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## Psalm 76

(2019)

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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.

## Psalm 76.

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### Topics.

- God is great in Israel; he is established in Salem and dwells in Zion.
- Glorious is God, who can stand before him when his anger is roused?
- God arose to establish judgment, to save the humble of earth.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

**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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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK THREE (PSALM 73-89)

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### PSALM 76:1-3

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To the Choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

**God is Great in Israel, established in Salem and He Dwells in Zion.**

- **Psalm 76:1-3:** In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel. <sup>2</sup>His abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. <sup>3</sup>There he broke the flashing arrows, the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. *Selah*

**Selah:** marks a musical pause.

**Judah:** comes from the Hebrew word (*Y<sup>e</sup>huwdah*) and means celebrated it carries the idea of revering and worshipping (with extended hands).

**God is known in Judah:** (v1) carries the following to idea, God is known in respectful, celebrated worship and in reverence and heartfelt devotion. Israel's first king Saul was a Benjamite his reign was not successful and when he died about 1000 BC a period of civil war broke out among the Hebrew tribes. Out of the destruction of King Saul's Kingdom emerged David a member of the tribe of Judah. David and his son Solomon succeeded in unifying the Hebrew tribes and imposing their rule on the whole nation. During their reigns the Hebrews achieved national greatness. When Solomon died all of this came to an end, the greater part of the nation broke away from the Judean rule to form the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria). The Davidic dynasty continued to rule at Jerusalem over a small remnant of the nation. This remnant is called the Kingdom of Judah (the two tribes). Judah continued to rule in Jerusalem until the destruction of the capital city Jerusalem by the Babylonians 587 BC. It is from the tribe of Judah that the Messiah the Christ came

- I (John) began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup>And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” (Rev. 5:4-5).

**God’s name is great in Israel:** (v1) God’s name is great by the mighty miracles he did to give birth to the nation Israel and His mighty deeds he performed leading them into the Promised Land. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God’s special and unique nation unlike any other nation.

God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Romans 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Romans 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Romans 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Romans 9:7)
- From Israel’s race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)

Added to these God said:

- Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine (Exod. 19:5).
- The LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments (Deut. 26:18).

The Psalmist wrote:

- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

**The thermometer of God’s prophecy:** it is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ’s return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God’s prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures

that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being. Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God.

For further information concerning this new nation God is building in Christ see the title:

- The Commonwealth of Israel, at the end of this chapter.

**God's abode has been established in Salem:** (v2) Salem comes from the Hebrew word (*Shalem*) and means peaceful, it is an early name of Jerusalem and carries the idea of friendliness, just, peaceable and perfect. This carries the following two ideas:

1. God's name is established in Jerusalem and will set His Son and King on its throne and make all nations his heritage and the ends of the earth his possession. Jerusalem will be beautiful and the joy amongst all nations of the earth and those who despised God's Son will bow down at his feet and greatly praise Jerusalem the City of God. Figuratively the city of God can be seen as the global body of Christ the faithful church surrounded with mighty walls of God's truth, love, justice, mercy and grace protected by His omnipotence and adorned with Christ's righteousness. All those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can be seen as the spiritual Holy City of God.
2. God abides in peace, should anyone wonder if a choice, decision or something they are about to do is in God's will one of the surest ways to find out is look into the heart and see if peace is abiding within. Years ago, I watch a movie in which a Christian group were having a discussion over differences in doctrine, the discussion became quite heated so the leader of the group instantly stopped the meeting had everyone stand up, hold hands and pray until peace once again filled the room. He was very aware God's Spirit only inhabits places of peace and not contention and strife.

**God's dwelling place in Zion:** (v2) Zion comes from the Hebrew word (*Tsiyown*) and refers to the mountain the city of Jerusalem is built upon. It carries the idea of a permanent capital mountain of Jerusalem in the sense of being readily seen and easily visible and noticed as an important sign (i.e., a significant and historic sign and guiding pillar). The following verses shine a brilliant light upon how exalted Zion is in God's eyes:

- Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His Holy Mountain (Psalm 48:1).
- As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my Holy Hill. <sup>7</sup>I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (Ps. 2:6-8).
- I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his Holy Hill. (Psalm 3:4).
- Beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King. (Psalm 48:2).
- Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His Holy Mountain. (Psalm 48:1).
- The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 60:14).

### **Who can Stand Before God, when His Anger is Roused?**

- **Psalm 76:4-7:** Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains of prey. <sup>5</sup>The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; all the men of war were unable to use their hands. <sup>6</sup>At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned. <sup>7</sup>But you, you are to be feared! Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused?

**Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains of prey:** (v4) the King James Bible says, "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey," clearly showing that it is God who is more majestic than the mountains of prey. The mountains of prey in the context of these verses refers to the prideful and all the men of war, the armies of Egypt who God drowned in the Red Sea and by extension all others great nations and empires that came against God's people. In the poetical and prophetic writings of Scripture great victorious secular nations, great kings and empires of the earth are often compared to mountains.

Those that are referred to as mountains of prey are called such because they were generally established by war and tyranny and maintained their greatness and power by preying on their own subjects, or other inferior kingdoms. When Israel did what was right before the LORD, He stood up to defend them, it mattered not how great or mighty the armies of a nation was that came against them, if the LORD'S anger was aroused against them, they had no hope of conquering God's people. The following verses show that nations in Scripture are often referred to as mountains and hills:

Enemies of Israel are referred to mountains.

- Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I am the one who helps you, declares the LORD; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. <sup>15</sup>Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff (Isaiah 41:14-15).

Babylon is referred to as a mountain.

- I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea before your very eyes for all the evil that they have done in Zion, declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup>"Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the LORD, which destroys the whole earth; I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain. (Jer. 51:24-25).

Judah and Israel are referred to mountains and hills.

- He (the LORD) stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains (Judah) were scattered; the everlasting hills (Israel) sank low. His were the everlasting ways. (Hab. 3:6).

**Prey:** carries the idea of something being obtained by hunting or by plunder. It is usually applied to the food of wild beasts of prey, so when the expression, "the mountains of prey," is used in Scripture it carries the idea of a place and stronghold of robbers and thieves from where they hide and venture out to plunder. The heights and rocks of the mountains furnish a safe place of retreat for robbers and because of this they became symbols of power.

By extension the words, "Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains of prey" (v4) can be applied to Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his character and nature and excellent in all his works who at this present time is exalted at his Father's right hand side far above all nations, empires and kingdoms signified in

this Psalm by mountains of prey. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords more glorious and excellent than the kings of the earth and all who dwell upon it and the mighty warrior who will trample under foot all mountains of prey that rise against him and his people when he returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

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## PSALM 76:8-10

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### God arose to Establish Judgment, to Save the Humble of Earth.

- **Psalm 76:8-10:** From the heavens you uttered judgment; the earth feared and was still,  
    <sup>9</sup>when God arose to establish judgment, to save all the humble of the earth. *Selah*  
    <sup>10</sup>Surely the wrath of man shall praise you; the remnant of wrath you will put on like a belt.

Verse eight to nine could apply to the flood in the days of Noah, to Israel's deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea, or to Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God or to any other occasion when God miraculously arose to protect, defend and fight for His people Israel when they did that which was right before Him.

**Surely the wrath of man shall praise you** (v10) does not necessarily mean that they will sing songs of worship and praise toward God, but that when mighty nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Rome (in the New Testament) who are enemies of God's people and who sought to destroy them see the awesome power of God's judgment will declare that the God of Israel is the God of the heavens and the earth.

**The remnant of wrath you will put on like a belt** (v10) the King James Bible says, "the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain," this carries the idea that God has poured out his wrath many times (i.e., the flood of Noah, the ten plagues of Egypt, the destruction of many great nations who rose up against Israel, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God and the Jews seventy year captivity and the list goes on. But the remainder of His wrath that He will put on like a belt, most likely refers to God's judgment when Christ comes to:

- Tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev. 19:15-16).

At this present time God is restraining what remains of His wrath until that day. The words you will put on a belt symbolically carry the idea that God will strap on His sword (a symbol to be used as a weapon for executing His own purposes) which will be to pour out the last of His wrath. The idea of strapping on a sword to go forth to conquer is seen in the following verses:

- David said to his men, "Every man strap on his sword!" And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage. (1 Sam. 25:13).
- Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendour and majesty! (Psalm 45:3).

**Christ's return:** the ultimate fulfilment of the words, "God arose to establish judgment, to save all the humble of the earth" (v9) will be when the final trumpet of God sounds and the final vial of wrath is poured out upon the earth and Christ returns 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. 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).

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## **PSALM 76:11-12**

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### **Perform Vows to God and Bring Him Gifts who is to Be Feared,**

- **Psalm 76:11-12:** Make your vows to the LORD your God and perform them; let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared, <sup>12</sup>who cuts off the spirit of princes, who is to be feared by the kings of the earth.

The vows in this context refer to Israel's promise at Mount Sinai to keep the Covenant of the LORD, Asaph is saying to Israel keep the promise you made to God and obey all His commandments, laws and statutes, because He has power to destroy mighty kings and their princes. By extension this of course applies to all those who belong to the global Kingdom of Christ in that we should be honest in all our dealings and do everything from a heart of integrity so that our lives honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.



## The fear of the LORD has the following two aspects:

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
- 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually. The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, violence, crime and wars in most countries.

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

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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).

7

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.

8

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

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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