

God's People Must Wait Upon Him
(Isaiah 40:31)

Introduction:

1. In ch.40 of his book the prophet Isaiah wrote to the people of Judah about "waiting upon the Lord."
2. It was necessary for Isaiah to do this because Babylon would eventually take the people of Judah into captivity, as stated in Isaiah 39:5-7.
3. According to Jeremiah 29:10, God would allow His people to return to their homeland after 70 years.
4. That 70-year period was a difficult time for God's people.
5. In our lesson we are showing from 2 Psalms how "waiting upon the Lord" sustained the people of Judah during the captivity.
 - a. Psalm 137 was written while the Jews were in Babylon.
 - b. Psalm 126 was written after the captivity ended.
6. The main point we are emphasizing in our lesson is that "God's people must wait upon Him."

Discussion:

I. PSALM 137

- A. We learn from vs.1-4 that the captivity was a trying time for the Jews.
 1. According to vs.1-2, the Jews were unable to praise God.
 - a. They had assembled "*by the rivers of Babylon*" [perhaps for worship].
 - b. Their memories of Zion caused them to sit down and cry.
 - c. They placed their harps on the willows.
 - d. To further illustrate how the captivity was such a trying time, . . .
 2. The Babylonians insulted the Jews (vs.3-4).
 - a. They wanted the Jews to sing "*one of the songs of Zion*" to them.
 - b. How could the Jews sing songs of praise under these circumstances?
 3. To survive this difficult period, the Jews had to "wait upon the Lord."
 4. Notice the change that takes place at this point.
- B. Vs.5-9 show us how "waiting upon the Lord" sustained the Jews.
 1. We learn from vs.5-6 that the Jews remembered Jerusalem.
 - a. They knew from the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah that the captivity would not last forever -- they would eventually return to their homeland.
 - b. They did not want to forget Jerusalem while they were in captivity.
 2. We also learn from vs.7-9 that the Jews were confident that God would take vengeance on their enemies.
 - a. (vs.7) They asked God to remember the deeds of "*the children of Edom.*"
 - b. (vs.8-9) They expressed their confidence that Babylon would eventually be destroyed.

II. PSALM 126

- A. In vs.1-3 the Jews reflected upon their release from captivity.
 1. The time element is revealed in vs.1a -- "*when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion.*"
 2. Notice how the Jews felt at this point.
 - a. (vs.1b) "*We were like them that dream.*"
 - b. (vs.2) They laughed, and they sang.
 - c. (vs.3b) They were glad.
 3. God was praised for what He had done.
 - a. (vs.3a) The Jews said, "*The Lord hath done great things for us.*"
 - b. (vs.2c) The heathens said, "*The Lord hath done great things for them.*"
 4. Because the Jews waited upon the Lord, He had sustained them until the captivity was over, and they praised Him for His greatness.
 5. "Waiting upon the Lord" was not over for the Jews.
- B. In vs.4-6 the Jews made an additional request of God.

1. The request is in vs.4a -- "*Turn again our captivity, O Lord.*"
 - a. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem, they found devastation, the land needed to be planted, and the land needed rain.
 - b. (vs.4b) They asked God to return their captivity "*as the streams in the south.*"
 - c. After making this request, . . .
2. (vs.5-6) The Jews expected to rejoice again.
 - a. They might have to sow in tears (vs.5a, 6a).
 - b. However, they were confident they would reap in joy (vs.5b, 6b).
3. As they asked God to bless their land, they were confident He would do so.
4. It certainly appears that the Jews had learned to appreciate the value of "waiting upon the Lord."

Conclusion:

1. These 2 Psalms teach us that the people of Judah learned that "God's people must wait upon Him."
2. According to Isaiah 40:31, God will bless those who wait upon Him.