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

Isaiah 44.

(2015)

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.

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

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Isaiah 44.

Topics.

- Fear not, my servant Jeshurun; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants.
- I am the first and I am the last the King of Israel, there is no god besides me.
- All who fashion Idols that are nothing, but blocks of wood will be terrified.
- Sing, O heavens, God has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel.
- God frustrates the signs of liars and makes their knowledge foolish.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

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.

Fear not, My Servant Jeshurun, I will pour My Spirit upon your Descendants.

Isaiah 44:1-5 ----- ¹"But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! ²Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. ³For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. ⁵This one will say, 'I am the LORD'S,' another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, 'The LORD'S,' and name himself by the name of Israel."

The previous chapter ended with the LORD saying Israel had wearied and burdened him with their sins, transgressions and iniquities and because of this He will deliver them to utter destruction. The focus of this chapter is upon their offspring and descendants. The LORD is telling them not to fear that their nation will be annihilated from the face of the earth, it will survive because He will bless their descendants.

NOTE: it helps to understand that though the Israelites as individuals were concerned about their own survival, collectively as a people their greater concern was upon the survival of their nation. God here is comforting them by telling them that their nation will survive, because He will pour out His Spirit on their offspring and His blessings on their descendants in such an abundant manner that they will spring up like healthily strong willow trees planted by fresh flowing water.

Thirsty land: pouring water on the thirsty land and dry ground: makes the barren land flourish with vegetation, flowers, and vineyards and causes lush grass to grow for livestock and wildlife to feed from. Figuratively pouring water on the thirsty land and flowing streams signifies God's favour and abundant blessings and prosperity.

Jeshurun: is a poetical or ideal title of Israel, it is always used as a title of honour except in (Deut. 32:15-18) where it is used in reproach of Israel, because in their prosperity they became a perverse and faithfulness generation that forsook God and worshipped idols and sacrificed to strange gods

I will pour my Spirit and blessing upon your descendants: (v3) this promise can refer to the following three events and periods of time: -

1. To God using 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).
- 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).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free and give them written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.

Under the leadership of 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. 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.

2. To a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ. God at this present time is favouring and blessing His people by His love and through Jesus redeeming blood that washes whiter than snow and by His grace in Christ.

Added to these great blessing God is building a global spiritual temple in the hearts and minds of the faithful who believe in Christ that is made up of Jews and Gentiles alike. This global spiritual temple is 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 study).

3. To the return of the Lord Jesus Christ 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).

Conclusion: in all three of these scenarios God is fulfilling His promise to those who went into captivity that He would favour and bless their descendants and that they would spring up like willows planted by fresh water. Many biblical prophecies contain a local fulfilment for the people the prophecy is being spoken to, but also contained within the prophetic language is a much wider and greater fulfilment to take place at a later future time in the history of God and of Israel. It is as though the prophecy rest for a time upon its first application and then takes up wings and soars through time and history until it fulfils its greater and more perfect fulfilment.

I am the First and I am the Last the King of Israel, there is no god besides Me.

Isaiah 44:6-8 ----- ⁶Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. ⁷Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. ⁸Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."

Prior to going into the Babylonian captivity the people of Judah Israel and Jerusalem had set up Baal altars throughout their land; worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent); sacrificed their sons to Moloch in the Hinnom valley; worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and one at a religious centre at Bethel; set up altars in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land.

This is why in these verses the invisible, immortal Almighty, Holy God of creation and source of all life emphatically says that He is the first and the last; besides Him there is no other god who is like Him. He then tells the people that they should have no fear of any other god, because He has from ancient days always told them there is no other God like Him.

God then challenges them to show Him a god like Him and let such a god declare future things that are to come. God refers to Himself as Israel's Redeemer and to them as His witness to the truth that there is no other God like Him, because, they had seen with their own eyes the many amazing miracles and wonders that He had done that no other god had ever done.

Based upon God's emphatic statement, "besides me there is no god" and the fact it is repeated twice to make the statement even more forceful and absolute many today worldwide who believe Jesus is the first and the last the invisible, immortal Almighty, Holy God of creation and source of all life use these verses to support such a theory, but this is reading into the Scriptures far more than is intended. However much of traditional Christianity use it to support the belief that Jesus is God, yet God Himself, the Almighty Heavenly Father says, He does not even know of any other god, and that there is no other god.

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).

Ponder for a moment: how grieved God must have been to see the children he redeemed not only fall so far away from Him, but also become so corrupt that being a God of justice He is forced to bring punishment upon them. It could be likened to an earthly father who raised his son in love only to see him in later years become such a criminal that the justice system is forced to imprison him to uphold the law and protect others from being influenced by his wrong doing.

The following verses show that God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked and is grieved over their death.

- I will bring to an end in Moab, declares the LORD, him who offers sacrifice in the high place and makes offerings to his god. ³⁶Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute, and my heart moans like a flute for the men of Kir-hareseth. (Jer. 48:35-36).

- Have I (the LORD) any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezek. 18:23).
- I (the LORD) have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live. (Ezek. 18:32).
- Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. 33:11).

God earnestly desires that all would repent of their wicked ways and be saved to eternal life and deeply grieves over the death of the wicked, so how much more will He grieve over the death of His own children who He had redeemed.

All who Fashion Idols that are nothing, but Blocks of Wood will be Terrified.

Isaiah 44:9-20 ----- ⁹All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. ¹⁰Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? ¹¹Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together. ¹²The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. ¹³The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. ¹⁴He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. ¹⁵Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. ¹⁶Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" ¹⁷And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" ¹⁸They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. ¹⁹No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" ²⁰He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

In these verses the LORD is highlighting the following two truths: -

- 1 People pay good money for a human craftsmen and ironsmiths to chop down a beautiful tree of the forest and make from it an idol with the beauty of a man to dwell in their house.
- 2 Idols cannot see, speak, move or talk and therefore cannot produce, or benefit or profit anyone in anyway.

These truths draw attention to how extremely deluded, the mind and heart of those who believe that idols are gods and worship them as such are. They are so spiritually blind that not only are they unable discern that the idol is a lie and deception in their house and has no power to deliver them from anything, but also have absolutely no idea that they will be put to shame and terror when the true God judges them. In highlighting all these truths God is attempting to show His people Israel (and by extension any other worshipper of idols) the vanity of delighting in idols and believing they are a god so that they would see their utter foolishness and return to the LORD their God.

The Living Bible and idols: 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 the 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 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)

Sing, O Heavens, God has Redeemed Jacob and will Be Glorified in Israel.

Isaiah 44:21-24 ----- ²¹Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. ²²I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. ²³Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel. ²⁴Thus 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.

This chapter began with the LORD saying, "I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants so that they spring up like willows by flowing streams," (v3-4).

Now in these verses the LORD is calling to the generation in captivity to Babylon and their offspring and descendants to return to Him, because He will not forsake them and will blot out their sins and redeem them. It is as though Isaiah in this vision sees beyond the seventy year captivity to the people of Israel marching with triumphant joy to their beloved city Jerusalem united as one nation with one faith in the LORD their God. Isaiah seeing this wonderful vision calls the heavens, the earth and all creation to break forth into singing, because the LORD has no longer forsaken His people, but blotted out their sins and redeemed them.

Keep in mind: this is a vision, Isaiah is seeing into the future we know this because the LORD in verse twenty-eight says: -

- Cyrus, is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose; saying, “Jerusalem, shall be built,” and of the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”

Cyrus the king of Persia (called the LORD'S anointed shepherd) (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) will fulfil all of God's purposes at the appointed time. How amazing is the LORD'S mercy and grace, no individual should ever think they have gone beyond God's grace and forgiveness. Israel had turned from the LORD to idols and adopted the pagan ritual of sacrificing their own children to the gods, yet God says He will not only forgive them, but blot out all their sin if they return to Him such is the depth of God's grace and His mercy.

I am the LORD who formed you from the womb: (v24) 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. When their Messiah does return in glory and the LORD pours upon them a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy when they look on him whom they had pierced, not only will the entire nation weep over the horrific crime they committed against him (Zech. 12:9-14), but the entire world and its oppressive systems of global finance and trade will be changed and its corrupt governments will be replaced for the better. 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.

God Frustrates the Signs of Liars and Makes their Knowledge Foolish.

Isaiah 44:25-28 ----- ²⁵God is the LORD, who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish. ²⁶God is the LORD, who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,' and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins'; ²⁷who says to the deep, 'Be dry; I will dry up your rivers'; ²⁸who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' "

The so called wise men in this context are the self-appointed prideful prophets and counsellors who have not only rejected the word of the LORD and turned to idols, but also speak against the LORD'S faithful prophets (v9-20) and by their authority and skilful oratory lead the people astray. God frustrates such men in that what they proclaim to come to pass is lies since they speak from their own wisdom and not the inspiration of God and in this way their wisdom, knowledge and prophecies of future events is made foolish since they are simply words in the wind spoken from the vanity of man's own heart.

In total contrast to this God confirms the word of His servant and fulfils the counsel of his messengers. The LORD'S servant and His messengers embrace Isaiah and all other faithful prophets we know this because these verses go on to speak about the prophets: -

- Who said to the deep, "Be dry and "I will dry up your rivers," referring to God parting the Red Sea and to God holding back the waters of the River Jordan as the people passed through it into the land of Canaan.
- Who said, "Jerusalem will be inhabited and the ruined cities of Judah will be rebuilt.
- Who said of Cyrus, "He is the LORD'S shepherd, and he will fulfil all His purpose and say, "Jerusalem will be built and that the temple foundation will be laid."

All of these prophecies came to pass exactly as God's faithful prophets proclaimed that they should. These verses are shining a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God had established the words of His servants the prophets in delivering His

people from circumstances that to the natural mind seemed impossible to bring to pass to enforce the truth that the prophets predictions concerning the return to Jerusalem of the people of Israel from their seventy year captivity would also be fulfilled. Prophetically Jerusalem in these verses is regarded by Isaiah as lying in ruins and the people to be in captivity in Babylon. It is said by many historians that it is unlikely any land was more completely desolated and laid waste than the land of Judea when its inhabitants were carried to Babylon.

Isaiah represents God as speaking to desolate Jerusalem and saying, that it will again be inhabited and the cities of Judah will again be rebuilt. At the time of Isaiah speaking this Jerusalem was full of inhabitants, but will be laid waste along with all Judah's surrounding cities towns, villages, farmlands and country at the appointed time. However God not only promises that there will be a return of the Jews from captivity and that they will rebuild Jerusalem and their homes in the land of Judah and inhabit them again, but also promises that their nation will again be restored to a flourishing and prosperous state.

To bring this promise to pass the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia and lead him by the hand as he went forth and conquered the Empire of Babylon after which he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing that the LORD had charged him to let His people go and build the LORD a House in Jerusalem.

- 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).
- In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:
23"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up." (2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-2) (Ezra 5:13-17) (Ezra 6:3) (Ezra 6:14).

Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel, back to their beloved city Jerusalem with triumphant joyful rejoicing and singing. For further information concerning Cyrus see the notes under the title "I will pour my Spirit and blessing upon your descendants," following (v1-5) (above). The exact fulfilling of God's prophecies proves and confirms the truth that the prophets were inspired by the Spirit of God and should give all who belong to the global body of Christ today confidence that what the prophets have proclaimed concerning the Lord Jesus Christ return in glory will come to pass at the appointed time as the LORD brought His word to pass at the end of the seventy years as the prophets proclaimed He would.

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).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in.

It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building, (taken from the beautiful writings of a faithful, but unknown brother in Christ).

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.