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Zephaniah 3

(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.

Zephaniah 3.

Topics.

- Woe to Nineveh the rebellious and oppressing city.
- The LORD within Nineveh is righteous.
- God has destroyed the nation's weapons and their cities are desolate.
- People will speak a pure speech and call on the name of the LORD.
- The LORD will remove the prideful from his holy mountain.
- The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never fear evil.
- The LORD will make you renowned among all peoples of earth.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

INTRODUCTION: Zephaniah prophesied during the reforms of King Josiah (640–609 B.C.), who brought spiritual revival to Judah after the long and disastrous reign of Manasseh. Zephaniah pronounced God's judgment on corruption and wickedness, but also his plan to restore Judah. He spoke of the coming "Day of the LORD," when sin would be punished, justice would prevail, and a "remnant" of the faithful would be saved. The term "Day of the LORD" occurs throughout the Bible referring both to impending historical judgments from God and to his final judgment at the end of time. Though Zephaniah does not give details about this day, he speaks of its worldwide consequences (Zeph. 1:18) and calls people to seek the Lord (Zeph. 2:3).

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.

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-4

Woe to Nineveh the Rebellious and Oppressing City.

- **Zephaniah 3:1-4:** Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city! ²She (Nineveh) listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD; she does not draw near to her God. ³Her officials within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves that leave nothing till the morning. ⁴Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy; they do violence to the law.

The focus is the city of Nineveh: (Zeph. 2:13) Nineveh is judged because of the oppression it is putting others under. When the Bible is read from Genesis to Revelation it becomes very clear that one of the things that, is extremely offensive and hurtful to God's heart is oppressing others for one's own gain.

Nineveh; was one of the most ancient cities of the world, founded by Nimrod the great-grandson of Noah. It was the capital city of the Assyrian empire (North Iraq) and was a great international power and administrative centre. Following is a list of the sins of Nineveh:

- They did not listen to anyone and did not accept correction.
- They did not trust in the LORD or draw near to Him.
- Their officials were like roaring lions (meaning they devour the less fortunate for their own selfish gain).

- The judges were like wolves (meaning they pervert the law to benefit themselves).
- The prophets were fickle and treacherous (meaning they speak what the people want to hear rather than the word of God, so they will maintain their popularity, fame and exaltation).
- The priests profane what is holy and do violence to the law (meaning they twist the law to their own advantage and distort it to control the people).

ZEPHANIAH 3:5

The LORD within Nineveh is Righteous.

- **Zephaniah 3:5:** The LORD within her (Nineveh) is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail; but the unjust knows no shame.

In the verses three and four Zephaniah is speaking against the officials, the judges, the prophets and the priests which means that the expression, "the LORD within Nineveh is righteous," is referring to the Spirit of the LORD that is in the common folk. It means the average person on the street, is basically living a right lifestyle before God. It is the secular and religious leadership that God is holding accountable and not the faithful commonfolk of the nation, if the leadership was doing the right thing the common people of God in Nineveh would follow because their spirit was basically right before the LORD.

This is probably why when Jonah came to Nineveh and proclaimed a message of destruction the entire population repented and God relented from Jonah's prophesy of impending doom. When a nation or the employees of a company, or the members of a religious organisation see its leaders doing the right thing the majority of those following such leaders will also willing do what is right.

The unjust knows no shame: (v5) refers to everyone who perverts' twists and distorts justice for their own gain and to take possession of what rightfully belongs to others. One of the great pillars of God's throne is justice (i.e., fairness for all) so to lie, deceive and cheat others from what is rightfully theirs by perverting justice is a great abomination before the LORD.

ZEPHANIAH 3:6-7

God has destroyed the Nations Weapons; their Cities are Desolate.

- **Zephaniah 3:6-7:** "I (the LORD) have cut off nations; their battlements are in ruins; I have laid waste their streets so that no one walks in them; their cities have been made desolate, without a man, without an inhabitant. ⁷I said, 'Surely you (the nations) will fear me; you will accept correction. Then your dwelling would not be cut off according to all that I have appointed against you.' But all the more they were eager to make all their deeds corrupt.

The nations in focus are Judah and Israel, and all the nations who have mocked, afflicted and been enemies to the LORD'S people. It is all the Middle East nations that have been mentioned in the previous chapters, with Israel and Judah being the first to be judged and punished. The day of the LORD in this context is not one day, these events happened over many years. Israel and Judah went into captivity for seventy years and during this time Babylon conquered Nineveh and at the end of Israel's captivity God used Cyrus King of Persian to conquer Babylon, but prior to these major events both Babylon and Media Persia were bringing to ruin many of the other nations mentioned by Zephaniah.

NOTICE: God was willing to relent from His judgment on the nations if they had accepted correction, but not only did they not accept correction they eagerly continued in wickedness (Zeph. 3:7).

ZEPHANIAH 3:8-10

People will speak a Pure Speech and Call on the Name of the LORD.

- **Zephaniah 3:8-10:** "Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. ⁹"For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. ¹⁰From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.

The LORD tells the faithful in God to patiently wait. Because the nations have not turned from their violence or wickedness so He has decided to destroy them.

The fire of my jealousy: (v8) refers to God's anger at:

- People who deny the God of creation (i.e., those who are totally committed to the teaching of evolution or the big bang theory etc.).
- People who are oppressing the less fortunate for their own selfish gain.
- People who inflict violence on the innocent.
- People who use the global media to corrupt the populations of nations and the global world.

I will change the speech of the people to a pure speech: does not mean everyone will speak Hebrew, it simply means everyone will speak the words of the LORD in contrast to speaking of idols or pagan religions and gods (v9).

All the earth shall be consumed: (v8) this expression refers to Judah and Israel and all the Middle East nations mentioned in the three chapters of Zephaniah, but they can also transcend this period of time to arrive in a future age when once again God will intervene in the history of mankind and judge all nations. This theme is covered in greater detail as we move toward the end of the chapter.

ZEPHANIAH 3:11-12

The LORD will remove the Proudful from His Holy Mountain.

- **Zephaniah 3:11-12:** "On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain. ¹²But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD.

On that day: refers to the day the LORD changes the speech of the people of Judah and Israel to a pure speech so that all of them call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord in contrast to calling on idols and pagan gods and worshipping the host of heaven (sun, moon, stars etc.), at altars they had set up which many of them were doing (v9).

Pure speech: in this context would also apply to speaking in humility, truthfulness and speaking what is right in contrasted to those who speak from pride and speak lies and deceit etc., (see v11).

Proudly exultant ones: refers to all the religious leaders in Israel and Judah who are full of pride and all their prideful enemies who have mocked and scorned God's people in their defeat, suffering and sorrow. Pride is a major enemy to the fruits of the Spirit, while humbleness or humility is a major pillar to God's throne. God exalts humbleness because those who are humble will never hurt or harm to another person, humility puts the welfare of others before itself, whereas arrogant pride will tread over others to attain its selfish desires.

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.

- Satisfaction with self: the happy satisfied feeling somebody experiences when having or achieving something special that other people admire. A person taking great pride in their work.
- Proper sense of own value: having the correct level of respect for the importance and value of your personal character, life, efforts, or achievements as opposed to having no confidence and no sense of worth.
- The source of personal satisfaction: such as an achievement or possession that somebody feels especially pleased and satisfied with (i.e. their grandchildren were their pride and joy).
- To be proud of something: personal satisfaction and pleasure from a particular source, especially something accomplished or a quality possessed.

Unhealthy Pride.

- Is 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.
- Is 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.

ZEPHANIAH 3:13-15

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your Midst; Never Fear Evil.

- **Zephaniah 3:13-15:** those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." ¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

These prophetic words of Zephaniah (in a limited sense) speak of Israel's triumphant return under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild their beloved city Jerusalem and the Temple of God after their seventy years in captivity to Babylon. When the Temple was completed Israel had a time of prosperity and peace, but Zephaniah's majestic and prophetic words

do not stop at the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, they cannot be contained to their era only. After resting there for a moment, the prophetic words of Zephaniah once again take up wings and transcend 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. This idea is looked at in great detail as we progress toward the end of the chapter.

ZEPHANIAH 3:16-20

The LORD will make you Renowned among all Peoples of Earth.

- **Zephaniah 3:16-20:** On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. ¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.

That day: refers to the day the LORD has cleared away His enemies and the King of Israel is with them (v15).

Zephaniah prophetic words: "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (v17) can refer to the following three periods of time:

THE FIRST PERIOD OF TIME

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Cyrus the king of Persia: Zephaniah prophetic words: "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (v17) can refer to Cyrus the king of Persia because God used Cyrus to set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. The following verses 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, ³I 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*. ⁴For 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*, ⁶that 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).

But Zephaniah prophetic words: "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (v17) does not end at Israel's freedom from Babylon, but transcends this era and echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed Shepherd and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF TIME

The Lord Jesus Christ: Zephaniah prophetic words: "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (v17) can refer to the Lord Jesus Christ because it was through him that God came amongst the midst of His people to save. Jesus by his ministry, death and resurrection came to save those who mourn and the lame and the outcast. The following verses not only show that through Jesus ministry the blind received their sight, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf were healed, the dead were raised up, and the poor had good news preached to them they also show that crowd seeing such wonders and miracles glorified the God of Israel. (Matt. 15:29-31).

- Jesus answered them (John's disciples), "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. (Matt. 11:4-5).
- Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, ³¹so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel. (Matt. 15:29-31).
- Jesus answered them (John's disciples), "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. (Luke 7:20-25).

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But Zephaniah prophetic words: "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (v17) does not end at Jesus ministry, death and resurrection, but transcends this era and echoes a future age when Christ will return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords and dwell in the midst of the resurrected faithful in the New Age to come.

THE THIRD PERIOD OF TIME

The primary focus of Zephaniah's three prophetic chapters are Jerusalem and Judah, Israel and the surrounding nations of the Middle East, but the following verses show that contained within the local message of Zephaniah's words there is also a far wider application which goes out to all the people and the nations of the earth.

- I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth, declares the LORD. (Zephaniah 1:2).
- The LORD will sweep away man and beast; the birds and the fish of the sea with the wicked. (Zephaniah 1:3).
- I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," declares the LORD. (Zephaniah 1:3).
- A day of wrath is that day, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom. (Zephaniah 1:15).
- The LORD will bring distress on mankind, because they have sinned against the LORD. (Zephaniah 1:17).
- On the Day of His wrath all the earth will be consumed and He will bring to a full and sudden end all the inhabitants of the earth (Zeph. 1:18).

- In the fire of the LORD'S jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed. ((Zeph. 1:18).
- The LORD will make a full and sudden end of all the inhabitants of the earth (Zeph. 1:18).
- The LORD will famish all the gods of the earth (meaning there will be no-one to worship them) and everyone will bow down to Him wherever they are in all nations (Zeph. 2:11).
- The LORD declares, "For the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. (Zeph. 3:8).

The expression, "All mankind shall be cut off from the face of the earth," (Zeph. 1:3) does not mean that the entire face of the earth will be devoid of any human life, it carries the idea that all the wicked will be cut off from the earth. Though the focus of Zephaniah's prophetic message is a warning of impending doom coming upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding nations of the Middle East these verses show that this warning of God's judgment can also transcend the era of Babylon's invasion of Jerusalem and travel through history to arrive upon another great day of the LORD when God will once again intervene in the history of our world and judge all mankind.

This of course will happen when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords' and deals with the oppressors and the wicked and restores the fortunes of His people and makes Jerusalem the Holy city of God once again renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth.

The events spoken of in the following Scriptures are God's final judgment on all mankind and the ultimate fulfilment of his prophetic words, "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save" (Zech:3:17).

- They (the secular world system and false religion) will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, those with him are called and chosen and faithful. (Rev. 17:13).
- From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev. 19:15-16).
- They (the faithful) shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rev. 7:16-17).
- I (John) saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new. (Rev. 21:1-5).

The first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more does not mean the entire planet is destroyed and vanishes, it means the following two things, firstly the earth, the sun and moon, the seas and the weather patterns as we know them today will be changed to suit the growth of all things on earth and bring forth life. Secondly the governmental system, the banking system and global trade will be completely changed to a system that is fair and just for all people. This is what the words, "Behold, I am making all things new. (Rev. 21:5) mean, the earth as we know it will be completely renovated and renewed.

- I (John) saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and *the kings*

*of the earth will bring their glory into it,*²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. (Rev. 21:22-27).

These climatic and breathtaking event will begin with 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).

FOOTNOTE

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).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states:

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

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

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

THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE GOD IS BUILDING IN CHRIST

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles' teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity. When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy

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

Peter wrote:

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when:

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

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