

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

EZEKIEL 36:24-36, 37:21-24

If you begin in Genesis 1:1, and just read through the Bible, by the time you get to Ezekiel 36:24, you've read 837 of the Bible's 1189 chapters - or 21,383 out of 31,103 verses. My point is, you've read 70% of the Bible.

Do the eye test... hold your finger at Ezekiel 36, and look at how much is before it and how much is after...

Ezekiel 36 is more than two-thirds of the way through the Bible and you haven't even read the life of Jesus.

And if you sum up the story from Genesis 1:1 to Ezekiel 36:21 it can be titled, "[From Babylon to Babylon.](#)"

After the global flood of Noah's day, God told Noah's descendants to scatter and multiply. Instead, the peoples of the Earth rallied together around a tower at Babel.

Rather than seek the one, true God - mankind turned to the stars for guidance. The people built a tower to the heavens - an ancient observatory. The leader of this coup d'état - the *lightning rod* was a man named *Nimrod*.

Nimrod convinced his followers that God was the enemy. He caused the people to fear God and the world He had created. Nimrod fashioned himself as a Savior.

And again, God had to intervene. He broke up the rebellion. God confused the languages and dispersed the tribes of humanity to separate corners of the globe.

The human family was the only creature made in God's image and likeness. God created us special and wanted our fellowship. But mankind chose to have nothing to do with God. *We rebelled with a vengeance - twice, before the flood and at the tower of Babel.*

Even when all God had in mind was humanity's best interests, man defied His authority and resisted His will.

That's why, after the rebellion at Babel, God changed tactics... Man's defiance boiled over under a man named **Nimrod**, in a land called **Babel**, and through a means, which was **fear**... But now God chooses a man of his Own, **Abraham** - takes him from Babel and brings him to **a new land** - and then teaches him, and his family, a new means by which to approach life - by **faith**.

God's response to Nimrod, and Babylon, and fear was Abraham, and the land of Israel, and a life of faith.

And for 2000 years God immersed Himself in loving, and nurturing, and training His people, the Hebrews.

He gave them His Law - it included commandments that protected them morally, and showed them how to love themselves... rituals and sacrifices that taught them symbolically how to love God... and laws specific to their civilization that showed them how to love each other...

And not only did God give them His Law. He gave them Himself. He came tangibly to live among them...

The eternal, Almighty God who spills over skies and holds galaxies in His palm, did the unthinkable. He made His home

among these people. For 400 years God lived in a tent - for another 400 or so years it was a Temple.

Amazingly, the Creator God had His people, Israel, build a Temple in Jerusalem. He called it “His footstool.”

The Temple was *a temporal home for God’s eternal glory*. For over 2000 years God’s headquarters on Earth was the family of Abraham and the Temple in Jerusalem.

And God made incredible promises to these people.

If they obeyed His Law, God promised to bless them abundantly. The land they inhabited would be fruitful. He would spare them diseases. In their battles He would grant them victories. God would see to it the family of Abraham was the most prosperous nation on the planet.

And to a large degree, this is what happened during Israel’s glory years. Under King David and Solomon she rose to great heights. Israel became a mighty nation.

And God made even greater promises. His prophets predicted that one day Israel would be *a global kingdom with an eternal king*. God promised King David that his heir would sit on his throne forever. The promised ruler was given the name “Messiah” or “Anointed One.”

But God made other promises too. If His people disobeyed His Law and rebelled against His grace, He promised that judgment would follow them. He wouldn’t give up on them, but He wouldn’t tolerate their sin either.

Like a dad who spanks his kids, God would discipline His people, Israel, and steer them back to Himself.

And this outlines most of the 2000 years of Hebrew history - from Abraham leaving Babel for the promised land; to Ezekiel's day when we find Israel being taken to Babylon in captivity. Over and over the Jews rebelled against God's Law, follow after idols, and God would raise up oppressing nations to spank His rebellious kids.

God loved Israel, and wanted the best for them, but until they admitted their wicked ways and turned back to Him, God was forced to make things hard on His people.

If you were reading your Bible from Genesis to Ezekiel the last few books would've hammered home this point.

Isaiah and Jeremiah are big books that cover *warning after warning* and *judgment after judgment*. They were written at a time when the rebellion of God's people had reached an apex. Over and over they chased after idols.

Despite God's pleadings, His blessings, His overtures of love and mercy, the Hebrews hardened their hearts.

We pity the Hebrew people because we see their history from a human viewpoint, and wonder what anyone could do to deserve such utter hardships...

But if we saw their journey from God's perspective we would marvel how anyone could be so determined to insult God's honor and to break God's heart. *How could God be so loving to Israel, and Israel so mean to God?*

The book of Jeremiah and the first 35 chapters of Ezekiel repeat this story. God warned and warned...

Finally the messenger came... Ezekiel was in Babylon when a herald reached him, and delivered the news that Jerusalem was razed to the ground - the Temple, God's footstool, had been burned and was no more - and the remainder of the Hebrews were in shackles... on their way to Babylon to join Ezekiel in exile and captivity.

What an awful irony. A chosen people who could trace their roots all the way back to Babylon, had been given an opportunity to come out of the land of idols - know the one, true God - and become a great nation *before Him* and *in the eyes of the world*. But because of their sin they failed, and ended up right back where they started.

When Jerusalem fell to the invading Babylonian army, and their king was deposed - hauled off to Babylon in chains - a chill settled over the more knowledgeable rabbis. Now a son of David no longer ruled in Israel.

Had God's promises failed? What about the worldwide kingdom and the eternal King he had promised? The rabbis familiar with these promises were left to wonder.

Psalm 137 was written by a Jew living in Babylon during this time. Tears stained the page as he wrote...

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows... For those who carried us away captive asked us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth..." But they answered...

"How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill..." In

Babylon the Jews found tolerable treatment. They were allowed to live free and prosper.

But there was a longing inside to return home. They'd left promises unfulfilled - blessings unrealized.

The Hebrews who were uprooted and taken to Babel lived lives of regret. They had blown their opportunity.

Here's why they wept... Here's why their hands didn't play and their voice couldn't sing a joyful song - they assumed God was finished with them... not so!

In their darkest hour, God shined His brightest light!

Imagine, a professional baseball player enduring the worst season of his career. The poor guy is hitting 125, has 0 home runs, and 100 strikeouts. His defense is so bad, he prays for the batter to hit it to anyone but him.

This player expects to be released any day.

But instead, what if the owner of the team comes to him on his worse day and offers him a raise? Rather than cut him, *he promises him a brand new contract!*

This is what God did for His people, Israel. At their lowest of lows, He offers them a raise - *with benefits!*

This is how God responds to Israel's remorse and deep longing. He makes them a new promise...

Though separated by 900 miles - two prophets - Jeremiah, amid the ruins of Jerusalem, and Ezekiel, by the rivers of Babylon - announce the **new covenant**.

And if you keep reading, this becomes the theme of the Bible's last lap - the last 30%... Realize, more than two-thirds of your Bible is the story of mankind's failure.

First, of all the nations - then God's chosen people. Both failed to savor the sweet mercies of a loving God.

But God gives it another try! *And after all the many attempts He made with Israel, why would this time be any different?...* Well, welcome to the wonder of all wonders! This new covenant was a better covenant.

It was a promise so great, so merciful it's hard to fathom. **The last third of your Bible is the miracle called *Christianity*.** It's the story of God's willingness to launch a new covenant when the old one had faltered. It's about His relentless faithfulness to Israel and mankind!

Read with me two passages from Ezekiel 36-37 that describe God's New Covenant... The first is 36:24, **"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.**

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.

I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. Not for your sake do I do this,” says the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!”

‘Thus says the Lord God: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate.

I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.”

And in 37:21, “Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their

transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant (a reference to David's heir, the Messiah) shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them."

While the Jews were in Babylon God cut them a new deal. It consisted of a three-fold promise... *Israel will be **regathered** to their land... Spiritual life will be born, or **regenerated** in their hearts... And a King will come to **re-establish** David's throne and kingdom to Israel.*

Here's the rest of your Bible... a **regathering** of the Jews to the land - a **regeneration** of hard hearts - then the **re-establishment** of God's kingdom on the Earth.

And notice the order... God **regathers**... then He **regenerates**... then He **re-establishes** His Kingdom...

It's an over simplification, but it can be helpful to look at the remaining third of the Bible this way... the rest of the OT shows how God **regathers** the Jews... the NT is how He **regenerates** our hearts... and Revelation, as well as portions of the Prophets, describe how God is going to **re-establish** His political kingdom on the Earth.

This is what the famous vision at the beginning of Ezekiel 37 is all about. The prophet sees a valley full of dry bones. Suddenly, the bones begin to come together. *The hand bone is connected to the arm bone, the arm bone is connected to the shoulder bone, etc.*

After God assembles the skeletons muscle and flesh cover them... But they still have no breath!

This is Israel today... Jews have and are returning to their ancient homeland... **And they have muscle!...**

In fact, if the US keeps depleting our military we might have to call on Israel for help. I saw this T-shirt in Jerusalem. **"America don't worry, Israel is behind you."**

As in Jesus' day, in our today Israel is a miracle.

Dry bones have reassembled. A strong nation exists where until recently the Jews were in exile - *but there's still no breath.* And before *the Kingdom can come to Israel, God's Spirit has to invade the people's hearts.*

According to the NC, **spiritual revival is a prerequisite for the coming of the Messiah and God's Kingdom.**

And this was exactly the scenario in the first century AD. Under ancient Zionists like Zerubbabel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah many Jews came home from Babylon.

And first century Israel grew muscle. The Jews rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple. Israel had **re-gathered.** Now the Jews were expecting **the kingdom.**

Realize, the NC was the backdrop before which the gospel accounts unfolded. So much of what our Lord Jesus said - and so much of what the people around Him expected were all predicated on these promises.

The three-fold promise of the NC was Nicodemus' mindset in John 3, when he came to Jesus by night...

It was the first “[Nick-at-Nite](#).” Nicodemus was a respected Jewish scholar, schooled in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Rabbi Nicodemus was thinking [New Covenant](#). He had Kingdom expectations.

Understand his logic... Israel was [re-gathered](#) to the land... In his mind the renewed zeal for the Law exhibited by the Pharisees must be [this new heart](#).

In Nicodemus’ thinking, the Jews were *regathered*, their hearts *regenerated* - all that remained was for Messiah to overthrow Rome, and *re-establish* God’s earthly kingdom. Jesus knew the rabbi’s thoughts, and answers his question before he asks... “[Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.](#)”

In essence, Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, recall the three stages of the NC, and the order they happen...

Yes, there’s a [re-gathering](#), and there will be a [re-establishment](#) of the kingdom. These are the bookends. But in between there’s a spiritual [revival](#).

Nicodemus had mistaken *religious zeal* for *spiritual regeneration*... Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, “[Hold your horses! Rethink what you’re calling “a new heart.” Self-righteousness isn’t God’s righteousness.](#)”

In Nicodemus’ desire for God to change the political situation of his day he’d missed the spiritual transformation God wants to work in our hearts.

Jesus warns Nicodemus, that in his desire for *God’s Kingdom*, he shouldn't skip over *spiritual life*. “[A new heart](#)” is more than *moralism* or *legalism* or *religion*.

A person can be *moral* and *legalistic* and *religious* and *DEAD* - *spiritually dead to God*. You can major on the do's and don'ts. Mind your Ps and Qs. Cross your "T"s and dot your "I"s... And still be sinful to the core.

Religious people are often the proudest of people.

In fact, this was the sin of the first century Jews. They were proud of their pedigree. They were the children of Abraham, and they thought that alone made them right before God. But Jesus warns them, **"It's not about your first birth. You've got to be born again!"**

As Ezekiel puts it in verse 25, ***"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments."*** Under the OC, the priest took water on the end of a branch and sprinkled it on the people's **heads**.

But under the NC Jesus *spiritually sprinkles or cleanses our hearts*. Hebrews 10:22 says it this way, ***"having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience..."***

A Jewish priest sprinkling was a ceremonial rite, but Jesus sprinkles us deeper. He cleanses us inwardly.

The OC required a person to outwardly conform to a set of rules. It regulated behavior. But our problem is deeper than our behavior. It's said, ***It's not sin that makes us a sinner. We sin because we are a sinner.***

There's sin in our hearts. It's like the boy who was made by his teacher to sit in the corner - he was being disciplined. The little boy said, "I might be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside." You can conform our actions, yet have a sorry attitude.

This is why the Holy Spirit sprinkles us and cleanses us from the inside out. He plants in us a new nature. Ezekiel says God will "*put His Spirit within us.*"

He starts with a heart transplant. God takes out our *heart of stone* and replaces it with a *heart of flesh*.

Before we come to Jesus our heart is hard, callous, stubborn. But if we're truly repentant - humbled and broken before Him - what I call "*the subtle miracle*" occurs - you receive a soft, sensitive, willing heart.

Under the NC God's Spirit takes out our *defiant spirit* and replaces it with a *compliant spirit*. A Christian's most basic instinct is to love God and love others.

And this is my question to you this morning, *have you experienced this heart transplant?* Has God taken out your *heart of stone* and replaced it with a *soft, sensitive heart?* Have you been changed on the inside.

Is it now your strongest desire to love God and love others, or does your heart remain hard and selfish?

So what if you keep your nose clean, and play by all the rules. Some folks are good people only to make themselves look good - *not because they love God...* Don't be deceived, love is what matters to the Lord.

This is what *“a new heart”* spawns - love for God and love for others. The Pharisees were religion without love - *clean on the outside, but filthy on the inside*. And Jesus reserved His harshest condemnation for them.

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus, *“You must be born again!”* That’s more than turning over a new leaf, *just trying to do better*. It’s not *reformation* that God is after, but *transformation*. The NC is about you and I becoming something different than we were before.

Take a little pig... You can dress that piglet up like a boy - treat him like a boy - give him a boy’s toys - *but he’s still a pig*. And the first time he gets around a mud puddle he’s going to jump right in and do what pigs do.

You can’t betray his real nature. You can’t be something you’re not... The same is true spiritually!

I think this is the question people are asking today. *Who am I? People are searching for their identity. Am I a hipster, a geek, a jock? Am I Asian? Am I Hispanic?*

We see white people today pretending to be black? Black folks wanting to be white? Females who think they’re male. Males who think they’re female. We even see some men and women who want to be both.

Recently, tough guy Chuck Norris admitted, *“I too was once a male trapped in a female’s body... then my mother gave birth.”* (it’s a joke) *But there is an identity crisis in our culture!* People even play internet games where they assume a different identity and spend hours as their virtual selves. They

don't like who they actually are. People are trying to assume a new them.

But here's the reality for us all, **you'll never be happy with who you are until you're born again!**

The Bible teaches that we're born the first time in sin.

We're all born twisted, warped in some way. It's only when we're *born again* of God's Spirit that we discover who He meant for us to be, and His will for our lives...

And to help Nicodemus understand this truth, Jesus quotes Ezekiel 36, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus is a Jewish rabbi steeped in the OT.

That's why Jesus quotes Ezekiel 36:25-26. God will *"sprinkle clean water"* and *"put a new spirit within you."*
Nicodemus, you must be born of water and the Spirit.

Jesus goes on to tell Nicodemus in John 3, "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again." What does Jesus mean by *"flesh is flesh?"* He's saying *self-help, personal improvement, life coaching, trying harder, doing better* isn't enough...

Under the OC the Jews proved our own goodness is never good enough for God. We have to be born of His Spirit. Only God can change us, purify us on the inside.

Jesus ends his conversation with Nicodemus with a rebuke. A Jewish scholar should've known these truths.

Jesus takes the teacher to school, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”

And here’s the Master’s point... The New Covenant wasn’t ready to be fulfilled, not yet. Messiah won’t sit on the throne of David, and set up God’s earthly Kingdom, until spiritual revival comes to Israel first.

Before God’s Kingdom is established on the earth in a *tangible* way, it first has to come to us *spiritually*.

Remember Luke 17, the Pharisees asked Jesus, *we hear all this talk of the Kingdom of God, when will the Kingdom come?* Jesus replied, “The kingdom does not come with outward observation... the kingdom of God is within you.” The Jews won’t see God’s earthly, political Kingdom, until King Jesus rules in their hearts!

One day Jesus will come on a war horse, with sword drawn, to slay the wicked, and take over the kingdoms of this Earth. Revelation 19 says a name will be tatted on His thigh, it reads, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

But until that day, Jesus is “the King of hearts.”

The NC requires the Messiah to rule over us *spiritually*, before He returns to reign over us *politically*.

I believe all this was in Jesus’ mind the night before His crucifixion. He came to the world to take away our sin. On the cross He paid for our forgiveness. But that wasn’t His only purpose. *He was far more ambitious!*

In the upper room with His peeps, Jesus took the Passover Cup and gave it brand new meaning. He invited His disciples

then and now, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant...”

Understand, Jesus’ bold claim. His blood, His sacrifice activated the NC God promised His people.

Until the end of time, Jesus is the mediator of this covenant. To receive a new heart - *and be the person you were meant to be* - you have to come to Jesus!

After Jesus’ resurrection and before His ascension, He hung out on earth for 40 days. He held a Q&A for His disciples. *And guess what questions they asked?*

Acts 1:6 tells us, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” *Why that question?*

Well, the kingdom was next on the NC checklist. **Re-gathering**, check. **Regeneration**, check - at least the disciples were born again.... According to the NC all that was left was the physical coming of the Kingdom...

Jesus’ answer to the disciples was interesting... “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses...” He didn’t say God’s kingdom was right around the corner, but He didn’t say it wasn’t. You could call Jesus’ answer... “**a definite maybe.**”

Timing is the Father’s business. Power is the Spirit’s business. And being a witness is our business. So, *don’t stick your nose in somebody else’s business...*

But when you examine how Peter and the disciples preached, it was as if they believed Jesus' return and His physical Kingdom were on the immediate horizon.

On the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached to the Jews he spoke of end time events. In Acts 2:17 he quotes the Prophet Joel, "It shall come to pass in the last days..." *Peter thought it could be the end of age...*

He goes on, "I will show signs in the earth... blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD..."

I think Peter believed if the Jews had embraced Jesus that day, He would've returned immediately to eliminate their enemies and establish His Kingdom.

But *they* didn't - and *He* didn't... Instead God pushed "pause" on the NC and that's where we are today.

In a soccer match there's a rule known as "stoppage time." A match consists of 90 minutes of continual play.

But there are times when play stops - an injury, a fight, a goal celebration, a restart on a corner kick or a free kick. And a referee keeps track of the stoppage time. It's added back to the game after the official 90 minutes have expired. The problem though is it usually doesn't appear on the scoreboard. It's kept on the field, so you don't really know when the game will finish.

And here's what's happened with God's clock. When the Jews rejected Jesus, *God put us on stoppage time.*

He turned His attention to the Gentiles and offered them salvation. Paul says this was *the great mystery* not seen in the OT. Since the tower of Babel salvation had been a family business. It belonged to “**Abraham and Sons.**” Through the Jews God intended to reach everyone else. Yet after the Jews rejection of Jesus, God offered His salvation directly, to whosoever will!

It's like a single fellow planning the ultimate date night... *starry sky, soft music, candlelight dinner on a rooftop, luxurious setting, a gourmet meal...* But your date backs out at the last minute. *What will you do?*

Let it all go to waste? No! You'll pull out your little black book and call your second choice... or third choice... if need be! And that's exactly what God did!

In Luke 14 Jesus told the parable of a man who was hosting a banquet. Everyone he invited had an excuse why they couldn't come. So he told his servants to bring in “**the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind...**”

Don't be offended, but that's God's description of us.

We're the people nobody wanted - *the poor, the maim, the lame, and the blind* - but God included us!

Don't be too proud to think of yourself among the down-and-out - in need of grace. The folks God rejects are people who think they deserve His love. The *proud* and the *self-righteous* are the people who miss out.

And this is where we are today in God's plan... *we're in stoppage time.* His plans for Israel are on hold. And God is

reaching out to Gentiles with the spiritual provision of the NC.
We too can have a new heart!

We can discover who we were meant to be!

But here's how the match concludes... The NC has yet to be realized among the Jews. Their **regathering, regeneration, and re-establishment** is yet to be fulfilled. But it will be. In fact, we see it starting in our day!

Shortly after the Jewish leadership rejected Jesus, the Romans invaded Israel. In 70 AD they destroyed the Temple and scattered the Jewish people again.

And for the last 2000 years the Hebrew race has been scattered and dispersed. The Diaspora Jew, the wandering Jew, drifted from nation to nation, finding persecution and hardship everywhere they settled.

Until finally, around the turn of the 20th century the Jews started migrating home. In 1900, 35,000 Jews lived in the promised land. Today, there are 6.5 million Hebrews living among the mountains of Israel. As in Jesus' day the **regathering** of the Jews has begun!

And the Hebrews will eventually humble themselves and embrace their Messiah. In Romans 11:26 Paul predicts that in the end, **"All Israel will be saved."**

Ezekiel 38 tells us in the latter days, a Russian-Arab confederacy will invade Israel - and God will intervene.

He'll deliver His people with a colossal earthquake.

The magnitude of this earthquake will shake the Earth - but more impressive, it'll wake up the Jews from their spiritual

slumber. They'll embrace Jesus as their Lord. The **regeneration** of the NC will take place.

Zechariah 12:10 tells us, God "will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his **only son...**" Their hearts will soften. They'll realize the scars of Jesus were for them.

Which will pave the way for God's Kingdom to come!

The Lord will return with thousands upon thousands of His saints, and re-establish His Kingdom to Israel.

At His first coming the only crown Jesus wore was a crown of thorns. Instead of sitting on a throne, He hung from a cross. He prayed for His enemies... But when Jesus returns, He'll prey on His enemies. He'll judge the wicked, and reign from His throne, and govern the world as benevolent dictator! His Kingdom will come!

In the meantime, we're in stoppage time. We're not sure how much of it is left, but we know it's not much.

We're in *the latter days*. 70% of your Bible is done.

Add to that, the rest of the OT and the life of Jesus - another 29.9%. That means *only seconds* remain...

This is why Paul said to the Corinthians, "**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**" He urged them to seize their opportunity.

The Bible teaches us we live in exceptional times.

God is holding out an olive branch to sinners who have rebelled against Him... *Will you be saved?*