

# WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS LED ZEPPELIN

WORDS AND MUSIC BY Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham and Memphis Minnie TRANSCRIBED BY Jeff Perrin

All guitars are in open G tuning, transposed down one whole step (low to high: C F C F A C) due to a reduction of the tape speed in the mastering process.

Bass tuning (low to high): D G C F.

All notes and chords sound one whole step lower than written (key of F).

( ) = optional note

## A Intro (0:00)

(0:07)

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

C5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

C5

end Rhy. Fig. 1

1 (drums) 2

Rhy. Fig. 1

Gtr. 1 (12-string elec.)

*mf*

\* Gtrs. are tuned down one whole step to emulate lower pitch produced by slow tape speed.

Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 1 second time

Bass Fig. 1

## S (0:20, 3:05)

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

C5

(play 3 times)  
end Rhy. Fig. 2

5 Rhy. Fig. 2

(play repeats simile)

Bass Fig. 2

(play 3 times)  
end Bass Fig. 2

7 Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

(play 3 times)

(play 3 times)

As heard on Led Zeppelin's Atlantic recording *Led Zeppelin IV*

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# WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS **LED ZEPPELIN**

**B** (1:08, 3:51)  
 Eb w/slide F C Bb C G C Bb C G

10 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

(doubled simile)

Bass Fig. 3 Bass Fig. 4

13 Eb w/slide F C Bb C G C Bb C G 1. If it

end Bass Fig. 4

**C** Verses (1:25, 4:08)

(1.) keeps on rainin' levee's going to break If it  
 Mean old levee taught me to weep and moan moan yeah  
 2. Cryin' won't help you prayin' won't do you no good no  
 All last night I sat on the levee and moaned  
 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 G Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

16 Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 three times simile (see meas. 5)

keeps on rainin' levee's going to break When the  
 Mean old levee taught me to weep and moan it's  
 Cryin' won't help you prayin' won't do you no good When the  
 All last night I sat on the levee and moaned the

18 (repeat previous two measures) 2

levee breaks I'll have no place to stay  
 got what it takes to make a mountain man leave his home oh well oh well oh well ooh  
 levee breaks mama you got to move a whoo-hoo oh  
 Thinkin' 'bout my baby and my happy home Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

20 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 first time (see meas. 4)  
 Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 second time (see meas. 10)

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**D** (2:12, 4:44)

23 *w/slide* Eb F C Bb C G C Bb C G

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see meas. 11)

(2nd time) To Coda ⊕  
(skip ahead to meas. 39)

25 *w/slide* Eb F C Bb C G C Bb C G

**E** Bridge (2:26)

27 Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) G G<sup>XII</sup> D G C D F G<sup>XII</sup> G G<sup>XII</sup> D G C D F G<sup>XII</sup> end Riff A

(w/slide) Riff A

f

Gtr. 1 Rhy. Fig. 3 end Rhy. Fig. 3

Bass

make you feel bad when you're tryin' to find your way home you don't know which way to go If you're

D G C D F G

Gtr. 2 plays Riff A twice (see meas. 29)  
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 29)

31 Bass

going down South they got no work to do if you're goin' on to Chicago

D G C D F G

33 Bass Fig. 5 end Bass Fig. 5

Ahh ahh ahh hey hey hey

D G C D F G

35 Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 simile (see meas. 33)  
\* played slightly "ahead" of beat.

# WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS **LED ZEPPELIN**

D.S.  *al Coda*  
(go back to meas. 5)

37

G G<sup>XII</sup> D G C D F G<sup>XII</sup>

Gr. 2

Gr. 1

Bass

 *Coda*

**F** Bridge (5:08)

G<sup>XII</sup>

Gr. 2 plays Riff A twice (see meas. 29)

39 Gr. 1

D G C D F G<sup>XII</sup>

Gr. 1

Bass

41 Rhy. Fig. 4 D C D F G<sup>XII</sup> end Rhy. Fig. 4

Gr. 1

Bass

(5:21)

Ahh

ahh

ahh

ahh

Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 four times (see meas. 41)

43 Gr. 2

D C D F G

Gr. 2

Bass

Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 four times simile (see meas. 33)

\* played slightly "ahead" of beat.

# WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS LED ZEPPELIN

Ahh ahh ahh ahh Oh

D C D F G D

45

oh

C D F G

48

## G Outro (5:47)

Goin' to Chicago I'm going to Chicago

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

51

*Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2*

Bass

Sorry but I can't take you Goin' down Goin' down I'm goin' down

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

53

*Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see meas. 51)*

Bass Fig. 6 *end Bass Fig. 6*

down I'm goin' down I'm goin' down

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

55

*Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see meas. 5)*

*Gr. 3 plays Fill 1*

*Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 five times (see meas. 3)*

*(backwards gr.) w/slide*

*mf*

Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5 Bb5 G5 Bb5 G5 C5

58

