

# Comforting the Jewish People



## Longing for His Appearing (Part 10)
## by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme this week has been "Longing for His Appearing." I trust you've found it inspiring. If so, please let me hear from you. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief, personal note. Now, back to our theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

In my talk yesterday I shared with you one specific sign which Jesus said would herald the end of the present age and his return in glory. That was the proclaiming of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations in the whole world. For all of us who are committed Christians, this constitutes our number 1 priority and our number 1 obligation to the nations. This in turn points out to us one final way we should be preparing for Christ's appearing which has to do with our attitude to the Jewish people. I suggest that some of you who listen to me will never have considered this particular responsibility and yet it's a very real one, clearly endorsed by scripture.

In Romans 11:25-26 Paul sets these two things side by side: the proclaiming of the kingdom to all nations and then a message of comfort and hope for Israel. He says this:

> "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in."

Now I'm sorry to say that I think multitudes of Christians today are precisely what Paul said he hoped they would not be, that is, they're ignorant of this mystery. They do not understand the basic principles of God's dealing with Israel and with the church. So I'm going to read those words again.

> "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, 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."

Every time the Bible speaks about God's rejection of Israel, his judgment upon them, it always ends up with a phrase "until." The Bible always indicates it is not permanent, there will be an end to it. And so Paul continues:

> "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come from Zion: he will turn godlessness away from Jacob." (NIV)

So you see there two things are put together, the full number of the Gentiles has to come in and then all Israel will be finally and forever reconciled to their Messiah and to their God. But that's the order. The full number of the Gentiles must first come in, then all Israel will be saved. You see, if you go back to God's dealings in the New Testament, you'll see that the gospel of the kingdom was first offered to Israel and only to Israel. At one point Jesus said in his earthly ministry, "I'm not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But because Israel as a nation did not accept the offer of the kingdom, because they rejected the king and therefore the kingdom, then the offer was extended to all nations. And so, at the end of the gospels both in Matthew and in Mark we have these commands of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations, go and preach the gospel to all creation. Now, Jesus has never revoked those commands, they stand, they have to be carried out. But through the proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to all nations, the result will be achieved which Paul speaks about in Romans 11, the full number of the Gentiles will come in. The full number of the Gentiles cannot come in until the gospel has been proclaimed to all the Gentile nations.

In the book of Revelation we see more than one picture of the redeemed in which it makes it clear that the redeemed are drawn from all nations and tongues and peoples and races. They're going to be representatives of every race, every nation, every tongue in the redeemed. That means to say all those nations and peoples and tongues and races have to have the gospel proclaimed to them in order that some of them may qualify to be redeemed. So that purpose of God stands unchanged. We can delay it or we can expedite it. Delay it by disobedience, expedite it by obedience. But we cannot revoke it. It's God's purpose, not ours. But as we see the purpose of God for the calling in or the calling out of all nations through the proclamation of the gospel, we also see God's hand at work restoring Israel and preparing them to be ready to receive their Messiah when he returns. That's why it's so important that the gospel of the kingdom be preached to all nations because the end of the age cannot come and God's final purpose for Israel cannot be consummated until the church has been faithful in its task.

Meanwhile, as I said, a work of preparation is being done and must be done in Israel. I want to read now from Isaiah 40:1-3. Bear in mind that these words are addressed to Bible believing Christians because they refer to Israel. Therefore, in a sense, they are not addressed to Israel, they're addressed to another group who are told to do something for Israel. And I submit to you that the only group that qualifies for this is Christians who believe in the Bible and who acknowledge the God of the Bible as their God and who acknowledged the commandments of the Bible as being addressed to them. So this is what Isaiah says:

> "Comfort, comfort my people..."

The context makes it clear there "my people" is the Jewish people.

> "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins."

Now, that's a message of comfort to the Jewish people, a message that their long, long night of suffering is coming to an end, that Jerusalem is to be restored and the nation is to be restored. Then Isaiah goes on:

> "A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." (NIV)

You'll see that this message of comfort to Israel is also preparing the way for the Lord. That's one of the ways we prepare the way for the Lord.

Then a little further on in Isaiah 40 Isaiah gives us the contents of the message.

> "The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath [or the Spirit] of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall..."

Now what comfort is there in those words? They are true, we all acknowledge them. They are true but they are not words of comfort. But the comfort is in the final phrase that follows:

> "...but the word of our God stands forever." (NIV)

Let me read those two verses again in the light of that.

> "The grass withers and the flowers fall because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." (NIV)

Everything fleshly, everything material is destined to pass away, but in the midst of all of it there is one thing that stands eternal and unchanged and it's the word of our God. Now why is that a message of comfort for Israel? Because it's the word of God that promises them their restoration. So, as long as the word of God stands, Israel has comfort promised to them through that word.

I've had the privilege in past years of speaking to groups of Jewish people in many nations, in synagogues and other meeting places. Not being Jewish myself I've always approached them as a Gentile one who believes in Jesus as Messiah. And I've tried to explain to them why I have hope for the Jewish people, why I have words of comfort to offer them. And having introduced myself that way I explain how I came to believe in the Bible, as a professor of philosophy studying the Bible as a work of philosophy. I encountered God through it, came to believe in it as the inspired word of God, that always attracts the attention of Jewish people because they respect academic education. And then I explain that studying the Bible I came to find the promises of God for the restoration for the Jewish people and I will usually end such a talk by quoting a whole number of these clear prophecies, the restoration of Israel. And, the amazing thing is that I've discovered that at least 80% of the Jewish people today that I have met don't know those prophecies. They are ignorant of their own prophet. They will come up to me afterwards and say, "I didn't know that was in our Bible. Where is it? Can you tell me where to find it?" So we have this privilege of telling the good news of the promised restoration of Israel to the Jewish people, comforting them and preparing the way for the return of the Messiah.

Let me give you one of these precious words of comfort just to close in Psalm 102:12-13:

> "But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever: your renown endures through all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come." (NIV)

I tell the Jewish people in God's prophetic calendar there is an appointed time when he's going to arise and have mercy upon Zion, the Jewish people and their land. And then I tell them that time is now. We're living in that time. God is going to show you mercy and favor. He's going to restore you. You see, if we take this message to the Jewish people we can do something wonderful for ourselves. We can begin to repay part of the immense, in fact, uncountable debt that we owe to them.

Let me close with these reflections. Consider what we would have of spiritual inheritance without the Jewish people. We would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible and no Savior. No wonder Jesus said, "Salvation is from the Jews." Brothers and sisters, it's time we began to repay that debt and prepare the heart of Israel for the return of their Messiah.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another rich and exciting theme from the word of God.

## Radio Program

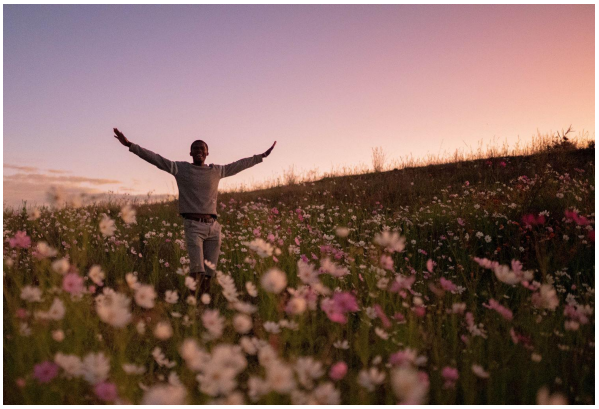
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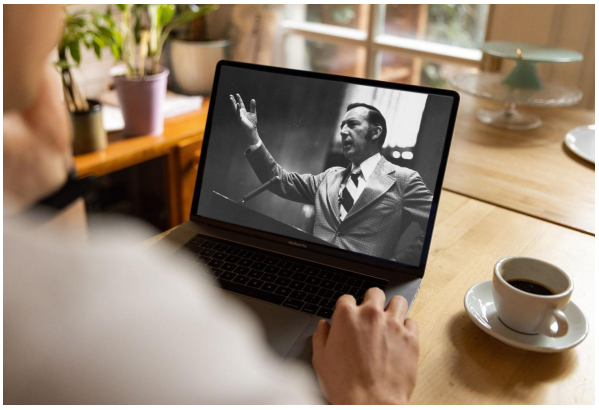
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