



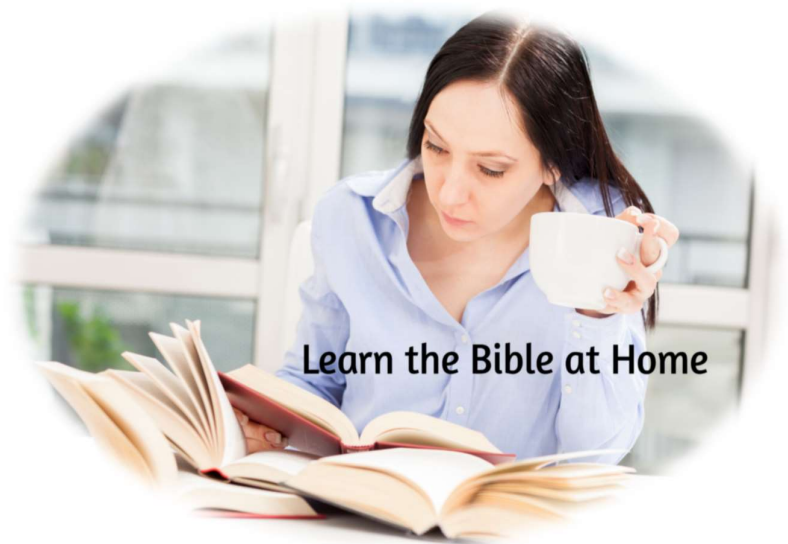
**WELCOME  
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BIBLE HOUSE  
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GRACE**

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**Trusting  
in  
Ceremonial Rites  
for  
Righteousness**

(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.

## Trusting in Ceremonial Rites for Righteousness.

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### Topics.

- Israel's iniquities have separated them from God.
- Your righteousness will not profit you.
- A personal testimony.

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### ISRAEL'S INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED THEM FROM GOD

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- **Isaiah 59:1-4:** Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; <sup>2</sup>but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. <sup>3</sup>For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. <sup>4</sup>No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. (Isaiah 59:1-4)

In the previous chapter Israel asked God, "Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?" (Isaiah 58:3). They could not understand why God was not answering their prayers and why they were still suffering and in misery when they were fasting and seeking God in prayer. Isaiah now tells them that God's power is not lacking to save them and that He does hear their prayer, but does not answer them because there is a separation between Him and them and therefore, He chooses not to hear their prayers because of the following iniquities and sins:

- They were guilty of taking innocent lives.
- They spoke lies of deception and their speech was full of wickedness.
- They perverted justice for their own advantage and gain.
- They plotted and planned wrongdoing and were troublemakers.

These verses and the previous chapter shine a spotlight upon the following truth. When God's people fast; seek God daily; delight to do outward religious deeds; dress themselves in religious garments; strictly attend church and every Bible class; adhere to ceremonial rites and holy days and keep every religious custom and tradition on Sunday. But on every other day of the week give God no thought and do as they please and care not how their behaviour and speech reflects on the honour of God and the good name of Jesus. Then all their religious efforts and works count for nothing if outside of doing them they deliberately live a lifestyle that brings dishonour to God's name and a bad testimony to the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though Israel lived as they pleased, they believed they were righteous and had not forsaken the laws of God, because they adhered to the outward religious practises of Israel. They delighted to draw near to God (Isaiah 58:2), but only on their terms, they were happy to keep their outward religious customs, providing they could live as they pleased. It is interesting to notice that most cults are heavily laden with ritual and outward religious practises. This is because they believe they are made righteous regardless of what they say or how they live their lives if they adhere to their outward religious practises.

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## YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL NOT PROFIT YOU

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In the book of Isaiah, we read:

- **Isaiah 57:12:** I will declare your righteousness and your deeds, but they will not profit you.

The reason Israel's righteous deeds will not profit them is because even though they may have been strictly adhering to their ceremonial rites, sacrifices and holy days, and keeping their religious customs and traditions, their heart was not involved, their behaviour was corrupt, and they had established many altars of worship to foreign gods throughout their cities and their land.

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## A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

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Some years ago, a Christian man told me, when he was a teenager, he was in a church in which the elders required the men to wear black trousers; a long sleeve white shirt; a tie and a black jacket even in the hot summer months. He said, even though he thought it was ridiculous, it turned out to be a good tradition for him, because he could do as he pleased during the week, and if he turned up on Sunday in his black trousers, a jacket, his long-sleeved white shirt, and tie, he was accepted as a holy and righteous man able to perform all the duties the church required during the service.

Now here is the foolishness of this type of religion, if a man who did live a godly life during the week, and did bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ turned up in a summer shirt, dress shorts, and long socks, he would not only be considered a bad testimony, but would also be disqualified from doing any duty in the church. This man's testimony highlights the foolishness of judging people's heart and salvation by outward clothing.

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**CONCLUSION:** it matters not how perfectly those who confess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, adhere to their church's ceremonial rites, and outward religious customs and traditions on Sunday, it will all count for nothing at the judgment seat of Christ, if their heart is not involved, and they give God no thought during the week, and live as they please.

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*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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