

Beyond Culture

by Art Katz

Preparing a place of refuge for Jews and understanding the role of the church in the last days requires a biblical lifestyle, community and relationship with God, and a sacrificial love and service.

Duration: 23:35

Scripture: Luke 15:4

Topics: "Native Indian"

Description

In this sermon, Art Katz, a Jewish believer, shares his personal journey of finding God after being a disillusioned atheist. He emphasizes the importance of a biblical lifestyle and a community of believers living together. Katz also discusses the significance of Israel and the Jewish people in the last days, highlighting their role in spreading the law to all nations. He connects this to the current events of Prime Minister Sharon declaring war on terror, suggesting that the powers of darkness seek to annihilate the Jews to prevent the fulfillment of God's plan.

Transcript

When God sifts the nations, what will be the criteria? Good afternoon, and welcome to Focal Point. I'm Peggy Gasterson, your hostess. And with me in the studio is Art Katz.

Art, welcome to Focal Point. Thank you so much, Peggy. I've waited a long time to have you on.

It's been a couple of years. I know you were a world traveler, and so it hasn't been possible always to get you on. But finally, God had you come into this studio even today, so praise his name.

Amen. I'm going to ask you to just introduce yourself, Art, and tell us what's on your heart today. Okay.

I'm a Jewish believer for 37 years now, saved in Jerusalem at the end of a 14-month spiritual odyssey with a pack on my back as a disillusioned ex-Marxist atheist looking for philosophical answers as my ideological and philosophical world came apart, not looking for God, but there was a God looking for me because some Gentile woman, the mother of one of my students, was praying for this radical atheist, and the Lord pursued me in response to her prayer as the hound of heaven. So I've had a 37-year history in the Lord that has taken me to many parts of the world and revelation and understanding and experience that has found its way into several books. And the last 27 years, the Lord has led us to participate in a community in northern Minnesota.

So we're about 30 believers living on a 160-acre farm with daily access to one another, going from house to house daily, as it were, breaking bread, seeking to establish a biblical lifestyle, having moved from evangelical to charismatic to Pentecostal to full gospel, every form and variety of the faith available. I came finally to the sense that something is omitted from them all that needs to be found and to be restored, and it's a lifestyle. It's a mode of being, a life together, those that believed were together.

And until we come to that, we will never have the quality and depth of witness that the world desperately needs. So we have been giving ourselves to that, and the Lord has blessed and taught us many things. It's been a hard school, but a gratifying one.

Well, driving here last night from Winnipeg, having attended a conference on North American native theology and driving on the Trans-Canadian Highway 1 and seeing the beautiful scenery and seeing Rainy River and the porous border between our two countries stimulated me again to be reminded that I bear a very special burden, which is very much in keeping with the reason for which the Lord has established us in northern Minnesota, and that is to prepare a place of refuge for Jews in flight from persecution in the last days. And this is something of which the church has hardly any awareness nor expectation, but there's a time of Jacob's trouble, spoken in Jeremiah 30 and 31 and in other of the prophets and in Amos chapter 9 of a sifting of the lost sheep of the house of Israel through all nations. So we are actually anticipating Jews coming down to us through Canada that may have their origin from as distant places as Europe, Russia, or Siberia, crossing the Bering Straits into the Yukon, the British Columbia, into Canada and down to us and from us into yet other places.

And we live 10 miles from the Chippewa Nation in Cass Lake, and we're not far from Red Lake, and the Lord has impressed my heart to believe that the North American Indian Christian is going to play a significant part in the shielding and providing of refuge and direction for Jews in those last days. It may call for a revival of Native American understanding of nature and of wilderness because God says in Ezekiel 20 to the Jewish people, I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations. It's in the remote, out-of-the-way places that these sophisticated, urbane Jews who have lived in condominiums and places of that kind will find themselves remarkably thrust, and that quite suddenly.

So, of course, I'm interested, therefore, in anything that pertains to Indian spirituality and to a deep appropriation of the faith. And we live close enough to know the high rate of suicide. It's almost a genocidal thing that is taking place among North American Indians, and the tragedy is that the gospel has had so limited an effect for them.

I'm very much inspired in remembering a remark made by Craig Smith, a North American Native brother who's the head of the Indian work of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, sharing with us one day some years ago that in his long preoccupation with the issue of the gospel and his own people, he felt that the high rate of falling away from the faith and the lack of the power to attract the Native American to what is purportedly white man's religion has been the omission of the things pertaining to Israel and the Jew in the communication of the gospel. And I agree with that completely. The fault of the matter is that those who brought the gospel to the Native Americans themselves lacked such a perspective, and so the whole church needs it.

But I believe that the depth of Native spirituality would respond to the understanding that there's a special destiny for themselves in relationship to the tribes of Israel that are yet dispersed over the face of the earth that will give them an ultimate and final purpose for meaning and significance, which, of course, is lacking

in modern times and explains, I think, so much of the disillusionment and depression and lack of sense of significant purpose for being that is like a cancer with the North American Native people. So there's a purpose for God that will bless Israel and bless them, and I hope to find opportunity to communicate that to my Native American brethren. That's the key.

How are you going to do that? How is that going to be done? Do you have an open forum for them? Not much opening. The Lord has somehow kept me on the shelf or the issue on the shelf, though I traveled the world. And here in my own backyard, I have very little opportunity for expression.

It may well be that this broadcast today is the beginning of something opening. And, of course, I just come from the conference in Winnipeg on North American Native theology with Richard Twiss and other significant leaders who seem to have known me from past times, and I left with them copies of my different books with Richard. I left a book on the Holocaust, *Where Was God?*, which is a biblical attempt to explain the tragedy of Jewish calamity and suffering historically and especially at the hands of the Nazis in recent times as being not somehow an accident in history of which we were the victim, but the fulfillment of Scripture, speaking of the judgment that would befall us in the last days, and that that principle is applicable not only to Jews, but to people who have been victim of oppression, the black people, the North American slavery or white oppression, to be understood as a rod of God's chastisement, and that the enemy is not the white man who has inflicted these things.

The enemy is our own unrepentant sin and our continuation in forms of religious culture that are in opposition to the biblical faith and in the rejection, the continuing rejection of the faith of the one God who is the creator of the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. We still stand under the threat of those judgments, and that the first step in return to God is a repentant acknowledgement and a willingness to understand and to see that what we have experienced as oppression or persecution is not the thing in itself, but a rod of God's chastisement for sins for which we have failed to acknowledge and to express repentance. Therefore, we are not victims.

So long as we have a victim mentality, we see the white man as enemy. But if we have a repentant mentality that sees that God may have used them as the chastisement, the necessary chastisement, then we are no longer their victims, but that they have functioned in a purpose in God to bring us to a necessary repentance, and we are released from the necessity to bear a resentment that puts us at odds with them and with their culture. There can be no healing until that bitterness and resentment is forgiven.

Right. And until you stop blaming somebody. We need to see ourselves in response to the same question that was put to Saul on the road to Damascus.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? We are the ones who have persecuted God in our failure to respond to his Christ and our continuing rejection of his salvation and redemption and even sometimes even actively opposing those who bear that message to us. And we need to be brought down to the earth as Saul was and perhaps to be blinded as he was until someone will be sent to lay hands upon us that we might receive our sight and our understanding and serve the God whom till now we have been historically opposing. We have had Richard Twist.

I have had Richard on this program, and I love him dearly. I understand his heart to win his people. And his idea is that they would redeem the Indian culture.

Some Indian people have asked me, do I have to give up my culture to be a Christian? Well, you don't have to give up being Scandinavian to be a Christian, and so explain that for them, will you? I think that there's an ultimate requirement of sacrifice that indicates our level of response and loyalty to God above every other attachment. Abraham, when he was called, had to come out of nation, kindred, and father's house and follow the Lord whithersoever he would lead him in the land of promise. There's a radical separation that the faith calls for as the first principle of the faith.

It was required of Abraham and required of the patriarchs. It's required of Jewish believers today who, in receiving Christ, face the very real prospect of the loss of their own families, their own communities. They have got to put the interest and call of God above every consideration.

I think that the question is of the same kind about Indian culture. But about culture in general, whether it's Indian or Western, I would say that we need realistically to appreciate that all cultures are human, and therefore they have a demonic quotient and prospect and possibility, and that we're told to touch not the world, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, for all that is in the world is the love of the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and so on. So we need to touch everything with a restraint, especially those things that have been historically employed by demonic powers to turn men from God and to the fascination or the idolatry of nature itself or nature gods of their own making and imagining who do not require the moral requirement that their true God calls for.

All right, let's use the issue of, for instance, their music. And we don't necessarily filter through music that comes from Ireland or Great Britain, let's say. It has kind of a Celtic ring to it, and yet we don't say that it's, well, maybe intrinsically evil.

One of the things that I have known about the Indian people is that everything they do is spiritual. Is that true? It's kind of like the Jew is that way. Yeah, that's a powerful component.

And so this is why maybe for me, looking on, I would have to say that maybe like the powwow or the music that they would play maybe has a spiritual meaning to it. And if they're not in Christ, then it would not be of the Lord. Can you redeem that? The only safe redemption that I could consider is if that were given over unto death with a full destruction in the real sense that you don't expect it back again and that if it comes back again, it comes back as a gift from the Lord from the resurrection side.

In that sense, it might be sanctified. But merely to employ the language of sanctification without submitting it to a very real death leaves it with all of its worldly power and spirit power intact. So unless we have a heart that is willing for something to be brought to death, as Abraham brought his Isaac, how then can we receive it back as safe? And this was the ultimate requirement for Abraham's faith.

It's the ultimate requirement for us with our Jewish culture, with our Indian culture, and any and all cultures. I'm not celebrating Western culture over the Indian. It has its demonic content and possibility.

And I would say that the only culture that is safe and that ought to be sought is the culture from heaven, the culture of the kingdom. And even in our own community life when we fought to introduce some Jewish cultural things like the candles on a Friday night of Shabbat, the Lord was quick to wrap our knuckles and not to allow it, as if to say, there's something higher that I want to communicate and see established in your community that has no origin in that which is earthly, however, sacrosanct, however, honored over time, and I will give it to you from heaven. As I'm giving you your economy, which is below the poverty level established by the United States government, I'll give you your culture also.

But don't you seek to introduce earthly, human elements, for it is all charged with corruption and given to suspicion. And we have to have a faith that will believe that if we forsake the one, God will give us that which is heavenly. Set your affection on the things that were above.

Don't strenuously defend your own vested self-interest and be open for the things that God is wanting to communicate. If he then gives it back, it is sanctified. And if he doesn't, you treat it with historical respect, but you don't employ it or think that you can sanctify it and that it will serve the purposes of God when there are yet things resident in it that are contrary to God.

Could we back up a bit? You said that your place just outside of Bemidji there, you felt that Jews were going to come out of Canada into the wilderness, various places of the wilderness in northern Minnesota. In the wilderness of all nations. I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations.

So I'm expecting a worldwide phenomenon that will employ even the indigenous people of Australia and New Zealand, the black believers of North America who are living in the urban centers where Jews are, may have to stand in defense of unbelieving Jews as against the rage and opposition of their own black kinsmen but that there's a particular call of God for the use of peoples that have been despised in the world as being inferior or secondary in which Jews themselves have had a superior perspective that God will use the foolish and the weak thing to convey to the unbelieving Jew the love of God at the price of sacrifice that why should a North American Indian or a black person who has perhaps been gouged in his rent by a Jewish landlord be willing to even risk his own life in defense of unbelieving Jews? There's no way to explain this except that this is the very sacrificial nature of God being expressed to believers who are in that kind of union with him. But if our culture keeps us from that union, we'll not be able to fulfill that kind of destiny. So there's something very much at stake here over the issue of our relationship with the Lord which ironically may be hindered by our insistence on employing cultural things that makes our religion as significant and as formidable as our white western brothers in their forms.

Both forms are suspect and we need to seek to heaven for the kingdom of heaven, the culture of heaven and the relationship with the Lord of heaven. Paul was such a man. And look at the remarkable penetration Paul had into pagan civilizations as well as with Jews.

Was it because of his natural qualification that he came from a Roman community or that he was a citizen of Rome or that he spoke Greek or had a rabbinical training or was it that the key to his penetration was that his citizenship was in heaven? So I want to make a case that this is not some airy metaphor that is not attainable. It is attainable and God has separated us in northern Minnesota. I'm a New Yorker by birth.

I graduated from the University of California in Berkeley and God is separating me from my own cultural origins to bring me into a dimension that is above all transcendent and will speak to all as God himself is in it in his power so to do. Why would they come out of these countries now? Maybe you said even from Russia through Canada, the Bering Straits down to Canada and into the United States or people in Canada, will they be taking care of the Jews? Canadian Jews will also be subject to the same persecution. We just read that there was almost a close attempt at bombing in Montreal in the Jewish neighborhood by Islamic radicals and Islam is spread all over the world and particularly now in the West.

So the life of Jews will be at stake. God will use this again as a rod of chastisement uprooting them from their places of security and culture and to thrust them out in a wilderness stripping where they have to face the ultimate question of the meaning of life and God and in that place God says, I will meet with you. So we foresee this time of Jacob's trouble as being near and it will affect Jews.

Jacob is everywhere and in that time God will use true believers to bring a place of refuge and understanding to those Jews upon whom this will come suddenly. What did you mean Jacob is everywhere? Wherever Jews are, Jacob is. In other words, we are not yet Israel.

We have called the political state Israel but we can see from its conduct that it's not acting as an Israel. Jacob did not become Israel until he met with the man and wrestled with him through the night of his adversity and then after that he was made lame and halt. The blessing was a crippling of his native power and humbling and then he built his own altar and called it El Elohe Israel, God the God of Israel.

My God has become for me personal and has changed everything even the way in which I view Esau. I see in his face now the face of God. So of my Jacob people, I was a Jacob myself until I was confronted by that man and now this is going to be a global confrontation wherever Jacob is and the church needs to know it, anticipate it for it is God's salvific agent in that very time in revealing the Lord in his love and in his mercy when all the world will be despising them.

When you include Indians or the Native American people as not knowing about Israel, I also feel there is a terrific ignorance in the Gentile church regarding Israel and our roots. Where do you see this church that say are believers today but still don't understand the significance? This is my primary function and that's why I'm going to nations all over the world with this kind of message to set forth the centrality of Israel and the Jew in the last days for the issue is not just the survival of an ethnic minority. The issue is the survival of a remnant of a chosen people in whose Zion shall go forth the law to all nations that there is a theocratic rule that has to issue out of redeemed Israel and that the powers of darkness know this better than the church and the answer to avoid the loss of the false power that these powers of darkness are employing is to annihilate Jews.

They have succeeded almost in times past and they will once again be given opportunity in the last days. We're recording this on Monday of this week and Prime Minister Sharon has been with President Bush and of course they were attacked over in Israel so he quickly went back to Israel and now has declared war on terror as President Bush has declared war on terror. How do you see that tying in with what we've been talking about? Well, I think until they recognize that the terror is the expression of a heretical religious system called Islam they will never successfully cope with it.

It's not terror as a phenomenon as an isolate in itself but as the expression of a false religious system conceived by a demonic personality, Mohammed and whose intent is world domination. I think we need to face that reality but of course it puts us in the unhappy position of having to say that there's a true faith that there is a true Bible that there's one true God and it's the God of Jacob and the God of Israel which even modern Jews are reluctant to express that sounds so dogmatic and narrow but we live in a pluralistic society that wants to make a space for all religious persuasions but I think at the end of the age we need to know that what we call religious persuasions are deception and that we need to stand for the truth and there's only one God and one truth in Jesus and we have to have the boldness to declare it that we will be called narrow, dogmatic and all of the rest and finally even be killed by those who will claim they're doing a God a service in removing us from what would have been a happy ecumenical world faith and world religion, world political system that we will of course oppose because we're waiting for that which comes from God which is the kingdom of God that waits on the restoration of Israel for which the church that is sacrificial will be the Lord's instrument Copies of this afternoon's interview are available if you would like them be sure to call us at KBHW it's been a privilege to be with you Art Katz thanks so much My joy Peggy, thank you for having me If you would like to get in touch with Art Katz and his ministry you can go

on the website at Ben Israel I-S-R-A-E-L one word, benisrael.org and there you can order books and tapes also if you'd like to correspond with one of our pundits, Art Katz route to Laporte, Minnesota 56461 God bless and Shalom

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