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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Isaiah 40.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Isaiah 40.

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### Topics.

- A voice cries in the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD.
- Herald the good news O Jerusalem, say to Judah, "Behold your God!"
- Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or taught Him knowledge?
- Nations are counted as less than nothing and emptiness by the LORD.
- Will you liken God to an idol overlaid with gold that a craftsman made?
- God sits above the circle of the earth its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.
- What will you compare the Holy One that He should be like man and idols?
- Why do you say, "My way and right it is disregarded by my God?"
- They who wait for the LORD shall mount up with wings like eagles.
- The history of Assyria, Israel, Babylon and Judah and the
- The Commonwealth of Israel.

**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:** Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw

the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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### **A voice Cries in the Wilderness Prepare the Way of the LORD.**

Isaiah 40:1-5 ----- <sup>1</sup>Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

The previous chapter spoke of Hezekiah showing all his treasures and riches to an envoy sent to him by Merodach-baladan the king of Babylon and Isaiah telling him that in future time to come all the riches and treasures and even his own new born sons will be carried to Babylon. Now Isaiah's vision not only soars beyond the time of Hezekiah and beyond Israel's seventy years in captivity to Babylon, but also soars through all Old Testament history to the time of John the Baptist.

**My people:** (v1) embraces those in Babylon and all God's people of all generations in all ages.

**Comfort, comfort my people, says your God:** (v1) Isaiah in the previous chapter, had delivered a very strong declaration of the impending doom of the kingdom of Judah, and of the captivity of the royal house of David, and of the people by the king of Babylon. The focus of Isaiah's succeeding prophecies is primarily upon of the comforting of God's people. In this chapter he begins by giving a promise of the restoration of the kingdom and the return of the people from the Babylonian captivity. But the prophecy is not confined to the restoration of the royal family and of the tribe of Judah.

The Messiah was to be born of the tribe of Judah so the restoration of Judah was necessary for the eternal plan God purposed in His eternal mind before time began to be fulfilled. This is no doubt why these two events are often connected and why in prophecies the focus of the Babylonian captivity diminishes when the Messianic Kingdom is brought into light. This amazing prophecy reaches to and includes the whole Gospel age from the coming of John the Baptist to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The call to, "comfort, comfort the LORD'S people," (v1) is twice repeated to highlight its importance, the call not only applies to the prophets, the priests, the apostles, the preachers, but also applies to all who belong to the global Kingdom of God.

**Israel's warfare is ended:** (v2) embraces all Israel's wars up to the time of John the Baptist, while the words, "comfort, comfort my people," embrace the arrival of Israel's Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world and the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of grace. These not only brought great comfort to the people of Israel, but also to the Gentiles (and still are). It is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that all Israel's sins are pardoned (and of course the Gentiles sins).

**All flesh:** (v5) refers to Jews and Gentiles and the statement, "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" refers to both Israel being set free from their seventy year captivity and the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, his ministry and his death and resurrection. It is as though Isaiah is seeing in vision form passing through his mind or before his eyes Judah having been taken into captivity to Babylon for seventy years; paying the punishment due for their rebellion against the LORD; being set free and after the prophecy has rested there for a short time it takes up wings and from there soars hundreds of years ahead in time to the arrival of John the Baptist.

**The glory of the LORD shall be revealed:** (v5) these verses carry the following two applications: -

1. They are words of hope and comfort for the people of Judah when they are taken captive into Babylon as Isaiah predicted they would be in the previous chapter. In this scenario the voice that cries would refer to Isaiah proclaiming hope and the LORD'S deliverance for the Jews during their seventy year captivity in a foreign and strange land (the wilderness) amongst a people who speak a foreign language and worship foreign gods. God's arm would refer to Cyrus the king of Persia who God used as his anointed shepherd to set His people free from their seventy year captivity in Babylon.

Isaiah is saying that the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were like healthy grass and a beautiful flower, but now God has breathed upon them His wrath and all their beauty has been stripped away. Their beloved city lies in ruins, the temple of God has been stripped of all its gold, silver and sacred vessels and they are under the oppression of the Babylonian Empire. Here in these verses Isaiah give them a message of hope and comfort

God used Cyrus king of Media Persia to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. The following verses of the prophet Isaiah show that God not only called Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and called him by name, but also show that God said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. They picture God holding Cyrus by the right hand and opening all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdues all nations.

- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped*, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, *who call you (Cyrus) by your name.* <sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, *I call you by your name, I name you*, though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me*, <sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).

- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: '*Surely God is in you*, and there is no other, no god besides him.' (Isaiah 45:14).

At this time Isaiah is speaking to Israel who is held captive in Babylon. God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. Cyrus after conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. For further information concerning this see the title, "The History of Assyria and Israel and Babylon and Judah," (at the end of this chapter).

2. To a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in who God at this present time is also building a Temple made up of Jews and Gentiles (also called a new nation in Christ and a new creation in Christ). For further information concerning the spiritual temple God is building in Christ at this present time, see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel" (at end of this Chapter).

In this context Isaiah's prophetic message is a message of hope and comfort for the lost sheep of Israel and the Gentile nations. In this scenario the voice that cries would refer to the voice of the apostles, disciples, ministers and preachers hearing the voice or call and crying what must I proclaim, to which the LORD would answer, "The message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary, the Gospel of grace and all things concerning Israel's Messiah and Christ and Saviour of the world.

Here the withering grass and fading flower would refer to the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) who were once like a beautiful flower that had great glory, but had now have become hypocritical, prideful religious rulers and priest so God breathed upon them His wrath or better withdraw His Spirit and all their beauty that once was as healthy grass and a beautiful flower is now utterly dead of any spiritual life.

**All flesh shall see the glory of the LORD together:** (v5) prior to this God's people Israel was the sole focus of the prophets' message, but now Isaiah's prophecy includes all flesh, meaning all nations, tongues and languages. Isaiah pictures all humanity as lush green grass and beautiful flowers that wither and die when God breaths on them, but though man through history will continue to die God's word that Isaiah has spoken in (verses 1-5) and (v10-11) will come to pass.

**The glory of the LORD shall be revealed:** (v5) in this context the glory of the LORD is the Lord Jesus Christ he is the glory of God. Isaiah's prophetic words, "A voice cries in the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God (v3) is cited hundreds of years later by the disciples in their writings when speaking of John the Baptist.

- This is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" (Matthew 3:3).
- As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (Luke 3:4).

This amazing prophecy of Isaiah shines a brilliant spotlight upon the stunning wonder of Bible prophecy.

**Herald the Good News O Jerusalem, say to Judah, "Behold your God!"**

Isaiah 40:6-11 ----- <sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up,

fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" <sup>10</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

**A voice says, "Cry!"** (v6) this is not the voice previously mentioned, that cried in the wilderness (v3-5) that is intended here. This voice is introduced for a different purpose. It is to proclaim distinctly that while everything else was fading and passing away, the promise of God was firm and secure. Isaiah presents himself as hearing a voice calling him to make a proclamation and upon hearing the voice he responds by asking what should the proclamation be? And he hears the voice of God saying, "Comfort my people," (v1). The LORD desiring to comfort His people calls Isaiah to foretell of the glorious and wonderful things, which He was determined to do for His people.

The LORD commands Isaiah to assure the people of the certainty of these things, by highlighting the vast difference between the frail beauty of nature and of human life, in contrast to the eternal nature and word of God. Mankind achieves their highest accomplishments, but are like the grass, or flowers of the field, weak and vanishing and soon wither away: but God and His word are eternal. Isaiah as the mouth of the LORD, and not of man, had spoken this under the inspiration of the LORD in the same way as he spoke in the following verse: -

- The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. (Isaiah 40:5).

**The LORD'S breath:** (v7) when a strong or hot wind blows on the grass or a flower they fade, wither and die, likewise whatever God breaths His breath of wrath upon is brought to ruin and destroyed.

**The word of our God will stand forever:** (v8) to highlight this truth Isaiah contrasts the eternal God and His eternal word to mankind's mortality, saying that all mankind is but as grass and a flower that is weak, frail, fading and soon withers and unlike God's word man's word cannot be trusted.

Similar sentiment is found in the following verses: -

- As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; <sup>16</sup>for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. (Psalm 103:15-16).

James wrote: -

- The rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. <sup>11</sup>For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. (James 1:10-11).

Peter wrote: -

- All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:24-25).

All kings, princes, nobles, the rich and powerful armies are all like grass and will soon pass away. It, matters not how great or how lowly mankind's vitality diminishes; his beauty fades; his wisdom ceases; and he falls, like the flower, to the dust. All his plans are temporary and that all that appears great in them is like the flower of the field that withers and dies.

All his goodness, kindness, love, goodwill, mercy, favour elegance and beauty, his good health, vitality, talent wisdom and all that is excellent and valuable in him and belongs to him. His riches, honour, strength and knowledge are all fading and perishing, like a beautiful flower planted in a garden that appears lovely for a while, but is destined to fade, wither and perish.

In contrast to this the LORD endures and His plans reach from generation to generation and will be accomplished. This is the truth that was to be proclaimed so that all would know not to trust in man, but put their confidence in the arm of God. Isaiah statement, "All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field (v6) is not limited to the Jews in Babylon, or to any single nation or class of people, but extend to all people, in all places and at all times.

**Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news (v9)** here is the Good News to be proclaimed from Jerusalem, "the Lord God comes." Some use this verse to support the theory Jesus is God, but, this is not what Isaiah is saying, God is coming in the sense that His favour is now toward His people and not against them and He is coming by His Spirit poured out upon His Son the Lord Jesus Christ when John the Baptist water baptised him.

- When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. (Matt. 3:16) (Mark 1:10) (Luke 3:22) (John 1:32).

**The LORD'S arm rules for Him:** (v10) the arm of God often refers to God's power throughout Scripture, but in the context of these verses it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who will rule for God; it is Jesus who brought God's reward to us (i.e., the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of grace). It is Jesus who brought God's recompense (i.e., redemption); it is Jesus who shepherds God's people and who will gather the lambs (i.e., the lost) in his arms and gently lead them. The message to be proclaimed from Mount Zion is Jesus Christ the Saviour not just of the Jews, but of all nations, tongues and languages.

**Words of comfort and encouragement:** since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Who, has Measured the Spirit of the LORD, or Taught Him Knowledge?**

Isaiah 40:12-14 ----- <sup>12</sup>Who has measured (directed in KJV) the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? <sup>13</sup>Who has measured the Spirit of the

LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? <sup>14</sup>Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

To magnify the sovereignty and awesome wonder of God Isaiah asks the question, "Who has measured the Spirit of God?" The word measured/directed comes from the Hebrew word (*takan*) it literally means to balance, (i.e. measure out) (by weight or dimension); figuratively it carries the idea of arranging, equalizing, levelling and balancing a thing.

In the context of God it carries the idea of all things in the universe being ordered and arranged in perfect harmony and all the work that God does being perfectly, decided, calculated organized and created. All created beings shrink to nothing in comparison with the Creator, especially since the LORD, by his Spirit, made the world and no one guided his Spirit, or gave advice what to do, or how to do it.

This passage is quoted by Paul in the following verse: -

- Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Rom. 11:34).

The idea here is, "Who has counselled or guided the mind or Spirit of God? What superior being has ordered, instructed, or influenced his understanding? Who has trained Him in His perfect wisdom, or lead Him in the design of His eternal plans?" The sense is that God is supreme above all others. No one has instructed or guided God His plans and eternal purposes are His own work, and have all been formed by Him alone.

Now here is the good news, since God alone has purposed His plans they are infinitely wise and since He is not dependent on anyone to bring them to pass His people can have full confidence in Him, and believe that He is fully able to bring to pass His eternal plans and purposes.

**God measures out heaven with His span:** (v12) but who can measure Him? Who can search out His Spirit by which He accurately searches out all things? God is not dependent upon the counsel of angels or of any living creature. He is supreme, independent, immeasurable and endless. None is qualified to instruct Him; and therefore all should confide in His wisdom and knowledge.

God neither needed to take advice from anyone in the creation of the heavens and the earth or in the administration of His works on earth they are all the effects of his own wisdom? Even though nations of the world deny Him and conspire against Him and against His ways His own plans and purposes will not be thwarted.

**Nations are Counted as Less than Nothing and Emptiness by the LORD.**

Isaiah 40:15-17 ----- <sup>15</sup>Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. <sup>16</sup>Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. <sup>17</sup>All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

**Lebanon:** though never totally occupied it is included in God's promise; it is a snowclad mountain range extending 100 miles along the Syrian coast with peaks reaching 10,200 above Sea Level. The melting snow creates great rivers including the Jordan River that meanders through Palestine to the Dead Sea. Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon's famous cedar trees; their massive branches; their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance.

Lebanon's isolated crags, supported watch towers and refuge-points and came to symbolize the exalted status of Judah's royal house. The psalmists' speaks of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice. The Lebanon's were also famous for choice-wine the lion and the leopard.

**Isaiah makes an amazing statement concerning Lebanon:** Lebanon was not only famous for its cedar trees, but for the multitude of its animals, including the lion and the leopard, yet the LORD says: -



- Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. (Isaiah 40:16).

Even all the blood of Lebanon's most glorious animals would not be enough for burnt offerings. There was only one blood type that had the right DNA to cleanse us and make us whiter than snow in the eyes of God and it was not in an animal, but a man whose name was Jesus.

**The nations are as nothing before him:** (v17) in comparison to the LORD the nations are as a drop of water in the oceans or as a speck of dust upon the earth, they are as nothing in that they cannot add to the LORD'S wisdom or make any addition to Him and no matter how mighty their weapons of warfare maybe they are powerless against Him. Added to this all nations are mortal and passing whereas the LORD is immortal and eternal it is in this sense that all nations are counted as nothing before the LORD.

The statement, "The nations are as nothing before him," magnifies God's love to the populations of the nations and the world in that even though the world has no worth before the LORD, yet for the redemption of the men and woman of it God gave his only-begotten Son, (John 3:16). Had Jesus not surrendered to the bloodstained cross of Calvary we would all have perished forever.

### **Will you liken God to an idol Overlaid with Gold that a Craftsman Made?**

Isaiah 40:18-20 ----- <sup>18</sup>To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? <sup>19</sup>An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. <sup>20</sup>He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.

When speaking of idols the Living Bible says, "O foolish man you chop down a tree and use some of the wood to build your homes, some to cook your food, some to warm your hands and some you carve into an idol and bow down before it to worship it, can't you see it's just a block of wood (Isaiah 44:19). The service of idols is so absurd and illogical that it is enormously difficult for a person with a sane mind to understand how anyone in their right mind chooses the service of idols before the service of God.

It is common for cultic religions to be heavily laden with ritualism. This is because a heavy focus and adherence to outward ritual and ceremony gives the worshipper a sense of reverence and a close connection and adoration to their god. These rituals may involve candles, occultist symbols, mystical rites, drinking the blood of bull, chicken-beheading, prayers, songs and such like things, but the most seductive is sexual ritual that involves all sorts of sexual immorality since this type of ritual appeals to the lowest level of the flesh (i.e., the lower nature of mankind).

One of the reasons people do choose a false faith is because idols and false gods do not put demands upon their outward lifestyle, as long as the believer adheres to their ceremonial rituals and outward religious practises they are accepted by their god and free to live as they please. There are other god's besides the LORD God of all creation; however all other gods are created by the imagination in the mind by a strong belief in them. This is because human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore automatically responds to whatever is pictured on the imagination of the mind whether it is real or false.

The stronger the belief the greater effect the mental image on the imagination of the mind will have on the human nervous system. This is why deception is so deceptive. It matters not if the god an individual believes in is real or not the nervous system responds accordingly. If the god an individual believes in is a wrathful, vengeful and judgmental god they will feel emotions of guilt and fear in contrast to this if the god an individual believes in is a god of love and compassion they will feel emotions of love and comfort.

The imaginary, but real images of the mind creates a real entity that affects the emotions and feelings through the human nervous system. These feelings convince those that believe in idols that there are evil gods and spirits, but in reality they do not actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind,

but to the individual believing in idols and false gods they are very real entities. This is why faith should be based upon the Scriptures of the Bible and never upon on emotions. This does not mean emotions should be denied, God gave them to us to enjoy (especially in worship and praise) it just means that they should not be the foundation of our faith and what we believe. It is through reading the Bible that we learn who the one and only immortal, invisible, eternal God is and His eternal will, plans and purposes for the world, the earth and for eternity.

Clearly no god of the imagination has any power to create the earth, the mountains and the seas, there is only one God who has such awesome power and He is the immortal invisible, Holy Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life the great I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the heavenly Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. To understand how idols and false gods gain controlling power over the minds of individuals and nations see the title: -

Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU)

**He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood:** (v20) the word impoverished comes from the Hebrew word (*cakan*) and means to make poor. The idea is that those who are too poor to offer a sacrifice find a skilful craftsman to carve them an idol out of wood rather than be without a god. This of course is utter foolishness since it matters not how skilfully the craftsman carves it or how much the owner of it may admire the carving it remains a block of wood that cannot see, hear, speak or move.

**God sits above the Circle of the Earth its inhabitants are like Grasshoppers.**

Isaiah 40:21-24 ----- <sup>21</sup>Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? <sup>22</sup>It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; <sup>23</sup>who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. <sup>24</sup>Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

The word circle comes from the Hebrew word (*chuwg*) it literally means a circle and can refer to a circuit or the compass of the circle (i.e., the scope, breadth, range and extent of it) and can also carry the idea of moving in a circle. In the context of this verse it refers to: -

- To the vault of the heavens as sealing the earth within its circumference (i.e., boundaries).
- To the arch and dome of heaven arching over the earth.
- To the globular form of the sky above and around the earth.
- To the highest heavens and the sphere surrounding the globe of the earth

From here God sits far above the earth as the LORD and Sovereign King and the Maker of all things, He is above it and outside of it and it is from here that He orders, directs and governs all things in it. All of these expressions are designed to show the majesty and glory of God.

Even though the globular form of the earth was then unknown and the people did not know that the earth was not flat, but round and hung in the air as a ball Isaiah speaks of the circle of the earth and the following two verses speak of the circle of heaven showing that the authors were speaking by the Spirit of God and under His inspiration.

- Thick clouds veil him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault (circuit in KJV) of heaven. (Job 22:14).
- When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep (Proverbs 8:27).

The statement, "He who sits above the circle of the earth," is connected with the previous verses, "To who will you liken God," (v18) and "Do you not know, have you not understood," (v21) that it is the LORD your God the sovereign King who sits on the circle of the earth and makes it His throne from where He beholds all mankind.

Isaiah seeing God's people worshipping idols and pagan gods speaks to them in a tone of despair because of their utter foolishness He urges them to remember what they had been taught by their fathers from the beginning. All that he says here is for the purpose of shining a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that their God who sits above the earth and laid out the host of heaven is far greater than their idols that sit not in heaven as God does, but upon the earth.

**The inhabitants are like grasshoppers:** (v22) the word grasshopper comes from the Hebrew word (*chagab*) and refer to the locust. This statement highlights the truth that the inhabitants of the earth though numerous and mighty are as nothing compared with God.

The idea is that God is so exalted, that, as He looks down from the highest heavens all the inhabitants of the world appear to him as grasshoppers and locusts.

From heavens viewpoint mankind appears as a sinful mass of multitudes spread over the vast face of the earth beneath him as locusts or grasshoppers spread themselves in almost endless bands over the plains in the East. This striking illustration of mankind's insignificance viewed from the heavens above is an arresting description of the nothingness of mankind's mighty plans and of the vanity of his greatest works.

- The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; <sup>14</sup>from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth. (Psalm 33:13-14).
- The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! <sup>5</sup>Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, <sup>6</sup>who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? (Psalm 113:4-6).

The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man and the expression, "the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers," picture the LORD as being one with very great eminence looking down and beholding exceedingly small, corrupt, mortal creatures that are short lived and in comparison to Him are as insects destroying the planet He created for them to dwell on.

**It is he who stretches out the heavens like a curtain:** (v22) most likely comes from the idea of the Orientals in the East and the Arabs of the desert spreading their tents out in barren lands to protect them from the scorching sun and the desert sandstorms and winds. The symbolism is that the heavens are not only extended out like a tent in order to provide a dwelling-place for God and the firmament and expanse above our heads is so vast that it was fitted out to be a suitable dwelling-place for the High and Holy LORD, but is also a majestic testimony to God's awesome power as the following verses show: -

- God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. (Gen. 1:7).
- You O LORD my God, cover yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. <sup>3</sup>He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind (Psalm 104:2).
- All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. (Isaiah 34:4).
- Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it. Isaiah 42:5

- Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself. (Isaiah 44:24).

The word, curtain comes from the Hebrew word (*doq*) it means something crumbling (specifically a fine and thin cloth) to crush, beat or crumble into small pieces and to bruise and make to dust or crush to powder.

In the context of (Isaiah 40:22) it carries the idea of the fineness, thinness and frailty of a fine and thin cloth or curtain. It signifies the frailty of the canopy of the heavens stretched over us that we live under which God at any time could roll up as a scroll. It is a curtain with which the LORD dwelling in the highest heavens and in light inaccessible to mortals that he not only draws around Himself, but also stretches out as a canopy around the earth as a safe tent for the benefit of the inhabitants that dwell under it.

- He alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; (Job 9:8).

**The LORD brings princes to nothing** (v23), mortal kings, nobles' rulers and leaders wither and die and no matter how powerful or how mighty their army is they cannot stand against God or thwart His eternal plans and purpose, a simple breath from Him and they are like grasshoppers and locust being stamped upon. In contrast to this the LORD is immortal and eternal; He does not faint or grow weary; His wisdom is perfect and understanding Him is unsearchable. This chapter is not about God's love for mankind, but about their futile pride and power before God.

**The greatness of God:** Isaiah in these verses appeals to people of all ages and nations to use their reason and their senses to consider who created the hosts of heaven. Some have the idea that everyone who does not believe in God is a wicked person, but this is not true, certainly we are all sinners no matter how good our behaviour, but not all are wicked. Many who have not heard the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ do amazing acts of kindness and charity toward others and many even give their lives to helping the less fortunate and helpless.

Others in countries where God's word is not as available as it is in the Western world look to the heavens and creation and hear the silent testimony of God's greatness and His glory and believe.

- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
<sup>2</sup>Day to day they utter out speech, and night to night reveals and shows knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup>Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4).

Upon this simple faith and limited knowledge they live a lifestyle of goodness before God. Based upon the universal principle, "To those who are given much, much is expected, but to those who have little, little is expected," I am certain at the second resurrection (called the second death) when the sea and the grave give up the dead to stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment many will be judged according to the light of God they were given and the lifestyle they lived before Him. For further information concerning this statement, see the title: -

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Isaiah is magnifying the awesome greatness of the LORD to those who willingly choose to be ignorant of the God of all creation who sits above the circle of the earth and which is suspended beneath His feet.

**NOTE:** those who made images of idols to worship them by their actions and worship made them equal to God in their hearts and minds, likewise today though we may not make images of idols or worship them, whatever we do esteem or love, fear or hope in more than God we make by our actions those things or that person equal with God in our heart and mind.

## What will You Compare the Holy One, that He should be like Man and Idols?

Isaiah 40:25-26 ----- <sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. <sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

Here the LORD is asking Israel (and by extension all mankind), "Who can they compare the Holy One with?" All anyone has to do is look up to the heavens and the answer is obvious, "No one." The LORD God the Holy One of Israel not only created all the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon, stars and millions of planets) and numbered them, but also has a name for each one. The statement, "Because he is strong in power not one is missing," means by God's power the sun, moon, stars and planets all circle the earth in perfect harmony.

## Why do you say, "My way and right it is disregarded by my God?"

Isaiah 40:27-28 ----- <sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? <sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

**O Jacob:** the name Jacob is a name often given to the Jews as the descendants of Jacob.

**O Israel:** the name Israel was given to Jacob because he had power to prevail as a prince with God (Gen. 32:28). It became the common name by which his descendants were known.

The language here is to be understood as being addressed to the Jews sighing for deliverance during their long and painful seventy year captivity in Babylon. Their city and temple had laid waste for many years; their captivity had been long and wearisome, and doubtless many would feel that the oppression of Babylon would never end.

**My way is hid:** (v27) this expression, does not refer to their course of life or their religious actions and other religious duties, but to their sufferings and their enemies abuse of them. It was impossible to see anyway out from Babylon's oppression let alone return to their beloved city, because of this they felt that God took no notice of their prayers during their captivity.

Isaiah is rebuking the people for their unbelief, distrust and lack of confidence in God's infinite power, wisdom and goodness to which there are such evident demonstrations in the heavens and in Israel's past history. He is calling them to remember that they took the name Jacob and Israel from a godly man who found God faithful to him in all his ways.

**Have you not known?** (v28) Isaiah somewhat bedazzled at the peoples unbelief is basically saying, Are you ignorant, have you not considered that the everlasting God, who has no beginning of days, and will have no end of life; is not weak and unable to help His people? Do you not know that He will fulfil his promise?

Keep in mind the only reason Israel is in this situation is because they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD the prophets spoke and instead of repenting and turning from their gross wickedness and worship of idols they continued in their corrupt ways. For the full story and history of Israel's seventy year captivity see the title: "The History of Assyria and Israel and Babylon and Judah," (at the end of this study).

**The LORD'S understanding is unsearchable:** (v28) carries the idea that human understanding cannot comprehend God's foresight, wisdom and works they are above the reach of all mortal minds. God is so great; that He is able to arrange the hosts of heaven with such unerring skill, that the sun moon and stars observe their proper place and their exact times. It is because God keeps the heavenly host in such perfect order that the faithful should be confident that He has their best interests at heart and they are safe in His hands.

All who belong to the global Kingdom of God have no reason to think that their interest is disregarded by God, but rest in the assurance that He who preserves the unbroken order of the heavens will not fail to keep and save His people to eternal life and everlasting happiness.

- Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. (Psalm 37:5)

**They who wait for the LORD shall Mount up with Wings like Eagles.**

Isaiah 40:29-31 ----- <sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. <sup>30</sup>Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup>but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

**Wait:** the word wait comes from the Hebrew word (*qavah*) and carries the idea of looking and waiting patiently with expectation. Though not limited to the Jews seventy year captivity the call to wait upon the LORD are most likely prophetic words of comfort for those who were suffering a long and grievous captivity in Babylon to encourage them to wait patiently and with an attitude of faith and expectation that they will at the appointed time be delivered from their captivity. They were to wait for the fulfilment of the LORD'S promise in the same way New Testament believers are called to wait with patience for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

**They who wait for the LORD:** (v31) waiting on the LORD does not mean that the Jews in captivity were to sit idly by waiting for God to perform what He had promised without going about doing what they were able to do to make themselves productive and comfortable. Waiting on the LORD is not inactivity, but rather implies that a believer's hope of aid and of salvation and eternal life should be in the LORD.

In the same way that New Testament believers go about their daily duties and responsibilities with a deep seated hope in God's promise that they will be delivered from death and resurrected to eternal life and everlasting happiness the Jews in captivity were to wait with expectation and with faith that God would at the appointed time deliver them as He had promised.

**They will renew their strength:** (v31) this is to be understood of and increase of spiritual strength that the faithful have in the heart and mind being refreshed and strengthened. It means that the people of God who trust in him shall become strong in faith and able to meet the temptations and trials of life while living in troublesome and sorrowful times. The faithful who endure will grow stronger and stronger in faith, and patience, and fortitude, and thereby will be more than conquerors over all their enemies and adversities. It is a spiritual strength that revives and causes what was once decayed to flourish again.

**Mount up with wings:** (v31) the idea here is that those who trust in the LORD will ascend on wings as eagles above all temptations and trials of life. The image is drawn from the following facts. Eagles have long and broad wings which enable them to fly at great speeds when in flight. The length of a full grown eagles wing is around 1.06 m (3ft 6in) and its wingspan is about is around 2.27m (7ft 5in).

Their eyes are extremely powerful, having up to three and a half times the sharpness of eyesight that humans have which enables them to spot potential prey from a very long distance. Eagles nest are not in plains, but in high trees and inaccessible high cliffs and often shielded from the weather by some jutting crag that hangs over it.

The eagle has always been celebrated for the height to which it is able to soar directly upward till they are out of sight, which no other bird can do. This is why the ancients gave it the name, "the bird of heaven." In the same way that a lion is considered the king of beasts, the eagle is regarded as the king of birds and considered the king of the skies and messenger of the highest gods. In mythology the eagle is connected by the Greeks to the god of Zeus, by the Romans to the god of Jupiter by the Germanic tribes to the god of Odin and by Judeo-Christian Scriptures to those who hope in God (Isa 40:31).

King David wrote: -

- Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by (Ps. 57:1).

While in the midst of hardships, troubles and sorrows David takes refuge in the shadow of God's wings. The picture here is of a baby eagle gathering under the wings of the King of birds and of the parent eagle protecting the helpless little chick from every type of predator that seeks to devour it. The Scriptures picture the LORD as an eagle caring for his young and building nests of warmth and spreading out his wings over them to shelter and protect them from harm and when they do fall catching them and lifting them up to be with him and his family.

- The LORD found him (Israel) in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.  
11 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions (Deut. 32:11).

The nest being built can be seen to symbolise God's love, grace and mercy, His wings can be seen as His Spirit and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and He lifts us up by His forgiveness. Notice God encircled His people and cared for them as the apple of His eye, meaning His greatest love. The faithful who belong to His global family will make up His treasured possession in the Lord's Kingdom.

The prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:31).

This can be applied to a particular trial, sorrow or grief that we are patiently praying will pass, but its ultimate fulfilment will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory to gather those who are His to Himself. Those who endure to this glorious day will be raised to immortality and eternal life where happiness is everlasting and suffering, sorrow and grief is swallowed up in joy and laughter and weariness and strife is replaced with endless vitality and peace. If we go forth in our own strength, we shall faint, and utterly fall; but having our hearts and our hopes in heaven, we shall be carried above all difficulties, and be enabled to lay hold of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

**Run and not be weary:** (v31) this carries a similar idea, in that those who trust in God will be spiritually uplifted in faith and the affections will be raised above the world. They will not be wearied in following the LORD'S Commandments, but with love will desire to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They will have strength to overcome trials without complaining and to perform the duties they are called to without exhaustion and on their death bed be able by faith and God's love to rise above the world in God's promised hope of eternal peace and everlasting happiness.

It is as true now as it was at the time of the Babylonian captivity. It has been found in the experience of tens of thousands that by waiting on the Lord the heart and the mind has been strengthened. While living in this mortal world and in our fallen corrupted body of flesh with its indwelling sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that we have all inherited from our earthly father Adam: -

- Some will swiftly soar like an eagle and dwell on high.
- Some may not fly so swiftly, but will run without weariness.
- Some may neither fly nor run, but will walk without fainting.

Should a believer find themselves in the group that swiftly soars they should not judge those who only manage to run or walk and those who struggle to soar should not be intimidated by those who do, because all who endure in faith and cross the finish line will be crowned with the prize of eternal life.

- They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31).

This promise and assurance is general in its nature, and is as applicable to God's people now as it was in the times of the Babylonian captivity, it embraces all people of all generations who feel that they are weak, feeble, guilty, and helpless, and who, put their trust in God.

**Waiting on the LORD:** faith is often expressed in the Scriptures by the expression, "waiting on God," with the idea of putting trust in Him and of looking to Him for help, expecting deliverance through His aid,. God said David was a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14) (Acts 13:22) and he speaks many times of waiting on the LORD as the following verses show: -

- Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame. (Psalm 25:3).
- Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. (Psalm 25:5).
- May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. (Psalm 25:21).
- Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! (Psalm 27:14).
- Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! (Psalm 37:7).
- For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. (Psalm 37:9).
- Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off. (Psalm 37:34).
- I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. (Psalm 69:3).

Isaiah wrote: -

- I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. (Isaiah 8:17).
- Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. (Isaiah 30:18).

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### **The History of Assyria and Israel and Babylon and Judah.**

God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them. But they continued to rebel against the word of 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.). 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 were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They 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 golden 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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### **The Commonwealth of Israel.**

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those

who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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End.