

Babylonian Captivity

“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 required of us a song, and those who plundered us required of us mirth, Saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
(Psalm 137)

Although the scene recounted by the psalmist is literally historical, it is not a New Covenant scene or spirit. Yet it does indeed have practical and spiritual applications, lessons and sobering realities for those of us who now live in a realization of the prophesied kingdom of God.

We are in Babylonian Captivity when we have been seduced and carried away from our Zion by:

The world, its empty illusive vanities, excitements and pleasures.

Our own fleshy lust, unsanctified ambitions, foolish dreams and imaginations

The Whore. False religion. False doctrines. Demonic counterfeits of the supernatural. Idolatrous superstitions. Religious frauds.

These all carry us far away from the true Christ, true life and worship in the Spirit of the living God, and cast us out in a barren wasteland of joylessness. We lose our spiritual vitality, joy, peace, gentleness, compassion, love, longsuffering and meekness.

We try to console ourselves beside Babylon’s “Rivers”. The pleasant places, refuges and distractions promised by our captors. But they are of no avail.

We “hang up our harps”. The music is gone out of our souls. There is no song in our hearts, especially of Zion. Our Zion is far, far away, a dim and distant memory that no longer has any reality to us. How can we sing of something that no longer lives in our souls?

We do not fit in Babylon. We are a mockery and derision to the world. Our would-be lovers become our tormentors. They will make mock fun with us, but we are no more than by-words. If we are truly Christ’s, they will never, never, ever be our friends: and we will never, ever fit into their communion.

The Hypocrite can oblige. He can fit in, parrot the religious songs, smile, jest and laugh with Babylon. He has lost nothing, and misses nothing in Zion. In fact he is happy to be rid of the galling pretense.

But the true believer cannot. His miseries are overwhelming. Zion is eternally fixed in his soul, mind, and memory. She is his chief joy. He can do nothing but mourn. And he should! It is indeed a time for “weeping and mourning, for baldness and girding with sackcloth” (Isaiah 22:12). When we do, God will surely and faithfully bring His own out of Babylonian captivity and back to our beloved Zion, the Kingdom of God that is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

-C.M