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Isaiah 65

(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 65.

Topics.

- The LORD said, "Here am I, to a nation not called by my name.
- I will repay; yours and your father's iniquities together, says the LORD.
- I will not destroy them all; I will bring offspring from Jacob and Judah.
- Those who forsake God will suffer, but His servants will rejoice.
- He who blesses himself by the God of truth shall swear by God.
- I create new heavens and a new earth; I create Jerusalem to be a joy.
- In my Holy Mountain the lion shall eat straw like the ox says the LORD.

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

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 65:1-5

The LORD said, "Here Am I, to a Nation not Called by My Name.

- **Isaiah 65:1-5:** I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that was not called by my name. ²I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; ³a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; ⁴who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig's flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels; ⁵who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.

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In chapter sixty-three Isaiah prayed the following prayer:

- LORD, look down from heaven and see, where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me (Isaiah and Israel). ¹⁶For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel (i.e., Jacob also a father of Israel) does not acknowledge us (Isaiah 63:15).

This prayer continues through chapter sixty-three and through chapter sixty-four until it arrives at this chapter. Here in verse one the LORD begins to answer Isaiah's prayer. Verses one to five shine a light upon the longsuffering and patience of God, He was waiting and ready to accept rebellious Israel even though they had forsaken Him, were worshipping idols and foreign gods and had entered into gross wickedness. God constantly said to Israel through the prophets, "here I am, here I am, come to me," but sadly they did not want the LORD because they said, "He is too holy for them." (v5). This would be one of the major reasons, people today reject the Christian faith, they understand that the God of Christianity is a Holy God and do not want to change their lifestyle accordingly.

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me: (v1) in the scope of the entire chapter and the language of this prophetic vision this statement can apply to the following two groups of people, the first is the people of Israel the second the future Gentile nations, because of this we will look at both groups in detail.

1. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

When we scan the entire chapter, it becomes clear that the LORD'S statement, "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me: (v1) was directed toward the following:

- A people not asking or seeking for God (v1).
- A nation not called by the name of God and who He spread his hands out to all day (v1-2).
- A rebellious people who followed their own ways and continually provoked the LORD to His face (v3).
- A people who sacrificed in gardens and on bricks (v3) (in contrast to sacrificing in the temple).
- A people that ate pig's flesh in their vessels (v4) (meaning in their meat offerings to God).
- A people that believed they were holier than others and who were smoke in God's nostrils (v5) (meaning they were an offence to the LORD).
- A people who God will repay for their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities (v7).
- A people who the LORD will save for His servants' sake (v8).
- A people who forsook the LORD and who forgot His holy mountain (v10-11).
- A people the LORD called and they did not answer Him (v12).
- A people who did what was evil in the LORD'S eyes and who the LORD will put to death (v12-15).

In this first scenario the words, "A nation that was not called by my name," (v1) refer to Israel in times past when they made no inquiry after the LORD and had sunk to the level of the heathen nations. In Isaiah chapter one the nation of Israel is spoken of as being children that the LORD had reared and brought up whose offspring not only rebelled against the Holy One of Israel and turned away from Him, but also became such an evil nation from the foot to the head that the LORD allowed foreigners to overthrow them.

These nations brought such destruction upon their entire land that if the LORD had not left them a few survivors they would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah. (i.e., utterly perished) (Isaiah 1:2-9). In previous chapters Isaiah wrote:

- Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel! (Isaiah 43:22).
- There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. (Isaiah 64:7).

The expression, "those who did not ask for the LORD," (v1) refers to the unbelieving, rebellious and wicked adult generation of Jews that had turned from God to foreign gods and went into the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. Prior to this God sent them prophet after prophet calling them to return to the LORD their God (i.e., saying, "Here am I, here am I)," and warned them of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the

word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The majority of these would have died in captivity therefore the expression, "those who now seek Him," (v10) would refer to the new generation (i.e., the children that went into the captivity and those born during it). Sometime near the end of the captivity this new generation prayed the following prayer:

- Our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: ¹³transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. ¹⁴Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. ¹⁵Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. (Isaiah 59:12-15).

Despite Israel's wickedness prior to their seventy-year captivity to Babylon the LORD was always ready to be found by them and ready for them to return to Him, if they had sought after Him and asked, but they didn't. Like an earthly father desiring for their runaway children to return the LORD always waited with His arms spread out saying, "Here am I, here am I," to His rebellious people, but they chose to walk in their own evil ways and by their wickedness continually provoked Him. The new wine that the LORD will not destroy for Jacobs's sake (v8) refers to the new generation that did seek the LORD and that came out of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. The Jerusalem that the LORD created to be a joy and gladness (v18) refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple of God by the returned captives. At this time:

- Israel established their true faith.
- Jerusalem became a city of joy, praise and gladness to all its inhabitants (v18).
- The LORD delighted in Jerusalem and was glad in His people (v19).

2. THE GENTILE NATIONS

In this second scenario the LORD'S statement, "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me: (v1) prophetically refers to the Gentiles being called into the Kingdom of God by the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace. This is a better fit for this prophetic vision of Isaiah as the following will show. Concerning this prophecy, the apostle Paul wrote:

- Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." (Rom. 10:20).

These words of Paul show that the following prophetic words of Isaiah's, "A nation that was not called by my name," refer to the Gentile nations. God invited whole nations by the preaching of the Gospel that was not called by His name. Isaiah in this chapter is speaking what is to take place some hundreds of years into the future the fact it was partially fulfilled when the Jewish captives returned to Jerusalem confirms the truth that it's full fulfilment will come to pass at the appointed time in the future. At this time the Jews were called, but rejected Christ, while the Gentiles sought and found God through Christ, because they were first sought and found of him:

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).

Israel symbolised as a tree: in Romans chapter eleven the nation of Israel is pictured as a natural olive tree that has some healthy branches and some diseased branches that God breaks off and replaces with healthy branches.

- The tree is a natural olive tree while the branches replacing the broken off ones are unnatural wild olive branches.
- The root symbolise Israel's promised Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world and the faithful fathers of Israel (i.e., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob etc., and the prophets).
- The natural healthy branches symbolise the believing and faithful of Israel.
- The unnatural branches symbolise the believing and faithful of the Gentiles.
- The diseased branches symbolise the unbelieving and unfaithful of Israel.
- The broken off branches symbolise God casting the unbelieving and unfaithful of Israel out of His Kingdom.

Overview: God breaks of the diseased branches (signifying unbelieving Jews) and grafts into their place wild olive branches (signifying believing Gentiles) so that the tree is growing with natural healthy Jewish branches and unnatural healthy Gentile branches. All of these branches are nourished from the root of the tree (signifying Israel's Messiah the Christ and the early faithful fathers of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc., and the prophets). Paul warns the Gentiles not to become arrogant toward the remaining Jewish branches, but to always remember that it is not the Gentiles who support the root, but the root that supports them. (i.e., Israel's Messiah the Christ and the early faithful fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc., and the prophets). Gentiles who have been grafted into the tree are also warned to stand fast in their faith, because it is certain that if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare them and if those who have been broken off do not continue in their unbelief God will graft them in again. (Rom 11:17-27).

By replacing the diseased branches with healthy branches God is not only removing ungodliness from Israel and from His Kingdom, but also keeping His covenant with Israel and His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Rom. 11:26-27). Breaking off the diseased branches from the tree resulted in reconciliation of the Gentile nations and riches for the world which means that the full inclusion and acceptance of the healthy natural branches into the tree will result in life from the dead (referring to the resurrection) (Rom 11:11-15). When these events fully come to pass there will finally be a New Heaven and a New Earth in which Jerusalem the Holy City of God will be a joy to the offspring of the blessed of the LORD and a universal blessedness to the world as Israel prayed for. (Isa 65:17-25).

Sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks: (v3) Israel was called to bring their sacrifices to the Temple of God at Jerusalem, but they had set up altars of bricks and stone throughout their land in pleasant garden surroundings and under the shade of trees on the hills of Israel to offer sacrifices to foreign gods.

Who sit in tombs: (v4) (remain among the graves in KJV) for purposes of communicating with the dead. The belief in necromancy was that departed spirits would be acquainted with future knowledge, events and secret things of the invisible world where they dwelt. It was believed that certain persons by various rituals and dreams could become intimate with these departed spirits (or familiar with them) and by obtaining their secrets be able to communicate them to the living.

Those who practised such arts supposed that being near the dead would increase and enhance contact with the departed spirits. This is why those who practiced such arts would lodge in the tombs and among the monuments of the dead. Amongst the ancients and Oriental countries, it was common for tombs to be excavated in the sides of hills many of them

being large caves. These caves were often used for dwelling places by robbers and the poor who had no houses. The following verses show that the practise of consulting the dead and imagined departed spirits to get knowledge of future things (i.e., necromancy) was utterly forbidden.

- There shall not be found among you anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer ¹¹or a charmer or a medium or a wizard or a necromancer, ¹²for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. (Deut. 18:10-12).

Spend the night in secret places: (v4) (lodge in the monuments in KJV) the word lodge comes from the Hebrew word (*luwn*) it can mean to stop or abide over-night or to stay permanently. While the word monuments come from the Hebrew word (*natsar*) in a good sense it means to guard, to protect, to maintain and to obey, etc., but in a bad sense it means to conceal, to besiege and carries the idea of observing hidden things. The expression, "they spent the night in secret places," (v4) most likely means that they went the too inner sanctuaries of an ancient temple or shine or to dark and obscure retreats or secret places of pagan temples where their oracles were consulted and many of their rituals were performed or to sepulchral dark and hidden places where the dead were buried. They would go to these places to sleep in order that they might receive communications in their dreams from idols or the oracles of their gods or departed spirits by being near them so they could foretell of things to come which was a common practice among the heathen of the time.

- When they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead, on behalf of the living? ²⁰To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word (i.e., God's word), it is because they have no dawn (no light). (Isaiah 8:19-20)

The King James Bible says:

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- When they shall say to you, "Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and to wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek their God? for the living to the dead?" ²⁰To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:19-20

Eat pig's flesh: (v4) (eat swine's flesh in KJV) the flesh of pigs was forbidden. This may not necessarily be for sanitary and healthy reasons, but perhaps because pigs rolled around in mud and therefore were a perfect symbol of those who loved sin and they were commonly sacrificed in pagan festivals. However, whatever the reason under the law given to Israel it is written:

- You shall not touch the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. (Deuteronomy 14:8) (Leviticus 11:7).
- Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the LORD. (Isaiah 66:17).
- So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 18:30).

To eat pigs' flesh at all was contrary to God's law, but to eat it in idolatrous sacrifices not only greatly increased their guilt, but was also an utter abomination, before God.

Eat broth of tainted meat in their vessels: (v4) (eat broth of abominable things in their vessels in KJV) refers to the practise of putting pieces or fragments of slaughtered pigs and unclean foods by the law into their vessels or pots and making a stew, broth or soup that they ate or drank at sacrificial feast. In Leviticus it is written these shall be unclean to you:

- The pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. ⁸You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you. (Lev. 11:7-8).
- You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. (Lev. 11:11).

A list of every unclean and the clean animal is given in Leviticus chapter eleven. Ever since the Jews return from Babylon and during Jesus generation onward Israel has been free from idolatry, however the imagery of idolatrous abominations (especially during Isaiah's time) is still considered the most loathsome of all sins in the eyes of God. For this reason, is employed to describe the accumulation of all the sins of Israel in ages gone by culminating in the worst of all sins their killing of the Messiah and still rejecting Him.

I am too holy for you: (v5) the expression, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you," carries the idea, "stay away from me, do not touch me you unclean person I am too holy for you." It is an expression of spiritual pride and hypocritical arrogance and refers to the self-righteous who esteemed themselves holier and superior to others simply because they were born of Abraham and adhered to all their outward religious ceremonial rites, holy days and kept their religious customs and traditions all the while living as they pleased. A perfect example of this is the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) whose holiness lay in their rituals.

- The Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at Jesus disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" (Luke 5:30) (Matt. 9:11).
- He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (Luke 18:9-10).

The Pharisee strictly observed the rituals of the law; washed themselves when they came from any public place to make themselves spiritually clean. They did not suffer themselves to be touched by the common people, nor would they touch them for fear of being defiled. They were the personification of hypocritical self-justifiers of the Lord's time. Often the most worthless people are the most-proud; and they who strictly adhere to ceremonial rites, holy days, religious customs and traditions have in general the most exalted idea of their own goodness.

Smoke in my nose: (v5) the word nose comes from the Hebrew word (*'aph*) it literally refers to the nose or nostrils, but carries the idea of rapid breathing in passion and especially of anger, because anger is evidence by hard breathing. The following verses show that the writers of Scripture considered the nose to be the seat of anger.

- Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. (Psalm 18:8).

The LORD'S words, "These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day (v5) most like carry an allusion here to the smoke of their self-righteous sacrifices ascending up before God and provoking Him to anger. It carries the idea that their conduct was offensive to God as smoke is unpleasant and painful to the nostrils. Instead of the smoke of their sacrifices being a pleasant aroma to the LORD they are a fragrance of judgment and death in his nostrils. The idea is that, Israel's gross wickedness is affecting the LORD just as any human parent is affected when their teenage child who thinks they know better leaves home, rejects them and their goodness to live a life of self-will and wickedness. They are like the Pharisees who Jesus said:

- You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 16:14-15).

The following verses show that Israel was a rebellious people continually provoking the LORD:

- I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; ³a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; ⁴who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig's flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels. (Isaiah 64:2-4).

These verses show that from the very beginning God and Moses knew that Israel was a stubborn and rebellious people and that when Moses died, they would forsake the LORD their God.

- The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them." (Deut. 31:16).

Prior to Israel crossing the River Jordan into the land of Canaan Moses said to the people:

- I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death! ²⁸Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands." (Deut. 31:27-29).

Perhaps God chose Israel to show all those made of clay the greatness of His love and compassion. Every time Israel returned to the LORD, He always accepted them with open arms and abundantly forgave all their rebellion (and they were many). Each time Israel returned; God began with them afresh as though they had never turned away. God does not forget, but neither does He hold resentment or bitterness in His heart they are foreign entities to Him. God not only chooses to take Israel's past rebellion and cast it into the darkness of the bottom of the ocean and fill His mind afresh toward them, but also granted them a new and fresh beginning. This same principal applies to all who return to the LORD in honest heartfelt repentance.

Sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem:

following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. Unrestrained these sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land. They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley. They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land. Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property. Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The lesson for today: by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not

witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness.

ISAIAH 65:6-7

I will repay; Your Fathers Iniquities Together, says the LORD.

- **Isaiah 65:6-7:** Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their bosom ⁷both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they made offerings on the mountains and insulted me on the hills, I will measure into their bosom payment for their former deeds."

Behold, it is written before me: (v1) refers to the covenant Israel made with God at Mount Sinai. This covenant contained blessings and curses. In Deuteronomy chapter twenty-eight it is written, "If you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you (v15). These curses state:

- The LORD will bring upon them a hard-faced nation from far away swooping down like the eagle that will destroy all their fortified cities throughout their land, slaughter their people, crush their work and destroy their livestock and lay all their land waste. Their sons and daughters will be given over to their enemy and go into captivity and all their labours will be continually under oppression. Whereas once they were as numerous as the stars of heaven, they will be scattered amongst foreign nations and left few in number.

When Moses was about to lie down with his fathers the LORD said to him:

- This people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all their evil, because they have turned to other gods. (Deut. 31:14-18).

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These are the writings the LORD was referring to when He said, "Behold, it is written before me," (v6). However, the LORD also gave the following promise:

- When all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, ²and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. ⁵And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deut. 30:1-6).

Those who belong to God reflect God in their lives to others they can be a good reflection or a bad one. Israel became so corrupt God was forced to judge them because they were profaning and degrading His name and His Holy character. God has to protect His name and His character so the rest of the world knows that God is Holy, loves justice, cares for the poor and despises those that oppress the less fortunate for their own gain and who do harm to others. Israel was committing all these sins and much more, they by their own rebellion and wickedness brought the curses of

the covenant upon themselves. God used Shalmaneser the King of Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to bring all these curses upon Israel. Shalmaneser with his fierce armies overthrew the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and took the people captive and Nebuchadnezzar with his mighty armies attacked the land of Judah and burnt the city of Jerusalem pillaged the temple of all its sacred items and took the people captive for seventy years. Israel's cities and land laid waste and became overgrown with thorns and thistles and filled with wild animals. During this period of time all the curses of the covenant came upon the people of Israel.

ISAIAH 65:8-10

I will Not Destroy all; I will Bring Offspring from Jacob and Judah.

- **Isaiah 65:8-10:** Thus says the LORD: "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,' so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all. ⁹I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of my mountains; my chosen shall possess it, and my servants shall dwell there. ¹⁰Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me.

As the new wine is found in the cluster: (v8) the picture presented here is, of a bunch of withering and useless grapes that has amongst them some healthy grapes, the idea is that the vinedresser does not destroy the entire bunch of grapes, simply because most of them are useless, but first takes out the healthy grapes and then destroys the bunch. The symbolism is that the great majority of Israel is corrupt, but amongst them there is a remnant that has remained faithful, they have not followed the evil way of the majority (or the crowd). These healthy grapes are called the holy and faithful seed, God's chosen ones. It is this remnant that God will save out of the nation of Israel and it is this group that will possess His Mountains.

I will bring forth offspring from Jacob and Judah: (v9), in this context the name Jacob refers to the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria while the name Judah refers to the two tribes on Mount Zion and at Jerusalem. God is saying that He is not favouring one over the other. Some might say, because Israel was the far larger congregation, they are the more favoured, others might think, because Judah had Jerusalem and the temple, they are the favoured, but neither of these statements are true. Those that are the favoured and called the remnant come from both Judah and Israel. The qualities God requires for a person to be in the favoured remnant group is faithfulness toward God and man, integrity, compassion, kindness and such like things. God's favour is not dependent upon whether we belong to a global congregation, a large church assembly or a small one, but upon our faithfulness, love and devotion toward Him.

Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks: (v10) Sharon is the coastal plain between Joppa and Mount Carmel, a place proverbial in ancient times for its fertility, pasturage and beauty, its suburbs and pasture lands were possessed by the tribe of Gad. Figuratively Sharon is used as a symbol of man's state of fruitfulness and glory and of man's eternal state of peace for evermore.

The valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down: (v10), the valley of Achor was a wilderness area. Its history goes back to Achan who stole for himself a beautiful garment, 200 shekels of silver and 200 shekels of gold, part of the spoil of Jericho that was devoted to the LORD, because of his disobedience Israel was defeated at Ai. God (by a process of elimination) revealed Achans' sin to Joshua and he confessed. He and his family, with their possessions were brought down to the valley of Achor and all the people of Israel stoned them. After the stoning they burned them with fire and raised over them a great heap of stones, therefore the

name of that place was called, the valley of Achor (Josh 7:25-26). God is saying that the wilderness area of Achor will become peaceful fields for sheep to graze and lie in. When this prophetic vision comes to pass many desert areas will become fruitful, it is most likely God mentions the valley of Achor because the story of Achan would be very vivid in the mind of all Jews and therefore they would clearly know the valley and the wilderness surrounding it.

My people who have sought me: (v10) refers to the children of the wicked and corrupt generation that went into the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and to those who were born during it. Most of the corrupt adult generation that went into the captivity would have died during the seventy years.

Near the end of the seventy years the new generation prayed the following prayer:

- Our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: ¹³transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. ¹⁴Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. ¹⁵Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. (Isaiah 59:12-15).

It is those who prayed this prayed acknowledging their sin with heartfelt repentance that God favours and calls His remnant and who He has in mind when He said, "I will bring forth offspring from Jacob and Judah," (v9). God used Cyrus the king of Persia to bring this promise to pass. 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 equipped him for battle and took him by the right hand and went before him opening all doors that no man could shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdued all nations.

- The LORD says of Cyrus, "*He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose,*" saying of Jerusalem, "*She shall be built,*" and of the temple, "*Your foundation shall be laid.*" (Isaiah 44:28).
- 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,* ³*I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you (Cyrus) by your name.* ⁴*For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me.* (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me,* ⁶*that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other.* (Isaiah 45:5-6).
- Thus says the LORD: "*The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus) and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: 'Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.'*" (Isaiah 45:14).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set the offspring of Jacob and of Judah free. Cyrus after conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave the united nation of Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. This returned remnant are the new wine found in the cluster (v8); the offspring from Jacob and Judah that possessed the LORD'S mountains (v9) and God's chosen (v9). Israel rebuilt the Temple of God and established their true faith and the land enjoyed a time of peace and prosperity. However, the

following verse show that Isaiah prophetic message reaches far beyond the generations of the Babylonian captivity, Cyrus and Israel's return to Jerusalem to a future age and future King who the LORD also calls His anointed Shepherd and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

ISAIAH 65:11-15

Those who Forsake God will Suffer, But His Servants Will Rejoice.

- **Isaiah 65:11-15:** But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny (that furnish the drink offering unto that number in KJV), ¹²I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in." ¹³Therefore thus says the LORD God: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; ¹⁴behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit. ¹⁵You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the LORD God will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name.

Within the nation of Israel there are two groups, the rebellious and the faithful, the faithful are called God's chosen servants and the remnant. Isaiah is contrasting these two groups.

They forget His holy mountain: (v11) means they do not keep God's laws, sacrifices, appointed feast days and Sabbath's etc.

They set a table for fortune: (v11) meaning they chased after worldly wealth and riches rather than God.

They fill cups of mixed wine for destiny: (v11) (that furnish the drink offering unto that number in KJV) this carries the idea that instead of drinking the wine offering in moderation they drank to an excess and by these things were setting their future destination to be one of judgment and not blessing.

When I called, you did not answer: (v12) God sent them prophet after prophet to call them to repentance and warn them of impending doom. Rather than heed the word of the prophets they set their hearts diamond hard against them so that they could continue in gratifying the flesh and living their life as they pleased, regardless of the dishonour it brought upon God.

The wicked: in this context refers to the generation of Israel that God took into captivity to Babylon, this generation:

- Did suffer great hunger and extreme thirst when their enemies cut off their food and water supply.
- Were put to shame by their enemies when Assyria and Bablon utterly destroyed their cities and took the people captive.
- Did suffered enormous heartfelt pain grief and sorrow throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian wars and while in captivity
- By their gross wickedness have left their name as a, blight upon the history of Israel and a shame to the faithful. The corrupt reputation of the unfaithful leaves a stained reputation for the future generations. It is the same today, if an individual or church corrupts the name and character of God it stains the testimony of others who belong to God even though they maybe faithful themselves (v15).
- God did put them to death, during the Assyrian and Babylonian wars and most of those that did survive these wars would have died during their seventy years in captivity.

In contrast to this wicked generation the generation that God brought out of the seventy years captivity:

- Did have an abundance to eat and drink, because God blessed and prospered their livestock, their crops and vineyards and all the put their hand to do.
- Did rejoice and sing for gladness of heart, because they built the temple and established their true faith and a golden age of peace over the land of Israel followed.

The LORD will call His Servants by Another Name.

The statement, "The LORD will call His servants by another name: (v15) means they will be called faithful as opposed to being called corrupt and unfaithful. However, since the following verses show that this prophetic prophecy reaches far beyond the era of Israel's captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem it can also mean that they will be called Christian as opposed to Jews.

ISAIAH 65:16

He who blesses Himself by the God of Truth shall swear by God.

- **Isaiah 65:16:** So that he who blesses himself in the land (in the earth in KJV) shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land (in the earth) shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.

These verses emphasises the truth that God is the God of faithfulness who keeps His promise, His word is firm, true and reliable in ages gone by and in the present time. It emphasises the absolute truthfulness of every word that God speaks and that His word of prophecy and Revelation arises from no man's imagination. His word is absolute and certain, whereas man's word is perhaps and maybe. God shows Himself to be true and faithful in all His promises, whereas man's word is fickle, changeable, inconsistent and deceitful.

He who blesses himself in the land (in the earth in KJV) shall bless himself by the God of truth: (v16) carries the idea that men and women will bless themselves in the God of truth. It is a declaration that all blessings will come down upon humanity through the God of truth and faithfulness and through those who follow Him in truth and faithfulness. It is a declaration that in the age yet to come, the whole earth will be filled with the faithful whose eyes have been opened to the ignorance, horror and destruction of sin and that only in the God of truth and His true and faithful servants is the blessing of life and of the blessing of the earth to be found. Worldly people bless themselves with the abundance of this world's goods and in false religions and gods, while God's servants bless themselves in Him; He is their strength and joy. They think themselves blessed in having His favour and truth and His love and grace in their lives and honour him as the God of truth.

He that swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth: the statement, "He that swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth," (v16) does not mean that those who make a promise should confirm it by swearing in God's name (i.e., saying, "I promise in God's name," since this would contradict the following words of James:

- Above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (James 5:12).

Rather the expression, "he that swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth," carries the idea of putting ones absolute trust in God's plan of salvation, it means, I as a Christian absolutely promise that salvation

and blessing is in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. By swearing refers to praising God for His benefits and offering up to Him our true worship in contrast to worshipping Him in hypocrisy, insincerity and dishonesty. The apostle Paul wrote:

- For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (2 Cor. 1:20).

He that swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth, carries the idea that the faithful who understand God's love and faithfulness put all their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and endeavour to do all they can to be like him in faithfulness and in truth as they are called to do. It means they will put all their trust in God's plan of salvation and in His name and not in any other teaching or foreign god and that they will fully trust themselves to God's judgment and in prayer and every other act honouring Him as the God of truth.

The former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes: (v16) this statement does not refer to the afflictions and persecutions that they suffered for God's and His truths sake for these sufferings are stored up in heaven as rewards. Rather it applies to their sin, rebellion, wickedness and all they did that was offensive to God and brought dishonour to Him and a bad testimony to the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ. These will all be forgotten by God and hidden from His eyes meaning He will choose to cast them behind him and treat them as though they had never sinned.

The image is of true faith and holiness coming upon Israel in the latter days that their former offences will not be regarded as worthy of recollection.

ISAIAH 65:17-18

I Create New Heavens, a New Earth and Jerusalem to be a Joy.

- **Isaiah 65:17-18:** "for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ¹⁸but be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

These verses can apply to the following four events:

1. To Israel's return to Jerusalem after their captivity to Babylon.
2. To Jesus ministry on earth and the generations of the Gospel.
3. To the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.
4. To the beginning of eternity in all its majestic fullness and perfect glory.

It would be right to say that these are not four separate events, but a continuation, and expanding of the first since they are all part of the same eternal plan of God to fulfil the promise He made to Abraham and to reveal the sons of God to the world and bring His glory to the earth. Concerning these Paul wrote, "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19).

The sons of God are men and women, Jews and Gentiles Old and New Testament who through faith are in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26). They are the sons of the resurrection who by it will be made equal to the angels who cannot die. (Luke 20:36). The following notes look at the four applications of the expression, "I create New Heavens and a New Earth; I Create Jerusalem to be a Joy."

1 To Israel's return to Jerusalem after their captivity to Babylon

In this scenario the new heavens and the new earth that the LORD will create, refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple of God and to the renewing and establishing of Israel's true faith and Jerusalem once again becoming a city of joy and gladness to all her people. Prior to these glorious events happening Shalmaneser the king of Assyria had not only overthrown the ten tribes of Israel in Samaria and laid their land waste, but had also taken all the people of Israel captive. Sometime later the armies of Babylon burnt the city of Jerusalem pillaged the temple of all its gold, silver and sacred vessels and took the people of Judah captive to Babylon for seventy years. During this time Babylon conquered Assyria so that both Israel and Judah were under the bondage and authority of the Empire of Babylon. The entire cities and land of Judah and Israel laid in ruin for seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that at this time all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed and that the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon was brought to an end. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated. Many of the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist, but the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built. After Israel had rebuilt Jerusalem; the temple of God; establish their true faith and God blessed all they did and prospered their land with peace it would be right and proper to say that the LORD had created New Heavens and a New Earth. In this context the expression, "the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind," (v17) would refer to the previous rebellion and gross wickedness of the generations of Israel prior to the captivity.

2 To Jesus ministry on earth and the generations of the Gospel

The LORD'S statement, "I create New Heavens and a New Earth, and "the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind," (v17) are not limited to the era of the Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of the ruined city of Jerusalem and the temple. Though they do rest there for a period of time, they are not bound by it, but take up wings and soar through history and time until they arrive at the Lord Jesus Christ and his words, "destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

- Jesus answered them (the Jews), "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
²⁰The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²²When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:19-22).

God through Jesus and the Gospel is at this present time building a spiritual New Jerusalem made up of Jews and Gentiles who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual city being established in the hearts and mind of Jews and Gentiles in all nations and countries of the world that is outwardly manifested by the testimony and good deeds of those who set their trust and faith in Christ for their salvation and collectively manifested through the global faithful church. This New Jerusalem in the New Testament is referred to as a new nation in Christ, a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God. In this context the expression, "the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind," (v17) would not only refer to the previous rebellion and gross wickedness of the generations of Israel (especially those who cried out, "Crucify him"), but also to all the sins of the Gentiles.

For further information concerning the spiritual Temple God is building in Christ at this present time see the title:

- The Commonwealth of Israel (at end of this Chapter).

3 To the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords

In this scenario, the LORD'S statement, "I create New Heavens and a New Earth, and "the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind," (v17) refers to the Lord Jesus Christ's return 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 this 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).

16

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).

Truly when all these events come to pass the LORD'S words, "I create Jerusalem to be a joy and her people to be a gladness" (v17) will fully and perfectly be fulfilled.

4 To the beginning of eternity in all its majestic fullness and perfect glory

As glorious as Christ's millennial reign will be it is not the final stage of God's eternal plan for mankind's salvation or for the exalted Holy City of Jerusalem that He planned and purposed in His eternal mind before the world began. At the end of Christ's millennial reign 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 eternal perfect

fullness and majestic royal glory. As the reader of the Bible travels through Bible prophecy and approaches the end of their journey the visions of the prophets become clearer and more detailed, so it is not surprising that when we arrive at the Book of Revelation we see that John has a far clearer and more detailed vision of Isaiah's prophecy. In the following beautiful verses, he amplifies what Isaiah is saying in this chapter by sharing the following vision God gave him on the Isle of Patmos:

- I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Rev 21:2-4).

In this same chapter the Holy City New Jerusalem is seen built of pure gold clear as glass and every kind of precious stone, jewels, jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst and pearls, (Rev 21:18-21). These are the most valued stones and jewels on earth, men will spend much labour tunnelling deep into the darkness of the earth and put their lives in great danger to find these precious stones.

All of these precious stones are symbols of how much value God places on those who are devoted to Him in love and trust Him for their eternal salvation. When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God's love all they have to do is think of these precious jewels and look back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal robe of righteousness so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

This truth should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace).

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).

John's vision continues:

- I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (Rev 21:22-24).
- No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5).

Form these most majestic and comforting verses we not only see that the throne of the Almighty God and of the Lamb are at the heart of the New Jerusalem the Holy City of God and that they are the light of this most glorious eternal city, but also see that there will be no longer be anything offensive to God or that can hurt or harm or bring death and therefore God will dwell with man and they will be His people.

An important Bible principal: when the Bible speaks of the city of Jerusalem the name in most instances not only includes the literal city of bricks and stones, but also embraces the inhabitants that live in it. The

same principle applies when reading these beautiful and wonderful Scriptures that John has given us. There is a majestic royal and literal city of Jerusalem in the New World that is to come that will be the centre of God's universal eternal Kingdom.

For further information see titles:

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

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ISAIAH 65:21-25

In my Holy Mountain the Lion shall Eat Straw like the Ox.

- **Isaiah 65:21-25:** they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³they shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. ²⁴Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall graze together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox and dust shall be the serpent's food they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be: (v22) this statement pictures a healthy, strong and flourishing tree. It is most likely an allusion to the great and famous cedar trees of Lebanon (1 Kings 4:33). Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon's famous cedar trees; their massive branches; their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance and life everlasting. The psalmists' speaks of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice.

(Psalms 72:16) (Psalms 92:12) (Song. 3:6-9: 4:11: 5:15)
(Isaiah 2:13; 10:34; 40:16) (Hosea 14:6).

The trees in the context of Isaiah's vision signify the people of God being strong, healthy and full of life and vitality all the days of their life. We get far greater insight into this new life of vitality when we get to the New Testament and read the following words of Paul:

- Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:50-54)

This of course is why Isaiah under the inspiration of God was able to see hundreds of years into the future and able to prophecy that the final blessing and inheritance of those who belong to Christ's Kingdom would be like the days of a tree (v22) symbolising life never ending. When the following promise that God gave to Abraham comes to pass in all its fullness:

- I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, (Genesis 22:17).

- I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, (Gen. 26:4) (Exodus 32:13).

When these promises that Gods planned and purposed in His eternal mind before time began and that He has been bringing to pass throughout history reaches their final and perfect end those who belong to Israel's Messiah the Christ spoken of throughout the Old and New Testament and who have been faithful and endured to the end will inherit a Kingdom on earth in which everyone will:

- Build their own house without debt and be secure in it (there will be no rental homes).
- Eat from their-own gardens. (every seed planted will abundantly bear healthy fruit and bugs, blight and insects will be a thing of the past).
- They will enjoy their work and all that they do will prosper.
- Children will be born completely free of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations of the flesh, the heart and the mind and of any form of disobedience.
- The instant the faithful call upon God He will answer their prayer.

The wolf and the lamb shall graze together: (v25) carries the idea that all wild and dangerous animals will be as harmless as domestic animals and as those animals' people take into their homes and love as pets.

The lion shall eat straw like the ox: (v25) the lion embraces all wild animals and signifies the idea that they will revert back to how they were in the days before the fall when all animals ate of the vegetation of the fields and of the trees and were therefore harmless to mankind. Ponder for a moment: imagine the wonder when lions (and all other wild animals) can roam through our backyards and we can play and frolic with them as we do our pet dogs without any fear.

Dust shall be the serpent's food they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain: (v25) carries the idea that in the New and Holy City of Jerusalem there will no longer be lies, deception, hypocrisy, pretence of religion and the perverting of justice for one's own gain or anything that could bring hurt, grief and sorrow to those dwelling in the New and Holy City of Jerusalem.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ and that 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 the Lord Jesus 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 in Christ, a new creation in Christ, 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).

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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