

Rivers of Babylon

We hope you will enjoy our special music today: “Rivers of Babylon,” a song that is well-known in Jamaica, North America, and other parts of the world. “Rivers of Babylon” is a Rastafari song written and recorded by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton of the Jamaican reggae group The Melodians in 1970.

The song in part is based on the following scriptures:

Psalm 137—King James Version (The Psalm is a biblical lament that speaks of the Hebrews’ exile to Babylon. The original Psalm was written during the Jews exile in Babylon in around 600 BC).

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
- 2 There on the poplars
we hung our harps,
- 3 for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
- 4 How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.
- 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy.

Psalm 19:14

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

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