

Lesson 134
Psalm 126

- I. Introduction
 - A. Psalm 126 is the seventh of the “song of ascents.” Since seven in the scripture represents perfection or completion, we might expect there to be an “exceptional” meaning to this seventh song of ascents. I believe there is since this song pictures release from captivity, redemption, revival of a nation, answered prayers, and promises to future works of God in the lives of a people who mourn and trust in faith!
 - B. This Psalm was most probably written after the exile of Israel from Babylonian captivity where they had been for seventy years. (Jer 25:11) Ezra is mentioned as a likely human writer. The return occurred in three stages: the first under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6, 538 B.C.), the second under Ezra (Ezra 7-10, 458 B.C.), and the third under Nehemiah (Neh 1-2, 445 B.C.)
 - C. We will outline this Psalm in the following way: Proclamation of the returned (v1-3), Prayer for restoration (v4), Promises of blessings to those who truly weep! We will finish this great Psalm with parallels and application to His church!
- II. Proclamation of the returned (v1-3)
 - A. When the LORD brought back (v1a) The Psalmist starts by emphasizing the truth that it was the LORD, the covenant keeping God, the God whose very name is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, quick to forgive, pitying His people, who brought back His people. The term brought back is the Hebrew word sub which means turned back, restored, recovered, and speaks of relationship restored, and repentance granted! (Jer 29:10-14)
 - B. The captivity of Zion (v1b) This speaks of the condition of the nation! They were exiled against their wills, separated from their homeland, imprisoned by the Babylonians, unable to worship corporately, prevented from observing the law, plundered all their possessions! It was like being in Egypt under cruel taskmasters and harsh, inhumane treatment. (Ps 137:1-4)
 - C. The release from captivity was like a dream! (v1c) Lawson adds, “the release from captivity was so marvelous that it seemed like a startling dream. The wonder of their return was so amazing that the people hardly dared to believe it. Some of them could barely remember living in the promised land as a child. So dramatic was their restoration that heading back was like fantasy, a dream come true.”
 - D. Mouths were filled with laughter and singing. (v2) This is the only appropriate response of thankful people. They sang “the LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.” (v3) (Ps 30:4-5,11-12, 32:6-7, 35:9-10, 40:1-3)
 - E. The response of the heathen (v2a) They said themselves, “the LORD has done great things for them.”
 - 1. God uses our afflictions, and the way we deal with them, to witness to the lost!
 - 2. The lost are watching us! What message are we sending them?
 - 3. God demonstrates mercy to His people to mark a distinction. God chastens His people for their restoration; God chastens the wicked for their condemnation!
- III. Prayer for restoration (v4)
 - A. The phrase bring back our captivity, in this text, literally can read “restore our fortunes.” This prayer was a request for the return of blessing like they had before the seventy years of exile. The people were trusting God to be faithful to His covenant promises of blessing upon obedience. (2 Chron 6:36-40, 7:14-22) We know from history that the repentance was partial and so was the restoration. The temple was rebuilt but it was smaller and less spectacular, revival was temporary, and the Shekinah glory of God did not return to the second temple. (Ezra 3:11-13) There is a future day coming of complete restoration and repentance!
 - B. As the streams in the South-This metaphor/simile is striking. The streams referred to the channel, or riverbed that holds water. The people were asking God to bring the blessings of water to the dry riverbeds of the Negev, or land south of Beersheba. Water was a gift from God and a sign of His blessing. The LORD had to send the “supernatural rain” to a desolate land. It would have been a mercy, an unmerited favor from God.
- IV. Promises of blessing to those who truly weep. (v5,6)
 - A. True weeping. (v5a) Godly sorrow for sin is a gift from God and is a demonstration of the beginning of true repentance! It is a turning from sin and a turning to God. It is a genuine, humble, contrite spirit that is acceptable to God because it comes from God! (Ecc 7:3-4; Is 57:15-18; Matt 5:3-5; 2 Cor 7:8-11; 1 Thess 1:9-10) It is a continual work of God in men’s hearts! (v6)
 - B. The principle of sowing and reaping.
 - 1. God will not be mocked (Gal 6:7-9) You are deceived if you do not understand this!
 - 2. We reap more than we sow. (Hosea 8:7; Matt 13:8) Whether it be consequence of sin, or blessings of faithfulness!
 - 3. We reap later than we sow. (Romans 2:5) Sinners think that because God does not immediately bring consequences to bear that they are going to be in the clear! We note the application to agriculture that the nation would be aware of.
 - 4. We do not know the results of our sowing! We are to be faithful in sowing and trust God for the reaping! He gives the increase! (Ecc 11:4-6)
- V. Application and parallels to the church!
 - A. We have been brought back from the captivity of sin; redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ; freed from the power of sin and the penal condemnation we deserve!
 - B. We must be ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ. We have been given authority and sent by God to disciple men.
 - C. The seed we sow is the WORD of God!
 - D. God has promised that we will bear fruit if we abide in Him! (John 15:5)
 - E. Being obedient and faithful brings joy and blessing to our lives.