

Amos 9

by Art Katz

God's judgment on Israel is a necessary step towards its restoration and fulfillment of its millennial destiny as a nation of priests and a light unto the world.

Duration: 1:12:10

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Amos 9:1-4, Amos 9:9, Amos 9:11-15, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Humanism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his 14-month journey through different nations, carrying only what he could on his back. He emphasizes the diversity of people he encountered and how they all received him with kindness. The speaker sees this journey as a microcosm of God's plan for the salvation of Israel, which involves sifting through the nations. He highlights the importance of understanding the end times and the glorious millennial blessing that awaits Israel.

Transcript

Attention this morning to Amos chapter 9, which is one of our favorite texts here at Ben Israel. I'm glad that Reggie is here, Adam, David, others of John. We're invited to join and in and extract the remarkable riches and depth of this chapter.

I always speak of it as the one great comprehensive statement in a single chapter of a whole remarkable eschatological schematic of Israel judged, Israel disciplined, Israel restored, right through to millennial blessing. It's there in one chapter. So Lord, grant us grace to bear it, to understand it, to be participant and witness to it in these last days, and that because we understand the end, we can bear, my God, those things that will pertain to it.

The end is glorious. So open it even in a new way for those who are familiar with the text. Let it not just be a routine exercise of review, but your word is inexhaustible.

And if this is on your heart this morning, Lord, let everyone receive benefit, even those of us who share. So, my God, we bless you, we look to you, instruct our understanding, we pray, affect our character, our life. We give you praise, glory, honor.

In Jesus' holy name, amen. Well, chapter 9, in fact, much of the whole book of Amos contains the severest statements of judgment for Israel to be found anywhere, even the commencement of this chapter, where

the prophet saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said, strike the capitals until the thresholds shake, and shatter them on the heads of all the people. And those who are left I will kill with the sword.

Not one of them shall flee away, not one of them shall escape. Though they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them. Though they climb up to heaven, from there will I will bring them down.

Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, from there I will search out and take them. Though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command a sea serpent, and it shall bite them. And though they go into captivity in front of their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them.

And I will fix my eyes on them for harm and not for good. The Lord God of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn, and all of it rises like the Nile and sinks again like the Nile of Egypt, who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth. The Lord is his name.

There are not many that would want to own a God of that kind. They must be persuaded that there's some kind of typographical error. How did that slip into Scripture? That God would acknowledge and even boast of the severity of such a judgment so all-inclusive that no matter where his people seek to flee, there he will find them, and there they will suffer the full severity of that judgment.

Probably it's because texts of this kind offend us, that we either shrink from them or pass them over, and in doing so we lose something of the aspect of God that risks the loss of all of the knowledge of God, because if we're unwilling to receive God in his severity, we even cheapen God in his goodness, and unless we understand his judgments and not receive them by holding our nose, having to take castor oil, but rejoice in them, knowing that he's righteous, however severe the language, that we don't know God as we ought, we're not celebrating him as we ought, and in fact are trivializing him. So there has been either a conscious or unconscious shrinking from the acknowledgement of God as judge, and where is that judgment more painful than when it's announced and performed upon his own people the apple of its eye? Not only painful for us to consider, painful for him to perform. That he will perform it is a statement of what he is in himself.

He'll not flinch from a righteous requirement. It's we who hedge and compromise. The Lord honors his word, maintains the standard of his own righteousness and his own integrity, particularly as it pertains to Israel, well how then is he God? And what standard then of righteousness will exist anywhere if he himself defaults on the kind of judgments that his righteousness requires? So the issue of Israel, wow what shall we say? To miss it in any aspect is to miss essentially the faith.

It's to miss God, and if we have a truncated, inadequate, sentimentalized, trivialized God, it's probably especially for that reason. We have voided, or have refused to consider, or shrunk from considering, or want always to abide in the New Testament scriptures and miss what God says of himself in the old, in judgments not yet fulfilled and that yet await fulfillment. So this is not passé.

This is not the God of the past. These are statements that refer to that which is yet to take place. So he's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

I can't think of anything more fallacious than to speak of the God of the New Testament and the God of the old as if they are alternate deities. The one, consistent, comprehensive, continuing God. So that's the

prelude to getting into the portion that's before us this morning.

Just to continue in verse 7, are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel, says Lord? But don't think that because you're the apple of my eye and my covenant and chosen people that you're exempt from anything that the Ethiopians have had to bear from my hand. You still will be judged as with all nations and in fact your judgment will be the greater because your privilege has been the greater. So don't think you're exempt.

One of the things that has been a theme and thread through the tragedy of Israel's history is called by the theologians the inviolability of Israel. The presumption that because we're chosen, because he has established his presence at Zion and in Jerusalem and in the nation that somehow we are exempt from and protected from the kinds of calamity that fall upon others. And so the final outworking of that misconception are men on the roof of the temple at the time of Titus's destruction of Jerusalem thinking that that's the safest place to be and went up with the flames that consume the temple itself.

Zion is not inviolable. It is not exempt from the judgments of God. In fact they are all the more susceptible to double judgment as we read in Isaiah 40.

You have suffered double for your sins because to you has come the great privilege of the revelation of myself my law and my way my covenant and when you desecrate that and violate that despite my sending the prophets rising up early and daily then upon you will fall the severity of a kind that eclipses that which comes to other nations. So don't think that the you're exempt from what the Ethiopians will experience or have. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt the Philistines from Kaster and the Aramaeans from Achaia and then we begin our text.

The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom and as we even had occasion this morning to review of English sharing with us last night how sinful is the sinful kingdom becoming. It's mistreatment of men, it's abuses, it's failing to sanctify God by its conduct. Israel was called to be a witness nation to the nations that in what it would display in its conduct is the unique relationship that it enjoys with its God and make him known by what it displays in itself.

You shall be witnesses unto me. God's victim to the church is exactly of the same kind. Where's that passage art that says you only have I known.

It's unanimous isn't it? Could be. But it compliments. You only have I known.

Therefore I will punish you. What a note of pathos. You only have I known.

It breaks my heart to have to lower the boom. You only have I known. What a sacred holy privilege but because of it and with this regard of so unique a relationship in history therefore I'm required to judge you yet more severely.

There's a pathos in God's heart. This is not some clinical judgment that is performed without emotion. He says in all your afflictions I am afflicted.

In your judgments I am also bearing it in the same way that the father bore the crucifixion of the son not viewing it as from a distance in some kind of dispassionate separation but in and with the son in that suffering and in that anguish even in the anguish of my God my God why has done forsaken me somehow in the wisdom of God that intense separation from the father at the time of the presence was most

desperately needed was part maybe the coolest part of the suffering that Jesus had to bear but he did not bear it alone he bore it with the father. I and the father are one. Don't think that God is some kind of distant deity whose passion and pathos and compassion is not touched.

He waits for that exact quality in his people. Interesting the phrase that we see the Holocaust memorials never again is cited in this text that's before us this morning but with an entirely different meaning to which Israel must come from the one that celebrates it to the never again that celebrates God. Well you can see from what you've cited how and from what we shared this morning how distant and separated this people is from their own calling and from their own knowledge of God that they can even construe and turn things in such a way that they come out as the victim or the object of pity or as if they're doing God's service.

So failing to be the priest as we said this morning by so abusing the people who are the victim of their power without any consideration of the culture, the disposition, the things that are respected for which Jews have little consideration or even scorn. Yet priestly people would have an obligation to understand the history, the culture, the disposition of those for whom they intercede and witness. Israel's present conduct is a complete antithesis of that calling and maybe we had to come to the end and see that and all of its painful implication and then suffer the judgment of it for whatsoever a man or a nation sows that too shall it reap.

You've abused their women and you've intimidated their men and mocked them, you're going to suffer exactly that same thing at their very hands. What does it say when Jesus comes? Two-thirds are perished and the women are ravished. Israel is going to pay in full for every mistreatment and every abuse that it is now inflicting upon those that are hapless for the day will come and it's not distant when they also will be hapless and be overrun and be unable to defend themselves.

It says in Isaiah 51, your young men will be like antelope in a net at the head of every street. Helpless, your IDF, your vaunted military forces will be completely tied in knots and completely incapacitated as even your generals even now acknowledge that all of our strategy and training is for the battlefield but we have never been prepared for an internal battle and it's one that you'll not know how to fight and one in which you'll be defeated. Not only defeated but humiliated and your women will be ravished.

You who scorn the sensibilities of others will yourself be scorned. You'll hear their shrieks and cries and be helpless to intercede as was also the consequence for Germany at the end of World War II. As I know from my time in Germany, my first wife coming from Stuttgart, that that part of Germany was captured by the French and they came with their colonial troops, many of them from Africa, and so all day and night the defenseless women were being raped by these black soldiers without mercy and you could hear a continual shriek and a cry coming out from every house in every alley and every rooftop and the women were defenseless because their men were either dead or on the Russian battlefield or incapacitated.

You don't hear anything about that now but anyone who was a GI in Germany in the early 50s as I was know how degraded the German women were even in accommodating the American soldiers. Politeness will not permit me to describe the kinds of practice that were everyday occurrences for us with a people that were so humbled and broken who were the master race. The ironies of God's judgment are written in history and it behooves us as the church to be able to recognize and read them so that we might proclaim warning that God's hand is not withheld and though it seems that it's in abeyance, there comes a moment when he will perform and honor his word, whatsoever a man or a nation sows, that too shall it reap.

It will be a terrible, degrading, humiliation, defeat, and brokenness but it's the kind of brokenness that Israel will carry with it into its millennial destiny and will forever remember. The judgments start with a consequence of their sin and it will temper them with a priestly disposition for all of the days of their life and so they'll be going into the same nations where they are now anathema or a curse or a threat to bring the benevolent way of God to the knowledge of Iraqis and Jordanians and Palestinians and Arabs to show the mercy of God on the basis of the mercy which they themselves have received and they will then fulfill their destiny. A nation of priests, a light unto the world.

Arabs will be hanging on the necks of Jews in gratitude for the knowledge of God communicated to them that will be salvational in the same way that the elders at Ephesus hung onto the neck of Paul when he said you'll see my face no more. Jews who are now despised and feared and hated will be loved and revered as God's priests who bring in every place in the world the knowledge of himself in the deeps in which Israel has been required to learn him. Not talmudically or even biblically but experientially both in the severity of his judgments and in the mercy of their return.

Okay yeah what we saw even from the threats that come into this organization that goes to bat for blacks in the south and other places how they are threatened to be hung from lampposts and not only killed but tortured. There's a vile demonic hatred for people standing for simple justice and righteousness so what shall we expect that when this venom comes upon Jews shall we be exempt? It will be proportionate to our own identification with them and when they're seeing that we're willing to suffer such a risk and such a consequence to take up an identification that is not needful and all other Gentiles are shirking they'll be moved to jealousy and say this can't be explained religiously. This is beyond religious obligation what you guys are doing and being joined with us and putting your life at risk and your families at risk has got to be God.

There's no other way to explain what's coming from you as Gentiles for certainly you owe us nothing and yet you're extending yourself sacrificially even unto death. Jews have never seen that coming from Gentiles and coming from the church but the extremity of the last days will display it. We've got to be to them a priestly identification to even reveal to them what they're calling us so it's more than just a religious condescension it's a jointedness as one with them which is what Jesus himself performed at the commencement of his ministry when he allowed himself to be baptized into the Jordan which was God's provision as repentance for the sins of Israel.

He did not stand at the bank in detachment as God's anointed called to Israel and looking with pity at those who have to go down into the muddy waters he went down into them to say I'm one with the nation and I share in its sin. We see that in Daniel in chapter 9 that great prophetic cry of Daniel's prayer is a complete identification of the sins of those people. You can't affect that.

That can't be a kind of a religious halo that's that's the deepest statement of God himself reflected in a man who has the kind of union whose cry is God's cry. The church is not there yet but God waits for it and when it comes it's the set time to favor Zion. Okay can I get into the text? Okay the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom.

You know what I love about God among the other things that I love about God not only does he not mince words he does not avoid truth. He does not just want to fashion his eyes upon the happy side and neglect seeing the grim. He sees all things.

He's a prophet and he's required to see things whole and steady and so he sees the sinful kingdom and he doesn't mince words about it and that kingdom will become increasingly sinful until it itself as we said this morning recognizes the truth of its own condition as only its own failure will have revealed it and that there were no other reason for the establishment of the State of Israel then this this would be reason enough. Now we Jews see I know Jews. I was one long enough I still am and we celebrate some supposed sense of moral superiority.

I don't know where we got the idea. We think that we have in a special ethical and moral sensitivity above the Graham above the Gentiles which is of course completely contradicted by Scripture. If God were to mark iniquity who can stand when Jesus was sought to be complimented by the rich young ruler and he was called good he said why call it found me good you're not going to get away with this one there's no man good but God.

Israel refuses Jews historically have refused to accede to that truth of God's statement of our condition as men. We think that the doctrine of human depravity is a Christian doctrine when it's rooted in Hebrew scriptures so how come we don't see it because we ourselves are not rooted in our own word we are the the the ultimate humanists that celebrate man over God and until that's broken how can we be forgot what we look and so it's not too lavish for God to allow the establishment of the state not that it would be intended to succeed but be intended to reveal the depravity that God says is inherent in all men including Jews.

We've got to see our own conduct painfully duplicating and coming too dangerously close to what the Germans had visited upon us that we are now tattooing men and well ready to deport Palestinians wholesale out from Israel from the West Bank to Jordan to some other place who are we to merchandise and men what are they stock items on a grocery shelf that we can move it from one place to another these are human beings they're rooted in their culture in their place with their olive trees with their families the family that we know in a booth that Inga was speaking last night Lily who was here for several months and worked in the kitchen she only moved 35 yards from the house in which she grew up into the house in which she married they know that village their life was that village the people

look at the way Inga knows these names I'm impatient I don't have time for detail at that time we Jews but Inga loves it they love it they know the boobies they know that the grandmothers the grandfathers the uncles the aunts the cousin this one born that one died they're enmeshed in that and here here's Israel talking about deporting well we were deported on cattle cars and now we ourselves are talking about deporting others we were tattooed now we're tattooing others and don't think that it's not being shoved in our face that this is too painfully close to the Nazi mistreatment of ourselves that we are now somehow out of the requirement for the preservation of the state are compelled so to act we are a sinful nation and that that sinfulness will increase so you Christian Zionists will

have everything to do to defend Israel until you'll just run out of explanation and you yourself will be mortified that you come to a place where no defense can be made where they cannot be justified and that we ourselves have to learn the painful truth that as much as we have a heart for this people we must be as God in recognizing the truth of their condition or we will fail to be to them what we ought to sentimentalize them now to pamper them to to give them a comfort before the time is a false comfort so I praise God for being God thank you Lord you're gonna be that for Israel be it for us don't spare us don't baby us don't mollify us tell it to us as it is speak to us as sons and daughters grow us up my God in the reality to which everything wants to save us and preserve us this is

my greatest conflict with Ingrid God bless her she's wanting to make nice sentimental yes she admitted it okay the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom and I will destroy it from the face of the earth not that Arafat will destroy the PLO of Saddam Hussein these are only rods of God's judgment I will destroy it and when you read Psalm 102 you'll recognize the two things that God is waiting for to conclude the age one is the church my servants coming of age who have compassion on their stones and pity upon the dust but the other is the acknowledgement of a subdued and broken Israel that we have received these things at your hand you have cast us aside read that text that is an acknowledgement that did not come out of the Nazi Holocaust that's why we can say never again we think

that the Nazi Holocaust was the issue of our defenselessness and the power of those who oppressed us we do not see God's hand in our calamity and until we do the calamities will continue to come that's why they are given as calamities that we might see the hand of God in judgment a first principle is always to ask where have I sinned in what way can what I'm experiencing or seeing be considered a judgment or a chastisement before we give consideration to any other explanation usually it's the last of considerations rather than the first well the weather has changed that this is happening that we have I say time newsweek mentalities and try to interpret adverse and things socially politically and so on rather than divinely so I'm saying for the church a first principle of consideration is

how is God to be understood in this how is this possibly a judgment because it's by judgment that we learn sin judgment is the revelation of sin it's Christ on the cross as the judgment of God that opens up the whole question for what reason did he suffer that death so sin does not reveal itself as sin that's its nature is to conceal it and we Jews have been mesmerized and duped in justifying our conduct of the most atrocious kind it's the judgment that begins to open the question of what the sin is that justified so severe a consequence so the first thing in examining any severity is to what degree is this a judgment and for what reason might it have been suffered had Jews asked that at the end of the Nazi Holocaust we could even theoretically consider that there would not have need to

be yet another Holocaust but of course the question was not asked nor was there a church that suggests the question because the church itself quickly accommodated itself to the Jewish community and yielded to the Jewish communities interpretation that the real fault of the Holocaust was not Jewish sin but the collapse and the failure of Christianity itself a revelation of the bankruptcy of Christianity and so the church bowed and scraped and acceded to that view and completely left Jews off the hook took the ground out from God and made the whole sacrifice so to speak vain they do not even subscribe to the Adam's fall if you read Eric Fromm who is drawing from Talmudic and mystical Judaism Zohar and the Kabbalah you know how they interpret the fall of Adam it's not a fall that God himself

was testing Adam and Eve to see if they would rise above God's own restriction that if they asserted their humanity to disobey that's what God was waiting for and wanting well that was the beginning of the commencement of individuation and self-realization what are you going to do with the people who interpret the fall of Adam in that way as to come out smelling like a rose and that God actually wanted it so they would say that's a Christian premise they don't realize it as a foundational biblical proof and part of our obligation to them is to show them that what they call Christian is foundationally Hebrew from the God of Israel and Hebraic that's right but we have failed in communicating that for we ourselves have made nice and have not wanted to offend and wanted to be kind few of us

have Hamlet's fierce determination with his mother Gertrude to say sometimes one must be cruel in order to be kind we're unwilling to be cruel because we want to be accepted and here's what I've observed in 38

years as a believer maybe you can explain to me why is Jewish acceptance so important for Christians they'll fall all over themselves to be accepted by Jews you probe that I'm not even going to try and answer it it goes deep and it has to do with humanistic assumptions itself that somehow Jews are looked upon in such a honorific way in the humanity now to receive their benevolent acceptance of is a prized and esteemed thing that we don't want to violate by taking the risk of speaking to them in truth so this is part of that whole mystery of Israel in the church how the Orthodox will

explain why it is that PLO terrorists came aboard in rubber dinghies and commandeered a bus of found a Jewish school and killed about 20 30 kids because the mezuzah was not hanging at the right angle you know the mezuzah on the door that contains the parchment scroll of Deuteron 6 what it wasn't hanging at the right angle even as they analyze Jewish history and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD they do not attribute it to the real causes but to internecine difficulties between the in the Jewish community itself the failure to be brethren went to another the factions the zealots versus the Pharisees as if it's an internal problem rather than recognizing that the eternal problem is only a symptom of a much deeper failure the failure of God to God himself so even the Orthodox so they

acknowledge it wrongly listen to this paradoxical statement my eyes are upon the central kingdom I will destroy from the face of the earth except here's mercy coming up out of judgment except I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob says the Lord first the singer sweeping judgment except I love the Lord for his exceptions and his until wonderful for we're not for that we'd all be dead they've just written that down for lo I will command and shake the house of Israel among all the nations not so much as a grain or a pebble shall fall to the ground how exacting is God's last day sifting of this people because not all Israel is Israel and God has an elect from among them whom we would not ordinarily ourselves recognized and we might even say they're not even a candidate we don't see a

spiritual potentiality it might come from the most fierce antagonist of Christ as Saul was to become a Paul but he has a remnant he has a people he'll have a nation but he must sift the nation among all the nations as one shakes a sieve but not so much as a pebble or a grain shall fall to the ground that's why I can say with on the basis of this verse with complete confidence whether I'm in New Zealand Africa Brazil I'm trying to think of the most recent places Chile it doesn't matter where or what even in Egypt itself I have preached this and said expect Jews to be sifted through your nation and if they say well we we don't have a Jewish population I said that doesn't disqualify you they will yet be brought there by the process of the sifting itself because God's object is not only to

sift Israel but to sift the nations through Israel and to sift the church in the nations in their response to Israel in its final and calamitous condition that's on that basis we can understand Matthew 25 and the now seated King performing his first judgment of separating sheep from goats among the nations on one question only what did you do with the least of these my brethren the issue of the Jew in his final extremity is the issue of the church it's the issue of the nations and so critical an issue that the Lord is not loath to pronounce an eternal judgment on those who fail to have recognized and responded to the least of these his brethren they're cast into the lake of fire prepare for the devil for his angels this raises so remarkable a depth of question how could God bring an

eternal judgment just for the failure of this one little thing maybe they were nice because they say Lord when did we see you for a hungry thirsty naked in a prison with the very use of the word Lord implies that he's sifting and separating those who purport to be Christians using the language of the faith but they failed at a critical juncture and others who did not even recognize what was at stake not even knowing that

they were the least of the brethren of Jesus could not but but help extend mercy whatever the consequence of themselves for which reason Jesus calls them righteous and invites them to enter the kingdom prepared for them the reward that we were speaking about yesterday at this time of participation in the rule and reign with Christ over one last final issue of sifting I

will shift you through all nations all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword who say evil shall not overtake or meet us remarkable of how the Lord defines a sinner is his attitude toward calamity and his inability to recognize that it's coming at God's hand and to think in his presumption in human pride that there's a way in which he can be saved from it independent of God God calls out an enemy it's a complete God forsakenness even in the threat of calamity if you'll not consider God then when then will you consider him and so I'll bring you out of the nations where you have sojourned but I'll not bring you into the land that's why I'm expecting a great attrition of the 15 million Jews are in the world today likely two-thirds of them will not survive this time so great are the

enemies to be found among us to God a remnant will return to Zion the redeemed of the Lord will return to Zion but they will not be great in number the great majority will suffer the consequence of this verse how will we bear that as Christians how many of us will have complaint with God and say where is he and how can you allow this ruthless extermination a second time within less than a century who purports to be the God of Israel and yet what lets his people suffer a wholesale devastation and death that's why we need to have a preparation in Scripture and be in agreement with God those things that are now at the door and soon to break we really need to put the scalpel in and open this up and look at it deeply who say this shall not come upon us is not just whistling in the dark and

hoping against hope it's the statement of deepest assumption about human self-sufficiency that's why will this not come but we'll see to it that won't come upon us when they should what was the thing that initiated my path to conversion who was a humanist of this kind and I believe with absolute confidence that there was no problem that could ever come to me beyond my intellectual ability to solve it and my human capacity to understand and to relate to it until God gave me a German wife who had been in the Hitler Youth was schizophrenic and I had under my roof to act out the whole tragedy of Germany and the Jew because in the frustration of her own schizophrenic condition the only way to get at him whom she loved and hated was the one place where I was susceptible in my Jewishness and

when that happened you know what I found out I was not a nice guy I thought I was a nice guy I could take anything that comes my way I could respond coolly and calmly and dispassionately and reasonably until I got zapped in a place that only God himself could have arranged and when that collapsed my reason was not sufficient my intellect was not and what I was as a man was not I had to take a leave of absence from the teaching profession I had nothing more to say to my students put a pack on my back and go to look out for somewhere in the world for philosophy of some answer to the new predicament which was the predicament of the recognition of my own insufficiency as a man here these rebels refuse to acknowledge that insufficiency and they think however great the calamity their reason

their ability their influence their wealth will save them and God says when you still believe that you're a rebel you still refuse to accede to me as God and you make yourself your own Savior and you are in fact your own God and your own Lord and this is the height of blasphemy and rebellion against myself let me say this lest we would be encouraged into some kind of anti-semitic disposition ourselves to see how intractable these Jews are and even in their final calamity what we need to understand is that the issue of the Jew is the issue of humanity the issue of mankind this is man writ large this is what is human this is in

the heart of man when we are displaying for the world is God's statement about man it's the revelation of himself as he is but it's the revelation of man as he is

and Israel has got to represent that and express that so we have to be careful that this is not a description of a particular ethnic people but the essence of what man is in himself that Israel is acting out for the benefit of all the world so we can see that even now with the covenant that they sought to make at Oslo predicated on total humanistic assumptions that if you appeal to your enemy and show him the benefit of what would come to him if they will only put aside their vengeful opposition and share in the prosperity that would come to both of us as Israel and Palestinian in the Middle East then we can find the basis for peace what's the assumption that man will act in his best self interest we can appeal to our our enemy on the basis of their own enlightened self-interest is the

assumption that man will act in that interest but what if man acts against his own interest by blowing up his own children and is acting not out of rationality but out of demonic compulsion we Jews have never had to face that problem before and now it's before us and it is humanly insoluble it is intractable and God had to bring us to an impasse of this kind because up till now even with the Nazi Holocaust and the and the sufferings of the past and the pogroms of the persecutions and even the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion into the nations we have always yet continued to believe that we could raise ourselves by our bootstraps and that there's no problem coming to us that is insurmountable that cannot be met on the basis of our own human ability and self-sufficiency without God

can you see why this crisis had to mount and come to such a thing that the Oslo agreement would fail as the other and future agreement will fail be a false covenant with death but the fact that we think we can make such covenants and negotiate on terms that will assure our security without having to seek God or exceed to him a bow or pray or consult shows the depth of our human intransigence and that's what humanism is and this is why we have to be cut down at the pass that's the explanation it came up with yesterday's discussion when Inge was sharing how do we understand this how can we justify them we need to understand it in this context God is bringing a people to the end of themselves as I personally had to be brought 38 years ago to launch out with a year's leave of absence from

teaching with a pack on my back looking for philosophical answers but I knew that I needed something that was not to be had in educational institutions or Marxist institutes or in anything wasn't looking for God I was an atheist but I was a candidate like you can almost say that I was repenting before I knew what the word was repent meant I was repenting of any confidence or trust in myself or in men and in that condition for the first time I heard the still small voice of God calling me by name we Jews are so filled with our own clamor our own noise our own ideologies our own convictions that we could not hear God if he shouted there's got to come a destitution of hope in ourselves by which our mouths are shut and we have nothing to say and then in that moment we can be candidates to

hear the still small voice of God and he'll do whatever it takes to bring us to that end so there's a remarkable book that describes the progressive emptying of a man the revelation of the Lord and precious salvation that's come and it's symptomatic of all Jews it's not just a man's testimony because that man is a piece of jewelry but more than that the salvation that comes to him comes when he is cast out from this place of security affluence and his ideologies and his categories and is cast into the nations and has moved from nation to nation in 14 months of traveling with living it for what I can carry on my back and meeting in every nation a new species of mankind who picked me up off the side of the road who received me with kindness who spoke a word that penetrated my heart and set

me up even for the reading of the first New Testament and the revelation that came and then all the way through of the salvation that is a picture of microcosm of God's last days mode of the salvation of Israel through a sifting through the nations because the purpose of God as I say so often is not the shortest distance between two points but a movement through many nations over a three and a half year period of time that they might see in every nation where however diverse the people the same consistent love of God expressed toward them whether it comes through Canadians or North Americans or North American Indians or simple Indians in the Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico they will see God in his consistency despite the diversity of nationality and race through which these Jews pass

it's going to take that demonstration it took that demonstration for my mother here in community she had to have lunch at this house and dinner at that house we circulated her through the community I should have the children so beautiful it's so peaceful I've never seen such order I said are you getting the point mom this is more than just the happenstance of individual personalities what you're seeing in every household is the consistency of a kingdom and the reality of a king which I finally came to her ten days before her death so this sifting through the nations is the final stratagem of God by which he says I will meet with you in Ezekiel chapter 20 face to face in the wilderness of the nations and there you will come into the bond of my covenant and under the right of my authority

something happens in the sifting something happens in what is revealed to Jews by those who express God in extending refuge okay in that day verse 11 and I have an italics above verse 11 the statement the restoration of David's kingdom we need to understand that in the very context of God's judgment there's already something working that presages and was set in motion to bringing about of the desired kingdom that we spoke yesterday coming in that day it's related to the judgment of Israel this kingdom waits for and comes out of that very nexus of devastation and judgment which is perfectly in keeping with other prophetic scriptures as for example at your own leisure you can look at the last statement in Isaiah chapter 6 when the prophet is called to judge Israel that his word is not going

to liberate but to condemn and to judge that who shall go for us send me okay you speak and in your speaking their ears will be stopped their heart will be numb they'll not be able to hear they'll not be able to believe to be saved how long Lord the prophet knows this cannot be the Lord's final statement and the answer is until until the cities are left without inhabitants until the land suffers devastation and ruin so there's the last judgment sets in motion the process of restoration and the issue of the kingdom and it's called the Davidic kingdom on that day I will raise up the booth of David or the tabernacle of David that is fallen repair its breaches and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old and you know what we sappy charismatics have done with them we think that

the tabernacle of David is a of charismatic Davidic worship that all of this turmoil and devastation is to introduce a new wrinkle and a Hebraic melody in our church services what a statement of the paucity of the church and its lack of kingdom consciousness as to construe the tabernacle of David to be a form of worship because David danced when the Ark of God came from Shiloh to Jerusalem this is government that the Davidic kingdom is the tabernacle of David and what's the evidence for that verse 12 in order that they the redeemed nation coming out of its judgment may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name says the Lord who does this Israel was not fit for its kingdom centrality until it passes through the sifting refining fire of God in judgment but

having passed through it the Lord can establish the kingdom of David not for Israel's sake but for all nations sake for the Lord shall go forth out of this redeemed Zion and the word of Lord out of Jerusalem all

of these texts come together Isaiah chapter 2 Psalm 2 that yesterday's material and now Amos chapter 9 all refer to the same reality the establishment of the kingdom that affects all nations for the word Edom is a symbol for Gentile nations that will now come under people who can rule in equity and justice and in its priestly demeanor without warding it over the Gentiles this is an answer to the question of the disciples before the ascension of Jesus who in his resurrection body before 40 days spoke to them the things pertaining to the kingdom we didn't think that there's that

much to say if the kingdom is only some subjective and internal thing or a mode of refinement for the church but if it is the polity if it is the political rule of God over creation the massive thing that takes back the from usurping powers the governance of God's own creation it takes 40 days of instruction and so they asked a final question is it time now to restore the kingdom to Israel he never rebuked them to say oh how petty are you in your nationalistic aspirations as if this is your baby it was a perfectly legitimate question based on biblical expectation even of the kind that we're reading now in the prophets they knew there would be a restoration of the kingdom what they didn't understand is how the kingdom though it is centered in Israel is not exclusively for Israel but all

the so now here's the fulfillment when does it come it comes in the context of Israel's final chastisement and sifting through the nations in that day the tabernacle of David will be raised up and its breaches repaired says the Lord who does this when shall the kingdom be restored when the Lord does this when the king comes and can come and rightly reign over people who have been redeemed and returned and restored upon whose head is everlasting joy when mourning and sighing passes away why are they rejoicing why is there everlasting joy not only because they're not again suffer expulsion and devastation but because they have the honor now to be exalted above all nations and being the locus of God's rule over all creation all of this comes to bear you see how at first the prophets are

something like the Psalms so much is said in so few words and remains for us to dig it out and to understand the wide implications of what is being described here because this goes right into the Millennium for verse 13 says the time is surely coming it's that same day says the Lord when the one who plows shall overtake the one who reaps and the treader of grapes the one who sows the seed this is poetry this is prophetic rhetoric but what is described as something so remarkably expansive that it could not be set forth in prose it has it requires this kind of imaginative language that the one who sows his is treading on the heels of the one who reaps that that that the abundance of the millennial blessing is so great that Israel will fill the world with its fruit not only its tangible

and the natural food but its spiritual fruit as well blessedness of a millennial kind comes to Israel after it has been abased and denigrated the same exaltation that came to Jesus having been brought into death as a criminal in the place of shame and then given a name above every name and exalted above all and become king is the same kind of exaltation that comes to the nation itself millennial blessedness of a kind where the where the the abundance is so great and so blessed this is a people going to be experiencing famine as well as devastation before their end comes but here the mountains shall drip sweet wine and the hill shall flow with it for I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel the same I will is the Lord who does this and restoring the kingdom is the same God who

restores the fortunes and brings to a land of famine exceeding great abundance and then they there they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them these are not the cities of antiquity but this is modern-day Jerusalem Tiberias Haifa Tel Aviv all of the present cities of Israel will be devastated in that final time of Jacob's trouble that has its inception in the land and upon the return and part of the millennial blessing is

the rebuilding of the ruined cities and inhabit them they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine they shall make gardens and eat their fruit this is a complete reversal of the Deuteronomic judgments spoken in the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy Leviticus that you will plant vineyards but you'll not drink the wine you'll plant gardens but you'll not eat

the fruit you'll build houses but you might inhabit them now that's the curse this is now the blessing and the enduring blessing the millennial blessing you'll plant and you'll you'll eat you'll plant and you'll drink you'll build and you'll inhabit and that's God's final statement that has carried on into eternity and I will plant them in their land and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land that I have given them says the Lord your God our controversy with Christian Zionist messianic believers and purported prophets who say this is fulfilled already but the context indicates otherwise that this is a final fulfillment after the ruin that requires rebuilding and after the expulsion that requires exile I will then plant you in the land and as we have so often said is there a

word any more precious than the word plant that I will you took a shot at it yourself your Zionist endeavor is impressive historically who else could have thought in a half century to resuscitate a malarial wasteland and build a modern civilization as you guys have done and so great high-tech civilization military enterprise I mean remarkably impressive but the end of it is destruction but I will plant you you sought to establish yourself now I'll show you the contrast for when I plant you you will not again be plucked up and when I plant you'll stay planted and when I plant you're not going to have neighbors that are exacerbated you're not going to have Palestinians forming at the mouth whose lands have been confiscated or whose olive orchards have been uprooted and bulldozed when I

plant it will be in my character I will plant it's more than the action it's the character of God and it'll be a it'll be an establishment of a totally different kind for how something begins is how it will end and carry the character if God begins it by planting it will be an entirely other kind of Israel than what we have presently seen but it waits for the destruction of the cities the expulsion and the exile the sifting through all nations the restoration of the tabernacle of David all in one chapter so let's let's dwell now a few moments here on this remarkable and why if we don't dwell upon it if we don't take it into our spirits we don't rejoice already for this assurance that it will come how should we bear when it's preceded how what keeps us from falling apart at the seams I'm

worried about myself I'm tougher than most of you but I'm I don't know that I'll make it I'm likely to crack up when I see Jewish women raped and and families devastated and blood gore all over the place and wholesale devastation the cities and the Israel that I have an affection for being ground-to-powder how will I bear the sight and the knowledge of that except that I'm sustained and buoyed up by the knowledge that this is the preliminary to the end Jesus said when you see these things look up for your redemption dwarf night the church that is the church has a distinctive grasp on the end it is an eschatologically minded church it has a sense that we're moving toward a conclusion and the conclusion is glorious or will not be able to bear the pain of the judgments that preceded and must

necessarily proceed it we need to dwell on this remarkable poetry of these images that are brought up by the prophet inspired by the Spirit of God of what will be the millennial blessing it will be so great that the Israel who have suffered these devastations and survived it will say it was worth it all what will we say for what devastation we have to experience and we because our end is yet more glorious than this they are in the land and in the earth their life is prolonged if a child dies at the age of 100 it's considered premature but we will have glorified bodies we will be experiencing the greater thing that Jesus showed to Nathanael

angels of ascending we will be in the rule and reign with him from heavenly places we will be able like Jesus to be on the earth and in the heavenlies

the glories that no I have seen what you have heard that the Jesus speaks of his mentions will not have to be envious of Israel's eternal blessedness what the blessing that will come to us will even eclipse and even fit us to be in relationship with them who are ruling from the earth as we in the heavenlies so that the benevolence of God's kingdom can go forth to all nations you know what does their saints we are not kingdom minded and we are not millennial in mind it and both these things need to be restored to the church that is the church well how shall we encourage these Jews and what shall we say to them when they come upon our doorstep be dragged broken stripped confused and having no hope what what do we say that they could they can revive and go on for that three and a half year

trek before they are returned to as the redeemed of the Lord to Zion unless we can speak to them this unless we can show them that this is a judgment but it's it's only God's penultimate word it's not his final word it's only the until but this is what follows and the day will come that though you're now bowed down and you're depressed and broken and it's a brokenness that's needful the day will come when they'll be everlasting joy upon your head not only because you have the confidence that you're not again be plucked up or rooted out but that there's a place of honor and celebration that every nation will acknowledge that you are the redeemed of the Lord and the Holy One Holy Ones of Israel and the priests of the Living God and there and you say it's worth it all we could never have

attained to this except we were first purged and put through this refining fire we have to be able to communicate that not just as men who are women who are clinically correct but with prophetic passion we have to project an image of something in the same kind of prophetic splendor as if it being set forth by Amos we've got to go beyond the mere capacity of information but to speak it in such a way that it's an encouragement and a hope for those who are destitute of all hope and will perish without hope unless we can convey hope according to the Word of God and a word we have got to be as prophetic as Amos and that that means that it's got to be into in us the prophet is his message we've got to exhibit it the joy of it even though we are sharing with them the present blight of their time

of Jacob's trouble so the ultimate requirement is the church and we see that in Isaiah 35 where the wilderness is glad for them whose hands are lame their knees are weak they're blind and they're despairing and they're caught up in the wilderness in places where they had never thought to be and can't see any light at the end of the tunnel they're ready to perish just as many in the Nazi time in the Holocaust perished for the want of hope it's not the strongest who survived it was those who had hope of some kind that were enabled and so God says to someone with them in the wilderness you can read it say to them your God will come yes he will vindicate you when they hear that word the eyes of the blind are open than the lame leap and water breaks out of the dry ground they're saved by a

word even before the fulfillment of the word for the word is not just a piece of information it's a prophetic proclamation that constitutes the reality before it comes right that does not come to them in the wilderness they will perish and never return to Zion and how then shall the word of Paul be fulfilled that what shall their return be but life from the dead they've got the return sense and the issue of their return is the issue of the church that is the church of a prophetic kind whose word is life more than information more than saying the correct thing imbued with the reality long before any sense of it can be seen or exists right because the Prophet stands above time he's with God with him there's no present past or future he already sees the future thing as present that's why

they speak to us that way this this is spoken of as if it's already taken place and that's why those who have misread it say there'll be no future calamity for Israel look he said I'll plant them in the land that's what it said of Israel is you're not reading it in context and you're not reading it prophetically before their wilderness experience are we willing for our own and the Lord can do that right where we are my most powerful wilderness experience did not come out in the naked forest it came in creature comfort Denmark where I lived with Inga for several months after the Lord expelled me out from the u.s. and some years ago are we willing for our own wilderness as the Lord himself will mediate it knowing our frames and knowing what we need that he will come to us when there's no

light at the end of our tunnel and when we are ready to despair and ready to throw in the towel for the want of hope that the Lord will come and we'll we'll experience the Lord in such a way that we can convey that reality to those who would otherwise perish the Prophet lives his message that's why we were expelled from this property that's why for three years there was no life on these grounds that's why we were exiles because we had to experience in some measure the pangs the pain the death and the humiliation of expulsion and the hope and the glory of restoration and return of which you are receiving some measure of the blessing no why because the Prophet must be his message he must speak it with a conviction that only can come not because he agrees with the verbal truth of it but

because he has passed through it and that's painful and then so God is saying the church itself must be this where Israel will not have a living prophetic word for the prophetic word constitutes an event what happened then brings life the word of the prophetic word is event but it's from expressed by those who have themselves been dealt with by God I've never thought of it before but maybe we can understand that as a willingness to bow to enter a degree of suffering of a sanctifying kind for we have just a few minutes notice in verse 15 the phrase never again here's an ironic echo of God of the Zionist human assumption that says never again based on their supposed strength and ability to deter evil but here God says it I will plant them upon the land and they shall never again be plucked

up the only phrase never again that has validity is when God speaks it not when man speaks it because it's a complete reversal of Zionist presumption and will stand eternally they will never again be plucked up because it says at the end of verse 12 says the Lord who does this and all you need to do is go through the text and see how many times we touch the phrase I will I will restore I will plant I will destroy I will command says the Lord who does this Israel's final experience and it's saving experience is the Lord who does this he has allowed them to give it a their best shot and that must necessarily fail and fail tragically but I will I will I will I will I will I'll judge I'll sift I'll restore I'll build I'll plant I will seed it you'll never again be plucked up you're gonna have

millennial blessing that will fill the earth with its fruit both naturally and spiritually because I will says the Lord who will do this so what a remarkable conclusion and how God is set forth before the nations who have who will visibly see because Jews will be sifted through the nations both the severity of his judgment and the mercy of his restoration has returned and in the return to plant them and to be an everlasting blessing to all the families of the earth fulfilling them what was spoken at Abraham as at the beginning as God's answer to the rebellion of nations I will make of you a great nation and give you a name and you will bless all the families of the earth your millennial blessedness will go out to all the families of the earth so we just need to bow before the Lord and

catching something of the majesty of all of this because the church is denuded and robbed of essential dimensions of the knowledge of God and the grandeur of God as is only demonstrated and exhibited in

both his dealing and his if they exempt that and dismiss it and have no heart for it they are necessarily confined to a narrow and inadequate evangelical charismatic self-serving self-propagating self-perpetuating religious entity they have lost the glory because it's caught up in that people whom God has chosen and elect for the demonstration of itself so we could pray the communication of this to the church and that is fulfillment so let's let's take a few minutes asking the Lord to put something in us of the sweep of this remarkable chapter giving us a glimpse of the end and the painful

means by which it can it must be obtained and that men will say that they are grateful so Lord save us from religious speak religious save us from learning something in a technical way thank you Lord for underlining our prophetic call as the church in total the church itself as a prophetic entity and the test of it will be our ability to speak a life-giving word to Jews in the ultimate extremity of their distress who without hope if we fail that they fail the issue is not then they'll they'll be dead they'll be inert and what brings them to life and makes them to leap in their eyes to be open is a word that comes from those who are with them in the wilderness and have not been absconded in some premature rapture that the church so calmly covets so my God we're asking to be formed for this

and in a sense as we're willing for whatever it takes it could be said we're bowing to enter the tent of Shem we're bowing to be an identification with that people we're bowing to receive from you there can only be obtained in that tent at your hand through dealings and preparation that we shall not fail in that final moment toward them thank you that whatever it means we welcome it whatever wilderness whatever despair whatever stretching to breaking where our own faith is ready to fail unless you appear and vindicate we're willing Lord that we would have a living tested prophetic word to speak that will be life for those would otherwise perish we know it's not cheap the prophetic thing is ultimate and it comes through a school of preparation and of life my God that we have some little

understanding bless us and receive our yes this morning would turn this morning into an event by our assent to whatever it will require to obtain the issue of Israel is the issue of the church the church of this ultimate kind for which we make ourselves willing candidates as did and then went into a dark night of the soul where none went to comfort her except the Lord himself who will do this give us that knowledge my God of yourself that we lack we have shielded ourselves and kept adversity at arm's length but we're opening ourselves Lord foolishly by welcoming what you think is needful for our preparation and our destiny we ask it in Jesus name

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