

“HOW SHALL WE SING JEHOVAH’S SONG IN A FOREIGN LAND?”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How shall we sing Jehovah’s song in a foreign land?” (Psalm 137:1-4).

Jews in exile found it difficult, traumatic even, to sing of God and the Land of Promise as they dwelt in captivity, far removed from home.

The Lord had promised Abraham that his descendants would receive the land of Canaan after a four-century sojourn in Egypt (Genesis 15:18-19). He renewed that promise to his son Isaac (17:8), and again to Isaac’s son Jacob (28:13), which promise was remembered by Jacob’s son Joseph and he repeated it to his brothers (50:24). The Lord repeated that promise to Moses’ generation, calling the place *“a land flowing with milk and honey”* (Exodus 3:8). By the end of the subsequent generation, the promise had been fulfilled. *“Jehovah gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it”* (Joshua 21:43). Fulfillment of the land promise was accompanied by a serious condition: *“If you do not obey the voice of Jehovah your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, ...all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... Jehovah will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known”* (Deuteronomy 28:15, 36).

For nearly eight hundred years, Israel possessed its inheritance, a land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a land flowing with milk and honey, but they squandered it on sin. Their disobedience cost them their homeland. In fulfillment of the curse they had been forewarned of, they sat on the banks of a far-off river, weeping over their wasted heritage, unable to sing the songs of Zion.

Contrast the despair that disabled them from singing with the actions of Paul and Silas in Philippi. The Lord had called them to Macedonia to preach the gospel (Acts 16:10), so they came to its foremost city Philippi (11-12), and had already met with some success in the

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ALL MOTHERS ARE WORKING MOTHERS

Mark White

Did you know, ladies, that by the time a mother of three rears her children to age eighteen that she will have put in more than 18,000 hours of child-generated work? That’s work you wouldn’t have to do if you had no children. It’s tiring just to think about it!

The mother who invests her time and talents in the rearing of her own children is too often unappreciated by the man and children she tries so desperately to serve. How could a little four-year-old girl or boy understand the importance of what Mommy is trying to do? We can only hope that each passing year and the maturity it brings will help children to understand. And we can only pray that a man who finds himself so fortunate will express his love and appreciation for such a wife.

We wish that every mother could understand how precious the days they invest in child-rearing really are. No job anywhere could be any tougher; no job anywhere could be more important!

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conversion of one household (13-15), but they were getting pestered by a slave girl possessed with a spirit (16-17), so Paul exorcised the demon (18), which angered her masters who were profiting from her fortunetelling ability (19). That got them a beating (19-23) and a night in jail (24). The jailer *“put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks”* (24). There they were, physically abused and deprived of their civil liberties (37). They could have been depressed, punished as they were for a good deed while engaged in the ministry of Christ. Instead, *“at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”* (25).

The curses of sin remove people from God’s promises and deprive them of their songs even as they sit on a picturesque riverside, but the blessings of the gospel move souls to sing praises to God even while shackled in a dungeon because the power of the gospel is at work on the inner man, not the outer circumstances. Jesus said, *“In Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Nowhere in the Scriptures is
'grace' synonymous with
'tolerance of sin' or 'tolerance of
false teaching.'"

– Steven Harper

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

KDNF 840AM

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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COINCIDENCE

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Wednesday, in the adult class, we were studying the book of Obadiah, specifically considering what Edom had done to merit the wrath of the Almighty (Obadiah 10-11). This brought our attention to the 137th Psalm, an imprecation against the Edomites for their complicity with the Babylonians in the downfall of Jerusalem. Coincidentally, the assigned reading for the next day was three Psalms, one of which was the 137th. While the daily reading had been planned since last year, the fact that we would read a portion of one day's assignment the night before in class could not have been anticipated, as our classes are not slotted to fit a quarter, semester, or annual schedule; we just study the material to its completion before moving to the next subject.

So, was it divine intervention that caused this overlap? In a sense, yes, but probably not planned by God in any particular detail. The work of the Lord in this regard is that He urges us to read Scripture thoroughly and frequently (Psalm 119:105; Acts 17:11; Colossians 4:16; 1st Thessalonians 5:27). When we keep His will like this – as individuals reading chapters per day and as a congregation, studying books together with frequent cross references to other inspired texts – we will find the coincidences stacking up. The more we read, the more connections we discover. In His infinite wisdom, God inspired one cohesive message in sixty-six distinct books and that becomes increasingly apparent the more attention we give to it.

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