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Isaiah 29

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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 perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Isaiah 29.

Topics.

- Ariel, Ariel, the city where David camped! Let feasts run their round.
- Nations that fight against Ariel shall be like a vision of the night.
- The thirst of nations that fight against mount Zion will not be quenched.
- The vision has become to you, like the words of a book that is sealed.
- People draw near with their mouth, while their hearts are far from me.
- The LORD will do wonder upon wonder their wise men shall perish.
- Shall the thing formed say to its maker, "He has no understanding?"
- Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and be regarded as a forest.
- The deaf will hear words of a book, and the blind will see.
- Jacob's children will be in awe of the holy one of Jacob, Israel's God.
- 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 TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

1

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.

ISAIAH 29:1-4

Ariel, Ariel, the city where David Camped! Let Feasts Continue.

- **Isaiah 29:1-4:** Ah, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped! Add year to year; let the feasts run their round. ²Yet I will distress Ariel and there shall be moaning and lamentation, and she shall be to me like an Ariel. ³And I will encamp against you all around, and will besiege you with towers and I will raise siege works against you. ⁴And you will be brought low; from the earth you shall speak, and from the dust your speech will be bowed down; your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost, and from the dust your speech shall whisper.

Ariel: comes from the Hebrew word (*'Ari'el*) it is a symbolical name, for Jerusalem it carries the idea of heroic, lion like men and the lion of God. (It is also the name of an Israelite). Here the inhabitants of Jerusalem are pictured as a fierce lion roaring against God, this is because they set their hearts diamond hard against the word God brought to them through His faithful prophets. This is why the LORD is going to bring distress that will cause the inhabitants of Jerusalem great sorrow and grief.

I will distress Ariel there shall be moaning and lamentation: (v2)
God through Isaiah is warning the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the LORD is about to bring judgment on them if they do not turn from their rebellion and forsake their worship of other gods and gross wickedness.

I will encamp against you and raise siege works against you: (v3)
the LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant to bring judgment on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many times, God through the prophets warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem that they would be taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years, because of their rebellion against

the LORD, but God would nurture them during their captivity and at the end of the seventy years He would deliver them. This is exactly what happened, the armies of Babylon held Jerusalem under siege for about eighteen months before it fell. Nothing was allowed in or out. When the city finally fell, Zedekiah attempted to flee with some of his troops, but the Babylonians overtook him and slew his sons before his eyes then put out his eyes and bound him with fetters of brass and carried him to Babylon with all the inhabitants of the city.

You shall speak from the dust like the voice of a ghost: (v4) while in Babylonian captivity the people of God were bowed down (humbled and made weak) and from the dust of the ground they prayed in contrast to praying from the Temple of God.

ISAIAH 29:5-7

Nations that Fight against Ariel shall be Like a Vision of the Night.

- **Isaiah 29:5-7:** But the multitude of your (Jerusalem), foreign foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff. And in an instant, suddenly, ⁶you, will be visited by the LORD of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. ⁷And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, all that fight against her and her stronghold and distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.

Thunder: (v6) the following verses show that thunder is used in Scripture to symbolise the following five things:

1. The extraordinary manifestation and power of God's presence.

- On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. (Exodus 19:16-18).

2. The power of God's voice.

- Keep listening to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. ³Under the whole heaven he lets it go, and his lightning to the corners of the earth. ⁴After it his voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice, and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard. ⁵God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend. (Job 37:2-5). (See also Psalm 29).
- The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. ⁴The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. (Psalm 29:3-4)

3. The thunder like noise of the hundreds of horses' hoofs and chariots as they charge toward the enemy and the thunder like shout of the soldiers and the noise of their coats of armour as thousands march with their weapons in hand to the battle.

- When the trumpet sounds, he says 'Aha!' He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. (Job 39:25).

4. To great masses of people.

- Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters! (Isaiah 17:12).

5. To the sound of a great multitude praising God.

- I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (Rev. 19:6).

Summary: thunder is used in Scripture to symbolise the extraordinary manifestation and power of God's presence and His voice (Exodus 19:16-18) (Job 37:2-5) (Psalm 29:3-4) and to symbolise the thunder like noise of the hundreds of horses hoofs and chariots as they and their soldiers charge toward the enemy with thunder like shouting and the noise of their coats of armour as thousands march with their weapons in hand to the battle (Job 39:25). Thunder is also used to symbolise great masses of people (Isaiah 17:12) and the sound of a great multitude praising God. (Rev. 19:6).

Earthquakes: (v6) the following verses show that earthquakes are used in Scripture to symbolise the following three things:

1. To magnify the power of God's awesome presence.

- Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. (Exodus 19:18).

2 To highlight the enormity, magnitude, horror and dread of a battle.

- Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the LORD I will sing; I will make melody to the LORD, the God of Israel. "LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water. ⁵The mountains quaked before the LORD, even Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel. (Judges 5:3-5).

The mountains didn't quake, this is describing the fierceness and horror of the battle in which Deborah and Balak defeated the king of Sisera and sang this song (see Judges 4). It can also be seen as a reflection of God's majestic and awesome power concerning the flood during Noah's generation; the destructive hail upon the Egyptians; God descending upon Mount Sinai; the Red Sea parting and all the great victories and triumphs God gave to Israel especially since the entire Psalm is highlighting God's awesome power displayed throughout history.

3 Jesus told his disciples before the end of the world comes:

- Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (Matt. 24:7).
- Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. (Mark 13:8).
- There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. (Luke 21:11).

Summary: earthquakes are used in Scripture to symbolise the enormity, magnitude, horror and dread of a battle and war (Judges 5:3-5) and God's judgments manifested through natural disasters (i.e., famines and pestilence, etc.).

The multitude of your, foreign foes shall be like dust: (v5) the LORD through Isaiah is saying that all the brutal enemies of Jerusalem will be crushed to dust (i.e., brought to utter ruin).

You will be visited by the LORD with thunder and an earthquake: (v6) refers to Cyrus king of Media Persia and his armies invading and conquering the Empire of Babylon and setting the people of Israel free. The armies of Cyrus were so fierce that Isaiah likens them to the power of thunder; the terror of earthquakes; the mass annihilation a whirlwind brings and the utter destruction of a fire which lays to waste everything that stands in its path. When these events take place the people of Jerusalem will be in such joy, blessing and peace that they will feel like all their afflictions, sorrows, grief and defeats were simply a vision or a dream. A simple example of this is would be a woman giving birth to a

baby, often the labour pains are extreme and the woman suffers great pain, but the instant the baby is born and in her arms all the pain is superseded by great joy. It is this type of joy that Isaiah is saying Israel will feel when all their enemies have been destroyed. The local fulfilment of these events was at the end of Israel's seventy-year Babylonian captivity. While in captivity Israel earnestly prayed and God heard their prayers. Judah and Israel were under the authority of the Empire of Babylon for seventy years. At the beginning of these years they were two rebellious nations that had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. While under Babylon's authority and oppression God molded them like a master potter molds a beautiful clay jar. They turned from their idols, forsook their wicked ways and became one united nation, faithful to the LORD their God and no other. The following verses show that at the end of the seventy years God used Cyrus the king of Media Persia to set the captives of Babylon free:

- 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).
- 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 Chronicles 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-2) (Ezra 5:13-17) (Ezra 6:3) (Ezra 6:14).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. Cyrus after Conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and to rebuild the Temple of God. But Isaiah's message is not limited to his generations, but transcends the days of Nebuchadnezzar and King Cyrus who God used as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. The language of this prophecy echoes a future King who God 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, but this one is not being built by the hands of men or with bricks and mortar, but by the Spirit of God. The cornerstone of this Temple is the Lord Jesus Christ; the foundation is the prophets and apostles and its walls are made up of Jews and Gentiles. This glorious structure is also called a new nation in Christ; a new creation in Christ; the body of Christ; the church and the Kingdom of Christ). For further information concerning the spiritual temple God is building in Christ, see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel" (at end of this Chapter).

ISAIAH 29:8

Nations thirst that Fight against Mount Zion will Not Be Quenched.

- **Isaiah 29:8:** As when a hungry man dreams, he is eating and awakes with his hunger not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams, he is drinking and awakes faint, with his thirst not quenched, so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion.

Mount Zion is called God's Holy Mountain because Jerusalem God's Holy City sits on it which means that the expression, "The multitude of nations that fight against Mount Zion," refers to all nations that fight against the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The idea presented in these verses is that even though Israel's enemies have had victory over God's City they will be left lacking and unsatisfied, their victories will not bring about the satisfaction and prosperity they were seeking, because God will ultimately exalt His people Israel and judge and destroy those who have come up against them.

ISAIAH 29:9-12

The Vision Has Become, Like the Words of a Book that is Sealed.

- **Isaiah 29:9-12:** Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! ¹⁰For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, and covered your heads (the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered in KJV). ¹¹And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." ¹²And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

Seers: comes from the Hebrew word (*chozeh*) it literally and specifically means a beholder in vision (as looked upon with approval), but can refer to one who mentally gazes at a vision or to one who perceive and contemplate a thing (with pleasure). It can refer to a faithful or unfaithful prophet, to those who gazes at the stars seeking prophetic signs or to those who see visions in their mind or outside of themselves (i.e., like a hologram or dream). The inhabitants of Jerusalem had become so spiritually blind that they not only had altars for worshiping the host of heaven (the sun, moon, stars and planets) in the court of the temple and worshipped at the altars of Baal, but were even sacrificing their sons on the altars of Molech in the Hinnom valley. Added to these abominations they were shedding innocent blood, cheating the innocent out of justice, not helping the less fortunate and oppressing the poor for their own gain all of these gross wickedness's permeated the land of Judah and Israel. Isaiah has spent twenty-nine chapters warning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, if they do not hear his words; humble themselves; repentant and turn to the LORD their God their beloved city will be destroyed. But their sins were so deep that they had become so spiritually blind Isaiah's words could not penetrate their harden minds and cold hearts.

The LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep: (v10) carries the idea that God had dulled down the minds of the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that they were blinded to the vision that He had given Isaiah. This does not mean that God did not want His people to hear His word, but that because they had become so corrupted their sin blinded them to His word. God has set the laws of the universe in such a way that when people deliberately and consciously enter into gross wickedness and set their hearts and minds upon idols and pagan gods (especially His own people) their minds become hardened to God and His ways it is in this sense that it can be rightly said, "God put a spirit of deep sleep upon them and closed their eyes.

The LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep: (v10) the expression poured out denotes the vehemency of God's judgment. Isaiah sees in the people (especially the chief rulers) a spiritual blindness which is the retribution of those who wilfully close their eyes and set their minds against the light of God.

- As it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day." (Rom. 11:8).

The LORD poured out upon them a spirit of deep sleep," (v10), because they had not only set their hearts diamond hard against the world of the LORD that came to them through the prophets, but also scorned and

mocked the prophets therefore God gave them up to a stupid frame of spirit; to a reprobate (i.e., degenerate and corrupt) mind void of judgment and spiritually blind. This same type of hardness of heart was manifested in the Jews in the time of Christ and his apostles, who obstinately chose to reject their Messiah the Christ against the most glaring light and evidence and instead chose darkness rather than the light of Jesus and the Gospel that shone around them. These like those of Isaiah's generation were righteously given up to a reprobate mind.

- Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God (to retain God in their knowledge in KJV), God gave them up to a debased mind (reprobate mind in KJV) to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28).
- Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind (reprobate in mind in KJV) and disqualified regarding the faith. (2 Timothy 3:8).
- They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient (abominable in KJV), unfit for any good work (unto every good work reprobate in KJV). (Titus 1:16).

The expression, "The spirit of deep, sleep," carries the idea of prideful self-reliance, hardness of heart, spiritual sluggishness, inactivity and stupidity. Where these things prevail in regard to the things of God, He withdraws his favour and grace (which alone can cure such prideful foolishness) and gives them up to their own hardness of heart and stupidity of mind.

The LORD has closed your eyes, and covered your heads: (v10) closed your eyes embraces the great bulk of the people while covered your heads refers to the chief rulers and priests. Whoever covers their natural eyes cannot see they are made blind. The blindness in the context of these verses carries the idea that they are not only spiritually blind to wisdom and the truth concerning God, but also lack good common sense and the ability to reason. It means that their mind is covered with a veil of ignorance and stupidity and to the words of the God's faithful prophets (the most intelligent men amongst them). It means that the eyes of their understanding were so extremely dull that they could not see the danger they were in, or the ruin that was coming upon their nation. They continued to worship and trust their pagan gods and their alliances and covenants with pagan nations and go about their wicked ways such was the foolishness of their mind and the hardness of their hearts to the word of God that Isaiah was speaking to them.

The words of a book are sealed: (v11) meaning the words of this entire vision from chapter one to its end is sealed. This principal applies to all the prophecies of all the prophets contained in the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. To the priests and the vast bulk of the people of Israel they were no more seen, known, and understood than if they had been in a book, written, rolled up, and sealed. Not because of the obscurity of the writings, or because they were really sealed up, but, because of the spiritual blindness and stupidity of the people's minds, whose eyes were closed, and their hearts hardened to the word of God spoken to them by the prophets and given to them in the Scriptures.

I cannot it for it is sealed: (v11) during these early generations it was common for books to be in the form of rolls that when delivered to someone that understood the language in which the book was written it was opened and they were asked to read what was written. When the book is given to one who can read and to one who cannot read both give the same answer saying, "they cannot, for it is sealed," The idea carried here is that it mattered not how learned the rulers and priests were or how much knowledge the common people lacked amongst the Jews neither the learned or unlearned were any better than one another for understanding the messages which God sent them by his faithful the prophets. The sense is that although they had the true prophecies and word of God which the LORD had made clear to them through the prophets, yet they did not perceive and understand them. Isaiah is saying that they

were as ignorant of their true nature as those who can read are of the contents of a letter that is rolled and sealed and as ignorant as those who cannot read are of the contents of a book that is handed to them. The message is sealed because the people of God are only giving the LORD lip service. They know the right things to say and do, but their heart is not involved. They have no love for the things of the LORD and doing His work is a burden to them. (v13). It is not until the Bible is read with a teachable spirit and a humble and seeking heart that desires to learn the truth and the will of God that it reveals its spiritual messages its mysteries and wonders, until then it remains as a sealed book to everyone (learned or unlearned). It will provide valued intellectual knowledge and wisdom as any other knowledgeable book does. It is only when prideful self-reliance gives way to a humble spirit that honestly seeks God that His love, grace and the path to salvation and eternal life is opened to the mind and the heart. Natural human learning without a right heart attitude will not enable anyone to rightly understand the word of God, and spiritual things.

- The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14).

God seals up His truths to the learned and unlearned alike whose hearts are self-reliant prideful and who have no desire to change their ways, in contrast to this those who approach His word with a humble heart and honestly desire to know Him will find Him.

ISAIAH 29:13

People Draw Near with Words, while their Hearts are Far from Me.

- **Isaiah 29:13:** And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men.

8

At this time the people of God are only giving the LORD lip service. They know the right things to say and do, but their heart is not involved. They have no love for the things of the LORD and doing His work is a burden to them. They are like men and women today who traditionally go to church every Sunday, but give God no thought during every other day of the week and go about doing and saying what they please regardless of how their speech and behaviour reflects on the honour of God and the good name of Jesus.

Their fear of me is a commandment taught by men: (v13) meaning they serve the LORD not from their spirit and heart, but from a formal devotion of outward religious works that their religious leaders, elders and priests and their national institution of religions demands of them and from years of tradition. Their religion was only to comply with custom and to serve their own interest (i.e., their pride and ego, the gain of worldly riches, a feeling of fame or importance or to have a sense of power and control). They did all the outward religious things, but their religion was a religion of pretence, they kept up the outward appearance of religion and devotion, but they withheld the affection of their heart from God. They did not love, fear or obey God, nor did they have any concern for His honour, but lived and did as they pleased. In the book of Matthew Jesus cited Isaiah's words when rebuking the religious leaders of his generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes):

- You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:7-9).

The statement, "Their fear of me is a commandment taught by men," (v13) means that their fear of God stemmed from intellectual knowledge that they would be punished and not from a heart that hates wickedness,

corruption and things that offend the LORD or from a heart that loves God, it is worldly fear and not godly fear (i.e., fear because of punishment and not fear of hurting or offending a person, especially God). It could be likened to those who go to church today not because they love God and desire to honour him, but to escape judgment and the grave.

The fear of the LORD: the reason a person is told to fear the LORD is because all humans have sinned and will one-day be judged by God. This fear should motivate all of us to seek God's forgiveness and eternal life. This is why the Bible says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom it motivates a person to seek after God and His forgiveness.

The apostle John in his letter wrote:

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10).

The fear of the LORD has the following two aspects:

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
 - 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually (i.e., do-good and not harm). The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, violence, crime and wars in most countries.
- The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. (Prov. 8:13).

The fear of God and Christians: those in Christ look to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and understand and experience Christ's great love and God's grace in their hearts and minds and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise, it is with the faithful who belong to the Lord's global family.

ISAIAH 29:14-15

The LORD will do Wonders, their Wise Men shall Perish.

- **Isaiah 29:14-15:** therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden." ¹⁵Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"

The LORD'S statement, "I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder," refers to God using Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant to bring judgment upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It is called wonder upon wonder, because no Israelite would have ever thought that God would allow Jerusalem the city of God to fall to secular nations and take all its inhabitants into captivity for seventy years. Ah, you who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" (v15) refers to the LORD'S people who are doing things in secret (especially the rulers and priests) that should not be done, thinking no-one can see. It could be

likened to ministers today who steal from the church's income, have secret affairs or abuse children, or lie and cheat in their business dealings etc. We maybe able to hide wrong-doing from others and deceive those around us for a time, but no one can deceive or hide anything from the LORD'S eyes.

ISAIAH 29:16

Shall the Created say to its Maker, "He has No Understanding?"

- **Isaiah 29:16:** You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Isaiah was indignant at the perversity of the so called wise and learned men exalting their own reasoning above that of God. He is basically saying "What right have they to say their creator has no understanding." They mocked His prophets, despised His teachings and regarded formality to be all that was required, they adhered to their outward ceremonial rites, holy days and kept their religious customs and traditions, but their heart was far from God. They worshipped God with their mouth and lips, but withheld their heart and did things in darkness that shouldn't be done supposing that God did not see them.

The sense of the passage is that it would be absurd for that which is made to complain of the maker as having no intelligence, and no right to make it as he did. It would be absurd for the piece of pottery to complain of the potter as if he had no skill; and it is equally absurd in a man to complain of God, or to regard Him as destitute of wisdom. Such was the conceit, stupidity and perverseness of the Jews, in endeavouring to hide their deceitful counsels from the LORD, and in thinking that He did not see and know them. By their actions they turned the order of things upside down, putting themselves first and God second

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You turn things upside down: means they are putting themselves and their counsel before God's. Isaiah is bringing them the true counsel of God, but they in turn not only mock Isaiah which is the same as mocking God, but also scoff at the message and counsel that Isaiah is speaking to them which is also the same as scoffing at God. They esteemed the clay above the potter supposing God to be destitute of wisdom and could not see what is done, which is absurd as it would be for the clay jar to complain that the potter who formed it has no understanding.

This passage is cited by the apostle Paul:

- Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? (Romans 9:20-21).

We are often tempted to ask questions about God's justice that aren't appropriate, we will only be concerned about them if we have failed to accept our low status and Bible teaching that we all come from Adam and Adam was made from the dust so all humans come from the same dust or clay, if we accept this all our questions let alone implied criticisms of God are inappropriate. It's like a small child insisting that their father explain the workings of a car to them, but even if it was explained they wouldn't understand since the concepts are far beyond them.

Vessels fit for honour and vessels fit for dishonour: it should be noted that Paul does not say God is making or predestining one human for honour and another for dishonour but rather that God being the creator of all mankind does have the right to do this and that God is with longsuffering enduring prideful and wicked people whose outward actions clearly show that they are only fit for destruction. It does not mean that

God has predestined beforehand some for honour and some for dishonour, but that He will make those who are corrupt, act wickedly and deny Him for dishonour and those who do what is good and right for honour.

Reasons God hardens people's hearts: in the Old Testament the Scripture states that God did not give Israel the land of Canaan because of their righteousness, but because of the wickedness of the people of Canaan (Deut. 9:5) we are told it was because of the wickedness of the people of Canaan that the LORD hardened their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle and be destroyed (Joshua 11:19-20). In the New Testament John cites the words of Isaiah against the chief priest and Pharisees stating God has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart because they were full of pride and constantly plotted to kill Jesus (John 12:37-43) showing that God confirms people in their own attitudes and positions which they themselves choose from their own freewill, but if these same people repent of their pride and wicked hearts their eyes will be opened to God's ways and His truth.

An example of man's free will working within God's sovereign will: the following is a simple example that can help in showing how man's free will works within God's sovereign will (howbeit certainly not perfect or an all-encompassing example). Take a large glass jar (representing God's sovereign will) and half fill it with cardboard pieces (representing individual humans). Shake the jar and every cardboard piece will move in their own individual and different directions within the space inside the jar, but no matter where they move, they are still within the Jar. The sovereignty and foreknowledge of God is an eternal mystery that our mortal mind will never understand until we inherit our immortal body. Nevertheless, an eternal truth that can be understood that Israel seemed to have forgotten is that like the clay on the potter's wheel has no power to escape the potter's hands, we have no power to escape the hands of the Master Potter or to save ourselves.

NOTE: in contrast to the unfaithful Israelites the Old Testament faithful never held God accountable to their understanding of what is fair nor did they hold God accountable to things that appeared unfair to our limited human understanding and appearance. They always saw themselves as the clay and God as the Master Potter. For further information concerning predestination, see the title:

- Predestination (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ISAIAH 29:17

Lebanon shall be Turned into a Fruitful Field, and as a Forest.

- **Isaiah 29:17:** Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?

Lebanon: is north of Israel above Tyre and averages 6000 feet above sea level with peaks reaching 10,200, its southern slopes descend into the foothills of Galilee. Though included in God's promise, it was never totally occupied. Its isolated crags, however, supported watch towers and refuge-points and came to symbolize the exalted status of Judah's royal house. Its greatest fame was its cedar trees, biblical poetry often uses the motion of their massive branches; the fragrance of their wood; the height of the tree itself as symbols of dignity or pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as symbols of strength and immortality. Their majestic beauty and awesome height is used as a symbol of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice. King Solomon used Lebanon's cedars to build the Temple and used 10,000 workers per month hewing Lebanon's cedars and floating them in great rafts along the Mediterranean coast. Babylon cut many of these forest giants down, but most were destroyed during 1914 -1919 to supply fuel for the Beirut-Damascus railway.

Is it not yet a very little while: (v17) the King James Bible says, "Is it not yet a very little while," neither of these expressions are clear in their meaning since it could be read in either of the following two ways, "what follows would come to pass in a few years" or "that it will not be in a little while that these things will come to pass." Either way the message is that these things will come to pass in a future time.

Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field: (v17) Lebanon denotes both a well-cultivated country and a great flourishing forest of majestic cedar trees it is in this context used as a symbol of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. At the time of this prophecy Jerusalem was a flourishing city and Lebanon had been stripped of its cedars by the Assyrian armies its once majestic forest lay barren of its beautiful and famous cedar trees. Isaiah has predicted the fall of Jerusalem and is now predicting its restoration. He likens the city of Jerusalem to the forest of Lebanon. The language of this prophecy allows for a partial application and for a far more complete and perfect application:

1. The partial application: Lebanon will again regain its glory and attain its greatness amongst the forests of trees as they once had and become the fertile and productive field it was. Likewise, the city that is now perverse, sinful, formal and hypocritical will again be restored to its former glory and attain its greatness amongst the surrounding nations. The number of the faithful righteous will be increased and pure worship of God will succeed. This is exactly what happened, God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the city of Jerusalem to ruin and take its inhabitants captive into Babylon for seventy years. The following verses show that at the end of the seventy years God took Cyrus by the hand and used him as His anointed shepherd to set His people free:

- 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 Sabaeans, *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, after conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon Cyrus gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. Under Ezra and Nehemiah, they returned with triumphant joy as one united nation to their beloved city and rebuilt the Temple of God and established true worship to the LORD their God only. At this time those that were spiritually deaf received the word of God in contrast to setting their hearts diamond hard against it. Their spiritually blind eyes were opened to understand and perceive the word of God so that their heart was toward God in love in contrast to their mind being filled with intellectual head knowledge and with legalistic rules, formalities and ceremonial rites to adhere to. They were humble before God in contrast to being prideful and hypocritical and exulted in the Holy One of Israel. The ruthless amongst them came to nothing

and their enemies did them no harm nor did they scoff and mock them. Honest justice prevailed, (those who were in the right were not turned aside) (v21) during that golden age that followed the rebuilding of the Temple and the establishment of their true faith. (They never returned to idol worship again).

2. The complete and perfect application: to a future time and a more perfect and complete fulfilment when the once flourishing Kingdom of God will become like a barren forest stripped of its trees, because it is full of prideful, self-serving, perverse and hypocritical rulers and priests. This period of time of course refers to the time of Christ when behind closed doors the rulers and priest plotted the murder of their Messiah and King and held his Gospel in contempt. After enticing the Romans to have Jesus put to death God took the Kingdom from them.

At Christ's death and resurrection, the need for a human priest, the Levitical priesthood and all Israel's religious formalities, ceremonies, holy days and customs were entirely done away with. None of these things are needed now for men and woman to be united to God and saved to eternal life. Added to this in 70 AD the Romans raided the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

- Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. (Matt. 21:43).

The Gentile world at this time was like an uncultivated forest full of unfruitful trees, but through the preaching of the Gospel became God's children and like a fruitful field, abounding with people and churches, fruitful in grace and good works the wilderness of God's Kingdom became such a strong and large field full of flourishing fruit it could be spoken of as a forest as Isaiah prophesied in the following verse:

- Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. (Isaiah 32:15).

The Kingdom of God that was once filled with sinful, prideful, self-serving, perverse and hypocritical rulers and priests will be filled with zealous and faithful apostles. Disciples from all nations will proclaim the Gospel and the Kingdom of God will be restored to its former glory and attain it greatness not just to the surrounding nations, but to all nations worldwide.

ISAIAH 29:18-21

The Deaf will Hear Words of a Book and the Blind will See.

- **Isaiah 29:18-21:** In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. ¹⁹The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. ²⁰For the ruthless shall come to nothing and the scoffer cease, and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off. ²¹who by a word make a man out to be an offender, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.

Isaiah's prediction, "The deaf shall hear and the eyes of the blind shall see" relates to hearing and understanding the prophetic message that had been sealed to Isaiah's generation because their heart was far from the LORD. Those who set their heart against the LORD or turn away from Him blind themselves to perceiving the spiritual wonders and truths of God. The Local fulfilment of these verses was Israel's deliverance from their seventy-year captivity in Babylon and their return to their beloved city Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple. However, the prophetic words of Isaiah:

- The deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see and the meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. (v18-19).

Better fits the time of the Lord Jesus Christ ministry on earth and the apostles proclaiming the Gospel when the word of God went out to all nations of the world and not just the nation of Israel (see the notes following (v17) (above).

Jesus said:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:3)
- The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (Matt. 11:5)
- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. (Luke 4:18)

When the Lord appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, he told him he is sending him to the Gentiles:

- To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' (Acts 26:18)

The apostle James said:

- Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (James 2:5).

In this scenario Isaiah's prediction that the ruthless and evil will come to nothing and the scoffers will cease (v20), would refer to the evil religious leaders of Jesus generation who plotted the murder of the Lord Jesus Christ and the prophetic words, all who watch to do evil shall be cut off would refer to those who with glee watched Jesus being crucified.

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Those who with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right: (v21) since people were constantly coming and going through the gates of a city it was common practise to assemble at the gate of a city for the purpose of discussion about civil affairs or debates about their religion or discussions concerning the innocence or guilt of a person. Added to these discussions it was common practise for the prophets to give messages at the gate.

- Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. (Ruth 4:11).
- Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. (Proverbs 31:23).
- They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth. (Amos 5:10).
- I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate. (Amos 5:12).

Elders of the city and the general public would gather at the gate of the city and testify to the character of a person entering the city, if the people's testimony was a good one the person would be allowed to enter the city, likewise if it was a bad one they would be refused entry. It could be likened to a church having people at its doors to determine whether a person was worthy to enter into their church or on a much larger scale likened to a nation determining whether a person is of good character or a terrorist before allowing them to enter their country. What was happened during Isaiah's generation was that certain elders at the gate were either twisting and perverting justice by making false accusations against a person or charging them of trivial offences (according to their laws) so that they would not be permitted entry and then charging them

a bride to enter the gates. They deliberately turned aside justice and falsely condemned the innocent for their own greedy gain. An example of this is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus came doing only good, healing the sick, ministering God's love and grace to all who came to him and proclaiming the true word of God, yet those who had the religious authority and claimed to be God's priests on earth (the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes) plotted behind closed doors his murder. This horrendous crime has to be history's greatest perversion of justice against an innocent man.

ISAIAH 29:22-24

Jacob's Children will be in Awe of the Holy One of Israel.

- **Isaiah 29:22-24:** Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall no more be ashamed, no more shall his face grow pale. ²³For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. ²⁴And those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction."

The face of Jacob the father of Israel is pictured as being pale as he looks upon his family. This carries the idea that he is in awesome fear for their survival and utterly ashamed of their behaviour as any earthly father whose children have gone so far astray would be. However the LORD here through Isaiah promises Jacob that a day is coming when he will have no cause to be ashamed and no need to fear for their survival, because his twelve sons and their offspring are the work of His hands and that a day will come when those who have gone astray in spirit and rejected the word of the prophets will humble themselves, receive the word of God and not only praise the Holy One of Jacob, but will also stand in awe of the God of Israel in contrast to worshipping many gods. This means that a day is coming when they will accept their Messiah the Christ the Lord Jesus Christ and Saviour of the world. Though their maybe times in Israel's history when these prophetic words of Isaiah could be partially applied to, the ultimate, complete and perfect fulfilment of them will be when the following prophetic words of Zechariah 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).

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

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).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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