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## **Hosea 14**

(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.

## Hosea 14.

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### Topics.

- Hosea calls Israel to return to the LORD.
- Assyria shall not save Israel and they will not ride on horses.
- The LORD will heal and restore Israel.
- Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? From me comes your fruit.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual Temple God is building in Christ.

**INTRODUCTION:** Hosea has been called the “death-bed prophet of Israel” because he was the last to prophesy before the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria (about 722 B.C.). His ministry followed a golden age in the Northern Kingdom, with a peace and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon. Unfortunately, this prosperity led to moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Hosea then explained God’s complaint against Israel and warned of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the LORD and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God’s love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.

**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.

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### HOSEA 14:1-2

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#### Hosea calls Israel to Return to the LORD.

- **Hosea 14:1-2:** Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. <sup>2</sup>Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, "Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips.

#### Hosea calls Israel to:

- Return, to the LORD.
- Acknowledge that their iniquities have moved them away from God.
- Take words of repentance to the LORD.
- Ask God to forgive their iniquity and only look on the things that are good.
- Commit to actually doing what they say.
- Stop looking to Assyria to save them.
- Not to trust in their armies, horses, chariots and weapons of war.
- Not to call idols there God anymore.
- To help the less fortunate.

**Take with you, words and return to the LORD:** (v1-2) at this time Israel had set their hearts diamond hard against the world of the LORD and his prophets. 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.

**Take with you words and return to the LORD:** (v2) Hosea is calling Israel to speak honest words of confession and prayer, with humility and repentance and to turn inwardly to the God, with their whole heart, and not their lips alone. He is telling them to bring to the LORD what is free and available to all and comes without any worldly cost (i.e., honesty, integrity, compassion, mercy etc.) and to stop thinking that by bringing burnt-offerings of bullocks, goats and rams and costly gifts of silver and gold that they will regain God's favour while they continue to live their corrupt lifestyles. God will not accept empty words nor does He ask for costly sacrifices. Isaiah wrote:

- This people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men. (Isaiah 29:13).

God does not want vain words of praise but our hearts, Israel was to speak words of repentance that acknowledge their sins and live a lifestyle that evidences the truth of their words by living a life that honours God and shows that their heart is in their words and that they are no longer religious prideful hypocrites saying one thing and doing another. God does not require of them gold, silver, and burnt offerings, but a godly lifestyle that honours His name and evidences that they are confessing their sins with their whole hearts, and not with their lips only.'

**Say to God, "Take away all iniquity,"** (v2) Hosea is exhorting Israel to return to God and forsake their sins and idols. It was by these that Israel had fallen and before they can rise again the stumbling-blocks must be taken out of their way. When God has forgiven and taken away iniquity, He removes all hindrance to His grace and pours His Spirit into all who honestly repent and crowns them in mercy and loving-kindness and saves them to eternal life.

The words, "Take away all iniquity," does not mean:

- The taking away of all sin; which, though very desirable, is not to be expected in this life.
- The expiation and end of sin in life and amongst the nation.
- The taking away of the power and dominion of sin within the flesh.
- The extinguishing of all sense of sin in the mind and thoughts.

If any one of us could reach the glorious state of living a life free of sin Christ died for no reason, in fact for the faithful devoted to God and those who loathe sin there is a greater sense of indwelling sin and they are made more-humble because of it. The words, "Take away all iniquity," means take away all guilt of it from the conscience by a fresh pardoning of grace and mercy. For those who walk before the LORD sin is a heavy burden when the guilt of it lies upon the conscience and the only removal of this burdensome weight from the conscience is by God's forgiveness, grace and mercy.

**Accept what is good:** (v2) or receive us graciously carries the idea of God receiving them into His grace and favour. This favour refers to the free love, mercy and forgiveness of God that comes by grace made possible by their broken hearts and contrite spirits, which are sacrifices acceptable to the LORD and not by self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. Nor do they come by their own works of righteousness because they are impure and imperfect.

**We will pay with bulls the vows of our lips:** (v2) means, when God has forgiven all their iniquity, they will offer a perpetual thank offering of praise with their lips and will render ceaseless praise to the LORD who has bestowed on them His priceless gifts of blessing, mercy, grace and forgiveness. It means that instead of presenting to God sacrifices of calves as under the law, they will present heartfelt sacrifices of praises from their lips that flow up from a devoted heart of thanksgiving and gratitude which are much more pleasing to God than bulls and calves.

David prayed:

- For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. <sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psalm 51:16-17).
- I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. <sup>31</sup>This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. (Psalm 69:30-31)
- The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!" (Psalm 50:23).
- Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (Heb. 13:15).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that a broken spirit and a contrite heart because of sin and heartfelt praises exalting the name of God with songs of worship that flow from the heart and magnifies with thanksgiving God's name are not only far more delightful to God's heart and counted as being of much greater value than offerings and sacrifices of bulls and calves, but also glorify God and His name far more than offerings of silver and gold that are given to buy God's favour.

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### HOSEA 14:3

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#### **Assyria shall Not Save Israel and they will Not Ride on Horses.**

- **Hosea 14:3:** Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more, "Our God," to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy."

In this one verse are the following four sins of Israel:

1. They expected protection and salvation from Assyria.
2. They put their trust and dependence on the world-power of Egypt, famed for war-horses and chariots.
3. They gave divine names to idols and foreign gods and bowed down to them.
4. They ignored the needs and cries of the orphan, the poor and the helpless.

**Israel's repentance required the following six things:**

1. Renouncing all dependence on foreign alliances.
2. Renouncing their trust in every form of weaponry.
3. Renouncing every form of idolatry and image-worship.
4. Renouncing all covenants made with foreign nations.
5. Renouncing any trust in kings and princes of this world to save them.
6. Renouncing trust in their own strength to save them.

**Assyria shall not save us:** (v3) at this time Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria had made a covenant with Assyria that they would pay taxes to Assyria for their favour and protection. Their gross sins had so spiritually blinded them that they were trusting in the might and power of Assyria to protect them rather than the power and might of the Almighty Lord their God. This is foolishness to the max, not only did Assyria oppress Israel with burdensome taxes; God later uses Assyria to bring judgment upon Israel. Assyria fierce armies invaded the land of the ten tribes in Samaria burned their homes, laid their farms waste and took the surviving people into captivity.

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**We will not ride on horses:** (v3) the following verses show that the horse is a symbol of battle and of warlike strength and of any form of weapon of war:

- Only he (kings of Israel) must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, "You shall never return that way again." (Deut. 17:16).
- Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. (Psalm 20:7-8).
- The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD. (Proverbs 21:31).
- The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. (Psalm 33:17).

The only two reasons horses were used amongst the Jews was for war and for great and royal pomp, but kings were especially forbidden to multiply horses to themselves. Since horses were used as powerful and fearless weapons of war the expression, "We will not ride on horses," (v3) means we will not go to war.

**We will say no more, 'Our God,' to the work of our hands:** (v3) it is foolishness and sin to trust in the creatures which God had made, apart from God, how much more foolish, to trust in things which they themselves had made, instead of God and how grossly offensive to God! Israel most foolishly thought their idols would be gods to help them. This reliance upon idols began with Aaron's golden calf in the wilderness.

- Aaron received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (Exodus 32:4)

Hundreds of years later Jeroboam continued this gross sin by setting up two golden calves at Dan and Bethel amongst the ten tribes in the land of Samaria.

**The story of Jeroboam:** when Solomon died the people met to proclaim Solomon's son Rehoboam king and asked Jeroboam to urge Rehoboam to alleviate their extreme work burdens. Jeroboam asked king Rehoboam, but the request was rejected so the ten tribes revolted from the House of David and made Jeroboam their king in the land of Samaria. Jeroboam was afraid that if his people went annually to Jerusalem to worship, they would be won back to the house of David (the two tribes of Judah at Jerusalem) so he established two worship centres at two extremities of his kingdom, one at Dan in the North and another at Bethel in the South. To do this he set up a "golden calf" in each of the new sanctuaries and quoted to the people the words of Aaron, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). Jeroboam's disobedience was in defiance of the commandment of Moses which states that the only altar for burnt-offering was to be at the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The mass of the ten tribes conformed to Jeroboam's new religious ways this was the "Sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin."

Jeroboam's introduction of the golden bulls led to the Baalization of the religion of Jehovah. In about two-hundred years the moral and religious corruption of the people had gone so far that there was no more hope for them, and God brought in a heathen power (Assyria) to lead them into captivity. Jeroboam's fear could be likened to a minister who relies on the income of their assembly (the bigger the congregation the greater the income) and therefore deliberately avoids speaking well of another church even though it is teaching the same doctrines for fear someone in their congregation might leave them and join the church they are giving credit to and their income diminishes. This was Jeroboam's fear, he should have been happy if people under his leadership did choose to stay at Jerusalem to worship since this is the city of God and the Temple of God and was the proper place to offer sacrifices to the LORD, but he was more interested in building his own religious empire. Likewise, if a member of a church does attend another church and they find it better suites their circumstances while still advancing their spiritual well-being then we should be happy for them and not try to possess them for our own gain.

**Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods:** means they will forsake all trust in any idol and any other god than the Lord their God the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**In you the orphan finds mercy:** (v3) the following verses show that God has always cared for the weak who are unable to help themselves and are exposed to the injuries and oppressions of others and who have no one to defend them.

- Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5).
- But you (the LORD) do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless. (Psalm 10:14).

God expects the strong in His Kingdom to be the helper of all that are destitute of strength in themselves and destitute of help from others especially the faithful who look to God and the orphan and widow.

**NOTE:** though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows

back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. The faithful of the Old Testament were saved by their faith that the blood of their sin sacrifices (shadows of Christ) covered their sin and by their faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), in the prophet Moses said was to come like him, in God's promise to Abraham that from his seed a deliver would come and by their faith in the promised seed of David the Messiah and Saviour.

The faithful of the New Testament are saved by their faith in looking back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and by looking forward to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shines a glorious spotlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same Deliverer, King and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

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## HOSEA 14:4-7

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### The LORD will Heal and Restore Israel.

- **Hosea 14:4-7:** I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. <sup>5</sup>I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; <sup>6</sup>his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. <sup>7</sup>They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; and flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

These prophetic words of Hosea (in a limited sense) refer to that most glorious time in Israel's history when after being taken captive as a divided nation (Israel and Judah) by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and being under Babylon's authority, rule and bondage for seventy years God used Cyrus to set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. The following verses of the prophet Isaiah show that God not only called Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and also called him by name they also show that God said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. They picture God holding Cyrus by the right hand and opening all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdues all nations. God not only favoured Cyrus and gave him a great victory over the Empire of Babylon and all nations aligned with Babylon, but also used him as His anointed shepherd to give written permission that allowed Israel to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.



- 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, <sup>3</sup>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*. <sup>4</sup>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*, <sup>6</sup>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).

Isaiah is speaking to Israel who is held captive in Babylon. 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 rebuild the Temple of God. God brought Israel triumphantly back under Ezra and Nehemiah as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob to their beloved city Jerusalem to rebuild their houses the city of Jerusalem and God's Temple. A golden age of peace and prosperity for Israel followed and Israel never again turned to pagan gods. But Hosea's beautiful and prophetic words are unstoppable. After achieving their purpose through God's anointed shepherd Cyrus, Ezra and Nehemiah and resting upon their age for a moment in time they they take up wings and soar once again through time and history until they arrive at their ultimate destination which is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. 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).

And 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).



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

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

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

To discover how Old Testament Israel and New Testament Christians fit into Hosea's prophetic words see the title: Commonwealth of Israel (at the end of this Chapter).

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## HOSEA 14:8-9

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### **O Ephraim, what have I to do with Idols?**

- **Hosea 14:8-9:** O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. <sup>9</sup>Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

**O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?** (v8) notice the anguish in God's voice the nation that He delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and raised as His own son who He loves has turned to other gods, and God is grieved not only because He loves them, but also because it means He is now forced to judge and punish them.

**I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit:** (v8) an evergreen cypress tree is always full of nourishment, it is immune to termites, insects and decay and its branches always gives shade. The evergreen tree is a symbol of strength, nourishment and the eternalness of God.

**The upright walk in the ways of the LORD:** (v9) carries the idea that the wise and discerning person understands that:

- The LORD is the one that looks after them and causes them to prosper.
- God has nothing to do with idols or people's false concepts of Him.
- God's commandments are about protecting the innocent and only by keeping His laws can humans live in harmony.

**Transgressors stumble in in the ways of the LORD:** (v9) means that those who love wrongdoing do not understand that the spirit behind the law is love, because each law protects a human from harm.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show the law is about doing-good to others and protecting them from harm and hurt. The spirit under-pinning the Ten Commandments, is love because each law protects another human from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from all types of harm and hurt. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because it honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith and because it is the right and loving thing to do. They not only understand that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort, but also know that from the love of God dwelling within their heart and displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary they are called to live a lifestyle that honours the King and Saviour they worship and follow.

**Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount:** the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing right to those in the church and those outside of it. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians, but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). Based on the commandment, love your neighbour as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: "Matthew 5" in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

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

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### **THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE GOD IS BUILDING IN CHRIST**

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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. Its 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.

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).

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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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