



*Psalm 137:1-4*  
*"By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the willows we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

## Captivities of Israel & Judah

From 597 BC to 538 BC, the people of Israel experienced some of the most gruesome and terrible times in their entire history.

This was the time of the -

### Babylonian Captivity.

The Babylonian Captivity was a horrible, dark time of judgment and refining for the people of God...

## Captivities of Israel & Judah

### Key Events To Learn: A,B,C,D

- **1050 BC** – The Kingdom is United with Saul as the First King.
- **931 BC** – The Kingdom is Divided with Rehoboam and Jeroboam as kings.  
- "The J's don't go together."
- **722 BC** – Israel Taken Into **Assyrian** Captivity
- **606 BC** – **Babylon** Deports The First Captives from Judah
- **586 BC** – The Babylonians Destroy The Temple
- **The Return:** Issued by **Cyrus**; Enforced by **Darius**.



**The majority of the population was taken into exile...**

Those left behind in the rubble and ruins of Jerusalem and its surrounding villages were the poor, the disenfranchised, the sick, the disabled and the elderly; a population so weak and weakened there could never be another rebellion against Babylon.



Emmanuel Evangelical Congregational Church

The ancient Hebrews had two stringed instruments, the "nebel" (harp) and the "kinnor" (lyre).

According to Josephus (1st century A.D.) the *kinnor* had from 3-12 strings (usually 10), the *nevel* 12. The *kinnor* anciently had a rectangular or trapezoidal soundbox and two curved arms of unequal length joined by a crossbar. It was played with the fingers or with a plectrum.

*Nevel* seems to mean "skin-bottle", perhaps because of its shape. Because the strings enter the top of the soundbox, it is more of a harp-lyre than the *kinnor*, whose strings stretch over a bridge on the side of the box in a lyre-like way.

The *kinnorot* and *nevelim* (plural terms), with their light framework and high tension strings, produced enough volume to compete with rams' horns, trumpets, and cymbals, and were used in both sacred and secular settings, accompanying choirs and soloists as well as song and dance.



Kinnor (lyre)



Nevel/Nebel (harp)

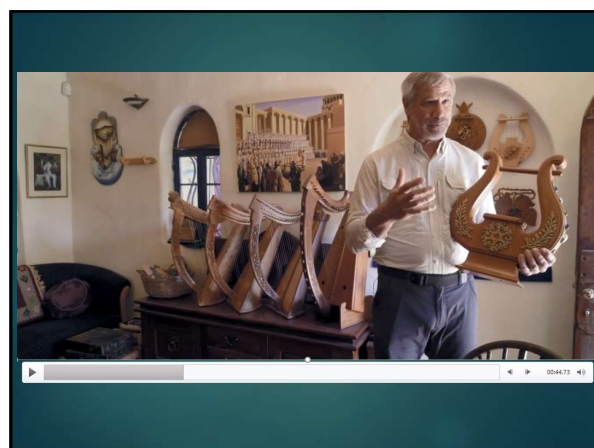
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*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

Defeated!  
 Dejected!  
 Demoralized!

*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

Hear the agony!  
 ...even a cry for vengeance!



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Have you ever been there?**

What am I doing here?  
What's going on?



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**David!**  
**Joseph!**  
**Elijah!**  
**Jesus!**



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

...agony...  
...crying out...

"A dark night of the soul"

Yet, hear also the **PRAYER!**



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

The Psalmist recalls & clings –

*"If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy."*

*Psalm 137:6*




*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

In fact...

**GOD WAS AWARE!**  
**GOD WAS THERE!**  
**GOD WAS AT WORK!**

He spoke...  
and continued to speak!



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

*Jeremiah 29:4-7*  
*"I know the plans I have for you..."*

*I have a future planned for you but...*  
*For the moment though...*  
**Adapt!**



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

*Jeremiah 29:4-7*

*"Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce, Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease..."*



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

*Jeremiah 29:4-7*

*"...But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare...."*



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

They had to learn to "seek God" in a new way...

*Jeremiah 29:13-14--*


*"...seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart... I will be found by You!"*



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

They had to become people of "the book" vs a place!

...with an identity rooted in what He declared vs where they worshiped!



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

In the midst of that captivity there was:

**Daniel!**  
**Shadrach**  
**Meshach**  
**Abednego!**

A heavenly song arose from their hearts & empowered them to live with honor, even on foreign soil.



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**ACTS 16**

Incarcerated unfairly...  
Beaten without the benefit of due process...  
Jailed without being permitted to defend themselves...  
"They sojourned in the strange world of injustice. But instead of hanging it up, Paul & Silas began to sing and the other prisoners heard them. Their joyful singing so influenced heaven that the earth shook and their chains fell off, for praise brings deliverance."\*

\*Admiral Black at the Toronto Satellite Ministers' Professional Growth Seminar in March 2000.



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Matthew 26**

"Only once in the New Testament is it recorded that Jesus sang. When did He sing? He sang on the night in which He was betrayed... after washing the disciples' feet... as the shadow of a cross fell unmistakably across His pathway. He sang as Judas hurried to betray Him... at the end of His Last Supper... as He headed for the agonies in the Garden of Gethsemane and the hill called Calvary... He sang a hymn as His outward world was falling apart...?"



\* Admiral Black at the Toronto Satellite Ministers' Professional Growth Seminar in March 2000.

*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Don't hang up your harp!**



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are renewed every morning; Great is your faithfulness."*



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Habakkuk 3:17-18**

*"Though the fig tree shall not blossom, and there be no grapes on the vines; though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even if the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle stalls are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will take joy in the God of my salvation!"*



*How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?"*

**Recall!  
Trust!  
Wait!  
Praise!  
Receive!**



**Benefits of the Exile**

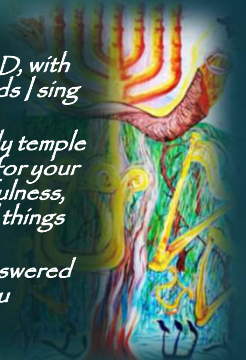
- The Jews became a separate people who did not want to become like their neighbors ever again. The Pharisees came from this era of Jewish history.
- They became pure monotheistic, giving up idolatry completely.
- They developed theological literature and renewed interest in the Law of Moses.
- They repented of their sins against Yahweh.
- The synagogues were established as a place of worship centered on God's Word, prayer, praise and study.
- Judaism became personal rather than a formal ritualism.
- They became a missionary people to all the nations.
- During this time God placed a longing for the coming of the Messiah in their hearts. The Pharisees were especially instrumental in keeping the Messianic hope before the eyes of the people.

<https://www.abideinchrist.com/messages/babyloniancaptivity.html>

**“Keep a Christian from entering the church sanctuary and you have not in the least bit hindered his worship. We carry our sanctuary with us. We never leave it.”**  
*A.W. Tozer*

*Psalm 138*

*“I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;  
 I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.  
 On the day I called, you answered me and my strength of soul you increased.”*



*Psalm 138*

*For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.  
 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.  
 The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.”*



*Psalm 150*

*Praise the Lord!  
 Praise God in his sanctuary;  
 praise him in his mighty heaven!  
 Praise him for his mighty works;  
 praise his unequalled greatness!  
 Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn;  
 praise him with the lyre and harp!  
 Praise him with the tambourine and dancing;  
 praise him with strings and flutes!  
 Praise him with a clash of cymbals;  
 praise him with loud clanging cymbals.  
 Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord!  
 Praise the Lord!*

