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

Isaiah 27.

(2015)

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Isaiah 27.

Topics.

- Leviathan the fleeing serpent.
- I, the LORD, am the keeper of the pleasant vineyard every moment I water it.
- Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.
- Jacob's guilt will be atoned for, when the altars are made like chalkstones.
- No favour will be shown to the fortified city it will be as a wilderness.
- Israel will be gleaned and worship on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.
- 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.

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.

Chapters twenty-four through to this chapter inclusive are a continuous prophecy of the overthrow of Babylon during the days of Nebuchadnezzar its king and in their widest sense the overthrow of the great world-powers which arrayed themselves against God and His people.

Leviathan the Fleeing Serpent.

Isaiah 27:1 ----- ¹In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

When the word day is used prophetically it is not limited to a single day, but can refer to a number of days, months, years or too seasons of time, periods of time or to a particular age of time. Likewise the prophetic expression, "In that day," rarely refers to one day, in most contexts it embraces a series of event over a particular period of time that are working together to bring about a specific result or outcome. In that day in the context of this chapter refers to: -

- The day LORD comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. (Isaiah 20:21)

Leviathan: comes from the Hebrew word (*livyathan*) it literally means to twist (i.e., crooked). It can refer to a wreathed, twisted or crooked animal such as a serpent or crocodile or some other large sea-monster or to the constellation of the dragon. Symbolically it may signify, Egypt, Babylon or some other nation that caused God's people great affliction.

Piercing: comes from the Hebrew word (*bariyach*) it literally means a fugitive, (i.e. the serpent as fleeing), and the constellation by that name. It carries the idea of something being beautiful or noble, but at the same time crooked deceptive and seductive.

Serpent: comes from the Hebrew word (*nachash*) a snake (from its hiss) or serpent. Figuratively it can refer to a soothsayer, a person who foretells the future or an enchanter.

Amongst commentators there has been a great variety of explanations who and what Leviathan refers to, following are the most common: -

A crocodile: because it is furnished with a coat of flesh so scaly and tough that it will resist the force of a musket ball in every part except under the belly and because of its enormous voracity and strength, as well as of its fleetness when it attacks mankind and animals in water with extraordinary power and suddenness. It is for these reasons that the name Leviathan is considered by some to be a crocodile and the fact a crocodile is a fitting image to symbolise a fierce and cruel tyrant.

Egypt or the Pharaoh of Egypt: the crocodile is also a natural inhabitant of the River Nile and of other Asiatic and African rivers and powerful in devouring its prey. In the following verses the word dragon comes from the Hebrew word (*tan*) it literally means a monster and can refer to a sea-serpent, a whale, a dragon, a jackal or some other huge and fearful land or marine animal such as a crocodile which makes the crocodile and dragon a perfect animal to symbolise fierce kings and tyrants especially those of Egypt.

- Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.' ⁴I will put hooks in your jaws, and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales; and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams, with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales. ⁵And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams; you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered. To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens I give you as food. (Ezekiel 29:3-5).

Here Pharaoh King of Egypt is pictured as the great dragon that owns the Nile (symbolising Egypt) and lies in all the streams that flow from the Nile (symbolising the nations in alliance with Egypt).

- Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh King of Egypt and say to him: "You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers. (Ezek. 32:2).

Here Pharaoh King of Egypt sees himself as a lion (i.e., a royal majestic king) but is actually a dragon in the seas that pollutes everything in its waters, meaning he is a king that is corrupting all nations (symbolised by the sea and its waters) that are under his authority.

- You (God) divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. ¹⁴You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. (Psalm 74:13-14).

Here the armies of Pharaoh in chariots pursuing Israel through the Red Sea are likened to Leviathan and sea monsters (perhaps whales). Leviathan in these verses symbolise Egypt while the heads of the sea monsters symbolise the rulers, princes and commanders of Egypt.

In Daniel chapter seven the four kings that are prophesied to arise up out of the earth are likened to four great beasts, a lion, a bear, a leopard and a fourth beast with ten horns.

1. Babylon (the lion) conquered by Cyrus king of Media Persia.
2. Media Persia (the bear) conquered by Alexander the Great king of Greece.
3. Greece (the leopard) conquered by the ten kings of Rome.
4. Rome (the beast with ten horns) conquered and diminished by war and unable to support its growth.

In Revelation chapter twelve the rise of Rome (the new Babylon) is compared to a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns which means that the name Leviathan can refer to Egypt and Babylon or in its widest sense could symbolise any prideful and powerful nation and army and king that are aggressively hostile, cruel and merciless enemies of God's people, but in the scope of the whole chapter the name Leviathan most likely refers to Babylon or to its king.

This suits the context and is in harmony with the three previous chapters and agrees with all that is spoken of and that occurs in this chapter and with the image of Leviathan that is used here.

The crocodile, the dragon and the sea monster all symbolise vast, voracious and ravenous creatures which is, a perfect image to denote the abhorrence with which the Jews would regard Babylon and its king.

This is a vivid picture in colourful symbolic language of God's judgment upon Babylon and its king during the generations of Isaiah and in a much wider sense upon the Babylon spoken of in the following verses which will affect the entire globe of the earth and the populations of all nations: -

- Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. (Rev. 18:2).
- The kings of the earth will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." (Rev. 18:10).
- Alas, alas, for the great city Babylon that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! ¹⁷For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste. (Rev. 18:16).
- The kings of the earth threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste." (Rev. 18:19).
- Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more." (Rev. 18:21).

For further information concerning Leviathan, see the title: -

- Leviathan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The sword of the LORD: (v1) the word sword comes from the Hebrew word (*chereb*) it literally means drought (dearth and famine etc.,) and to a cutting instrument (from its destructive effect), as a knife, dagger, sword, axe, or other sharp implement (all instruments of war). It carries the idea of killing, slaying and destroying and making desolate. The sword is an emblem of war, and is often used among the Hebrews to denote war

- By your sword you (Esau) shall live and you shall serve your brother. (Gen. 27:40).
- I (the LORD) will bring a sword upon you (Israel), that shall execute vengeance for the covenant and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. (Lev. 26:25).

It is also an emblem of justice and punishment: -

- If I (the LORD) sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. ⁴²I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh—with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy. (Deut. 32:41-42).
- If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow. (Psalm 7:12).
- These two things have happened to you (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) —who will console you?—devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you? (Isaiah 51:19).

In this chapter the sword most likely refers to God punishing and overthrowing Babylon and its tyrannical king by using the armies of the Medes. Scripture and history shows that 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, ³I 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*. ⁴For 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*, ⁶that 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).

Cyrus after Conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.

It should be noted that this prophetic message is not limited to the era of Isaiah and Cyrus, but only rests there for a time and then takes up wings and soars through time and history until it reaches 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 of God made up of Jews and Gentiles (also called a new nation or 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).

I, the LORD, am the Keeper of the Pleasant Vineyard Every Moment I Water it.

Isaiah 27:2-5 ----- ²In that day, "A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! ³I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day; ⁴I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. ⁵Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them, make peace with me, let them make peace with me."

The King James Bible says: -

- In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. ³I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day. ⁴Fury *is* not in me: who would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. ⁵Or let him take hold of my strength, *that* he may make peace with me; *and* he shall make peace with me.

Vineyard: comes from the Hebrew word (*kerem*) it literally refers to a garden or vineyard of vines it also comes from the Hebrew word (*Beyth hak-Kerem*) which means house of the vineyard (a place in Palestine).

Pleasant (red wine in KJV): comes from the Hebrew word (*chemer*) it literally means wine (as fermenting) and carries the idea of pure, red wine.

The pleasant vineyard: (v12) carries the idea of God's people being spiritually healthy and righteous before God by the pure blood of the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. In the context of this chapter it means that God is pleased with His people Israel.

Briars and thorns: are symbols of corrupt and worthless men and nations: -

- Worthless men are all like thorns that are thrown away. (2 Sam. 23:6-7).
- The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day. (Isaiah 10:17).

- You (Ezekiel), son of man, be not afraid of them (Israel a nation of rebels), nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. (Ezekiel 2:6).

Since briars and thorns not only hinder the growth and fruitfulness of a vineyard, but also if left untouched have the power to bring the vineyard to total ruin it can refer to the following two groups of people: -

1. To those who confess to be in God's Kingdom, but act rebelliously and wickedly or set themselves up as false prophets and teachers and hypocritical ministers or wilfully sin and act contrary to God's good character. In Scripture these types of people are referred to as briars and thorns meaning they are as unfruitful and worthless as thorns and briars are to a vineyard and therefore only fit to be plucked up and consumed by the flames of a fire.
2. To secular nations or individuals who set themselves against God and against His people and who act in a manner that brings harm and hurt to others by their wicked and corrupt behaviour.

When God finds such briars and thorns instead of fruitful vines He will tread them down and consume them like a raging fire consumes briars and thorns in a dry field.

In the day: refers to the day the LORD will destroy Babylon (at the end of Israel's seventy year captivity) when this day comes Israel (the pleasant vineyard) will sing of it and the LORD will have no wrath toward them.

Night and day: carries the idea that the LORD is the keeper of His people to protect, keep and bless them when they remain faithful and to chastise them when they are not for the purpose of bringing them to repentance and thereby return to their faith and their God and in this way the nation of Israel will never be utterly annihilated. Should any nation (the thorns and briars) rise up against God's people to battle He will consume them together as the flames of a fire consume the briars and thorns of a field. Therefore His people (the vineyard) should make peace with the LORD and look to Him for their protection. It may also carry the idea that their enemies should repent and make peace with the LORD so He does not consume them.

Let them, make peace with me: (v4) is repeated twice to highlight God's great desire and longing that His people would turn from their rebellion and forsake their idols and pagan gods so that He is not forced to use Babylon as his instrument to bring punishment upon His people. With this in mind these verses can also be seen as God saying, "He loves Israel the pleasant vineyard and that it would be easier for Him to deal with a nation that was full of thorns and briars (meaning any other nation than Israel) than have to punish His own people and because of this He is pleading with them to turn to Him and make peace with Him so He is not forced to judge them.

If God's people make themselves worthless (like briars and thorns) by their wicked and rebellious behaviour God's fury will naturally rise against them and therefore He pleads with them to make peace with Him.

Israel shall Blossom and Put Forth Shoots and Fill the World with Fruit.

Isaiah 27:6-8 ----- ⁶in days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. ⁷Has he (the LORD) struck them as he struck those who struck them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain? ⁸Measure by measure (when it shooteth forth in KJV) by exile you contended with them (thou wilt debate with it in the KJV); he removed them with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind.

Have they been slain as their slayers were slain? (v7) means that the destruction of Israel will be so utterly complete that it appears as though they have been totally annihilated as their enemies often were. Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed by Assyria and Babylon. To the surrounding nations it would have appeared that the glorious kingdom of

David and Solomon had ended and observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated. 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.

Measure, by measure the LORD contended with Israel in exile: (v8) the word measure comes from the Hebrew word (*ca'c'ah*) it literally means measurement and carries the idea of moderation. In this context it means God will afflict and punish His people with moderation (i.e., self-control and temperance) so that they will not be totally annihilated. Though the branches will be broken off the tree will not be utterly destroyed. The following verses express this idea of the LORD punishing with controlled moderation and limitations: -

- David prayed: "O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath." (Psalm 6:1).
- Correct me, O LORD, but in justice; not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing. (Jeremiah 10:24).
- I am with you to save you, declares the LORD; I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished. (Jer. 30:11).
- Fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD, for I am with you. I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished. (Jeremiah 46:28).

When it shoots forth: (v8) the word, "shoots" comes from the Hebrew word (*shalach*) it literally means, to send away or send out, to forsake or let depart, in the context of this prophecy it refers to God forsaking His vineyard Israel out of their land and carrying them forth into Babylon a distant country.

You contended with them: (thou wilt debate with it in the KJV) means God did all he could to save His people from the looming punishment by sending prophet after prophet to warn them to turn from their wicked ways and their worship of idols and pagan gods.

Judah, Israel and Babylon: God uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. 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 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.

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).

Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit: (v6) the expression the whole world can refer to the world of God's people Israel or the entire world as a whole. A partial fulfilment of this prophecy can be seen in the glorious and triumphant return of Israel to their land after the seventy year captivity. At this time multitudes of Jewish families returned to their land from the nations they had been scattered into and in this sense their entire land that had lain as a wilderness for so many years was now filled and blossoming with its rightful owners.

But, the ultimate and complete fulfilment of these words will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. For further information concerning this Kingdom, see the title: "King of kings and Lord of lords," following (v12-13) (below).

He removed them with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind (v8) the east wind speaks of a dry, blasting violent and destructive wind that brings all sorts of grievous calamities. The wind is often used in Scripture to signify the calamities war and other judgments that bring destruction and ruin as the following verses show: -

- He said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. (1 Kings 19:11).
- The east wind lifts him (the godless wicked man) up and he is gone; it sweeps him out of his place. (Job 27:21).
- At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse, ^{12a} wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them." (Jeremiah 4:11-12).
- Like the east wind I will scatter them before the enemy. I will show them my back, not my face, in the day of their calamity." (Jer. 18:17).
- Behold, it is planted; will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it sprouted? (Ezek. 17:10).
- The vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem, fire consumed it. (Ezekiel 19:12).
- Though he (Ephraim) may flourish among his brothers, the east wind, the wind of the LORD, shall come, rising from the wilderness, and his fountain shall dry up; his spring shall be parched; it shall strip his treasury of every precious thing. (Hosea 13:15).

The east wind can be very damaging to tender shoots of a vine and so boisterous that it breaks branches off trees and uproots others. God holds the winds in his hand and controls the force of them or stills them likewise He controls the afflictions that come upon His people Israel until they have accomplished the end for which they are sent. Often a strong wind breaks off the branches of a tree, but the tree itself is not destroyed, likewise though God will use affliction to chastise His people he will not utterly destroy His people. In this prophecy the the east wind signifies Babylon which came upon Judea and Jerusalem and carried them away as a strong and violent wind carries away everything in its path.

Jacob's Guilt will be Atoned for, when the Altars are made like Chalkstones.

Isaiah 27:9 -----⁹Therefore by this the guilt (iniquity in KJV) of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim (groves and images in KJV) or incense altars will remain standing.

Remember this is a vision, Isaiah is seeing into the future, Jerusalem is deserted, because the people of Israel have been taken into exile to Babylon for seventy years. Israel is called a people without discernment because they are worshipping pagan gods and have altars of incense for them.

When he makes the Asherim and the the altars like chalkstones: (v9) the Hebrew word Asherim (groves and images in KJV) (v9) can refer to the goddess or to a grove of trees. It is the name of the chief female deity worshiped in ancient Syria, Phoenicia, and Canaan. The Phoenicians called her Astarte, the Assyrians worshiped her as Ishtar, and the Philistines had a temple of Asherah (1 Samuel 31:10).

It started as soon as Joshua was dead and continually plagued Israel (Judges 2:13). It was represented by a tree trunk planted in the ground usually carved into a symbolic representation of the goddess. It was because of the association with carved trees that her places of worship were commonly called groves.

Because Israel did not drive out all the people of Canaan as originally commanded the worship of Asherah survived. She was also worshiped as the goddess of love and war and was sometimes linked with Anath, another Canaanite goddess. Her worship was noted for its sensuality and involved ritual prostitution. The priests and priestesses of Asherah also practiced divination and fortune-telling. The LORD sought to purge Judah and Jerusalem from these groves and the carved images, and molten images and destroy all the objects and signs of idolatry out of the land

Prior to the Jews being carried away from their city and land into captivity all their sins were of a heinous nature, most were inclined to idolatry, and for that sin especially, most of God's judgments, which they had suffered, had been inflicted upon them. But of that most heinous and wicked inclination they were re cured by the punishment of the seventy years captivity in Babylon.

They returned to their land and destroyed the groves and never again returned to the worship of pagan idols and gods. When their repentance was sincere it manifested itself by their zeal in destroying the groves erected to honour idols which God commanded His people to destroy. One of the ways they did this was by breaking them into small pieces and reducing them to powder and dust (thus the word chalkstone).

- Thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire. (Deut. 7:5).
- You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. (Deut. 12:3).

Purged or forgiven: the whole design of these chastisements and the inhabitants of Jerusalem being taken away from their temple, their city and their land and into captivity to Babylon was, to remove them from the groves and altars of idolatry which they had set their affection on.

It was to turn them to the LORD their God and preserve them from relapsing into their sin of idol worship this was the whole purpose of the seventy year affliction. After being humbled they repented, acknowledge their sin and forsook them and turned to God and by His mercy and forgiveness were set free from the guilt of their consciences to once again worship God as a nation washed and cleansed of all their pollutions.

There can be no true repentance nor full reconciliation to God until the heart is purged from all idolatry and the monuments of it are destroyed. Destroying all the altars and groves in the land of Israel to power and dust (i.e., chalkstone) outwardly evidenced Israel's inward repentance of the heart. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar the Jews have ever since abhorred idolatry fulfilling the following prophetic words of Isaiah: -

- In that day (Jacob is brought low) (v4) man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will look on the Holy One of Israel. ⁸He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands, and he will not look on what his own fingers have made, either the Asherim or the altars of incense. (Isaiah 17:7-8).

Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned: (v9) (purged in the KJV) the word therefore links this statement back to the previous verses, Isaiah is saying because the LORD has purged Jacob during the exile (the seventy year captivity in Babylon) their guilt will be atoned for and the full evidence of this will be manifest in them blossoming and filling the whole world with fruit (i.e., doing the right thing before the LORD) and crushing to pieces all their pagan altars their Asherim and altars of incense. It should be highlighted here that afflictions are not atonements for sin (as some religions believe), but were God's means of bringing Israel to and awareness and conviction of their sins and to repentance.

No Favour will be shown to the Fortified City it will be as a Wilderness.

Isaiah 27:10-11 ----- ¹⁰For the fortified city (defenced city in KJV) is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; there the calf grazes; there it lies down and strips its branches. ¹¹When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment; therefore he who made them will not have compassion (mercy in KJV) on them; he who formed them will show them no favor.

Fortified: (defenced city in KJV), comes from the Hebrew word (*batsar*) it literally means to be isolated (i.e. inaccessible by height or fortification) it carries the idea of being strongly defended, fortified and walled up. In these verses it refers to the city of Jerusalem.

The fortified city is deserted like the wilderness: (v10) Isaiah in this prophetic vision see the city of Jerusalem emptied of its inhabitants. This of course refers to that horrific event when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took all the inhabitants of Jerusalem captive into Babylon for seventy years.

This is a people without discernment: (v11) means they were spiritually blind, they could not perceive that their corrupt behaviour and worship of other gods was about to bring the judgment of God upon them. They lacked the ability, wisdom and foresight to see that the fierce armies that were marching toward them were being used by God to punish them for their gross wickedness. They lacked the insight and understanding that if they had repented, turned from their corruption and set their affection upon the LORD their God and Him only none of these sufferings would have come upon them.

It could be said they were like an adulterous wife who beds many men without any thought of the hurt she is doing to her husband and children and the wrath she will receive when he discovers her sinful secrets. Israel was even worse than such an adulterous woman since God sent them prophet after prophet pleading for them to turn from their evil ways and warning them of the doom to come if they don't forsake them and still they continued to play the harlot wife of the LORD.

He who made and formed them will not have compassion on them: (v11) the following verses show that God formed Israel and that they have always been a unique nation to God.

There is no other nation on earth that has history with their God as Israel does. Their history with the LORD their God goes back to the beginning of time no other nation or religion can claim such miracles and wonders or history no matter what god they may believe in. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation. God said: -

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation: -

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Rom. 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Rom. 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Rom. 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)
- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

The thermometer of God's prophecy: it is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being.

Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God.

Israel's love for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob cannot be doubted and when their Messiah does return in glory and they do recognise him not only will the entire nation weep over the horrific crime they committed against him, but the entire world and its systems of global finance, trade and governments will be changed as we know them today.

For further information concerning the new nation God is building in Christ, see the title: -

- The Commonwealth of Israel, (at the end of this chapter).

Israel will be Gleaned and Worship on the Holy Mountain at Jerusalem.

Isaiah 27:12-13 ----- ¹²In that day (it shall come to pass in that day in KJV) from the river Euphrates (the channel of the river) to the Brook of Egypt (the stream of Egypt in KJV) the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel. ¹³And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in that day: (v12) refers to the following events spoken of in the previous verses: -

- The LORD will destroy Leviathan (a symbol of all Israel's' enemies) (v1).
- A pleasant vineyard will sing of it (v2) meaning God's people will rejoice when it comes to pass that all their enemies have been destroyed.
- In days to come Israel shall blossom and fill the whole world with fruit. (v6)
- Israel will be atoned for and their sins removed (v9)

The expression "it shall come to pass in that day," (v12) firstly refers to the day the LORD destroys Babylon (at the end of Israel's seventy year captivity) and sets Israel free from their oppression. When this day comes Israel (the pleasant vineyard) will sing of it and the LORD will have no wrath toward the pleasant vineyard. It refers to that day Jerusalem will be flourishing because its troubles and afflictions will have come to an end when their enemies, Babylon and Egypt and in the latter days, Rome and the antichristian powers are destroyed and the Jews accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

From the river Euphrates to the brook and stream of Egypt: (v12) the word brook (channel or river in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*shebel*) it can refer to a flowing stream, a channel or branch of water or to water in flood. In many places the English Standard Bible uses the word brook while the King James Bible uses the word river. River comes from the Hebrew word (*nachal*) it also can refer to a stream, a brook or river or to a course of water flowing through a narrow valley or to a river in flood overflowing its banks because of torrential rain or melting snow.

This is why there has been some confusion amongst commentators as to which river the title: "The brook of Egypt," intends since many brooks are named in the Bible, it can refer to "wadi" which is a small stream and one of the "sweet words of the Scriptures, because the Bible was written in lands near the desert and by men who therefore appreciated water or to a channel, stream or river. However when the brook, stream, channel or river is qualified with the title: "of Egypt," in most cases it refers to the Nile River.

The word, "Nile" comes from the Hebrew word (*y^e`or*) it literally means a channel, (i.e. a canal) and its adjoining trenches, brooks and streams. It specifically refers to the Nile which is often given the title, the streams river and brooks of Egypt. The Nile River is commonly used to signify Egypt and its country. (The Hebrew word (*y^e`or*) can also refer to the Tigris river as the main river of Assyria).

Streams of Egypt (Rivers of Egypt in KJV): the word rivers, comes from the Hebrew word (*y^e`or*) it is of Egyptian origin and literally means, a *channel*, (i.e. a canal) and specifically refers to the Nile, as the one river of Egypt, including its adjoining brooks, streams, trenches and rivers which are sometimes given the title: "the streams and brooks of Egypt." The Nile River is commonly used to signify Egypt and its country. As a general rule when a stream, brook, channel or river is qualified with the title: "of Egypt," it in most instances refers to the River Nile. (The Hebrew word (*y^e`or*) can also refer to the Tigris river as the main river of Assyria).

The River Euphrates: is often called the Great River it is the uttermost eastern boundary of the land of Canaan, both the Euphrates and the river Nile were two borders of the Promised Land. The Euphrates is the longest and most important river of Western Asia. It flows from Turkey through Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf, the whole course is 1780 miles. The promise to Abraham was that his seed's inheritance should reach the Euphrates.

The expression, "from the river Euphrates to the Nile River," means that the LORD will destroy all Israel's enemies from the river Euphrates and the river Nile (two borders of the Promised Land). The city of Babylon was on the banks of the Euphrates River and the Nile River was the major river of Egypt. Both these rivers were the limits and boundaries of the land of Israel (Deut. 11:24).

The majority of the population of Israel was held under the oppression of Babylon for seventy years and many others would have fled to Egypt thinking to escape their invading enemies. The meaning is, that the LORD would find His people no matter where they were and call them by His grace and gather them to Himself.

The LORD will thresh out (beat off in KJV) the grain: (v12) the word, thresh and beat off comes from the Hebrew word (*chabat*) it literally means to knock out or beat off. The expression, "the LORD will thresh out and beat off the grain," carries the following two ideas, firstly one of wrath and punishment (the seventy year captivity) and secondly one of mercy and blessing (Israel's return to their beloved city Jerusalem). In (Deut. 24:20) labours are pictured beating the olive trees to collect the olive crop from the tree while the seeds are collected from their husks by threshing them.

To get the good fruit the LORD expected from His people Judah and Israel He will firstly have to punish them for their rebellion and gross wickedness which He did by using Assyria and Babylon to lay their land waste and secondly forgive their sins and bless them which He did at the end of the seventy year captivity. (After the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity they never again returned to the practise of idolatry).

It means after the threshing there will be a full and abundant gathering of the good seed (i.e., Judah and Israel). The LORD will take His people from the river Euphrates to the river Nile (meaning all the Israelites that were scattered in those parts) from among the nations and gather them together like thrashed corn into the garner and God's people will once more be peopled as in the days of old and the boundaries of their land restored.

Ruth is spoken of as gleaning in the field until evening and then beating out what she had gleaned which was about an ephah of barley. (Ruth 2:17). Thrashing or beating out was necessary work to separate the pure grain from the chaff. The word thresh (beat in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*chabat*) it literally means to beat or knock out or off. In this context it carries the idea of beating off with a stick as fruit is beaten from a tree or to beat out grain with a stick to separate it from its husks (i.e., chaff).

It is commonly applied to the act of collecting fruit after it has been beaten from a tree, or grain after it has been threshed. The use of these words shows that the expression, "the LORD will thresh or beat out off the grain: (v12) is taken from the act of collecting fruit or grain after the harvest; it means, that as the farmer gathers in the fruit, so God would gather in His people. There will be a shaking in the land as when a farmer beats off his fruit from the tree which will result in all the scattered people being gathered into their own land.

The future time referred to is at the end of Israel's seventy year captivity, when the Empire of Babylon is conquered by Cyrus king of Media Persia who then gives those held captive to the oppression of Babylon written permission to return to their own land. It should be kept in mind that the Jews were not only carried to Babylon, but were scattered in large numbers in all the surrounding regions. The promise here is, that from all those regions where they had been scattered they will be re-collected and restored to their own land. It signifies the separating of the LORD'S people from the rest of the world; as the fruit beaten off is separated from the tree, and corn beaten out is separated from the chaff.

You will be gleaned (gathered in KJV) one by one, O people of Israel: (v12) the word, gleaned and gathered comes from the Hebrew word (*laqat*) it literally means to pick up, to gather up and to glean (i.e., collect, assemble and bring together). The expression, "you will be gleaned and gathered one by one," may signify the smallness and fewness of the remnant of that numerous people and the gradual manner in which they will be gathered. But more likely expresses God's singular care of them that not one of them should be lost as this fits better with the context of the prophecy.

Even though there will be a full and abundant gathering of all Israel yet each individual will receive God's undivided care. It signifies that they will not be gathered merely as a nation, but most carefully as individuals. Everyone will be gathered, not one shall be left or lost, but all Israel shall be saved, God will see that no man, women or child is overlooked, and that all shall be brought in safety to their land.

In that day the great trumpet shall be blown: (v13) God shall summon His people, as it were, by the sound of trumpet, meaning by an eminent and distinguished call, or act of his providence and wisdom on their behalf. The allusion here is to the custom of calling the Israelites together with trumpets:

- Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp. ³And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Num. 10:2-3).

Those who were lost in Assyria and Egypt will worship at Jerusalem: (v13) when Israel is gleaned one by one those who were taken captive to Assyria and those who fled to Egypt to escape the fierce armies of Assyria and Babylon will be gathered to worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem and all Israel's troubles and afflictions will have come to an end and the song spoken of in verse two will be sung and Israel will flourish once again and be at peace.

This prediction had its first accomplishment in the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, to whom many of the Israelites from Assyria, Egypt and other parts were joined and returned and united themselves together as one nation and after having rebuilt the city and the temple worshipped the LORD, on His holy mountain at Jerusalem at which time a golden age of prosperity and peace followed. But the ultimate fulfilment will be when all Israel's enemies and the antichristian powers will be cast down and the following prophecies are fulfilled: -

- On that day (the day the Lord protects the inhabitants of Jerusalem) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰"And I 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. ¹¹On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great the priests will mourn by themselves and each family will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

When they shall look on him whom they have pierced they will renounce all their legal sacrifices, ceremonial rites and the traditions of the elders and their own self-righteousness and look alone to the sacrifice of Christ on the bloodstained cross of Calvary, and declare him to be their Messiah, Saviour and King.

- In that day (the day Jerusalem becomes a terror to the Egyptians) there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. ²⁴In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, ²⁵whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance." (Isaiah 19:23-24).

King of kings and Lord of lords: those who walk on this Highway of God are faithful Jews and Gentiles from all nations who have accepted the Lordship of Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This of course will be when the Lord returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign

from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

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

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The apostle Paul wrote: "When the last trumpet sounds the dead and the faithful who are alive will be raised imperishable, and changed, for our perishable body must put on the imperishable and our mortal body must put on immortality. When these glorious events take place then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is your victory, O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:52-54).

After proclaiming these glorious words Paul goes on to say, "Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

In the latter days God will take care of his pleasant vineyard, the Jews will be gathered and united together with the global body of Christ, numbered among God's true worshippers by the sounding of the Gospel trumpet. Until that time it should be kept in mind that every plant of all kinds need continual watering to thrive and remain healthy likewise we all need the continual watering of God's grace to remain spiritually healthy and strong.

To prevent Gentile believers from becoming puffed up in their own conceits Paul warned his followers to always remember that it is not them who support the root, but the root that supports them, meaning it is not the faithful who support Christ, but Christ who supports the faithful. Paul then goes on to say, "I want you all to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:17-27)

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—¹²remember 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. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For 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 ¹⁵by 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, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So 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, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In 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).

End.