

Jayne O'Conner said, "*I grew up thinking that someone was watching over me. I feel a little less watched over now.*" She was talking about the Old Man of the Mountain, a 40-foot tall natural outcropping of granite ledges in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, which looked like the profile of an old man.

Two hundred years ago Nathaniel Hawthorn wrote a famous story about it: "The Great Stone Face." The image was on New Hampshire license plates and quarters and about a million souvenirs; it was the official state emblem. Sometime on May 1 or 2, 2003, in a heavy fog, the 700-ton face fell. It broke apart and slid down the mountain in the dark.

Steven Heath, one of the residents of nearby Franconia Notch, said, "*It's something that has been a part of our lives forever. At first it was disbelief. No one could believe he came down. It's like a member of your family dying.*"

Another man said, "*I'm absolutely devastated by this. It makes you wonder if God is unhappy with what is going on.*"

There are times when it seems the most dependable, reliable presence in your life disappears into the fog in the middle of the night. The next morning, that "mountain" you've depended on is gone, and "*it makes you wonder if God is unhappy.*"

Everything on earth changes... including the mighty continents. ... Australia... for example... drifts 70 millimeters to the northeast every year... and that journey is now starting to mess with systems that rely on pinpoint accuracy... specifically GPS.

Australian GPS was last updated in 1994... and the entire country has moved a little more than five feet since then. Much of our current technology relies on accurate GPS coordinates.

Everything on earth changes - but for believers there are three crucial foundational things that will never change: God doesn't change, His Word doesn't change, and His promises do not change. These are settled forever in the heavens.

It is this third understanding that we will focus on this morning in our study through Revelation – God's promises do not change. ... If God's promises to the people of Israel in the Old Testament were to change... (If God were to take them away from Israel... and somehow turn them into non-literal metaphors and allegories about the Christian church today...) ... then many would have a hard time trusting our New Testament promises... and I would probably be one of them.

But if those Old testament promises are true... and still apply as they were initially understood... then my trust in a Covenant-keeping God can be strengthened.

Well... that is my hope for all of us... as we continue our study in Revelation this morning. I hope that we will all deepen our trust that God will come through on every one of His promises to us... and we have some important promises to cling to. ... Many of you hold a tight grip on promises such as:

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for

good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

James 4:8 (ESV)

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Aren't these GREAT promises...?) ... This last one in Jeremiah is claimed by a lot of Christians that I know. But notice that God originally said it to His first covenant people... the Jews. If He did not mean it to them... why should we believe He would mean it for us...?

Well... it turns out that God did (and still does) mean it for the Jews. ...And because He is faithful to them... we can know that He is also faithful to us.

We are going to be looking through the lens of prophecy this morning and watching how God will bring His people (the Jews)... back to Himself. This is what ends the Tribulation... and bring the return of Christ to earth.

So... let's begin with God's promise that He is going to restore the Jewish nation to Himself. (Get ready to do a lot of Bible-thump'n with me through the Old Testament... this morning.)

Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they

look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

They will one day mourn over the realization that they killed their Messiah... and they will have pleas for mercy. ... In Jeremiah chapter 3... Jeremiah also prophecies that the Jews will return to the Lord... but he says something absolutely astounding about their return. He says that they will not have the ark of the covenant nor will they miss it. The essential part of being a Jew in the Old Testament... was their reverence for the ark of the covenant... (They won't need it... because they will be followers of Christ.)

Jeremiah 3:14-18 (ESV)

Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

God is going to restore His covenant people – the Jews – to Himself. And it is the events of the Tribulation... that will bring them back. The tribulation ends with the Armageddon Campaign – which we started looking at last week in Revelation chapter 16. Let's return to this passage... where we left off last week.

Revelation 16:12-16

The Armageddon Campaign will begin with this 6th Bowl Judgment of the Tribulation. This is the first stage (of 8 stages) that make up the Armageddon Campaign. You see it is not going to be a single battle... as it is often thought. It is a campaign of 8 stages. The first stage is what we just read... here in Revelation chapter 16 – The assembling of the allies of the Antichrist.

The Euphrates River will dry up... making it easier for the Antichrist to assemble his forces. The kings of the east... I explained last week... are probably Kings from Babylon... not the Chinese. (Every mention of the East in Scripture is a reference to Mesopotamia – which is where Babylon is.) Babylon will be the Antichrist's political center... where the 7 other kings who ruled during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation... ruled the world with him. Antichrist is now the supreme earthly king... and they have probably retained some of their kingly authority.

So these kings from Babylon (Antichrist and his secondary rulers) ... unrestricted by the Euphrates River... will assemble their troops in a place called Armageddon. ... This is not where they will fight. This is only where they will come together... and prepare for the bloodiest war the world has ever known. The fighting will happen someplace else. We will see WHERE in a moment.

Look how other prophecies describe this assembling...

Joel 3:9-11 (ESV)

Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into

spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD.

God is mocking them in their attempt to wipe out all the Jews... and prevent God from restoring Himself to them. The Antichrist is going to know that their being restored is a pre-requisite to Christ's return to rule. Antichrist doesn't want that to happen... so he tries to kill all the Jews. ... But God taunts Antichrist and all his forces saying "*Make sure you are well equipped... have all possible weapons... be sure that you turn your farm equipment into weapons of war...*"

This same taunting is also seen in Psalm 2 over this same gathering...

Psalm 2:1-6 (ESV)

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

Now... while Antichrist is away from Babylon with his forces preparing for war... stage 2 of the Armageddon Campaign will happen. Unprotected Babylon will be attacked and completely destroyed. All of Isaiah chapters 13 and 14... and all of Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 tell of this. (We don't have time to read all 4 chapters... they are quite lengthy... but let's take a peek at a few revealing sections...)

Isaiah 13:1-5 (ESV)

The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz

saw. On a bare hill raise a signal; cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles. I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones. The sound of a tumult is on the mountains as of a great multitude! The sound of an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The LORD of hosts is mustering a host for battle. They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the LORD and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

Isaiah 13:19-22 (ESV)

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

When Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians during Daniel's day... it did not fall because of a great battle. It was not sudden... like Sodom and Gomorrah. That was a gradual fall and decline into a ghost-town. No... Isaiah is describing a different event that has not happened yet.

Jeremiah 50:14-16 (ESV)

Set yourselves in array against Babylon all around, all you who bend the bow; shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she has sinned against the LORD. Raise a shout against her all around; she has surrendered; her bulwarks have fallen; her walls are thrown down. For this is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance on her; do to her as she has done. Cut off from Babylon the sower, and the one who handles the sickle in time of harvest; because of the sword of the oppressor, every one shall turn to his own people, and every one shall flee to his own land.

Jeremiah 50:21-27 (ESV)

“Go up against the land of Merathaim, and against the inhabitants of Pekod. Kill, and devote them to destruction, declares the LORD, and do all that I have commanded you. The noise of battle is in the land, and great destruction! How the hammer of the whole earth is cut down and broken! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! I set a snare for you and you were taken, O Babylon, and you did not know it; you were found and caught, because you opposed the LORD. The LORD has opened his armory and brought out the weapons of his wrath, for the Lord GOD of hosts has a work to do in the land of the Chaldeans. Come against her from every quarter; open her granaries; pile her up like heaps of grain, and devote her to destruction; let nothing be left of her. Kill all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come, the time of their punishment.

Jeremiah 51:58 (ESV)

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: The broad wall of Babylon shall be leveled to the ground, and her high gates shall be burned with fire. The peoples labor for nothing, and the nations weary themselves only for fire.”

Now here is why we believe the Antichrist is away from Babylon (and probably with his troops at Armageddon... when Babylon falls...

Jeremiah 50:43 (ESV)

“The king of Babylon heard the report of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain as of a woman in labor.

Jeremiah 51:31-32 (ESV)

One runner runs to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken on every side; the fords have been seized, the marshes are burned with fire, and the soldiers are in panic.

If he was in Babylon when it fell... Antichrist would not need a runner to come give him a report. ... He is somewhere else when it falls.

But just before Babylon falls... do you know what God is going to do...? He will do something very special for the Jews who are living in Babylon. He is going to warn them and encourage them to flee the city.

Jeremiah 50:6-8 (ESV)

“My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold. All who found them have devoured them, and their enemies have said, ‘We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the LORD, their habitation of righteousness, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.’ “Flee from the midst of Babylon, and go out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as male goats before the flock.

Jeremiah 50:28 (ESV)

“A voice! They flee and escape from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple.

So far in the Armageddon Campaign we have seen the troops gathered at Armageddon... and Babylon attacked and destroyed... (probably while they are away.) Now we are ready for stage 3 of this campaign. Antichrist and his forces will move South and attack Jerusalem.

Israel will hold out for quite a while. There will be massive casualties on both sides. But finally... after a hard fought and bloody battle... Jerusalem will fall. (But not before God allows many to escape to a place of protection in Edom... called Borzah... where many Jews have been gathering during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation and experiencing God’s supernatural provisions and protection.)

Stage three of the Armageddon Campaign is the Fall of Jerusalem. The Antichrist and his allied forces... instead of going after those who destroyed and pillaged Babylon... will turn toward Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:1-2 (ESV)

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

In the Battle for Jerusalem... God will energize the Israeli fighters... and they will initially look like the victors... striking down the enemy as quickly as a torch begins to burn up wood that is very dry.

Zechariah 12:4-9 (ESV)

On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.' "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem. "And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

After Jerusalem falls... Antichrist and his troops will go after the Jews who have been sheltered and protected by God at a place in the desert called "Bozrah." This is the fourth stage of the Armageddon Campaign.

First let me show you just a few of the prophecies about Bozrah (first in the Old Testament... and then what we have already seen in Revelation.)

Micah 2:12 (ESV)

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.

Revelation 12:6, 14 (ESV)

*and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.
... ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.*

But the Antichrist and his forces will come against them in that place...

Jeremiah 49:13-14 (ESV)

For I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a horror, a taunt, a waste, and a curse, and all her cities shall be perpetual wastes." I have heard a message from the LORD, and an envoy has been sent among the nations: "Gather yourselves together and come against her, and rise up for battle!

Hang in there with me... this is where it gets really exciting! We are now at the climax of the Tribulation. We are now ready for stage five of the Armageddon Campaign...

Antichrist and his forces look like they are going to crush Israel and finally wipe all Jews off the face of the earth. All hope for them is gone. They are

surrounded... out numbered... and with inferior military might... and weaponry. What are they are going to do...?

Stage five of the Armageddon Campaign will be the national regeneration of Israel. The leaders of Israel will finally recognize the reason why the Tribulation has fallen on them. ... Just as the leaders of the nation during Christ's day led the people to reject the Messiah... they are now going to lead the nation to accept His Messiahship... and to call on Him for help.

Hosea 6:1-3 (ESV)

“Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”

The Apostle Paul also wrote about this in his letter to the Romans...

Romans 11:25-27 (ESV)

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

Paul said that all Israel will be saved. You know what...? I am pretty sure that this is not hyperbole. “ALL” really means “every living Jew at that time.”

The second coming of Christ... Folks!... is going to happen... in response to the pleading of Israel for the Messiah to return and save them from their predicament of having the world's armies surrounding them.

Stage six of the Armageddon Campaign is Jesus' second coming. And when He comes... He does not first touch down at the Mount of Olives. The place He first comes to is Bozrah... to rescue them!

Isaiah 34:1-7 (ESV)

Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter. Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction. The LORD has a sword; it is sated with blood; it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom. Wild oxen shall fall with them, and young steers with the mighty bulls. Their land shall drink its fill of blood, and their soil shall be gorged with fat.

Isaiah 63:1-6 (ESV)

Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down

the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

Look how easily Jesus will slay the Antichrist. The Apostle Paul says that it will simply be by the breath of His mouth.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (ESV)

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

Now let's return to the Book of Revelation...

Revelation 19:11-16 (ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The final two stages of the Armageddon Campaign will be as Christ wipes out the armies of the Antichrist... These forces will be at Bozrah and many will be in the Valley of Jezreel... also called Armageddon... This will be extremely brutal. (We have already seen some of its description in our study of Revelation... when we were in chapter 14...

Revelation 14:20 (ESV)

And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

Finally... the last stage of Armageddon... is Jesus then going to Jerusalem... and ascending the Mt of Olives... in victory.

Zechariah 14:3-4 (ESV)

Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

... ..

We have looked at a lot of Scripture this morning. These are just a few of the many... that detail God's plan to bring the nation of Israel back to Himself. ... Don't let anyone tell you that God is finished with Israel. He isn't. He will be faithful to every one of the promises that He made to them... even though Israel has not been faithful to Him.

(LISTEN)... Has your faithfulness to God been lacking...? Please don't think that you have missed your chance... not yet... anyway. If you are still alive... you still have opportunity to place your trust in this promise-keeping God... Who offers you love... forgiveness... and the certainty of eternal life.

What He offers you today... He will extend as an offer to the Jews who will one day accept it. ... (All Israel will be saved!) ... Come and offer Him your life today. You do not have to live through the awful events of Tribulation. It is coming. God is working His plan that He has given to us in His Word. The next thing to happen is the Rapture... when Christ will come and take off the earth... those who believe and are alive at the time. Will you be included...?