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## Psalm 124

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Psalm 124.

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### Topics.

- If the LORD was not on our side, we would have been swallowed up.
- Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.
- Babylon, Judah and Israel and their seventy years captivity.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

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### PSALM 124:1-5

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A Song of Ascents of David.

#### **If the LORD was Not on Our Side, we would Be Swallowed up Alive.**

- **Psalm 124:1-5:** If it had not been the LORD who was on our side— let Israel now say—<sup>2</sup>if it had not been the LORD who was on our side when people rose up against us, <sup>3</sup>then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; <sup>4</sup>then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; <sup>5</sup>then over us would have gone the raging waters.

**Ascents: means** a climactic progression or journey to a higher place, it carries the idea of a thought arising.

These verses apply to the people of Israel escaping their four-hundred and thirty years of bondage and slavery in Egypt after the ten plagues through the Red Sea with the fierce armies of Egypt riding upon horses and chariots pursuing after them and Israel arriving safely on the shores of the wilderness while the waters of the Red Sea crashed down upon their Egyptian enemies. Had the LORD not parted the Red Sea the fierce armies of Egypt in their prideful anger would have slaughtered the people of Israel and had the LORD not held back the waters of the Red Sea until Israel was safe on the other side the waters of the sea would have swallowed them up alive as the raging waves did their enemies.

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### PSALM 124:6-8

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#### **Blessed be the LORD, who has Not Given us as Prey to their Teeth.**

- **Psalm 124:6-8:** Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth! <sup>7</sup>We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! <sup>8</sup>Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Though these verses are most likely a continuation of praise to the LORD for Israel's deliverance from the Red Sea, but the entire Psalm could also embrace every fierce and powerful nation that came against Israel and who God gave them great triumphant victory over. This is because the following expressions:

- The flood would have swept us away the torrent would have gone over us.
- The raging waters would have gone over us.
- We have escaped the prey of their teeth and the snare of the fowler.

Figuratively can all refer to any powerful and fierce army of any generation that rose up against the people of Israel which means that these verses can be applied to any deliverance the LORD gave to Israel against their enemies and especially to their deliverance from their seventy years captivity to the Empire of Babylon since this event brought both Judah, Jerusalem and Israel to utter ruin and eventually united them as one nation of one faith. Throughout the Old Testament God used secular nations and kings to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless Israel and other times to bring judgment.

**Babylon, Judah and Israel:** Israel set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12), they rebelled against the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14). The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.).

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Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods and were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years. Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again).

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly, Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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