling for Divine vengeance upon them. And indeed, the Lord (YHVH) did remember! And that's because the Edomites had a long-standing *habit* of fighting against Israel, *out of pure hatred*. And their this hatred was long standing because they *repeatedly* (Amos 1:11) fought *against* Israel (when they had *no reason* to do so). And for that, the Lord (YHVH) did promise not to 'turn away' their punishments. And that's why the Lord (YHVH) *did* remember… **and *will***, remember - as the prophesies of their *future* punishments (such as Ezek 38-39) tell us!

And then the Psalmist asked spoke of how the 'daughter of Babylon' was destined to be destroyed. This was a common idiom in those days used to *personify the inhabitants* of a region. So, the Psalmist was simply referring to his Babylonian captors who ravaged (plundered) them. Thus, the Psalmist expressed his deep desire for *justice* to come upon Babylon, i.e. he looked forward to their eventual destruction. And then, he took that 'one step further' when he wrote that he hoped the babes of the Babylonians would be dashed to pieces upon the stones, as 'payback' for what they've done to him, Jerusalem, and many others. And, as horrible as this sounds, the Psalmist was *only* asking for Babylon to be repaid for what *they* did to his own people (vs 8). Further, the brutal slaughter of children was not unusual in ancient conquests (2 Kings 8:12). And, while that doesn't make it right, it helps us to understand *why* the Pslamist write such a thing. So, the Psalmist took the *worst* possible treatment he could think of (which happened to *his own* people) and hoped *that* would happen to the Babylonians as well.

So, in his *deep* grief and pain, the Psalmist was expressing how he hoped his enemies would suffer the *same* evils *they committed on others*. And, if that happened, he would approve of the person who did it. But, even so, the psalmist did *not* vow that *he* would 'get even' with the Babylonians. Nor did he instruct anyone to carry out these acts. Instead, he openly bared his heart to the Lord (YHVH) *and placed the results in His hands*. And truly, God's Word does prophesy that Babylon *will* experience what they have done to others (Jeremiah 25:14), even that which the Psalmist asks for in this verse 9 (Isa 13:14-20). And thus, Babylon *did* receive the same kind of treatment they gave others, just as the Lord (YHVH) prophesied *and* as the Psalmist (here in 137) asked for. However, the *full* destruction of 'Babylon' has *not yet* been fulfilled. For, though the city Babylon was conquered (by the Medes and Persians) many years ago, that 'city' continues today via Satan's *wicked system* that runs the world. And it is *that* 'great city' (the great whore, Rev 17) that the Lord (YHVH) *will* destroy ***fully***, when Jesus Christ returns, at His Second Advent. And, while *many* Scriptures prophesy of this destruction, Jer 51 and Rev 18 (which are *very* similar) are some of the most *detailed* prophesies about that time. And we know the destruction at that time (when Jesus Christ returns) will be *so thorough* that '*that great city Babylon*' will "*be found* ***no more at all***" (Rev 18:21; Jer 51:24-26)! And *that* is certainly something *to look forward to*!

*6 Seeing **it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you**;*
7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
*8 In flaming fire **taking vengeance on** them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*
*9 Who **shall** be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*
*10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, **and** to be admired in **all** them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*
2 Thess 1:6-10

*10 The righteous **shall rejoice** when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*
*11 So that a man shall say, Verily there **is** a reward for the righteous: verily he **is** a God that judgeth in the earth.*
Ps 58:10-11

AMEN.