



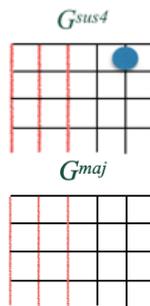
Rivers of Babylon

Words adapted from Psalms 137 & 19 by Brent Dowe, Trevor McNaughton, modified by Rick Larson to conform more closely to the original text; Music by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton © all rights reserved. Sing along with As You Go @ https://static.wixstatic.com/mp3/055bba_bbf7dcf4d949cb990f9109759563f8.m4a

G
 By the Rivers of Babylon, where we sat down.
D *G*
 And there we wept, when we remembered Zion.
G D G
 ‘Cause the wicked carried us away in captivity;
C G
 Required from us a song.

D G
 How can we sing Emmanuel's song in a strange land?

G Gsus4 Gmaj D
 So let the words of our mouths;
G Gsus4 Gmaj D
 And a meditation of our hearts;
G Gsus4 Gmaj D
 Be acceptable in thy sight;
C G
 Adonai.



Psalm 137 I By the rivers of Babylon there we sat weeping when we remembered Zion. On the poplars in its midst we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for the words of a song; Our tormentors, for joy, “Sing for us a song of Zion!” But how could we sing a song of the LORD in a foreign land?

II If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget. May my tongue stick to my palate if I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem beyond all my delights.

III Remember, LORD, against Edom that day at Jerusalem. They said: “Level it, level it down to its foundations!” Desolate Daughter Babylon, you shall be destroyed, blessed the one who pays you back what you have done us! Blessed the one who seizes your children and smashes them against the rock.

Psalm 19:15 Let the words of my mouth be acceptable, the thoughts of my heart before you, LORD, my rock and my redeemer.



REPEAT

Scripture and History

"**Rivers of Babylon**" (the Tigris and Euphrates), is a Rastafarian song written and recorded by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton of the Jamaican reggae group The Melodians in 1970. The lyrics are adapted from the texts of Psalm 137 and verse 14 of Psalm 19. The Melodians' original version of the song appeared in the soundtrack album of the 1972 movie *The Harder They Come*, making it internationally known.

Psalm 137 is a hymn expressing the lamentations of the Jewish people in exile following the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Previously the Kingdom of Israel, after being united under Kings David and Solomon, was split in two, with the Kingdom of Israel in the north, conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC which caused the dispersion of 10 of the 12 tribe of Israel. The southern Kingdom of Judah (hence the name Jews), home of the tribe of Judah and part of the Tribe of Levi, was free from foreign domination until the Babylonian conquest to which "**Rivers Of Babylon**" refers. **Psalm 19** speaks of the coming Messiah.

“**Rivers of Babylon**” lyrics are based in Biblical scripture. Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton modified the Biblical text to conform to their view that King Haile Selassie of Ethiopia was the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Melodians’ version: After its release in 1970, the song quickly became well known in Jamaica. According to Brent Dowe, the song was initially banned by the Jamaican government because "its overt Rastafarian references ('King Alpha' and 'O Farl') were considered subversive and potentially inflammatory". Leslie Kong, the group's producer, attacked the government for banning a song with words taken almost entirely from the Bible, stating that the Psalms had been "sung by Jamaican Christians since time immemorial". The government lifted the ban. After that it took only three weeks to become a number one hit in the Jamaican charts.

Rastafari is an Abrahamic belief which developed in Jamaica in the 1930s, following the coronation of Haile Selassie as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. Most adherents see Haile Selassie I as *Jah* or *Jah Rastafari*, an incarnation of God the Father, the Second Advent of Christ "the Anointed One", i.e. the second coming of Jesus Christ the King to Earth.

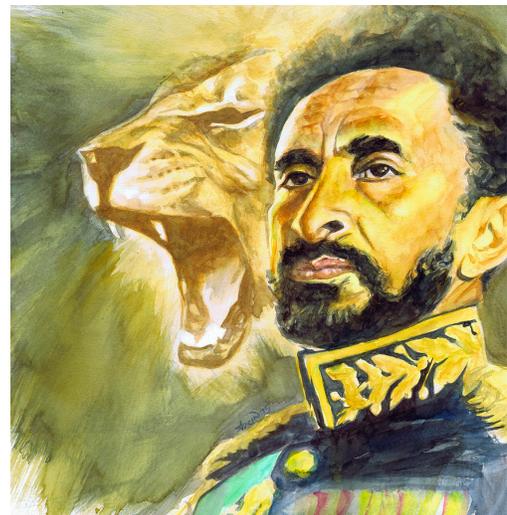
The name *Rastafari* is taken from *Ras Tafari*, Haile Selassie’s title. Ras means "head" in Amharic, and is an Ethiopian title equivalent to prince or chief. His given name before coronation was Tafari Makonnen. *Täfäri (teferi)* means one who is revered in Amharic. *Jah* is a Biblical name of God, from a shortened form of Jahweh or Jehovah found in **Psalm 68:4**.

Ethiopian Christianity traces its roots to the Church of Alexandria, founded by St Mark, and its 5th-century continuation in the Coptic Church of Alexandria. Rastafari holds many of the Christian beliefs like the existence of the Triune God, called *Jah*, who sent his divine incarnate son to Earth in the form of Jesus (Yeshua) and made himself manifest as the divine person of Haile Selassie I. Rastafarians accept much of the Bible, although they believe that its message and interpretation have been corrupted.

The Rastafari way of life encompasses the rejection of the degenerate society of materialism, oppression, and sensual pleasures, called Babylon. It proclaims Zion to be Ethiopia, the original birthplace of humankind, and from the beginning of the way of life calls for repatriation to Zion, the Promised Land and Heaven on Earth. This can mean literally moving to Ethiopia but also refers to mentally and emotionally repatriating before the physical.

By 1997 there were, according to one estimate, around one million Rastafari worldwide. In the 2011 Jamaican census, 29,026 individuals identified themselves as Rastafari. Other sources estimated that in the 2000s they formed "about 5% of the population" of Jamaica, which would be "perhaps as many as 100,000 Rastafari . . .".

Wikipedia



“Haile Selassie I, Conquering Lion of the Lost Tribe of Judah”
by Adrienne Norris