

Reality Carpinteria - Pastor Britt Merrick
Mark 13:19-26
The Coming With Great Power and Glory
(15MAY2005)

Bible Prophecy Sermons Series:

- This is the sixth in a series of Bible Prophecy and End times studies based on Mark 13.
- These past sermons, among others, are available on CD and at www.jesusisreality.com
 1. A General Introduction to Bible Prophecy
 2. The Temple in Jerusalem (Mark 13: 1-4)
 3. World Conditions Prior to Lord's Second Coming (Mark 13: 5-13)
 4. The Abomination of Desolation (Mark 13:14-18)
 5. The Tribulation: The Wrath and Mercy of God (Mark 13:19)

Mark 13:19 - 26

¹⁹"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will." ²⁰"Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days. ²¹"And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, He is there'; do not believe him; ²²for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³"But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance. ²⁴"But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, ²⁵AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶"Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.

The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ

- Not to be confused with the Rapture of the church, which is a separate event from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - The Rapture of the church, which happens prior to the Tribulation, will be discussed next week.
 - The Second Coming happens after the Tribulation.
- Except for salvation, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is mentioned more often in the Bible than any other topic.
 - There are 1,845 passages about the Second Coming in the Old Testament and 318 passages in the New Testament.
 - Twenty-three out of twenty-seven books in the New Testament give prominence to this event.
- It is testified to by the fact that the **Church Universal** accepts that there will be a Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - The return of Jesus is in every creed and doctrinal statement.
- If you reject that Jesus is coming again, you do not have biblical Christianity.
- If you were to remove all the references to Jesus' Second Coming, you would no longer have the Bible.
- As a Christian you must accept the idea of the Second Coming.
 - This takes a lot of faith, because we so often want to walk by sight in this world.
 - We're a very visual society (TV, PowerPoint slides, digital this and that, etc.) so it's hard to foresee His Second Coming.
 - It is easier to *believe* He came a first time.
 - No one can reject this. It is a historical fact.
 - People can argue all they want about the identity of Jesus, but they can't argue that He existed.
- The Old Testament (the *Tenakh* in Hebrew) talks about the Messiah's Second Coming 8 times more often than His **First Coming**.
 - If the First Coming is a historical fact, we can be 8 times surer He will come again.
 - It was absolutely correct about the first coming and it is absolutely correct about the Second Coming.

Why Two Comings?

- The Old Testament contains two veins of prophecy concerning the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - Vein #1 - At the appointed time, the Messiah would come to suffer.

- Daniel 9: ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.
 - Jesus would come at the appointed time: 183,770 days after King Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Vein #2 - After Jesus' appointed time the Messiah would be cut-off, the Antichrist would come to conquer, but the Messiah would eventually conquer over him.
 - Daniel 9: ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."
 - If the Messiah is to be cut-off (that is, He ceases to be there), and if He then conquers over the Antichrist, then this necessitates two comings of the Messiah.
 - Isaiah 52: ¹³ Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. ¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men. ¹⁵ Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see And what they had not heard they will understand.
 - The Messiah would be a conqueror. He would inherit the Kingdom.
 - Isaiah 53 tells about the Messiah going to the cross, about His wounds, and His death.
- Ancient scribes and rabbis who studied the Tenakh were puzzled. How can Messiah, both come and be cut-off (suffer and give Himself up as a sacrifice), and yet be a conqueror and have an everlasting kingdom?
 - The prophecies for them are very clear: The Messiah would inherit and sit upon the throne of David. He would rule and reign forever.
- Observant Jews today reject Jesus as the Messiah because He died upon a cross. They neglect to see the fact that there are two comings.
 - They state that when Messiah comes, He will return the kingdom to Israel and establish it. He will liberate Israel from its oppressors and He will sit upon the throne of David.
 - They state that Jesus never did this.
- Some ancient rabbis believed in the two comings of the Messiah.
 - It made sense to them that if He were to have an everlasting kingdom, and scripture said He had to be cut-off, then He had to be cut-off first. If the **everlasting** kingdom came first, it made no sense that He would ever be cut-off.
 - First appearance: He's cut-off.
 - Second appearance: He comes again to conquer.
- Other ancient rabbis did not believe in two comings of the Messiah, but instead they believed in two Messiahs!
 - First Messiah: The Suffering Servant of Yahweh.
 - Repeatedly referred to in the Book of Isaiah.
 - Second Messiah: The Conquering King.
 - Repeatedly referred to throughout the scriptures.
- Observant Jews today, ignore the suffering servant aspect of the Messiah. They allegorize that this refers to the nation of Israel.
 - They believe that the sufferings of the Messiah were fulfilled in the sufferings that Israel has undergone.
 - They expect a Messiah who will come as the Deliverer.

A Picture of God and the Nation of Israel

- The Book of Hosea – God tells Hosea to marry a beautiful woman named Gomer. He does so but soon she abandons him and goes into a life of adultery and prostitution. Her life hits rock bottom when she winds up naked on the auctioning block as a slave. At this point, God tells Hosea to go and buy back Gomer. Hosea points out to God that she is an adulteress

and has left him and played the harlot many times before. She is filthy and defiled. And now, he must pay money to buy her back?! God confirms that this is exactly what he wants Hosea to do: buy her back and love her. And so, Hosea does as the Lord tells him.

- Gomer is the nation of Israel, who repeatedly turns its back on God.
- In the Book of Jeremiah, God said that the nation of Israel would play the harlot with idols and that it would end up in the auctioning block of slavery to other nations.
- Repeatedly, God would go after Israel, redeem her, bring her back and love her again and again.
 - Before the church was ever called the bride of Christ, Israel was called in the Old Testament, the wife of God.
- Hosea 5: ¹⁵ I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.
 - God says, "I will go away". When did God *come*?
 - Emmanuel – "God with us". Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Everlasting Father!
 - God came as Jesus Christ.
 - God says, "I will go away". When did God go away?
 - At the Ascension.
 - John 14: ² "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for ^(B)I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, ^(C)I will come again."
 - God says, "I will go away". Where is God *going*?
 - Hosea 5: ¹⁵ I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.
 - John 14: ³ Jesus said, "If I go and **prepare** a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Big Note: the Tribulation has everything to do with the nation of Israel.

- Jeremiah 30:7, "The time of Jacob's trouble." Jacob had his name changed to Israel by God.
 - The Tribulation is the time of Israel's trouble.
 - The Tribulation period is not only God pouring out His wrath on an unrepentant world, but it is God refining, rebuking and chastening the nation of Israel to bring them to the point of recognizing their Messiah.
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- Hosea 5: ¹⁵ I will go away until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.
 - Israel undergoes this "affliction" in the Tribulation, both under the wrath of God and under the wrath of Satan.
 - As stated in last week's homework: Revelation 12 - Satan constantly wars against Israel.
 - Israel will turn to the Messiah at the Second Coming.

Jesus Christ the Messiah will return to Jerusalem, to the nation of Israel.

- The Second Coming has everything to do with the Messiah finally being revealed as such to the nation of Israel.
 - In the First Coming – Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives over Jerusalem and wept.
 - Luke 13:34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I wanted to gather you, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not have it."
 - Luke 19:44 " . . . they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you would not recognize the time of your visitation." (Jesus is referring to the destruction of the Temple.)
 - The **original Century Church** was made up of all Jews. It is not correct to say that all Jews rejected Jesus.
 - In the Book of Acts, the door was flung open for the gospel to go to the Gentiles.
 - God had always told Israel that they were to be a light unto the nations.
 - Genesis 12:2, God's covenant with Abraham states that He would make Israel a blessing to all the nations (for out of Israel would come the Messiah).

- When Jesus came, some of Israel received Him and some of Israel rejected Him.
 - The ones who received Him became the church.
 - The church is made up of Gentiles and Jews.
- God is not done with Israel. He refuses to let them go. He will refine them by fire in the Tribulation period.
 - The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is an epiphany. God in the form of Jesus Christ is revealed to them in the midst of a fiery furnace.
 - In the Old Testament, King Nebuchadnezzar has Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego placed into a fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar has his men heat up the furnace seven times hotter than usual, yet they are not burning up and in agony - - - what's more: Nebuchadnezzar sees a fourth "man", one who looks as the Son of God, standing alongside Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.
 - When Israel goes into the fire of the Tribulation and is refined through it, they will recognize Jesus as the Messiah.
- Hosea 5: ¹⁵ " . . . in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."
 - God says, "I will go away". What will *happen* to Israel?
- Hosea 6 ¹ "Come, let us return to the LORD For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. ² "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. ³ "So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth."
 - Jesus will return to Israel in order that Israel might recognize Him as the Messiah.
 - Listen to past teachings on God's faithfulness to Israel (Romans 9, 10 & 11 - June 11 & 18, 2004) available at www.jesusisreality.com.
 - Romans 10: ²¹ But as for Israel God says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."
 - This is a perfect description of Israel throughout the ages.
 - They saw more miracles than any other people on the face of the earth, yet they continuously walked away from the Lord.
 - This is a perfect description of *us* today.
 - We have God's complete Word, and we continuously walk away from the Lord.
 - Much of the Church in America today attributes this passage to say that God is done with Israel.
 - This is called Replacement Theology.
 - These people see the Church as replacing Israel in the plan of God.
 - They believe all the promises made to Israel throughout the Bible are now transferred to the Church.
 - ***This is nonsensical!***
 - The promises made to Israel concern a literal and physical land in the Middle East.
 - The Church has never been called to dwell in that land!
 - If the promises of Israel were transferred to the Church, you should be living in Israel!
 - God will be faithful to complete all the promises He's made to Israel.
 - Romans 11: ¹ I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.

Israel may have rejected God, but God *has not* rejected Israel!

- Romans 11: ¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.
 - Their not receiving the Messiah the first time is not the end for Israel. But rather, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous.
 - It is an ordained purpose of the Church that we are to provoke Israel to jealousy with our love for the Messiah.

- Our love for God should be such a reality in our lives that Israel is forced to take notice and question whether they may have actually missed the boat!
- Romans 11: ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!
- Romans 11: ¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.
 - The Church is to love the nation of Israel because it is the apple of God's eye. He will protect it and cherish it always, as if it was the very pupil of His eye.
 - Both in Biblical and modern times, God has done more to protect Israel than any other country in the world.
 - On May 14, 1948 at midnight, Israel became a nation. This was unprecedented.
 - The next day, five surrounding Arab nations attacked Israel. Out-numbered 5 to 1, and against every conceivable odd, Israel pushed back all the armies of the 5 invading nations and gained more land in the process!
 - Generals who were in the battle commented that it was miraculous. It was the God of Israel protecting her!
 - In 1973, in the War of Yom Kippur, while they were at synagogue, the Israelis were attacked on the Day of Atonement by the surrounding Arab nations.
 - The Israeli army pushed Egypt back past the Sinai Peninsula and across the Suez Canal. Egypt called for help and the United States and Russia were asked to intervene and ask Israel to give back the Canal to Egypt.
 - Against overwhelming odds, it is obvious that God fights on behalf of Israel.

**God has set a historical precedent for the love He has for Israel.
He will use any means to win back and protect the "apple of His eye"!**

Don't be surprised at what the Bible says He will do for Israel at the Second Coming!

- Romans 11: ²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery (Israel), brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.
 - In their rejection, God has blinded Israel and **partially** hardened their hearts.
 - There is a remnant of Jews who will recognize the Messiah.
 - The full number of the Gentiles will be established at the Rapture of the Church.
- Romans 11: ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."
 - At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ all Israel will be saved. This is not to mean that just because you are a Jew you will be saved. You must be born again.
- Romans 11: ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
 - All of the nations of Israel as a whole will be saved at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when they no longer continue in unbelief. This is the sole purpose of His Second Coming.

- Zechariah 13 : ⁷ "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.
 - Talking about the Messiah being crucified.

What will happen to Israel in the Last Days?

- Zechariah 13 ⁸ In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.
 - The Tribulation Period. (Refer to last week's message.) 50% of the population of the world is destroyed at the wrath of God. But two-thirds of the Jews who continue to reject God during this period "will be struck down and perish". This is heart breaking.
 - Remember: God does not pour out His wrath all at once. Instead, with full mercy and patience, He lets go of it in stages. He has warned humanity in various and sundry ways, over and over, to repent.
 - God has been warning Israel and giving her signs, since before the first coming of the Messiah.
 - In Daniel 9:25-27 God gives Israel the very day that the Messiah would come the very first time.
- The "day and hour" assigned to the Second Coming of Jesus and the Rapture of the Church by God is the key difference between them.
 - Regarding the time of the Rapture, Jesus said, "No man knows the day or the hour, therefore do not be caught unaware".
 - The day of the Second Coming is definitely known. Jesus will return at the end of the Tribulation. The Tribulation is exactly 7 years long. The Book of Daniel states that at exactly 3 ½ years into the Tribulation, the Antichrist sets himself up at the Temple as God. From that moment, the Jews alive at that time can then count 1,260 days (per the Jewish 360 day annual calendar) and determine the return of the Messiah.
 - Jesus wanted them to be aware of the first coming and He wants them to be aware of the second coming. God takes no pleasure in catching people unaware that they might miss salvation.
 - The Rapture may catch us unaware perhaps, but it is not about missing salvation.
- Zechariah 13 ⁹ This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"
- Zechariah 14 ¹ A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. ² I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.
 - In the Last Days all the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem.
 - Welcome to the Last Days! Read the history of the UN and their decisions regarding Israel. Do a poll of every nation in the world. What is their stance regarding Israel's right to dwell in the land and Jerusalem being its capital?
 - Israel declares that its capital is Jerusalem. All embassies are placed in the capital of a particular country. But, not in Israel!
 - No nation recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, including the US. They have all established their embassies in Tel Aviv!
 - Every country has refused to recognize Israel's sovereign right to the land and Jerusalem as their capital.
 - The Bible says that ever-increasingly so in the Last Days, the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem until the Battle of Armageddon.
 - The Antichrist with his one-world forces will come against Israel and Jerusalem.

God Will Prove Himself Faithful

- Zechariah 14 ³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle.
 - God will fight on behalf of Israel like He did throughout the Old Testament, as He has done in modern history. He will do it again!

- Zechariah 14 ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.
 - This verse does not refer to the Messiah's First Coming. When Jesus came the first time he stood on the Mount of Olives, but on His Second Coming He will set His feet down on the Mount and this will split the Mount in two from east to west.
 - On July 11, 1927 geologist found that there is a huge fault line running east to west underneath the Mount of Olives!
 - God is throwing us a bone, people! He wants us to know that His promises are true. If He says something is going to happen, it will happen just like He said it would!
- The Book of Revelation 19: ¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.
 - This is Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:1,14)
- Rev 19: ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God," ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." ¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.
 - For more on this see Zechariah 12 and 14, plus Revelation 16.
 - The beast is the Antichrist and his one-world army gathers against Israel in the Valley of Armageddon, to war against Israel, Jerusalem and the Jews.
 - This is where God intervenes once again on Israel's behalf.
 - When Jesus shows up with His army, the Antichrist takes up the battle against God Himself!
 - Rev 19: ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.
 - Jesus defends the nation of Israel to prove Himself faithful to the world. God made many promises to Israel that after they were removed from the land, they would be returned to the land. And, that once they were returned, they would **never** be removed again. God will keep His promise!
 - The Antichrist has enough forces to wipe Israel off from the face of the earth. But Jesus proves Himself faithful by annihilating the Antichrist and wiping out his armies.

If God is not faithful to Israel, you have no reason to believe that He will be faithful to you!

- God has made promises to Israel and He has made promises to His Church.
 - Even if you ever doubt your salvation, or you may doubt the Lord's return, or feel that all the earth's wrongs will never be set right, **if God has been faithful to Israel, He will be faithful to you!**
 - God has proved He is Faithful through the little nation of Israel.
- The Valley of Armageddon is north of Jerusalem. With the Word of His mouth Jesus defeats the Antichrist. Jesus then places His feet on the Mount of Olives. From there, He will enter what is known as the Gate Glorious, or the Golden Gate, also known as the Eastern Gate, of the Temple Mount.
 - Two thousand years ago, this is the gate that Jesus went through at His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:8-10, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:29-38). He went down the Mount of Olives and entered through the Eastern Gate and stood on the Temple Mount. In the same manner, He will do it again at His Second Coming.

- At the bottom of the Kidron Valley, where Jesus rode the little donkey into Jerusalem, is the Eastern Gate. In front of this gate lies a cemetery of Muslim graves. An Ottoman Turk, with the intention of preventing the Jewish Messiah from arriving, started the graveyard in 1541.
 - Scripture states that the Messiah will come; He will come to the Temple, entering through the Eastern Gate, to establish His kingdom.
 - The Ottoman Turk, who wanted to exert His authority and sovereignty over Israel, put in the graves and thought, “**That** will keep him from coming!”
 - Like others, He thought the Jewish Messiah would be a mere man!
 - No Jew would defile himself by walking on top of graves. According to the Old Testament, he would be ceremonially unclean and would not be able to walk into the Temple Mount.
 - If the Messiah were merely a man that would have worked, but He is Jesus Christ, the god-man.
 - An inscription was placed at the graveyard that reads, “Come, Messiah. Israel awaits you.”

In Conclusion:

Israel awaits the Messiah today. Much of Israel missed the First Coming. At the Second Coming, Jesus will reveal Himself to them. The Bible says it will be a day of great mourning.

- Zechariah 12:9-10 - On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. ¹⁰ “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”
 - The very same God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believed in Him would never perish but have everlasting life, is speaking in this passage.

**At the Second Coming, Jesus will be revealed to Israel and to the nations as the Messiah.
And the Jews will look upon Him whom they have pierced.
They will mourn and they will repent.**

Pastor Britt's Prayer

Lord, we thank You for Your promises that are sure and true and absolute and unfailing. Please stir in our hearts a tremendous love for You. We have been saved! You've opened our eyes. All of this is not a mystery to us. There is not a partial hardening that has happened to our hearts, but God You have opened our eyes. Restore unto us this day, the joy of Thy salvation. That we would once again be in awe to the fact that: “I am saved!” That we would experience all that You have for us today. Thank you that we do not have to wait for the Second Coming to see You face to face. We can see You face to face today. Your word says that we can enter boldly into the throne of grace and there commune with You.

Paul the apostle wrote concerning communion, that as often as we partake of it, we proclaim the death of Jesus until His coming. We remember as we hold the bread in our hands that God is faithful. He will never fail. His body was broken for us. He was pierced through for our transgressions. We remember as we hold the cup, which is a picture of His blood, that He split it for you and me, as He promised. As sure as that First Coming and that gift of communion is, it is eight times surer that He is coming again. We proclaim His death until He comes again and is revealed unto the nations. Today let's worship that God who is so good.

If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you need to repent. You need to say, “God, I'm wrong. I'm a sinner, but I'm sorry. I understand, Jesus, that You died to pay the price for my sins. Save me!” God will save you. Let's worship a God who is that good. The God who was, who is and who is to come! As real as the Second Coming is, He is here right now. The Lord is in our midst. He's here to save and He's here to heal. Come forth and commune with God. Today is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Study Questions:

1. Why is it so important for us to know that God would consistently keep His promises to Israel?
2. God is giving the world every opportunity to repent and be saved during this present age, the Age of Grace. What makes a man turn his back to God and so easily dismiss the coming Tribulation Period?
3. Throughout history God has used His Word to give us insight about events to come. God has also given us the fire of His Holy Spirit to refine us that He might take us from glory to glory. Is God trying

to get your attention today? Is there an area in your life that you are still holding back from God's refinement?

4. We are astonished that in the Last Days the Antichrist would wage war against God Himself. Yet, today we see our own world wage war against God through people, television, magazines, entertainment, laws and philosophies. Can the type of amusements and leisure time you are choosing for yourself (and your family) give away which side of this war you are on?
5. We are told that Israel is the "apple of God's eye". Also in the scriptures, God says, "I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you." Why is it so important for God that we recognize and care for the nation of Israel?
6. God has called the Jews His Chosen People. He came to them first. He loves Israel with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). Jesus came to His own, but His own received Him not. In essence, the Jews "saw God first". But, now the gates of redemption are opened to the Gentiles, you and me. Romans 11:11 says, "salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious." Is your daily walk with the Lord God, your testimony of His love, and your witness of His love, something that would cause envy in the heart of a Jewish man or woman?