

PSALMS 126

Thanksgiving for Return from Captivity

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Song of Ascents. "When the Lord Restored the Fortunes of Zion." (RSV)
- B. This psalm seems to fit the return of Judah from Babylonian bondage, but it would also fit the return from any captivity. It would seem reasonable to think that the pilgrims who sang it would probably think of the captivity that had affected them personally, the most.
- C. Spurgeon divided the psalm:
 - 1. A narrative (story) (126:1,2).
 - 2. A song (126:3).
 - 3. A prayer (126:4).
 - 4. A promise (126:5,6).

THE TEXT.

- 126:1** When the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
- 2** Then our mouth was filled with laughter
And our tongue with joyful shouting;
Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
- 3** The LORD has done great things for us;
We are glad.
- 4** Restore our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.
- 5** Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.
- 6** He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying *his* bag of seed,
Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

COMMENTS.

- A. A Narrative.

[v1] "When the LORD brought back the captive of Zion..." This may well have the return of Judah from Babylon.

"...We were like those who dream." After being in Babylon for 70 years and two or three generations, they must have felt like they were dreaming when Cyrus told them that they could go back and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

[v2] "Then our mouth was filled with laughter... our tongue with singing." We can imagine their joy and exhilaration when they learned that they were free to go and that Cyrus would pay for the rebuilding and protect them in doing it.

"Then they said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them." The significance of this statement is that it is the "nations" or Gentiles who are acknowledging that the Lord is doing it rather than Cyrus.
- B. A Song.

[v3] Singing praises to the one responsible is the most natural thing when one is rejoicing for a blessing. Here Israel seems to join the chorus of the Gentiles in the previous verse.
- C. A Prayer.

[v4] The streams in the South came to life with the rains in the fall. They were a sign of good crops during the winter for the spring harvest. Our song, "There Shall Be Showers of Blessings" comes from this psalm.
- D. The Promise.

[v5] "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." The toils of tilling the soil and planting is forgotten in the joy of a bountiful harvest. There are many other figures which speaks of the hardship being forgotten in the blessing that follows. Can you think of some others? Of course our song, "Bringing in the Sheaves" also comes from this verse.