

**Withdrawal and Return
God Has Plans for Israel, and for Us Too!
Hosea 5:15 – 6:3**

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If we insist on doing our own thing, God will give us the space to do so. He did that with Israel. He warned what the consequences of their sin would be and when they showed that they were determined to do that sin rather than repent, He “returned to His place” and gave them their space to be as destructive as they wanted to be.

That is the message we ended with last time along with the outline for repentance. He still desires relationship with His chosen people. Jeremiah made that clear.

Jeremiah 31:8–10

“For I will bring them from the north and from the distant corners of the earth. I will not forget the blind and lame, the expectant mothers and women in labor. A great company will return! Tears of joy will stream down their faces, and I will lead them home with great care. They will walk beside quiet streams and on smooth paths where they will not stumble. For I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is my oldest child. Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.” (NLT)

We ended the rebukes of chapters 4 & 5 by suddenly seeing, in Hosea 5:15, the grace of God and His desire to see His people repent and return to Him. He tells us that they will do so, but at the same time

He gives us a New Testament message about how we can take advantage today of what it is Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.

For Israel though, it truly is a last call.

For us to really get at what is being said by Hosea and avoid some confusion, we will also need to remember something about how chapters and verses came into existence in our Bibles.

The chapter divisions commonly used today were developed by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury. Langton put the modern chapter divisions into place in around A.D. 1227. The Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 was the first Bible to use this chapter pattern. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

The Hebrew Old Testament was divided into verses by a Jewish rabbi by the name of Nathan in A.D. 1448. Robert Estienne, who was also known as Stephanus, was the first to divide the New Testament into standard numbered verses, in 1555. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

This means that the Geneva Bible published in 1560 would have been the first with chapters and verses in it to be followed by the Authorized Version (KJV) in 1611.

Chapter and verse divisions are the creation of editors and are not in themselves part of the inspired text. They help us navigate through the text, but chapter and verse divisions are not in themselves inspired. There are some problems with them.

They really do get in the way at times of us understanding the text.

Dr. Naselli in his class on New Testament exegesis says the following:

I am not a fan of chapter and verse references in the Bible. That's actually a toned down way of saying it: I strongly dislike chapter and verse numbers. Bible verses didn't even exist until about 1550, and chapters go back only to the 1200s. They can obscure the text and create artificial, and sometimes inaccurate, divisions. (Nasselli 2016)

Personally, I like chapter and verse divisions for reference look up purposes. They are an invaluable help to locate a text; but I do agree with Dr. Naselli, they tend to get in the way every now and then.

We have arrived at one of those places where they get in the way.

In the original Hebrew or Greek there are no chapter and verse divisions. Backing up from the text and ignoring the chapter and verse designations shows us that once the story of Hosea and Gomer concluded, YAHWEH began to discuss His indictment of Israel and then outline the evidence in favor of that.

This begins in Hosea 4:1 and the entire discussion continues until we get to the conclusion in Hosea 6:3. We are taken through the charges and the overwhelming evidence and then we are taken to the future at the end of the Tribulation when Israel will be restored in faith.

Though Israel was unrepentant, God promised that the day would come when "they will seek My face; in their misery they will earnestly seek Me" (v. 15). God promised to restore them like the rain restores the earth (6:1-3). Ultimate restoration will be fulfilled at the Second Coming. (Walvoord 1990, 284)

Here is a key to remember as you go about studying the Bible. As it was written, it was originally intended to be read aloud. There were no chapter and verse divisions. As you read, be aware of what the context of the section you are studying really is. If you think there is a problem forcing a verse with a different thought in with everything else the author has just said leading up to it solely because of chapter or verses divisions, you might be right; it might be a new thought altogether. Read it to yourself out loud.

We have a standing invitation from the author of this book to ask Him to provide us guidance and direction as we read and study.

There are times that perhaps the best way to get at the sense of what it is we are working at understanding in the scriptures is to listen to an audio book of the Bible. Many of them do not have chapter and verse references at all.

My Father-in-law told me that he got more out of his Bible reading when he was forced to listen to an audio version after he lost most of his eyesight from macular degeneration. He heard the text read without chapter or verse references.

The important point to remember is we have very real help available to us in the person of the Holy Spirit, the author, and the one who wants us to understand what is in the text.

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (NKJV)

It is when we hit sections such as this one, that as we study, we have the opportunity to remind Him of His promise to us, to teach us all things.

It is at that point we can ask Him to do as He promised and teach us all things, to open up the scripture for us. Then we allow Him to teach us through the Holy Spirit what it is that the Spirit originally inspired the author to write down in the first place.

This is what makes Bible study so cool. The author talks to us personally today and tells us what he meant in the text. “Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12, NRSV)

Hosea 5:15–6:3

“I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their distress they will search for Me.” “Come, let’s return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him. So let’s learn, let’s press on to know the LORD. His appearance is as sure as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, As the spring rain waters the earth.” (NASB 2020)

The English translation from the NASB gives you no hint as to who is doing the talking once we get to verse 1. Hundreds of pages have been written conjecturing as to just who is doing the speaking. Is it God, or Hosea, or a debauched Israel, or a remnant of Israel, or a straw man being argued to those who need to hear?

The Septuagint, translated from the Hebrew into the Greek around 200 BC provides the following giving us the sense that the rabbi’s leaned towards. It is about Israel, the Northern Kingdom.

Hosea 5:15–6:3

“I will go and return to my place until which time they are destroyed, and they will seek my face. In their affliction they will rise up early toward me, saying, ‘Let us go and return to the Lord, our God, because he has snatched away, and he will heal us. He will strike, and he will bandage us. He will restore us to health after two days; on the third day we will rise and live before him, and we will know; we will seek to know the Lord. Like the sure-to-come dawn we will find him, and he will come to us like the early and late rain comes to the earth.’” (Lexham Press 2020, Hosea 5:15 - 6:3)

Clearly, those who are speaking are the remnant of Israel at the end of the age. “They will say,” looking back at the context, it has been about Israel, and it still is and that is who is talking. We are being given a preview of what the remnant of Israel will be saying when they turn to Messiah at the end of the age.

There is one more version we can look at as well and that is the Targums. This is the Aramaic translation.

Hosea 5:15–6:3

“I will remove my Shekinah. I will return to my holy abode in heaven, until they realize that they are guilty, and petition me. When they are in distress they will seek my favor. They will say, “Come let us return to the worship of the Lord: for he who struck us will heal us; he who brought destruction upon us will relieve us. He will give us life in the days of consolations that will come; on the day of the resurrection of the dead he will raise us up and we shall live before him. And we shall learn and strive to know the fear of the Lord. Like the light of the morning which shoots forth when it comes out, so he will bring blessings to us like strong rain, and like the latter rain that saturates the earth.”” (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1990, Hosea 5:15-6:3)

Again, signals pointing us to the end of the age, the remnant and that point in time after the Tribulation when the OT saints are resurrected.

Let’s pick back up on verse 15 which we began to examine last time we were together.

As we examined last time, verse 15 points to that time yet in the future when the nation of Israel, as one, turns towards their Messiah and ask Him to come and save them.

Leading up to verse 15 was the recitation of charges against the people, and they were quite detailed. Verse 15 begins, for us, a glimpse of the grace of God and His heart for His people.

But He is done with them for now. They will get what they want. Paul outlined this.

Romans 1:24–25

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.” (NRSV)

For Israel, God tells His people that due to their sin He is returning to heaven for awhile, They will get what they wanted and the consequences that go along with it. But He is not done with them yet.

What the announcement of Yahweh’s withdrawal does in effect is to interpret Yahweh’s wrath in such a way that the experience of punishment becomes an invitation to penitence. It introduces a constant theme of Hosea that God in his anger against his people’s sin ultimately seeks their reconciliation. (Mays 1969, 92)

We see from the use of the term, discipline, that the intent of God is not to destroy His people, but as Hosea did with Gomer, to see repentance and a return to faithfulness.

To accomplish this, there will be a personal envoy sent direct from the throne room, a member of the family actually, to provide the means for what is hinted at in verse 15 to take place. Meanwhile, various ambassadors have been sent and others are to be sent all bringing the same integrated message from God to His people...the need to repent. Thus verse 15. Unfortunately, Israel did not realize their guilt when Messiah came the first time and rejected Him.

In the midst of all the darkness of sin and the impending judgment of the consequences about to come on those who have engaged in the sin, we find grace and light. We are told what to do to make things right.

Step One – Acknowledge that we are sinners. For Israel, that was to acknowledge their guilt. That is an event that is yet to happen for them as a nation, but will take place soon, per Zechariah 13:9. For us, it is admitting that we are sinners. This is an agreement with the diagnosis that God has already made about our condition and the reason why He has provided a solution for us.

Step Two – Seek His face. For us today, this is incredibly simple thanks to what Jesus Christ has achieved for us on the cross.

The goal is restoration, not destruction.

Hosea loves Gomer. YAHWEH loves Israel. There is no doubt about that. But like Gomer, their lifestyle was one that must change. That takes tough love. The question comes up more than once from those who study the scripture about the fairness of God when He does judge and discipline His people as well as others. The intent is for us to come into our right minds and seek Him.

He made us, He knows us, and He knows how stubborn we can be. For some of us it, did not take much to show us our need for Him. Then there are those of us who needed a bit more encouragement.

Yes, stubbornness is a factor.

You and I as believers have responded to the Holy Spirit who showed us the truth of who God is and what Christ did for us on the cross. Because of that, we have placed our trust in the accomplished work of Jesus Christ and now exercise believing loyalty in Him. We have been given the Holy Spirit as a down payment of coming redemption to dwell in us forever. He helps us with the transition. Why? Because it is tough to go from being a rebel in cahoots with the enemy to a loyal soldier and adopted child of the King. We have recognized His grace as outlined in Hosea 5. Paul translated this into action steps for us.

Romans 10:9–10

“If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.” (GNB)

Seeking God’s face is done by praying to Him. The prayer is simple.

Lord, forgive me, I agree with you that I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sin and then rose from the dead. Jesus be the Lord of my life.

That’s it. It is no more complicated than that.

Hosea 5:15

“I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their distress they will search for Me.” (NASB 2020)

Israel will do this in the future as they recognize their Messiah and ask Him to rescue them (Zechariah 13:9). He will return from His place at that time, Zechariah outlined the actions to be taken by God on behalf of His people and Jeremiah outlined what comes next.

From the Targum (Aramaic translation) of Zechariah.

Zechariah 14:3–5

“And the Lord shall reveal himself and shall do battle with those nations as in the day when he did battle by the Red Sea. And at that time he shall reveal himself in his might upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall be split in two to the east and to the west by a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall be torn away to the north and half of it to the south. And the valley of the mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall extend to Azal; and you shall flee just as you fled before the earthquake which came in the days of Uzziah king of the tribe of

the house of Judah; and the Lord my God shall reveal himself, and all his holy ones with him.” (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1990, Zech 14:3-5)

Jeremiah 29:11–14

“For I know what I have planned for you,’ says the LORD. ‘I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope. When you call out to me and come to me in prayer, I will hear your prayers. When you seek me in prayer and worship, you will find me available to you. If you seek me with all your heart and soul, I will make myself available to you,’ says the LORD. ‘Then I will reverse your plight and will regather you from all the nations and all the places where I have exiled you,’ says the LORD. ‘I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.’” (NET)

What we see happening to the remnant in verse 15 is exactly what Hosea outlines for us and then Paul added to. They repent. They come to their senses. They agree with God and His assessment of their predicament.

The outline has not changed.

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

Coming to Christ is no more complicated than that.

For some of us, we came to Him during a time of distress and for His people, at the end of the Tribulation when they do so, it will indeed be a time of distress.

Hosea 6:1

“Come, let’s return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.” (NASB 2020)

As Messiah responds to the prayers of Israel who has, in the distress of the battle of Armageddon and the Beast attempting to fulfill the goals of Satan with genocide of all Jews on the planet, we hear this from the nation, as one. “Both the command to return to the Lord, and the promise that the Lord will raise His smitten nation up again, and quicken them anew with His grace.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 63)

God has judged for sin in that He has torn and wounded (4:14). But as the great physician He will heal, bandage, revive and raise them to spiritual health. His purpose is that they might live before Him, apparently in fellowship. (Rosscup 2008, 1296)

Now comes a prophetic word answering the question, “how long?”

Hosea 6:2

“He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him.” (NASB 2020)

Is this a reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Some scholars believe that is a possible interpretation of this prophecy.

Jewish rabbis though have seen something else, something that more closely follows what we have seen take place historically. In the Babylonian Talmud we see that this was interpreted to mean not days, but thousands of years instead.

Babylonian Talmud

Said R. Qattina, “The world will exist for six thousand years and be destroyed for one thousand, “as it is said, ‘And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day’ (Is. 2:11).”

Abbaye said, “It will be desolate for two thousand years, as it is said, ‘After two days will he revive us, in the third day, he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight’ (Hos. 6:2).”
It has been taught on Tannaite authority in accord with the view of R. Qattina: Just as at the advent of the Sabbatical Year the world will lie fallow for one out of seven years...so it is with the world. A thousand years will the world lie fallow out of seven thousand years, as it is said, “And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Is. 2:11), and Scripture says, “A Psalm and song for the Sabbath Day” (Ps. 92:1)—a day that is wholly the Sabbath.

And Scripture says, “For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when they are past” (Ps. 90:4). [A day stands for a thousand years.] (Neusner 2011, Sanhedrin 11.1, 1.88 A 520)

The whole expression implies a short indefinite time; as we say, After two or three days. (Drake 1853, 109)

Referring back to verse 15, God has returned to heaven after disciplining Israel. He promises to return, but only when Israel finally decides to be serious about the relationship. The steps needed to have that take place are provided and will indeed be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation. The remnant of Israel will indeed return to the Lord, but how long is this going to be before that happens? We are told 2 or 3 days, but the rabbis look at that as thousands of years, not days. They are interpreting days consistent with God’s view of a day in Psalm 90:4. Something Peter makes clear for us.

2 Peter 3:8–9

“Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (NET)

Adam did indeed die in the day he sinned. “Then the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat fruit from every tree of the orchard, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die.”” (Genesis 2:16–17, NET)

If we are to take that as a possible interpretation, then we see here in Hosea the prophetic length of time that Israel will be out of the land. “It will come “after two days” (after the two 1000-years-long prophetic days of the church age), “in the third day” (the Millennial day).” (Gingrich 2004, 20)

Here is the thing, we are seeing the first phase of that return, the return in unbelief, taking place right in front of our eyes today. The clock is ticking.

Ezekiel talked about this return in Ezekiel 37. It begins with him being taken to a valley filled with dry bones. Bones which had been there for a very long time. The imagery is that of people without hope of ever coming back together again. But there is what we have just read in Hosea 6:2. God’s grace is limitless, and we are about to see that in action.

Hosea 6:2

“He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him.” (NASB 2020)

Ezekiel picks up in Ezekiel 37.

Ezekiel 37:1–10

“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.” (ESV)

These passages from the prophet Ezekiel describe in detail the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. He declares that the Jewish people will come out from “among the nations,” alluding to the fact that the Jewish people were dispersed worldwide. Secondly, God is rescuing these returning Jews from a horrifically grave Holocaust-type condition. (Salus 2013, 41)

The Lord explained to Ezekiel that the bones represented the whole house of Israel (cf. 36:10). The Israelites were saying that they were like dry bones: they had been dead for a very long time spiritually as well as physically (Hosea 5:15). They had no hope of life in the future; they had lost all hope of becoming a nation again or of seeing God’s promises to them fulfilled literally. The Lord had cut them off completely; the bones were separated from each other, and the Israelites were scattered over the earth. Consequently, Ezekiel was to prophesy to them that the sovereign Lord would open their graves, cause them to come up out of their graves, and bring them back into the Promised Land. Then they would know that He is God. (Constable 2003, Eze 37:11)

After 2 days, in reality, 2000 years or so after the rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah (Matthew 12:24), Israel is in the process of being regathered from nations around the world, but in unbelief.

There is a promise of a physical restoration as well as a promise of a spiritual restoration.

Did you notice it is a two-phase process?

First the bones gather together physically, but the breath, the spirit is not in them. That happens later, when Ezekiel prophesies to it in Ezekiel 37:14.

Even though the house of Israel felt forsaken, they were not. They were still His people, and this speaks to His faithfulness more than theirs. Despite all they had done to rebel against Him, God would still deliver His people from the nations in which they were exiled and lead them back to their land. He is not acting because they were good but because He is, which should give all of us hope. (Dowden 2015, Kindle Locations 3940-3943)

How long did it take for Israel to become a nation?

The restoration —the flesh being put on these bones that have come together— was the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel on May 15, 1948. For the first time in history, a people scattered and separated from each other for two thousand years came back together and reformed their nation in the homeland of their forefathers. That is the only time in history that has ever happened. (DeYoung 2012, Kindle Locations 930-933)

Two days or so.

And when Israel was to return, per Zephaniah, they would speak Hebrew.

Zephaniah 3:9

“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.” (ESV)

The official language of Israel today, Hebrew.

Are we witnessing the fulfillment of Hosea 6:2 today, already but not yet? Yes, we are.

Hosea 6:3

“So let’s learn, let’s press on to know the LORD. His appearance is as sure as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, As the spring rain waters the earth.” (NASB 2020)

In verse 15 we saw the call to repentance and the outline of what that looked like. We saw how Paul expanded on it yet the message, thanks to Jesus, remained simple to comprehend and embrace.

Verse 1 Called on the remnant of Israel to return to the Lord and with that, those who have an ear to hear of the nations as well.

Verse 2 answered the question of how long for Israel and for us.

Then we come to verse 3. As believers now, Israel is to learn how to know the Lord. These are His people, but they are, as a nation, now very new believers and must learn what this all means. At the end of the age, this means they are now all filled with the Holy Spirit, as promised elsewhere in the Old Testament for His people.

When we first come to Christ, we have the same challenge before us as well. We too must learn what this new life is all about. The opening phrase “so let’s learn” is important. It implies that something has taken place that changes us. Priorities have shifted.

We have personally experienced the grace of God in our life and our sin has been forgiven. We are free from sin and the Holy Spirit has entered us. We have new life. Everything changes and now we want to know what His word says. We want to learn about Him because the more we learn about Him, means we get to know Him better. It is a relationship after all.

For Israel, that is the big difference. Before, it was rote ritual with no meaning behind it as the leadership had stripped all of that out. For the remnant, for those who have witnessed Messiah save them. They want more.

Hosea 6:1 – 3 spells out just how God has poured His grace out on His people at the end of the age. Grace now poured out on the same people He was discussing earlier in the terms of discipline and judgement.

There are 9 things that God says He will do for His people as they come back to Him. These 9 things are not just limited to Israel either.

God’s Grace in Action

God will:

1. Heal and protect Israel (Hosea 6:1)
2. Bandage the wounds (Hosea 6:1)
3. Revive Israel and bring them back to the land (Hosea 6:2)
4. Raise Israel up (Hosea 6:2)

5. Save Israel and they will live before Him (Hosea 6:2)
6. Teach Israel to know Him, they will Spirit filled (Hosea 6:3)
7. Give Israel a new beginning (Hosea 6:3)
8. Be the source of physical and spiritual life for Israel (Hosea 6:3)
9. Meet all their needs (Hosea 6:3)

As we come to Christ, we become part of His family. We are told we are adopted meaning; He is now our brother. God is our father, Jesus Christ is our adopted brother, and the Holy Spirit lives in us. Wow!

Hebrews 13:5

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”” (NKJV)

Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” (NKJV)

Galatians 4:4–7

“But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God’s sons and daughters. To show that you are his sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out, “Father, my Father.” So then, you are no longer a slave but a son or daughter. And since that is what you are, God will give you all that he has for his heirs.” (GNB)

Ephesians 1:3–11

“Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters—this was his pleasure and purpose. Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, which he gave to us in such large measure! In all his wisdom and insight God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head. All things are done according to God’s plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning.” (GNB)

For Israel, the call stretching into the end of the age is to learn how to know the Lord. Why? Because His appearance is as sure as the dawn and when He does appear, everything changes.

When Israel prays for rescue, He answers and as we learned from Isaiah, even then they will be surprised at His appearance.

Isaiah 63:1–6

“Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?— “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth.”” (NKJV)

Earlier, Hosea had referred to God's departure (5:15). Now he speaks of God's return. He will come like the warmth of the sun. He will come like the refreshment of rains in a hot country. A new season will come into their lives. It will be like sunrise. It will be like the freshness of spring rains. (Eaton 1996, 102)

Jeremiah 38:31–34

“Look! The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “and I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I established with their fathers on the day I seized their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not remain in my covenant, and I neglected them,” declares the Lord. “For this is my covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord. “In giving, I will give my laws into their mind, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will become a God for them, and they will become a people for me. And each one will not teach his fellow citizen, or each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord!’ because everyone will know me, from the smallest of them to the greatest of them, because I will be gracious to their injustices. And I shall not remember their sins any longer.” (Lexham Press 2020, Jer 38:31-34)

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