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Isaiah 26

(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 26.

Topics.

- Judah will Sing, "Open the gates of the city righteous nation."
- The LORD will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him.
- God has cast the lofty city to dust and levelled the way of the righteous.
- The world learns righteousness when God's judgments are in the earth.
- Other, god's have ruled over us, but the LORD alone we remember.
- LORD, we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind.
- My people, hide yourselves for a little, behold, the LORD is coming.

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.

THIS CHAPTER THROUGH TO CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Chapters twenty-four through to chapter twenty-seven inclusive are a continuous prophecy of the overthrow of Babylon during the days of Nebuchadnezzar its king and in their widest sense the overthrow of the great world-powers which arrayed themselves against God and His people.

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ISAIAH 26:1-2

Judah will Sing, "Open the Gates of the City Righteous Nation."

- **Isaiah 26:1-2:** In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks (salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks in KJV) ²Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith (truth in KJV) may enter in.

Day: when the word day is used prophetically it is not limited to a single day, but can refer to a number of days, months, years or too seasons of time, periods of time or to a particular age of time. Likewise, the prophetic expression, "In that day," rarely refers to one day, in most contexts it embraces a series of event over a particular period of time that are working together to bring about a specific result or outcome.

The strong city: refers to Jerusalem, not that it was strong in itself even though it was strongly fortified, but that it was strong in that God would guard it and be the protector of it. Isaiah sees in this vision a day coming when instead of walls of bricks and mortar making the city of Jerusalem a strong city, salvation will be its walls and its gates will be open to all the faithful. The expression, "in that day," shows that this is a prophetic vision of future things to come to pass it refers to the day God will do glorious works for the comfort of His people and bring ruin to their enemies, this can apply to the following three events each one greater than the previous one:

1. To the people of Israel during the days of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon.
2. To all who belong to the church and live amongst its antichrist system.

3. To that glorious day the New Jerusalem descends to earth.

In the first instance it embraces the nation of Israel and their enemies solely, while in the second scenario it embraces the entire world system when the antichrist and all Christ's enemies are destroyed and in the third instance it embraces Christ's glorious Kingdom age. Perhaps the clearest way to understand these is to look at each one separately

1. **The nation of Israel and their enemies:** this scenario refers to Israel's triumphant return to their own land to rebuild their city, their homes and farms and the temple of God when these events take place the people will sing. In this context the walls and bulwarks refer to God Himself and the unchangeable promises and covenant the LORD made to Abraham and his offspring.

- I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory in her midst. (Zech. 2:5).

The call to, "Open the gates that the righteous nation that keeps faith and truth may enter in," (v2) refers to the people of Israel and Judah who had been scattered throughout the surrounding nations during the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and the enlargement of the population of Israel as multitudes of Israelite families returned to their beloved city united in faith as one nation to worship the LORD their God. On this glorious day the gates of Jerusalem will be opened wide to receive families from Judah and from Israel as true members of God's household and a song of victory will be sung praising the LORD, for His righteous judgment on their enemies, and the favour He has blessed them with.

2. **To all who belong to the church and live amongst its antichrist system:** though this vision can be applied to the triumphant and glorious return of the Jews to their homeland and the restoration of their city, homes and land, it only rests there for a moment and is then superseded by the much wider view of a world-wide judgment. This means that though historically it can apply to the fall of the material and strong city of Babylon and to the literal Jerusalem at that time the city signifies something far greater than the visible Jerusalem built of bricks and mortar by the hands of man and religious institutions or organisations. No church no matter how glorious that is organised amongst men can be the New Testament representation of the strong city spoken of in these verses. The central thought of this vision is that of an indestructible city of which the literal Jerusalem built upon a rock is but a symbol. All that is built by man's hands of all generations sooner or later pass away, but persistent through them all is the city that has no foundations and at the end will stand high above them all. The strong city is not an earthly one as Jerusalem, but the church of which Jesus is the corner stone and the prophets and apostles the foundation upon which the number of its citizens made up of Jews and Gentiles will be as the sand upon the seashore and the stars in the heavens. Here the call to, "Open the gates," refers to the call of the Gospel to invite people of all nations into the Kingdom of God and not just those born of Israel only. Though faith in the Lord Jesus Christ sinners of all nations may be received into the household of God and acknowledged as true members of His Kingdom. Walls and bulwarks in this context refer to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel while the song to be sung is a song of praise thanking God from a heart filled with gratitude for His abundant grace in the Lord Jesus Christ that those who belong to his Kingdom are saved by. This prophecy anticipates the New Testament Gospel it lifts religion from all earthly and material associations into the spiritual realm. By salvation is meant deliverance from the condemnation of the law and death and the right to enter into the Kingdom of God and eternal life. These are the things that are the bulwark of the city spoken of here. The wall and the bulwark of salvation is the power of God in Christ to deliver a sinner from death and save them to eternal life. Whoever takes shelter behind this wall will have God Himself as their shield and need no others.

3. **To that glorious day the New Jerusalem descends to earth:** in this scenario Isaiah beholds the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem descending from above with its golden streets, its walls of precious stones, its crystal clear river, its peaceful inhabitants, its light streaming from the throne of God and of the Lamb and its gates opened wide to all the faithful. In this scenario the strong city refers to the city spoken of in the following verses:

- The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Rev. 3:12).
- I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:2).
- The angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2).

None, but those who wash their garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, can come into this city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Here the walls and bulwarks will be the fullness of salvation which is an immortal body, everlasting happiness and eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

ISAIAH 26:3-4

God will keep Him in Perfect Peace whose Mind is Stayed on Him.

- **Isaiah 26:3-4:** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ⁴Trust in the LORD forever, for the Lord GOD is an everlasting rock.

The statement, "The LORD will keep him in peace whose mind is stayed on Him," applies firstly to Judah and Jerusalem at the time of Isaiah and secondly to all God's people of all generations.

1. To Judah and Jerusalem: had the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem kept their mind and heart on the LORD their God instead of on idols and pagan gods and trusted in the LORD instead of trusting in pagan gods and faithfully followed the LORD, He would have kept their nation in perfect peace, no Israelite man or woman would need to fear since God would forever be an everlasting rock and fortress to them and His favour, love and grace their comfort and in this way the LORD would keep them in perfect peace because their mind was fully set on following and pleasing Him.
2. To all God's people of all generations: who trust in Israel's Messiah the Christ and Saviour for their righteousness and not in their own self effort and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or trusting in religious customs and traditions to be counted righteous and be saved. Whoever sets their mind and heart on Christ and trusts in him for their righteousness will be kept in perfect peace, because they are set free from the condemnation of the law and the striving to attain to righteousness by their own self-efforts, because in Christ they are set free from the law of sin and death that states, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

For those who trust in Christ there is a far higher law that supersedes the law of sin and death, this divine law (also called the, law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) states that death has no legal right or power to hold in the grave those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why those who trust in God's way of salvation have perfect peace, their

conscience if set free from the condemnation of the law and from the impossible task of forever striving to attain to its perfect standard. Paul in his letters states that all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is:

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

This means that the law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him. This promise is guaranteed because it is not dependent on our self-effort, but on our faith, this is why the Scriptures state:

- Faith is counted to whoever believes in God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:22-25)

And why Paul wrote:

- The promise to Abraham depends on faith in order that it may rest on grace and in this way be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring (Jews and Gentiles) (Rom. 4:16).

God in his eternal foreknowledge and knowing human nature knew if He had made eternal salvation dependant on our self-effort there is no-way He could guarantee or promise it to any of us, thus the reason God in His great wisdom made eternal salvation dependant on faith and upon His grace. This is another reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News.

NOTE: it is not the Ten Commandments that are at fault, since they are not only perfect, but also express God's perfect will, it is our corrupt fallen nature with all its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (self, ego, pride, greed, lustful thoughts, jealousies, anger and such like things) that that are the problem since they prevent all of us from attaining to the perfection the law demands.

The mind and conscience of those who commit their mind to forever trust on God and His way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ and make him their everlasting Rock will be kept in perfect peace, since they are set free from any fear of judgment and condemnation. Whatever we trust the world for will last only for a moment; but those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will receive from him strength that will carry them to that blessedness which is forever. The path to spiritual peace is to fully trust the Lord for salvation without this trust there can be no mental peace. This is because the instant a person begins to rely on their own self-efforts to attain to righteousness that leads to eternal life God's peace that was once like a restful bird nesting in the mind instantly leaves the nest.

ISAIAH 26:5-8

God Cast the City to Dust and Levelled the Way of the Righteous.

- **Isaiah 26:5-8:** For he has humbled the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust. ⁶The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy." ⁷The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous. ⁸In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.

Since this is a prophetic vision of things yet to happen it is better read, "He the LORD will humble the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city." The lofty city at some level can be literally applied to all the strong, stately and proud cities of God's enemies such as Nineveh, Tyre, Greece and Rome the city built upon seven hills etc., or to all Israel's enemies collectively, but in this context it seems to better fit Babylon during the days of Nebuchadnezzar its king and to the Babylon spoken of in the book of Revelation (chapter 18).

He lays it low to the ground and casts it to the dust: carries the following two ideas firstly God will literally bring down the high, strong and lofty city built of bricks and mortar by man's hands to dust (which expresses the utter destruction of it) and secondly God will bring down those who are puffed up in pride. He will bring them under the feet of His despised, poor and feeble people. No matter how mighty the enemy or how powerless His people maybe before them there is no power so high that it can hinder God, when he sets His mind to deliver His people. The things the LORD hates is lofty, pompous and excessive pride and the things that thrill the LORD are humbleness and those who help the poor and the needy.

NOTE: there are two aspects to pride, healthy pride and destructive pride. Not all pride is evil pride the following shows the difference between healthy pride and destructive pride.

Healthy pride embraces the following:

- That happy satisfied feeling experienced when having or achieved something special that other people admire.
- Taking great pride in one's work is healthy and productive pride.
- That personal sense of satisfaction and pleasure that comes from something accomplished or a quality possessed.
- Having a proper sense of one's own value and the correct level of respect for the importance and value of one's personal character, life, efforts and achievements as opposed to having no confidence and no sense of worth.
- That personal feeling of satisfaction because of an achievement or possession that one is especially pleased to have accomplished and is fully satisfied with (i.e. their grandchildren were their pride and joy or the gold medal I won at the Olympics is my pride and joy etc.).

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Unhealthy pride embraces the following:

- Having a feeling of superiority and a haughty attitude. This type of pride is shown by somebody who believes (often unjustifiably) that he or she is better than others. A person who has this kind of pride will often not mix with those they consider their social inferiors. This pride is arrogant it exalts oneself above others and even God, and will treat those it looks down to and believes are inferior to them with disdain and at its peak with cruelty and destruction. It causes quarrels, strife, arguments, fights and even wars.
- Having the biggest ego of all, a person at this level of pride sees themselves at the top of humanity and views themselves as always being right. They believe they are equal to God or even a god themselves and are so egotistical that they think the whole world revolves around them.

The people of Israel were despised, poor feeble and powerless held captive to Babylon for seventy years, until God took Cyrus King of Media Persia by the hand to bring Babylon to ruin and deliver the people of Israel. Those who were once despised and powerless marched over the fallen city of Babylon and in triumphant joy walked over its crumbled columns and ruined palaces of glory to return to their beloved city Jerusalem and their homeland.

The path of the righteous is level: (v7) firstly applies to when God brings the lofty and prideful city of Babylon to dust and His people march over its ruins to freedom and secondly to the Gospel in which the way to righteousness has levelled the playing field (so to speak) for all people since it matters not if one is noble or lowly, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, male or female, a scholar or a pauper in the streets all can attain salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you: (v7) can apply to the following three events:

1. To God's judgment upon Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their cry during their seventy years captivity in Babylon for deliverance, throughout these years they longed for their city, their temple and for the LORD their God. There became a deep desire and yearning in their hearts to return to their true God in contrast to pagan gods and idols.
2. To the judgments of God upon earth and the heartfelt cry of all the faithful of all generations who with a longing heartfelt desire patiently wait for their Saviour to return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth while they patiently dwell amongst the ungodly nations of the world and wait for God's judgments to come upon the Babylon spoken of in the following verses:
 - Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality. (Rev. 14:8).
 - Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. ³For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living. (Rev. 18:1-3).

Babylon here signifies the entire world system here John sees the complete accomplishment of this prophecy of Isaiah which is yet future, and not to be fully realised until that this last event, when all antagonism toward Christ will be ended and all the strong cities are brought to dust and all the antichrist powers are brought to utter ruin and those who have walked throughout the world as pilgrims and wanderers will be exalted and made kings and priests to the Lord.

7

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

For further information concerning the future Kingdom of God to come, see the notes under the title: "O LORD God, other god's have Ruled over Us, but You Alone we Remember," following (v12-14) (below). Our faith counts for nothing if we do not make it the foundation of our heart and mind, it is our calling and will be our comfort to wait for God, and remain faithful even in times of long and dark nights of affliction and discouragement. We must never let our troubles turn us from the Lord, but always desire him and wait with patience for his glorious return and the fullness of our salvation.

ISAIAH 26:9-11

The World Learns Righteousness when Judgments are on Earth.

- **Isaiah 26:9-11:** My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. ¹⁰If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals corruptly and does not see the majesty of the LORD. ¹¹O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

Isaiah's desire is that the enemies of God's people would see that the LORD is on His people's side and be ashamed for the cruel, brutal and oppressive way they have treated them and learn righteousness (i.e., the way of mercy and salvation). Isaiah earnestly desires that the LORD'S judgments would instantly come upon all those who act wickedly and corruptly upon the earth so that they would learn to do what is right. It could be said, "We live in the long day of death and the long day of grace," this statement is as true today as it was during the generations of the Old Testament.

Those who act wickedly and prosper by their dishonesty, deceptions and corruptness wrongly believe because their life is charmed and prospering and God's judgment is delayed that they have escaped judgment, but this is not so. Old Testament Israel acted corrupted before God for many years, prior to God using Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as his servant to bring judgment upon the entire nation and bring them to utter ruin for their rebellion and gross wickedness. The reason God's judgment is delayed is because:

- The LORD is merciful, gracious and longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth (Exodus 34:6) (Psalm 86:15)
- The Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

It could be said that the wicked are taking advantage of and abusing the grace and goodness of God, but just because God does not instantly judge the wicked when they do wrong does not mean that they have escaped His judgment. The following is an important lesson we can all learn from this.

- Just because a minister or religious organisation may have a beautiful, majestic architecturally built church and a global following does not guarantee that they are teaching the true word of the God and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of Israel trusted their leaders and priests and they lead the entire nation to utter ruin.

O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it: (v11) prior to the ten tribes of Israel being taken into captivity to Assyria, and the people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem being taken into captivity to Babylon God sent fierce armies against them, yet they did not perceive that these armies were God's hand being lifted up against them, because of their rebellion and gross wickedness. They were so spiritually blind to God judgment against them and to the word of the prophets that the cup of iniquity became so full it overflowed, which forced God to bring His full judgment upon them.

Likewise the world we live in rather than heed God's warnings manifested in natural disasters and such like things, deliberately moves further away from Him and His ways to such an extent that we now teach in our schools the theory of evolution which denies the existence of God as an absolute truth, but like Israel and Judah of old the cup of iniquity will overflow and the full judgment of God will be poured out upon our planet.

NOTICE: God's majesty in the context of these verses is His judgment.

ISAIAH 26:12-14

Other god's Ruled over Us, but the LORD Alone we Remember.

- **Isaiah 26:12-14:** O LORD, you will ordain peace for us; you have done for us all our works. ¹³O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we bring to remembrance. ¹⁴They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end you have visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them.

The statement, "You will ordain peace for us," (v12) refers to a future time of peace being established for the people of God. It refers to the following two events yet to come to pass:

1. To Israel's deliverance from Babylon's seventy-year captivity when they returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt their city, their homes, their vineyards and farms and rebuilt the temple of God and returned to worship the LORD their God and no other. After this a golden age of prosperity and peace followed for the people of Israel.
2. 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 the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

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

For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us: (v13) the word lords in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*'adown*) it literally means to rule, it embraces the idea of a sovereign, (i.e., a controller) (human or divine) and can refer to a lord, a master, captain or owner. Israel had many kings rule over them, but now they rightly exalt and esteem God as the King of their nation. This does not mean that they would never have other kings, but that God would always be the head of their nation. Today we could express the same principal in the following words:

- We have had many ministers' control and rule over us, but now God and the Lord Jesus Christ is the only ruler of our hearts and minds.

There is a danger in Christianity that faithful brothers and sisters in Christ consciously or unconsciously exalt and esteem their pastor above the Lord Jesus Christ especially if they are close to the minister and he is highly esteemed throughout the world as a great man of God. Clearly faithful ministers and pastors are a gift to the church, but no matter how gifted they maybe or how large their following they should never be esteemed in the heart and mind above the Lord Jesus Christ.

ISAIAH 26:15-18

O LORD, we were Pregnant, but we have Given Birth to Wind.

- **Isaiah 26:15-18:** But you have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land. ¹⁶O LORD, in distress they sought you; they poured out a whispered prayer when your discipline was upon them. ¹⁷Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; ¹⁸we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

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You have increased the nation: (v15) this applies to the following two events:

1. The end of Israel's seventy-year captivity, when all the Jews that had been scattered to the surrounding nations during the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions returned to their homeland and their beloved city Jerusalem.
2. To the New Testament age when Gentiles through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ were added to the Commonwealth of Israel. For further information see the title: "The Common Wealth of Israel," at the end of this document.

In distress they sought you: (v16) Isaiah's prophetic words, "they poured out a whispered prayer when your discipline was upon them," refers to the people of Israel praying during their seventy years in captivity. Their prayers are referred to as whispered prayers because they are under the oppression and authority of Babylon. They are whispered, in contrast to being open as they were when they were in their own land and had their temple and held their sacred weeks of celebration before the LORD.

We were pregnant, but we have given birth to wind: (v18) the expression, "We were pregnant," means they had the prophets, the law of God, His promises, His word and the words of eternal life within their nation while the expression, "we have given birth to wind," means that though they had all these gifts of God they had not brought salvation and God's Kingdom on earth all the wisdom and promises of God they were

blessed with had come to nothing (they had brought forth wind). The Bible pictures the earth as a pregnant mother in labour longing to give birth to the sons and daughters of God. As we get closer to this glorious day coming to pass the labour pains (i.e., natural disasters of the earth) will increase and become more rapid, until mother earth gives birth to this child. This world changing event will be when:

- The last trumpet sounds and the dead are raised imperishable, and this perishable body puts on the imperishable, and this mortal body puts on immortality and the saying that is written comes to pass, “Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is your victory, O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

ISAIAH 26:19-21

My People, Hide Yourself for a Little Behold, the LORD is Coming.

- **Isaiah 26:19-21:** Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. ²⁰Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. ²¹For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.

After seeing in this prophetic vision the sad truth that Israel as a nation had accomplished no deliverance in the earth, the vision takes a majestic and glorious spiral upward, to behold the dead bodies of God’s people awakening from their sleep and rising from the earth with singing and joy to eternal glory. The resurrection is spoken of as the earth giving birth to the dead because all who belong to God will rise from the dust of the earth. This is why those who die in faith are referred to as sleeping in Christ.

Sleeping in Christ: when a person who belongs to Christ dies the Bible says, that they have no knowledge and know nothing they are totally unaware of it and are in a perfect state of peace, this state is called, “sleeping in Christ,” they have no consciousness, so there is no time. It is very similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes, they have no idea of whether four, seven or twelve hours have passed. Likewise, because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world’s time. David died thousands of years ago, but the moment he is resurrected will be like the moment he breathed his last breath, because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

Death to the Christian is similar to a person in a coma: a person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead.

Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principal as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take body parts out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea

of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says, absent from the body, present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8) it is a true statement, even though a brother or sister in Christ may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

A second reason: the death of a Christian is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary. Being asleep in Christ means everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God. Jesus said:

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ until the first resurrection (Rom. 20:5). Then, like those who were raised to mortal life after Jesus crucifixion and went to the holy city of God to testify (Matt 27:50-53) all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to immortal life and everlasting glory.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way, we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen, then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation the mind to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

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Come, my people, enter your chambers hide yourselves for a little:

(v20) the LORD’S people are told to enter their chambers, meaning accept going to the grave, because it will hide them from the fury of the LORD that is to come to punish the people of the earth. This applies to the following two future events:

1. To Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem when the fierce armies of Babylon invaded their land and burned their city, during these invasions multitudes of men and women were slaughtered and the survivors taken captive.
2. To that day the seven angels spoken of in the book of Revelation begin to pour out the seven vials of God’s wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth, because of its rampant iniquity and the blood shed upon it (i.e., murder and wars).
 - I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished. (Rev. 15:1).
 - I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God. (Rev. 16:1).

The earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and no more cover its slain:

(v21) means that during the days the armies of Babylon invade the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem and the latter days of the seven angels with seven plagues there will be so much death that there will not be enough men to to bury all the dead bodies. This is why the apostle Paul tells the faithful to encourage one another with the following words:

- This we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend 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 will rise first. ¹⁷Then

we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said:

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

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Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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

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