ISRAELU

LOVE WHAT GOD LOVES:

SEEING ISRAEL THROUGH THE FATHER'S EYES

COURSE STUDY GUIDE

COURSE ONE | LESSON FIVE



I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER;
I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NO ONE
LIKE ME, DECLARING THE END FROM
THE BEGINNING AND FROM ANCIENT
TIMES THINGS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN
DONE, SAYING, MY PURPOSE WILL BE
ESTABLISHED, AND I WILL ACCOMPLISH
ALL MY GOOD PLEASURE.

ISAIAH 46:9-10



ISRAEL

Welcome to Lesson Five, *Isn't He Obvious? Why It's Difficult For Jewish People To See Jesus*

This week's study examines why Jesus's identity as Messiah isn't immediately evident to the Jewish people and highlights the believer's call to pray and witness, anticipating the full revelation of God's grace to Israel.

ISN'T HE OBVIOUS? WHY IT'S DIFFICULT FOR JEWISH PEOPLE TO SEE JESUS

IN ESSENCE

Jesus's identity is not obvious to the Jewish people. Divine and satanic strategies have partially and temporarily hidden God and the gospel message.

Satan has used antisemitism within the Church to persecute Jews, marring Jesus's image and historically presenting a negative testimony of His love to the Jewish community.

God has partially and temporarily hardened the hearts of the Jewish people to the gospel, a divine mystery that has veiled their recognition of Jesus as Messiah. This hiddenness is not entire, nor permanent, and one day the veil will be lifted from Israel's eyes, revealing God's face again.

Believers are called to partner with God in prayer and witness to make the Messiah irresistibly attractive to the Jewish people, anticipating the day when the veil will be lifted, and God's countenance and grace will fully shine upon them.

GETTING STARTED

Group leader, read the In Essence *summary as you begin your time together. This will help set up the direction for this lesson.*

As you open the group time, give everyone an opportunity to answer this question.

▶ **What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?**

Our experiences play a significant role in how we see the Lord. Attributes of His that are prominent for one person may differ for someone else. How have Israel's experiences affected the way most Jewish people see Jesus? We'll consider that in this week's lesson.

LESSON FIVE VIDEO

Group leader, stream the video teaching.

As you watch the video teaching, use the following prompts and space provided to record anything that stands out to you.

1. Jesus should be obvious, right?

2. Satan's role

3. God has been hiding His face from Israel and has caused a partial and temporary hardening of the Jewish heart to the gospel.

4. Isaiah wrote about the effects of the hiddenness, describing Israel as a people who have ears but can't hear, eyes but can't see.

5. Jesus, who perfectly reflects the face of the Father, was partially hidden.

6. God has kept a remnant of Jewish believers. The divine hardening is partial and temporary and in no way entire and permanent.

7. Zechariah wrote of a day, a time of an existential threat for Jerusalem, when the Lord will fight on Israel's behalf, His identity will be revealed.

8. **When we see the divine mystery involved here and recognize the forces working against the Jewish people, it should silence criticism and indifference and compel us to action.**

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Group Leader, read aloud the questions and prompts below and lead the discussion.

1. **Before this lesson, did you think Jesus's identity as the Messiah should be obvious to Jewish people? If so, based on what reasons?**

2. **The Joshua Project reports in 2024 that 95% of the worldwide Jewish population haven't heard the gospel. Why do you think efforts to share the gospel with them have been widely nonexistent?**

In the discussion this week, although it isn't the only factor to why it's difficult for Jewish people to see Jesus, we want to primarily discuss God's hidden face, because it is a widely unknown factor to most Christians.

3. **Read Deuteronomy 31:14-18.** This is not a conditional "If … then" statement, but a prophecy. What did God reveal Israel would do in the Promised Land?

   Read Isaiah 59:2. What caused the hiding of God's face?

4. **What do you think about the Lord's response of hiding His face from His people?**

5. **Through Isaiah, God speaks repeatedly of "My servant."** Sometimes the reference speaks of the people of Israel, and other times "My servant" is referring to the Messiah – the perfect servant from Israel. Isaiah 49:1-13 is one of the four "Servant Song" passages foretelling of Jesus. In verse 2, how is the Messiah described?

6. **Although Jesus is the exact representation of the Father, when He ministered on earth there was a partial hiding of His identity.** Read Matthew 13:10-15 and discuss why Jesus taught in parables to the larger crowds.

   Verses 14-15 show us the effect of the hidden face of God. These verses quote Isaiah 6:9-10. How were the Jewish people in the crowds described?

7. **Read Isaiah 64:5-12.** Discuss how Israel is described here. What are their questions in verses 5 and 12? Has the hidden face reality been a strict punishment?

8. **What do we learn about God's discipline of true sons and daughters in Hebrews 12:5-11?** How would you want to be treated by other believers during a season of divine discipline? What would you want people to remember about you and about the grace of God?

   How can understanding the hidden face of God affect your thinking toward and interactions with Jewish friends and family?

CONCLUSION

Jesus's identity as the Messiah is not obvious to the Jewish community today for several reasons, including God's hidden face. The partial and temporary hardening of the Jewish heart and mind to the truth of the gospel will one day be removed, by the grace of God. Until that great day, let there be compassion from our hearts as God's firstborn son undergoes a discipline not designed to destroy Israel, but to bring them to righteousness.

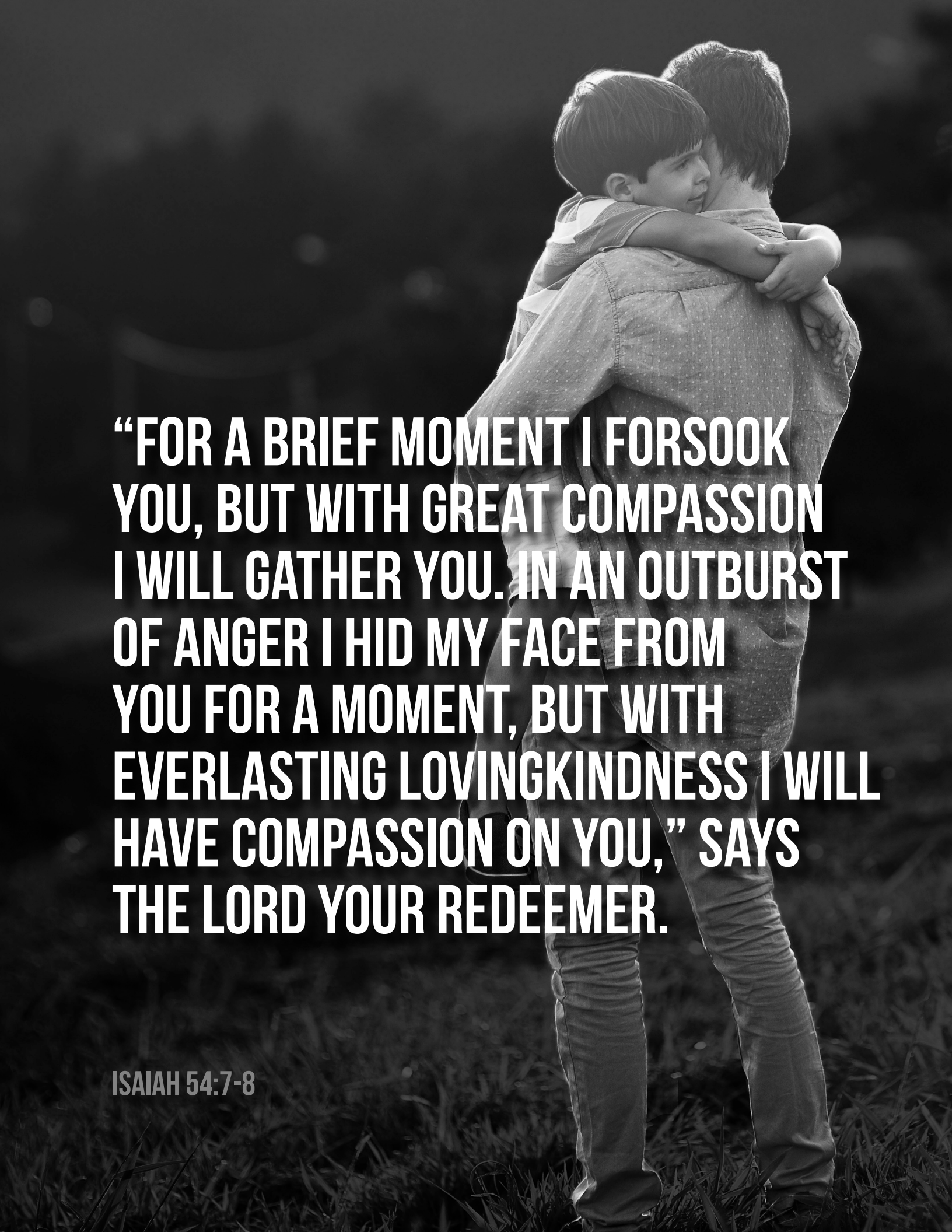
> *In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.* **Zechariah 13:1**

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you close your time together, see if anyone within your group has a need for prayer, and take a few minutes to cover those.

Pray that the spiritual veil covering the mind and heart of each Jewish person will be taken away. (2 Cor. 3:14-16)

Pray for a greater level of love and compassion within the Church to prioritize sharing the gospel of Jesus with the Jewish community.


“FOR A BRIEF MOMENT I FORSOOK
YOU, BUT WITH GREAT COMPASSION
I WILL GATHER YOU. IN AN OUTBURST
OF ANGER I HID MY FACE FROM
YOU FOR A MOMENT, BUT WITH
EVERLASTING LOVINGKINDNESS I WILL
HAVE COMPASSION ON YOU,” SAYS
THE LORD YOUR REDEEMER.
ISAIAH 54:7-8

PERSONAL STUDY FOR BETWEEN SESSIONS

This section is designed for your personal study to help you dig deeper into some of the themes from the teaching and discussion.

DAY ONE

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

One of God's names is *El Elyon* (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן), *God Most High*. It's here we learn that God is sovereign and rules over all.

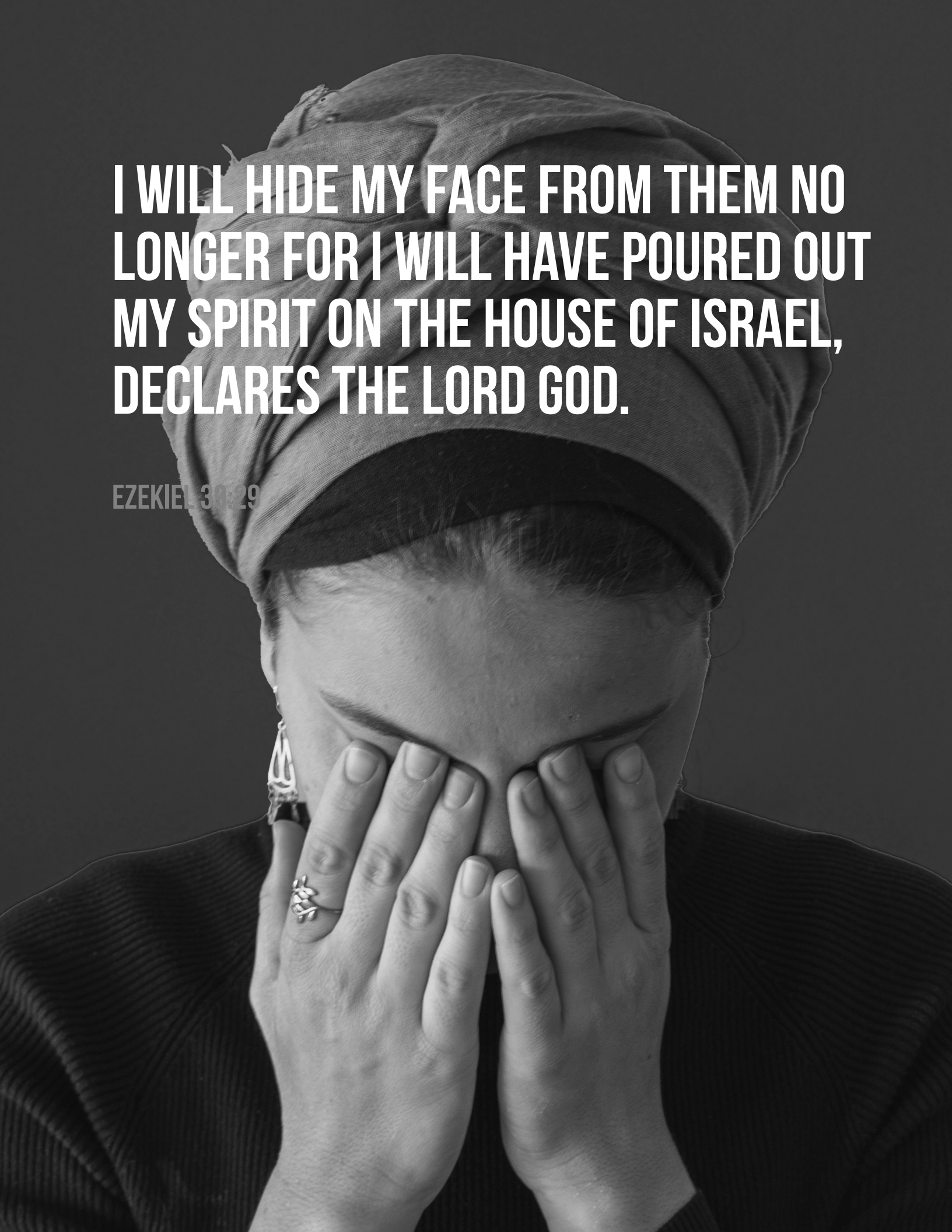
- Where do you turn when the past is overwhelming?
- Where do you run when there seems no way forward?
- Whose embrace is there when the wounds that pierce your heart are from someone trusted?
- Who will have an answer when evil seems to flourish, and nothing makes sense?

His name is *El Elyon*.

In this lesson, we considered hindrances the Jewish people have had in seeing Jesus as their Messiah. We're not surprised by Satan's influences, but God hiding His face from His people…what do we do with that?

Maybe you've experienced times that felt beyond what seemed fair, well past the threshold of pain. None of it made sense. The cards seemed stacked against you. Were you without help, or perhaps even hope?

Is there an Answer, a Strong Tower, we can run to and find help and peace?


I WILL HIDE MY FACE FROM THEM NO LONGER FOR I WILL HAVE POURED OUT MY SPIRIT ON THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, DECLARES THE LORD GOD.
EZEKIEL 39:29

What does the Bible say about *El Elyon*, or God Most High? Read the verses below and write out what you learn.

1. **Read Daniel 4:34-35.** After seven years of insanity and stripped of his authority and dignity, King Nebuchadnezzar was radically humbled and wrote this about El Elyon.

2. **Psalm 9:2-4, 9-10**

3. **Psalm 18:4-19**

> *"While it looks like things are out of control, behind the scenes there is a God who hasn't surrendered His authority."*
> *A.W. Tozer*

4. **Psalm 21:7**

5. **Luke 1:32:** What did Gabriel reveal about Jesus? Whose Son is He?

6. **Romans 9:14, 19-21:** What do you learn about God's sovereignty/authority?

REFLECTION

The sovereignty of God can seem at times like the good news and the bad news. In His sovereignty He has all power and will ensure we make it through to the other side of the trial, yet why did He allow such a thing to begin with?

The answer to the dilemma is simply to bow your knee to Him and rest. He will allow you to speak and hear your cry. He is not harsh. He's also not our equal. Our compassionate God is the eternal King who rules over heaven and earth and over the affairs of mankind.

7. **Job endured unbelievable pain and loss. Read Job 42:1-6.** What did he say about the things he could not understand? What do you learn from Job's example that can be applied to your life?

   Can you, like Job, declare the things you don't understand "too wonderful to know"? Is there an area of your life that you need to fully surrender, stop wrestling, and consider it too wonderful? If so, what is that area?

8. **In verse 5, what did Job's trials provide?** Have you also found this to be true in your life? If so, in what ways?

9. **How can laying hold of the truth of God's sovereignty and His name, El Elyon, or God Most High, affect your day-to-day, but also troubling times?**

FURTHER STUDY

This week's lesson highlights how both divine and satanic strategies have partially and temporarily hidden God and the gospel message from the Jewish people.

The lesson primarily emphasized God's sovereignty in hiding His face from the Jewish people. However, we cannot omit the influence of man's free will and fierce demonic strategies, which have hindered the Jewish people from recognizing Jesus as the Jewish Messiah.

The *In Essence* summary at the beginning of this lesson notes that "Satan has used antisemitism within the Church to persecute Jews, marring Jesus's image and historically presenting a negative testimony of His love to the Jewish community."

Sadly, the ancient hatred of antisemitism is still alive and increasingly prevalent in our day. In response to this, our team created a mini-series specifically to address this important issue.

For this week's *FURTHER STUDY* recommendation, we're included some bonus material for you to consider at your own pace. Check out this 4-part video series: ***Uprooting an Ancient Hatred: What You Need to Know About Antisemitism.*** You can download the full PDF notes for the mini-series HERE, and watch the videos on FIRM's YouTube channel at your convenience.

We know there's a lot of content here, but the topic is simply too important to leave out! So, if time doesn't permit at this point, save these videos and watch them later.

4-part Mini-Series: *Uprooting an Ancient Hatred: What You Need to Know About Antisemitism*

- **Part 1:** What is Antisemitism? Why the Rise in Jew-Hatred Today?
- **Part 2:** History of Antisemitism: Is this Part of Christianity?
- **Part 3:** Antisemitism Today
- **Part 4:** How Can the Church Fight Antisemitism?



TRACE GOD'S HAND,
TRUST HIS HEART.

THE NAME OF THE
LORD IS A STRONG TOWER;
THE RIGHTEOUS RUNS
INTO IT AND IS SAFE.

PROVERBS 18:10

DAY TWO

GOD'S MYSTERIES

The hidden face of God, the partial hardening of Israel, the Gentiles included into the family of faith…there are divine mysteries, the Bible tells us.

> *For I do not want you, brethren, to be uniformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* **Romans 11:25**

In the Greek, the word for mystery is *mysterion*, meaning a divine secret. It carries the idea of an undiscoverable truth, long hidden, but made manifest at God's choosing. It's a sovereign *El Elyon* who reveals His truth when and to whom He chooses.

Paul writes that we are not to be uniformed, other translations say "don't be ignorant," about truth now revealed. Now that the mysteries are revealed, we're not to live like we're unaware of them. According to the verse above, being ignorant of God's mystery concerning Israel's partial hardening can lead to being wise in our own eyes – in one word, pride.

The Old Testament doesn't speak a lot about mysteries, because that's where they are hidden, into the writings of the ancient prophets and psalmists. Daniel and Job tell us, though, who is the keeper and ultimate authority of the hidden things.

1. Read **Job 12:22 and Daniel 2:22 and write out what is said of God.**

There are several divine mysteries mentioned in the New Testament – truths now revealed by God that had been hidden in shadow form for ages. Below are some.

REFLECTION

Read these passages and note what mystery is mentioned.

- **Matthew 13:10-11**

- **Ephesians 1:9**

- **Ephesians 3:4-6**

There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries...
Daniel 2:28

- **Ephesians 5:31-32**

- **Colossians 1:25-27; 2:2-3**

- **2 Thessalonians 2:7**

God's purposes and plans, His Kingdom, the Messiah and His Church, even the opposition of evil in the last days, are all divine mysteries now revealed. And right alongside these supreme themes – is the mystery of Israel's partial and temporary hardening to the gospel and to seeing God's face.

So why would God cause the partial hardening to Israel? In the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, Moses recorded Israel's history and their future.

3. Read the following verses in Deuteronomy 32 and answer the questions.

- **Verses 9-11:** How is God's relationship with Israel described?

- **Verses 15-18:** What became of Israel (Jeshurun) over time?

- **Verses 19-21:** What would God do in response?

In verse 21 God said He would make Israel jealous with those who are not a people, meaning the Gentiles.

4. Compare this to Romans 10:19-20 and 11:11.

Interesting, isn't it? God has used the Gentiles coming to faith to provoke the Jews to a jealousy to want what Gentile believers have in Messiah.

In Israel's partial hardening, the gospel has come to the Gentiles, but it is not to stop there, but circle back to Israel again. Will you be part of that God-given purpose? Will you see Israel through the Father's eyes and love what He loves?

Deuteronomy 32:36, Moses wrote: For the Lord will vindicate His people, and will have compassion on His servants.

5. Read Deuteronomy 32:43. Who is to rejoice and why? What does this tell us is coming for ethnic Israel?



BUT YOU ARE A GOD OF FORGIVENESS, GRACIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE, SLOW TO ANGER AND ABOUNDING IN MERCY; AND YOU DID NOT ABANDON THEM.

NEHEMIAH 9:17

REFLECTION

We've looked at some divine mysteries revealed in the Bible, but we've each had personal mysteries in our lives. Things we've experienced, things we've seen…that have left us baffled and wondering, *Lord, what are You doing? Why?!*

Is there an answer for those mysteries in our lives? Remember that He is *El Elyon.* He's sovereign, He rules over all, and He's a loving Father. If we need to know, if we can handle the answer – He'll tell us.

6. What does He promise in Jeremiah 33:3?

7. What do you learn about the Lord's wisdom and ways in Isaiah 55:8-9?

The distance between the earth and the sun is 93 million miles. God's wisdom is far beyond that distance, but just think of that distance - would it be reasonable to believe that the answers to the mysteries and unexplained dilemma's we've experienced are (figuratively) tucked into the 93 million miles of His wisdom that is beyond us? There are answers to the unexplained, and you never know when *El Elyon* will see fit, in His measureless wisdom, to reach into the 93 million miles, grab hold of the exact revelation or answer you need, and make it known.

Until then, remember Job's words: *The things I don't understand, I'll consider them too wonderful for me to know.*

8. Considering God's sovereignty from Day One, His mystery and unmatched wisdom, how would you counsel yourself in an area of need today?

DAY THREE

GOD'S HIDDEN FACE REVEALED IN JOSEPH'S STORY

Genesis records the story of Jacob's beloved son, Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. After years of struggle, through a series of miraculous events and God's faithfulness, Joseph was suddenly thrust into power – second only to Pharaoh.

During Joseph's years of obscurity, Jacob remained in Canaan with his other sons and their families, including Joseph's youngest and only full brother, Benjamin. Based on a lie, Jacob believed Joseph had been killed. In a time of severe famine, Jacob sent his sons, except Benjamin, to Egypt to purchase food. Who would they encounter, but the brother they had betrayed.

> It will be God's compassion that unlocks "hearing" from its prison; His compassion will open the eyes and ears of the Jewish people again to His face and His voice.

Jacob recognized them immediately, but they could not discern his identity – his face was hidden to them because of the Egyptian context. They had no idea the lord of the land was their brother, Joseph.

Joseph had his brothers presented before him. In the first instance, Joseph kept his identity hidden and tested his brothers. He gave them grain but required them to bring Benjamin to him. For collateral, Joseph kept Simeon (whose name means "hearing") in prison until the brothers returned with Benjamin. (Genesis 42)

This literally happened, but the story also points to a spiritual truth, a prophetic picture. In the same way that the brothers couldn't "see" Joseph, who is a foreshadow of Jesus, most Jewish people didn't recognize Jesus's true identity as Messiah at His first coming. Simeon (or "hearing") was locked up, literally, in the Joseph story, but we see the prophetic truth carried into the present as well. Think of Isaiah's words – *My people cannot see or hear the truth* (Isaiah 6:10). Jesus quoted Isaiah to say the same was true about the people in His generation (Mark 4:12).

The famine was severe.

1. **Read Genesis 43:1-5.** It's repeated to stress importance, what did Judah report "the man" had warned them?

2. **Read Genesis 43:13-14.** What did Jacob hope his sons would receive from God and for what purpose? Remember the meaning of Simeon's name.

Joseph's servants brought the brothers before him two more times (Gen. 43-44).

3. **Read Genesis 45:1-7.** Again, this literally happened, but see the spiritual picture as well. Joseph is a type or foreshadow of Jesus, whose hidden face will one day be revealed to His own family. What stands out to you about Joseph's unveiling and encounter with his brothers?

4. **Joseph saw the larger purpose for all he had endured.** In verses 5 and 7, what did he recognize as the reason for his suffering? The same idea is expressed in Genesis 50:20.

   How is that same picture true of Jesus's life and ministry?

One day, this story will have its prophetic fulfillment when Jesus returns to earth and the veil and partial hardening currently over the Jewish heart and mind will be removed. The Lord will return one day for an entire family of faith, but all the "brothers" must be present – including Benjamin, Joseph's full brother, or the Jewish people, prophetically.

The prophet Zechariah had the revelation of what that day will be like, when Jesus returns and His face is unveiled before His brethren. It will be a severe day, in a time when Jerusalem is under attack. Jesus, who came first as a Lamb, will return as a warring King.

5. Read Zechariah 12:1-3, 8-10; 13:1, 6.

Until the day Zechariah prophesied, the veil can be lifted through faith in Jesus, one individual at a time. Will you pray for the compassion of God to be upon the Jewish people today to see Jesus? It's God's heart for all people, from every nation, to know Him.

The Bible is clear, the world will be in an extremely critical time when Jesus returns. Paul presented Timothy with a description of the last days in 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

In the Joseph story, the context is a severe famine that covered the earth.

6. In Amos 8:11, how does Amos describe the famine that will come?

REFLECTION

The last days will be severe and there will be a famine of the Word, but it doesn't have to be a famine for you, personally. Even as Joseph prepared the world by storing grain in a time when the grain could be found, so too, now is the time for each of us to feast on the Bread of Life, fill our own hearts and minds with the very Words of God.

7. What is the invitation God gave in Isaiah 55:1-3?

8. What is the promise Jesus gave in Matthew 5:6?

9. How would you describe your sense of hunger and appetite for the Word of God, the Bible? Would you renew your commitment to it? Would you share the Word with those around you? Today is the day of salvation.


“OPEN MY EYES THAT I MAY SEE WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LAW.”
PSALM 119:18

Read the *In Essence* lesson summary provided at the beginning of Lesson Five. As you have considered Why it's Difficult for Jewish People to See Jesus, have there been further questions come to your mind, or perhaps poignant moments when some dots were connected for you? If so, write them out.

Replacement Theology has been a two-pronged weapon distorting the identities of Israel and the Church with much pain, confusion and division as a result. Let's be rightly aligned to see Israel and the Church through the Father's eyes.

FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on God's hidden face, scan this QR code, or click on this link for an article written by FIRM staff titled, "Why Don't Most Jewish People Recognize Jesus?"

ISRAEL IS GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL, ENTRUSTED WITH A UNIQUE PURPOSE THAT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH CONNECTING US TO GOD.

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