

(Becoming a Prophetic Church) 5. Psalm 102

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of priestliness in the church, and how it is necessary for the prophetic word to be spoken, and how suffering can break us loose from our prescribed notions and allow us to come to a deeper acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and justice.

Duration: 1:04:13

Scripture: Psalm 40:3, Psalm 72:11, Psalm 102:11-12, Psalm 116:16, Psalm 119:18, Psalm 119:105

Topics: "Prophetic Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the unique recognition of God that Jews historically have not experienced in times of suffering. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the poetic and symbolic nature of the Word of God, which requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit for interpretation. The sermon highlights the concept of 'kairos,' a fixed time in God's intentions, in which He waits for certain conditions to be fulfilled before He can come as king. The speaker also emphasizes that God is not waiting for human heroism or acts of bravery, but rather for a specific condition to be met. Ultimately, the sermon points to a future time when all nations and kingdoms will acknowledge and worship God, as a result of Israel's role as a deliverer and the submission of earthly peoples to God's authority.

Transcript

I could hardly hope for any kind of commendable beginning, and the Lord gave a beginning, and now I believe that the same God, hi, Cynthia, will be bringing his Omega conclusion. And from what I understand in the text that I've been considering, Psalm 102, it's a low-profile, low-key conclusion. It's not a kind of thing that you would expect that Mike would like climactic and resounding like a Wagnerian opera.

This is more like a little piccolo or a flute trilling on a light theme, but it brings a resonance of something without which the whole drama cannot be completed. The drama is going to end not on a mighty, massive note, but something, I don't have a word for it, something mellow, something other than prophetic, maybe more priestly. And if that priestly component is not there together with the prophetic, the conclusion cannot come.

And the same people that are called to that priestly function of speaking that prophetic word of resurrection that brings life to those bones are required equally to be priestly as the Lord before them, who is the high priest and the apostle of our confession. Were he not priestly, neither could he be apostolic. And those of you who have been reading in the book Apostolic Foundations know how much time is

devoted, space, to the exposition of the conjunction between priestliness and propheticness, priestliness and apostolicity.

Priestliness is that ultimate quotient, that ultimate dimension so hard to define, so much out of temper with the nature of our generation, our culture, our civilization. It's an echo of something out of the biblical past, but it's the issue of modernity itself. It's a component that needs to be rediscovered, be brought in, but you can't play at it.

You can't play at priestliness. It has got to be wrought. It's a disposition.

It's a mode of thought, of reflection, of an affinity with God's own priestly heart. And until that comes, there'll be no deliverance for Israel because the deliverer has got to come out from Zion to take transgression from Jacob. Israel has got to be acted upon by something that is external to it, by which God himself comes.

But what is it that releases him? How is it that he comes as deliverer out of Zion? What is the Zion from which he issues? Is it a physical place like Mount Zion? I don't want to in any way detract from the literalness of that Zion in Jerusalem, but the word has multiple meanings and can also refer to a condition of being, particularly the condition of being for which God waits in the church because the mystery of Israel and the church is not only the issue of Israel's restoration, but the church's transfiguration. There's something that has to happen to both ends, and the one releases the other. And so I hope in discoursing through Psalm 102, this low-key, low-profile psalm, that something of this mystery will be communicated to you, and I'm going to ask the Lord's blessing now.

We'll need it. Lord, precious God, if this is dear to your heart, Lord, and is a component that is critical to the whole fulfillment of the mystery, everything else might be supplied. But if this is wanting, everything is wanting.

If this mentality, this disposition of heart and spirit is not to be found in the church, the deliverer cannot and will not come out of Zion. He waits for this in his servant people that he might be released to act upon Israel, who is inert and helpless until he comes. So, Lord, show us what these things mean, and I don't have to tell you how much out of keeping it is with the temper of our generation and our society, Lord, this priestly component.

So I'm asking in a special grace, my God, to bring it forth and to communicate it and to win us over into it, that we might obtain and move and live and have our being in that dimension, without which the other things cannot follow. You cannot be apostolic if you're not first priestly. That was your own example.

How shall we attain on any other basis than what you have set forth in yourself? So come, Lord, and let the presentation itself be a demonstration, coming out of nothing, coming out of abject emptiness and even lack of all the kinds of things that we think, inspiration and adrenaline that must precede speaking, but let it come, my God, out of destitution that gives you opportunity to be all in all. Come and explain these mysteries and win us to them, Lord, we pray. We thank and give you praise in Jesus' name, and God's people said amen.

Okay, Psalm 102. It begins, as we read it, as if it's a comment from a man speaking from the place of a concentration camp. It almost has an echo of the Holocaust of the Nazi time, and I want to suggest, if I can take the liberty, that it's a statement of something future in the experience of Israel in which this kind of

confinement and destitution and desperation of a concentration camp inmate shall be known by tens of thousands of Jews, because if Jesus is right as the prophet, that the calamity and trouble that is yet ahead for Israel, for the nation, is greater than anything it has previously known, that would include being greater than the Nazi Holocaust itself that took six million lives, what then will this take? And how short a time will it require historically to bring about a process of annihilation of what may be as many as ten million Jews, and that only a remnant of existing Jewry today will survive that time of tribulation and constitute the redeemed of the Lord that returned to Zion.

So we need to strengthen our loins and be able to bear the devastation that will fall upon that people in our generation. And I often say that it's given to me to speak these things almost with a clinical ability, but how will I be when they take place? How will I take it when I see the ravaging of my own people, when I see their daughters raped and wholesale butchery of the kind that we're seeing only in a minute portion in the beheading of this Jewish idealist, that naive man that went to Iraq and found his head taken off of his shoulders. He was not spared because he was a nice guy.

How many such beheadings will there take place? How much relish will the enemies of Israel, who are the enemies of God, take, not just in defeating a defenseless people, but humiliating them? How much must we understand when we read Isaiah 51, and it says, Lie down and we shall walk over you, and they lie down and they are walked over, is a picture of a last day's defeat and humiliation by the nation when its young men shall be caught up as antelope in nets in helpless and paralyzing contradiction by what comes upon them suddenly in an inability to fend or to defeat, and are trapped and are humiliated, and the enemy has a particular character that we have not seen before historically that is not satisfied merely with the defeat of Israel, but requires Israel's humiliation. There's something in that Islamic soul kindled and intensified by what they believe have been the injustices perpetrated by Israel against them that will not be satisfied except with a malicious, spiteful ability to extract a last drop of wretchedness at the hapless foe. So let's read this as a man who has been defeated and is in some kind of internment waiting to die, and he's dying already by inches.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto Thee. This is an eschatological psalm. This is a psalm not out of Israel's past, but a statement of Israel's future given to us millennia ago for a time that is yet at hand, and that's how it's to be read and to be understood.

Hide not Thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble. Incline Thy ear unto me in the day when I call. Answer me speedily, for my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as in a hearth.

My heart is smitten and withered like grass so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness.

I'm like an owl of the desert. I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. My enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

That's the King James. My other Bible says, All day long my enemies taunt me, and those who deride me use my name for a curse. You know how it is, dear saints? When there's a prophetic statement, it waits upon the proximity to the time and to the actual fulfillment to become clear.

We wait now and have a better understanding of what kind of an enemy this is who all day long taunts me and derides me to use my name for a curse. If that's not a picture of Islamic vindictiveness and a passion for retribution and bringing out a last drop without mercy of a hapless people that waited for this time and

hour historically to demonstrate, for this is something that even exceeds Nazi brutality. This is something of a new kind.

We've not seen this spite, this maliciousness as a factor in history as we're seeing it increasingly in the kind of torments and depredations that the Islamic terrorists are capable. And we'll wait as long as it's necessary to have the opportunity to ventilate. So I'm reading it as if this is that which will soon come to pass when this psalmist who is representative of a defeated Israel is experiencing a derision by enemies who taunt me all day long.

So it's all day long. It means that he's in a fixed condition of helplessness and subjugation to that enemy. He's defeated.

He's interred. He's imprisoned. For I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink because of your indignation and anger.

For you have lifted me up and thrown me aside. My days are like an evening shadow. I wither away like grass.

But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever. Your name endures to all generations. Now listen, you dear saints, as I'm going to tighten the screws and show you how terse and compact the word of God is and how it needs to be opened to understand what is being said in only one or two verses because what is being said now is unprecedented.

It has not been known historically that a Jew who is in the grips of the judgment of God through devastation, defeat, and imprisonment and humiliation has come because of that process to a new kind of recognition of God that has not been known or characteristic of Jews historically and especially in the place of suffering. For a Jew to say, because of your indignation and anger for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside is to say, I'm suffering this, but I'm suffering this justly. This is a consequence for my sin.

This is your judgment, and it's not some aberration in history. It's not some inexplicable thing that I have to scratch my head to understand. This is totally understandable.

I'm guilty. This is your wrath. This is your judgment, and I acknowledge that.

You have done this, which is an acknowledgment that has never come from the Jewish community with regard to the Nazi Holocaust, evidently will come in a future Holocaust by which they are brought through their suffering and distress. If this psalmist and commentator is speaking in behalf of a new consciousness that comes to a nation and for which God waits, this is a remarkable and unprecedented innovation that Jews who are suffering in judgment for sin will acknowledge that it is just. It's because of your indignation, your righteous indignation and anger.

You're just in what you have done and what we're bearing in our present humiliation. For you have lifted me up and thrown me aside. They're only the instrument.

They're the rod of your chastisement, but you're the God who is acting, and I'm acknowledging that. I recognize your sovereignty because you, O Lord, are enthroned forever. Ponder what that means, you dear saints that are being called to be exegetes and to draw out from the word of God its meaning.

That's a statement that is loaded. For you, O Lord, are enthroned forever means there's no caprice. There's no accident.

There's no something happening when you were not looking. You are God. You're enthroned.

You're in charge. You're in the place of enthronement, authority, and rule, and therefore if that's true, then what I'm experiencing now is under that authority. This is not some arbitrary thing that I have to wonder how come it has struck me.

I acknowledge that you are in the place of authority, and what I'm experiencing is the result of that. And I'm not complaining. I count it as being just because how can you do or be other than what you are? You're righteous.

You're correct in your indignation and in your wrath. Don't you understand, dear saints, that God is waiting for an acknowledgment like this from his people Israel? And until he gets it, how can they be a nation of priests and make him known that it requires this kind of depth of apprehension of God in judgment, and nothing reveals God so much as his acts of judgment and wrath when they are rightly understood and received as just? Why do you make me feel like I'm talking to a bunch of Americans from Kansas City who can't for the life of them begin to fathom what I'm talking about? That if I was somewhere in Asia or Europe or Africa, I wouldn't have this trouble because this is noncompass mentis. The world has not fitted you to understand the subtlety and the depth of what it is I'm trying now to communicate.

The significance that God is waiting for something, as I hope to show you not only from Israel but also from the church, to conclude the whole epical thing of his redemptive saga, his heilsgeschichte, his salvation history, is waiting for its completion on two things. Number one, for Israel, a recognition of himself as God in sovereignty as enthroned forever, which means not only today and the future but also the past. So that this psalmist, by saying that you're enthroned forever, is acknowledging that the Nazi Holocaust was itself an act of God.

It was itself a statement of the God who is in power and enthroned and rules from heaven. And that was not an accident. And Hitler is not the sole thing.

He's only the instrument. It cannot be dismissed as being the work of man. God is enthroned.

Do you understand what it means for the nation to come to an acknowledgement of this kind and to come to it in the midst of their suffering, in the midst of now experiencing yet another and more and worse judgment than in the past and counting it as just altogether? It's your indignation, it's your anger that has put me in this place, and I'm not complaining because you're enthroned, you're just, you're righteous, and it's due us. Lord, I believe, but help thou my unbelief, that the significance of what I'm communicating, for which you're waiting, will get through into the density of American culture and life that has not fitted us to understand the issues of judgment, the issues of sovereignty, that the revelation of God is reserved not for the brightest hour but the darkest hour, that when we shall know him in the dark hour and understand him and not fault him for his acts that confound and confuse and contradict what we think of God and how he ought to be and act, then do we know God in fact. This is what is being stated here, and it's only the preliminary.

The real heart of this psalm is yet to come, but I don't want you to miss this. For you, O Lord, are enthroned forever. What an acknowledgement of God as Lord, God as enthroned, God in authority, God

in sovereignty, even in the condition in which the psalmist affirms himself.

For your name endures to all generations. Well, if I failed in the first part, shall I succeed in this? Your name endures to all generations. Can you imagine Jews even taking the issue of God's name into their consideration and that the issue of God's name to all generations eclipses every other consideration, even the fact of our present suffering, the judgment that has come upon us, that I'm constantly being derided by my enemies, my bread is mingled with ashes, I'm like a sparrow, I'm alone, I'm fluttering, I'm a tremulous thing, I'm on the verge of perishing.

But your name is the issue, not my alleviation, not my relief from distress. I'm not crying out to be taken out from this. What is really the issue, and I'm seeing it for the first time, and would to God that we had seen it before and understood it before, our whole subsequent history would have been other than what it has become.

For what is a Jew, what is Israel, if it is not jealous for and concerned for the name of its God? The honor of that God, his reputation before the nations, not to have this as a concern and a central and foremost concern is not to be truly a Jew. For not all Israel is Israel, and not every physical descendant is a son of Abraham. Beyond the physical dimension, there's a quotient, there's something that should be the distinctive of this chosen people, and that is the regard for God and his name, which even the church lacks adequately.

That's why you're straining to understand me, because it's outside even your own experience and your own jealousy. This is my last time so I can be insulting. We've got the motor running for a quick getaway.

Are you understanding me, you Kansas City saints? You do not have a jealous regard for the name of God. That ought to be the distinctive of the church, as the Israel of God, as it ought to be of the natural Israel, for that is the foremost distinction that makes us his people. That more than our comfort, more than our convenience, more than the alleviation of our distresses, the one awesome and all-pervading constant consideration is his name, his honor.

How does this affect him? And for the first time in redemptive history, we're hearing that acknowledgment from a man crying it out from his place of distress and confinement and derision and shame from a concentration camp. And I'll tell you what, dear saints, that is so important an acknowledgment to come from the people Israel that it's worth any number of concentration camps and any degree of suffering in order to obtain it. And you know what I think? Nothing less than the distress of last day's judgment and wrath can obtain it.

So long as we're in the place of comfort, security, and everything about us is hedged in with safeguards, and we can continue in our categories, unquestioned premises that are never challenged, we'll never come to the depth of acknowledgment being expressed in this verse now. It takes suffering to break us loose from our prescribed notions, our established ways of seeing and understanding that all the world applauds as being correct. But correct is not correct enough.

There's something transcendent that God is wanting in the earth that is heavenly, a perspective of things that he himself enjoys, and every true saint has always sought and had as the foremost reason for being and is absent from our contemporary church. And that's why we take the liberties that we do and merchandise God and trivialize him and fit him in with our programs. We have not that Judaic, true Hebraic sense of reverence for God as God.

And Karl Barth, my favorite theologian, says, when that is wanting, it's not just that something is wanting, it's everything is wanting. When you lose that component, when you have not attained that component, everything is wanting. The deep reverence for God as God, not when things are sailing well and comfortable and we're prospering, but in adversity, in suffering, in confinement, in derision.

When you can say God is enthroned, then you know him. And you can make him known, which is our Jewish calling in which we have failed to now. But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever.

Your name endures to all generations. This guy has come to a comprehension of something that you don't pick up in a Bible school or a seminary. It's a deep awareness, an acknowledgment of something that is at the very nexus of reality itself against which everything conspires that is in the world to disguise.

And when a man will come to this recognition, he has come to truth. He has come to reality. And it's worth every suffering to obtain.

Believe us all this? Therefore, he can say, knowing this God in this way, you will rise up and have compassion on Zion. Do you know why? Because he knows that though he is presently suffering judgment and wrath, it is not God's ultimate word. And that's what the prophets have all along known, who have sounded the warnings of doom, of crisis, of judgment, of last day's acts of God that would be devastating.

But it's only the penultimate act of God. It's the next to last. It's not the last.

It's the judgment that precedes the mercy. The final word of God is not wrath. The final word of God is mercy.

The final word of God is that even the judgment was a preparation and is itself a mercy, if you could but see and understand, to bring a nation to this kind of comprehension of myself. For to know me like that is to live. And even though they should perish physically because of the duress of that condition, that kind of knowledge is salvation and eternity.

For such a one is safe. You will rise up and have compassion on Zion. How do you know that? Because that's God's ultimate nature.

What's the word in Hebrew for tender kindness and mercy? Chesed. The psalmist knows that this is the root character of God. It's his mercy, his compassion.

And you will rise up. You're not active in it now, but you cannot long constrain yourself. You're not going to allow this judgment and this condition to be the last word.

Because that's contrary to what you are as God. You have got to rise up and to express your inmost nature. You cannot contain it.

And that is your chesed, your compassion, your mercy. You'll not allow us to remain in this condition unto death without rising up to have compassion on Zion. For it is time to favor it.

The appointed time has come. Oh yeah? How do you know? Because your servants hold its stones dear and have pity on its dust. Here's where the whole message goes down the tube.

Because you're incapable of following this poetry, this philosophic discourse, this remarkably compact statement that the man in distress knows that there's a set time. There's a kairos, K-A-R-O-S. It's not

chronological.

It's a time fixed in the intentions of God by which he contains himself waiting for a certain condition and fulfillment for his release. Talk about the humility of God who is constrained and confined in the heavens even now waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. He cannot come as king until certain conditions which he has allowed to restrict him are fulfilled.

And those conditions are met by men in the earth who are called the church. Talk about faith. And this is exactly what is being spoken here.

What is the set time? How does the psalmist know it? That there's a set time by which favor will come to Zion through the compassion of God. When his servants have compassion on these stones and pity upon its dust. What does that mean? What it means is that the servants are not Israel.

For if Israel were servants, they would not be in confinement. The servants is a mystical allusion to the church in the kind of language that the psalmist had to employ before the church was even considered as an entity historically. Servants are us.

And what about us? What distinguishes us? What is God waiting for in us that releases him to be the deliverer that comes out of Zion and take transgression from Jacob? It's a thing that you would hardly have looked up to consider. You'll not even blink now to have compassion on stones and pity on dust. That's what God is waiting for.

We should take an interest in archeology. Is that the distinction? Or is it the stones of a devastated Israel and the dust of their ruins and the judgments that have befallen them in Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem, Tiberias, all of the modern day cities of Israel flattened, left desolate and in ruins. And you know what? The world is rubbing its hands in glee and enjoying Israel's terrible predicament and the loss of her state and the collapse of her civilization that is reduced to rubble and dust and say, you had it coming and you deserve it.

But there's one small people in the earth who do not enter into that celebration and that glee. They're not happy for this desolate condition that has befallen the people Israel with whom they are joined in spirit as brethren grafted into their tree that their suffering is our suffering. Their misery and wretchedness is our misery and wretchedness.

And their judgment is not something that isolates us from them, that we remove ourselves in a superior spirituality, but we join the Lord in identification with them, not at their best, but at their worst. Not when they're cute, but when they're disgraceful. This is God speaking poetically, you dear American literalists who barely got by with English 101.

This is poetry. And you know what poetry is, what its distinction is over prose? It says something tersely. It does not need pages of commentary.

In one statement, in the symbolic and poetic way, it strikes at the heart of an understanding that requires the spirit of God to open for our consideration, which I am attempting to do under the most adverse and difficult circumstances. Listen. The remarkable thing is whatever this condition is, God is waiting for it.

He's not waiting for our heroism. He's not waiting for some remarkable supreme act of bravery. He's waiting for a condition of identification, an inward condition that cannot be feigned.

You can't mock this. You can't pump this up to have compassion on stones and pity on dust. It has got to be out of your gut, some kind of identification with a people in their judgment, as if you yourself are deserving of it and are willing to stand with them in it.

And you're not even Jewish. And that's not just a small point. That is the point, that you who have no obligation and ought to be joining the rest of the Gentile world in celebrating Israel's pathetic predicament and condition are different.

You're not just rejoicing in their predicament. You're sorrowing. It hurts you.

There's an ache that these people have been reduced to such destitution. And yet you know it's the penultimate and not the ultimate and final thing. For when they come to that and you come to this, the set time has come by which God will deliver Zion, because he has waited for you to come to this condition.

You hard Americans, you callow, shallow, evangelical charismatics who are rooted in self-centeredness with an overlay of seeming spirituality, but your self-interest is the predominant factor that is the center of your being and moving, even in coming to a place like this to learn ministry and how to obtain and be. It's deep, and it's the wrong principle. It's the wrong center.

The right center is an identification with God in those things that are contrary to self-interest, even spiritual self-interest, and shows itself in a way that beggars the mind and stupefies the imagination that a Gentile should be so identified with Jews in their ultimate depravity of distress and judgment that they would take it upon themselves as being appropriate to themselves. It's not from a distance that you cluck your tongue and too bad about those Jews. You're with them in it.

You're not just having mercy about the dust. You're in the dust. And when God sees that, he can now deliver Israel because the issue of Israel has produced in you that quality of divine character which is at the heart of God himself and is the very genius of deity, which is compassion.

And that's why Jesus had to be baptized in the Jordan. And poor John the Baptist, I have need to be baptized. What are you doing? It's necessary for all righteousness to be fulfilled for I cannot be Israel's deliverer from standing on the banks and looking down upon them as they wallow in that muddy water in repentance and brokenness for their sin, and I'm standing in some sort of aloof superior condition looking and waiting for them to come out that I can minister to them.

I've got to go down and into. Though I'm sinless, though I'm the son of God, I have got to identify and join with my people in their condition or I cannot be to them what I must. And the same thing is true for you as it was for him.

This is not schmaltz. This is not sentimentality. This is not saccharine tears.

This is God in you. This is God. His very nature is central to you.

His response is your response. It's contrary to your self-interest. In fact, it will bring you in danger to exhibit this kind of empathy and identity with Jews by those who hate them so much that they will not allow them to breathe.

And how will they treat you if you give evidence of an identification with them? This will not be a cheap compassion. It will be expensive. But you cannot help yourself because you're righteous.

It's not that I guess I have to do this, being righteous. It's that being in God's righteousness, you cannot help but do this. You've come to a condition of being for which he waits to have a bride for the bridegroom, adorned for the bridegroom, having the glory of God, and this is that glory.

His nature, his compassion, his mercy. He's waiting for a bride who is like him and not just some American plastic counterfeit. That's when the set time has come.

Israel will be in the throes of judgment and helpless, helpless condition while God waits for something not from Israel but from his servant people. And when he sees that something that has come, the set time to favor Zion has taken place and he will become Israel's deliverer. Do you know why? Because the purpose for Israel has been fulfilled in obtaining from the church a condition of character and being and identification with himself for which he waits.

And this is the mystery of Israel and the church. The issue of Israel, as I said this morning, is not Israel, it's the church. The servant people of God.

It's interesting that of all the words that could have been used as a synonym for church in a time in which the word church would have been meaningless to those generations who would have read this psalm, that the single word that the Holy Spirit gives is servant. When my servants, when my bond slaves, when my people who do not live for themselves but for me, who have set me before them, their every consideration is how it affects me. They're not prompted by religious self-interest or spirituality or attainment.

A servant people, like Paul, bond slaves, have no life unto themselves nor for themselves. And when you come to a condition like that, you won't have to strain to affect compassion. Compassion will flow out of the necessity of the reality to which you have come in Christ.

For he is the ultimate servant and the suffering servant and the compassionate son of God. And he's waiting for a bride who has exactly that qualification and that condition which cannot be emulated, cannot be purchased, cannot be obtained, cannot be wrought. It has to be communicated and obtained in union with him.

You will rise up and have compassion on Zion for it is time to favor it. The appointed time has come. Your servants hold its stones dear and have pity on its dust.

Mamma mia! Is that all you're waiting for, Lord? Nothing dramatic? No great exercise of heroism? You're waiting for a condition of a subdued kind, an inward condition that does not reveal itself in heroics but that you can see and measure that is authentic and unfeigned and real that can only be obtained by union with yourself. That when the church will come to that place, the mystery has been fulfilled. The nation will be restored for a church has come to this place and miracles have been transfigured.

The great concerns of God and the great jealousies both for church and Israel have been obtained and the whole redemptive saga has come to its conclusion when the church will express it in this poetic statement of having compassion on Israel's stones and rubble and mercy and pity upon her dust. And don't think because I'm Jewish that I'll be all the more qualified to come to that condition than you. It's not an issue of genetics or racial inheritance so that we Jews have any advantage.

It's an issue of transcendence. It's an issue of beyond what we are racially, genetically Gentile Jew. It's an issue of union because only God has a compassion of this kind that is expressed not when it's deserved but when it's least deserved in the midst of judgment and in devastation.

God is compassionate and we have to be also and it's not be some overlay that we can put on a charismatic flip-flop. It's got to be authentic something that has been wrought in us by the continual relationship with Him of union by which you can't tell where the servant ends and God begins. His nature prevails.

The powers of privacy and selfishness have been broken. We are as Him and a wife adorned for the bridegroom which by the way if he doesn't obtain a spouse of that kind neither shall he have dominion over creation because dominion was given to Adam and Eve. Dominion was given to them.

God will not allow Jesus to be a regent without a co-regent. He must have a wife. He must have one adorned for Him that He can then prevail over His creation and have dominion.

You see what the issue is? It's enormous. It's more than wanting to see Israel help saved and all of the kinds of things that we can project out of our own humanity. This is beyond us and other than us and He waits for it which implies that it can be obtained but only through a union with Him not in a final moment but the sum of all our moments before that moment.

And it's evidently a demonstration of so magnificent a kind that the nations themselves will observe it because the very next statement says the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth your glory for the Lord will build up Zion He will appear in His glory He will regard the prayers of the destitute He will not despise their prayer.

Something has taken place in history that even dumb, dumb nations Gentile having no consideration for the God of Israel as God having their own deities their own paganisms are seeing something made manifest before their eyes that cannot be contradicted it's an awesome testimony of so ultimate a kind that the nations will fear the Lord when they see this quality this identification this union that cannot be understood in any programmatic mechanical institutional way when they see the reality of this supernaturalness being evidenced throughout the earth wherever God's people are who are servants they will have to take note that God is God see how to read a psalm how to open every statement how to exegete how to draw out one statement on the heels of the other it's the most terse compact

piece of holy ghost composition is what psalms are and we are little practiced in them and I would recommend to you my practice of reading the psalm for the day every day in the morning devotional time today is the what's today's date? the 20th? it comes up for me in psalm 40 tomorrow is the 21st I'll be reading psalm 41 on the 22nd I'll be reading psalm 42 so that the last digit is always related to the actual date I'm not playing spiritual roulette I'm going systematically through the psalms a psalm for the day and I'm not reading it I won't even say I'm studying it I'm immersing myself in it I'm swimming and luxuriating in its statements I'm taking them on to my tongue I'm contemplating I'm immersing myself in the mystery of this compact communication that is unique even in scripture

itself and speaks volumes with but one statement and the nations and didn't I say that the issue of Israel is the issue of the nations? that what the nations will see in Israel affected by the church that are the servants of God they will fear the name of the Lord all the kings of the earth, your glory something breaks loose when the king arises and comes out of his retirement and rises to have compassion on Zion because he's been released for that thing which has come and is now evident in his church for the Lord will build up Zion he'll appear in his glory he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer that's you when your prayer will arise out of your destitution he'll hear that prayer and not despise it the prayer of the destitute is not the prayer of Israel

it's not the prayer of those in confinement it's the prayer of a church that is itself destitute of the kind that men like myself experience when they have to get up on a platform like this and speak and project themes of this kind and would rather run the other way and hide because they feel destitute I had to summon my African brother to pray before we came out tonight Alex, I'm depressed I'm out of it I don't have inspiration I don't have a heart for this I'm destitute it's not a pleasant feeling but it's a condition to which we must come when we will acknowledge the magnitude of what our calling is we will recognize the truth of our condition as destitute and until you're destitute until you're aware of how frail and pitiful a thing you are in yourself and incapable of expositing

something of the mystery of this kind though it's critical for the church's consideration and it is never before so set before as tonight you'll recognize your destitution and in that recognition and in the prayer and the cry that issues from it he will hear so long as we pray out of our comfort out of our categories out of our polite consideration for the peace of Jerusalem you know that little 30 second thing that we do and discharge our responsibility and go on to something else you might as well save your breath, it falls to the floor with a thud to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is to exercise your spirit with an anguish that knows that that peace will not be obtained until the prince of peace comes after the harrowing and devastating judgments that must yet befall that people

throughout the world wherever Jacob is in a time of Jacob's trouble that will eclipse even the previous Nazi Holocaust and until that comes and this kind of recognition of the sovereignty of God who is enthroned forever there'll be no peace and unless you pray for that peace with that prayerfulness out of that kind of knowledge save your breath because it's just a little courtesy it's a little cheapy and it will ruin you not just for Israel but for anything if you get by with such practices as that that require nothing more but a 30 second acknowledgement got the idea saints? you are the issue of God's deliverance for Israel he cannot come until he comes out of the Zion that he waits to be formed by you in your true corporateness in the reality of his personhood in what he is in himself

is the distinctive issue in quality and truth of your own life but in order to attain that death to Kansas City mentality and Americana and Charismatica and all the kinds of things that are cheapy equivalents to which we gladly give ourselves so to attain ministry or to do something better than working in the world and serving God understand? let this be recorded for a generation to come so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord that he look down from his holy height from heaven the Lord looked at the earth to hear the groans of the prisoners to set free those who were doomed to die that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when peoples gather together and kingdoms to worship and serve the Lord the climax of the ages those earthly peoples those

nations that will not condescend to God and build their own towers of Babel that he had to confuse their tongue and disperse them still retain their initial enmity against God still their independence still their rebellion and they're going to come now to a place where they acknowledge and worship and serve God their kingdoms will now be submitted to his authority all because something has happened with Israel that God has come as a deliverer all because a servant people have exhibited a quality that is intrinsic to God himself that releases him to bring that deliverance that this is the ultimate effect of it nations are turned to acknowledge God to worship and to serve him and bring their kingdoms under his sovereignty is that the end of all things?

Yes! over so little a trifle as an attitude a disposition is that all that God is waiting and wanting? that a people who are servants will have compassion and mercy that he's waiting for that one thing because that

one thing is everything and when he has it he's released to deliver a people who are inert and incapable of acting for themselves and that the world will take note of this remarkable deliverance and understand what it is that has released it that is an astonishment because it comes essentially out from Gentiles for Jews and there's no natural logic by which that can be understood it's utterly and totally supernatural, only God could have effected it, it's steeper than some kind of schmaltzy sentimental identification with Israel because they're cute because you've seen the

exodus or you think that they all look like Paul Newman this is deep and when God will see it when the reality is attained he's free his purpose for the church has been obtained, he has a spouse now he can deliver the nation, now he has both the heavenly and the earthly thing and now the nations themselves seeing this remarkable phenomenon come into subjection to that God so as to worship and to serve him with their kingdoms either this psalm is a statement of the eschatological future toward which we're tending or I'm just bumping my gums and making sounds that count for nothing but I have a faith to believe that this is a statement of the future toward which we're tending and cannot attain except we seek it consciously and are willing for the sacrifice and the multiple deaths of which I

spoke this morning that stand as obstructions and human alternatives to the compassion of God our schmaltzy sentimentality is not that compassion that compassion will be measured not when Israel is attractive but when it is destitute and when we will share in that destitution willingly and voluntarily he'll hear that prayer and hear that cry and he'll act that the kingdoms will worship and serve the Lord and it will be spoken of throughout all generations the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion his praise in Jerusalem when people gather together because he looked down from his holy height from heaven the Lord looked at the earth to hear the groans of the prisoners and set free those who were doomed to die because the Lord himself exercised compassion as well as power to a people who

have been reduced to this kind of bondage and hopelessness and futility and death in chambers and dark places and concentration camps and chains God looks down hears their cry and acts it's the revelation of himself so it's a coming of age of the church it's the thing for which God waits and the thing to which we should be consciously tending and for which reason he's speaking this as a conclusion in these days what faith that this is an appropriate conclusion that the chastening of the Lord will be for Israel's advantage to break them to acknowledge his sovereignty that they'll lay their head upon his shoulder with sobs of contrition and gratitude because of the chastening reserved for sons of such high calling it's the recognition of the Father that comes when the pain of love is

affected by the chastisement of a father to a son the greatest expression of love of a father to a son is the willingness to chastise and the son in his depths will recognize that however painful that chastisement this is very love and though it will break in tears and contrition it will find its head on the shoulder of the father who has inflicted it and be in a relationship with that father in a deepened way through all millennia and all the eternal future that makes Israel Israel indeed it's not as I'm writing in my holocaust book that you must get a copy it's not that Israel will have a message for all nations so much as she will be the message for in those days 10 men from every language and nation will grasp the skirt of a Jewish man and say let us go with you we've heard that God is

with you for the Holy One of Israel has glorified you for the house of prayer of all nations that the Lord who gathers the outcast of Israel says I will gather to him others beside those who are gathered to him who says arise and shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you and Gentiles will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising that there's a radically preserved position of

honor and recognition of Israel that will be acknowledged by all nations and come up to express that honor on every feast of tabernacles and their stubborn refusal so to do will bring upon them curse because they have become the city of the Lord the Zion of the Holy One of Israel and the response of the nations is in gratitude for the blessing that now redounds

them through the fulfillment of Israel's call to be a kingdom of priests violence shall no longer be heard in your land neither wasting nor destruction within your borders but you shall call you all salvation your gates praised and days of your mourning shall be ended it's not a human light or a Talmudic light but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light and your God your glory not by virtue of any work of religious zeal but by the imputation of God your people shall all be righteous and they shall inherit the land forever not with Jacob usurping or clutching or grasping but inherit what is given not on the basis of one's qualification of virtue but on the basis of God who gives and the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations you'll no longer be

termed forsaken nor shall your land anymore be termed desolate so shall your God rejoice over you and they shall call them the holy people the redeemed of the Lord and you shall be called sought out a city not forsaken the branch of my planting the work of my hands that I may be glorified because you oh Lord endure forever because you will arise and have mercy on Zion so the nation shall fear the name of the Lord and the Lord shall build up Zion because he regards the prayer of the destitute and because he hears the groaning of the prisoner and those that are appointed to death who will declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples are gathered together and the kingdoms to serve the Lord I've given you a spate of Isianic scripture that speaks of the the

millennial glory of a restored Israel taken out from dungeons and chains and death sentences and hopelessness and futility and restored and brought back and redeemed as the remnant of the Lord the return of a holy people to Zion that will bless all the families of the earth and I'll conclude with this a little quotation from Spurgeon in his commentary on the Psalms which I commend to you the greatest bargain in books is the three volume work of Spurgeon called the Treasury of David his commentary on the Psalms it's superb and in his commentary on the Psalm that we have considered tonight he writes happy will be the day when all nations shall unite in the sole worship of Jehovah then shall the histories of the olden times be read with adoring wonder and the hand of the Lord shall be seen

as having ever rested upon the sacramental host of his elect because he is enthroned forever his hand is ever upon them both for judgment and for good then shall shouts of exulting praise ascend to heaven in honor of him who loosed the captives delivered the condemned raised up the desolation of ages and made out of stones and rubble a temple for his worship all you need do is write one paragraph of comment like that and you can retire to make of the ruins and the rubble the stones a temple for his worship Israel's devastation is God's opportunity God's final judgment and chastisement is his ultimate mercy the nations will know and wonder and worship and serve Israel's God and join in rejoicing and all generations shall acclaim him for the redeemer has come out of Zion when the set time

to favor her had come when his servants have compassion upon her stones and mercy upon her dust let's pray Lord we

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/becoming-a-prophetic-church-5-psalm-102/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net