

Title: By the rivers of Babylon
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Psalms 137:1-4 (WEB) 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down. Yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows in that land, we hung up our harps. For there, those who led us captive asked us for songs. Those who tormented us demanded songs of joy

Psalms 137:1-4 (WEB) "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How can we sing Yahweh's song in a foreign land?'

1. Greatest OT judgement inflicted under Nebuchadnezzar - 586BC

BABYLON represents world power & global culture in opposition to God.

NOAH movie by DARREN ARONOFSKY celebrates Kabbalism as a deliberate act of blasphemy.

2. Our God owns it all! God-focus vs people focus

a] Psalms 24:1 (NET) 'The Lord owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it.'

b] Isaiah 24:1,3,5,8,9,14-16 (NLT)¹Look! The lord is about to destroy the earth and make it a vast wasteland. He devastates the surface of the earth and scatters the people.³ The earth will be completely emptied and looted. The lord has spoken! ⁵ The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. ⁸ The cheerful sound of tambourines is stilled; the happy cries of celebration are heard no more. The melodious chords of the harp are silent. ⁹ Gone are the joys of wine and song; alcoholic drink turns bitter in the mouth.¹⁴ But all who are left shout and sing for joy. ¹⁵ Those in the west praise the lord's majesty. In eastern lands, give glory to the lord. In the lands beyond the sea, praise the name of the lord, the God of Israel.¹⁶ We hear songs of praise from the ends of the earth, songs that give glory to the Righteous One! But my heart is heavy with grief. Weep for me, for I wither away. Deceit still prevails, and treachery is everywhere.'

3. Daniel & friends - friends in worship before upwardly- mobile in market place.

Daniel 3:1 'King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:4-7, 14-18, 23-25 (NLT) ⁴ Then a herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command! ⁵ When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue.¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? ¹⁵ I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you.

Daniel 3:17-18; 23-25 (NLT)¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty.¹⁸ But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

²³ So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames.²⁴ But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?" "Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.²⁵ "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!"

4. Let's demonstrate & celebrate the eternal culture of Spirit-filled worship

Colossians 3:16 (WEB) ¹⁶ 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.'

Revelation 5:8-14 (NIV) ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation."¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign[a] on the earth."¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!" ¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!" ¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.