

Dvd 16 the Time of Jacobs Trouble

by Art Katz

The Time of Jacob's Trouble is a future event prophesied in Jeremiah 30, where a holocaust of unprecedented scale will occur, exceeding the Nazi Holocaust, and the church will be an instrument of Israel's redemption.

Duration: 48:32

Scripture: Isaiah 51:3, Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1, Hosea 5:15, Zechariah 12:2-3, Matthew 24:21, Romans 11:26

Topics: "Eschatology", "Israel Restoration"

Description

This sermon delves into the prophetic insights regarding God's dealings with the Jewish people in the last days, focusing on the time of Jacob's trouble as foretold in Jeremiah 30. It emphasizes the need for the church to be spiritually and practically prepared to understand and support Israel during a time of great distress and judgment, highlighting the importance of sacrificial community living and prayer guided by the Spirit to align with God's intentions for Israel's ultimate redemption and restoration.

Transcript

We see the beauty of their lives, and their character, and their integrity. And we hear them speak their many languages, and see their intensity, and their passion, and their character, and their nature. And our hearts come at them for the kingdom of God, that they might be an end-time people of God, proclaiming His salvation throughout the earth.

Now, in our second episode, we will continue to examine the revelations concerning God's dealings with the Jewish people in the last days. Specifically, the time called the time of Jacob's trouble, prophesied in Jeremiah 30. Art, you've written a book called *The Holocaust, Where Was God?* What was the thesis or main theme of that book? How was it that you came to write on that subject? And what relationship exists between the Holocaust and the time of Jacob's trouble? Well, to take the last question first, I think that the time of Jacob's trouble, which is future, although we are yet even presently at the threshold of a time of woe, will bring a holocaust of a kind that will eclipse even the Nazi time.

Jesus himself warned of it in his own response to his disciples' question recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, what shall be the signs of the time of your coming and of the end of the age? And he spoke of a persecution coming to Jews to the nation that will exceed any trouble that has previously known and will be of such a kind that except it were cut short, no flesh would survive. But for the elect's sake, it shall be cut short. So there's an ominous sounding of something that runs as a theme throughout the prophetic scriptures and reiterated by Jesus himself.

That is yet future. And if it's future and it exceeds all previous trouble, it must therefore exceed even the Nazi Holocaust by which six million Jewish lives were taken. And we know that at the time of the Lord's coming in Zechariah chapters 12 and 13, two thirds of the nation will already have perished and one third is brought forth through the fire.

If that ratio of annihilation holds not only for those Jews that are in the land but in the world, we're talking about the possible or probable annihilation of 10 million Jews of the 15 million now existent in the world. Of course, just that attrition eclipses the Nazi Holocaust. So it will exceed it both in numbers and in horror and devastation and in flight and in suffering.

And yet the remarkable thing is not only is the Jewish community unaware of this prophetic plight, but the church is unaware and making no preparation to anticipate it both practically and spiritually. So I would say that this is a subject of supreme significance for the church, for if it is unprepared, it will be devastated by its own moral failure to reckon on such an event and will even perhaps hold God as responsible. And where is God and why has the state failed and why are Jews again suffering in such proportion when we thought that their suffering was past and now they would be moving into a final success in their state and into the fulfillment for which we have all hoped.

And it may well be that Paul's warning of the last days falling away has to do with this kind of disillusionment and disappointment that springs from a failure to rightly understand the scriptures that describe it. So perhaps we ought to look a bit at the two or more of the basic texts. You mentioned Jeremiah chapter 30 with a phrase, the time of Jacob's trouble is actually expressed just leaping in at verse 5. For thus saith the Lord, we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

How descriptive that is with those conditions now increasingly prevailing in Israel. And the fact that they are prevailing, that we have not yet come to the peace, indicates that there's yet this time at whose threshold we now stand. Verse 6 continues, ask now and see whether a man doth travail with child.

Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness. Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

So, there's coming a time therefore of calamity, the whole chapter bears this out. We can't read it now, but we invite those who are watching the video to look at it at their leisure, and to consider how graphic are the statements that even imply a judgment with the nations that are the very instrument of this trouble for Jacob. Why the phrase Jacob? Why doesn't God say directly Israel? And I think the answer is that Jacob is not yet Israel.

Israel is not just a name out of the blue, it's descriptive of a condition to which this people have not yet come. Actually, if the truth were better known, the state of Israel ought to be called the state of Jacob. And that Jacob is a condition that yet waits on a turning and a conversion of a change of character that makes of Jacob a worshiper of the God of his fathers.

And that this took a last day's extremity of such a kind that he had to pass all things over, and then that night, and there's a night that is coming in which Jacob must wrestle with the man, and yet he says, I've seen God face to face, yet I live. So the very history of our patriarchal father is a premonition and a pattern of that which is yet future for a Jacob people, not only in Israel, but everywhere in the world. It will be a sifting throughout all nations wherever Jacob is, and a fierce sifting.

And yet the Lord brings this kind of assurance in verse 10, Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel, for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. The clear testimony of these verses in their literal and grammatical structure indicates that this cannot be descriptive of the present state, for the present state is afraid, and that fear will be justified, and the devastations will follow, of which Jesus warned, until they will not be afraid again. And as other of the prophets have said, I will plant you in the land, and you will not henceforth be plucked up again.

You'll plant vineyards and drink from them, you'll plant gardens and eat the increase, which harkens back to Deuteronomy and the blessings and curse that follow Israel's covenantal failure or obedience, that when we shall be his people, we shall enjoy the fruit of the land and live in it at peace, but to merely reside without the covenantal relationship that brings such blessing, we can expect that we will not enjoy even the fruit of our own labor, and others will eat from our gardens, drink from our vineyards, take our daughters and our sons captive, until the purpose of God will have been served to break us in our power and in our self-sufficiency, and that he himself will deliver us from our captivity, is very literal. It will not be a coming to Israel that we can establish by our own prowess, that's another alaya that we can perform, that God, having allowed our expulsion as judgment upon Jacob, will in effect bring us back by his own hand and in his own power. Even those nations that are the instrument of the chastisement will be employed at a later time in their brokenness to bear us up on their shoulders upon litters, their kings and queens will return us, where all the nations will acknowledge that we are the nation that God has blessed, that we were chastised and are now exalted.

Just like Jesus before us, there is a necessary going down before being raised up to a place of exaltation before all nations. That was the pattern for the Son of God, it will be Israel's pattern also. But to understand that this is not some kind of arbitrary chastisement, that there's a principle that we have to follow, like it or not, but the chastisement is a judgment in exact proportion to our sins, for as the text goes on to explain, your transgressions will exceed that of your father's, and therefore there's a necessary comeuppance, a necessary chastisement for our sin.

And what are we seeing in the present state of Israel, and in our conduct, both in Israel and out of it, that our sins are increasing. And that, as the text says, can an Ethiopian change his color or a leopard of her spots? Our condition is intrinsic, and it can only be met by God in the kind of profound conversion that happened for our patriarchal father Jacob, that made him Israel, and will happen for us also. Out of the trials and the extremity of this time, Jesus was actually citing and referring to scriptures stated by the prophet Daniel of an abomination of desolation that must take place in Jerusalem itself.

So we cannot say that the time of Jacob's trouble was the Nazi time, because it's clear, both from the scriptures and from the statement of Jesus as prophet, answering the question, what shall be the signs of the end and of your coming, of a distress that must have its origin within Israel itself and within Jerusalem. Pray that it doesn't take place on the Shabbat. Pray that it doesn't take place in the winter.

Flee to the hills of Judah. Make clear that the physical context is Jerusalem and of Israel itself. But it is not limited to that.

It has its inception within the state, but so long as we are Jacob in the world, it will haunt us and find us in all the places of the world where Jacob in fact is. So I'm expecting a global upset, which is supported by the prophets in Amos chapter 9, I will sift you through all nations. This calamity will require us to be raised

up out of our places of comfort and security and affluence and be cast into wilderness places that we have not heretofore known and that the wilderness itself has a certain efficacy in reducing all categories to one.

The issue of ourselves and God is calling and our destiny. So long as we are encased in affluence, prosperity and the activities that seem to us primary, we will be insulated from the issues of God. There's a stripping that must take place.

It had to come from me. I was raised up out of my place of affluence and success in California as a professional, as a teacher, and be expelled out from and into the nations with a pack on my back and therefore stripped not only of physical comfort, but stripped of my categories. There's a God who waits us.

He's a still, small voice. And until our ear is unblocked and our mouths stop from our own clatter, can we hear him? And because our destiny is so enormous, because the whole issue of the nations and their peace waits on this people first coming to the shalom of God in the peace that is a peace and not a false peace, we must pass through this time of uprooting and calamity and being expelled through the nations. I will sift you through all nations, but not so much as a grain or a kernel shall fall to the ground.

So, so long as we are in the nations, we will experience this. But not only will we be sifted, but the nations themselves. How are we to be treated when we will be an exilic people and hated in all nations and being driven by persecution is the issue of both the nations and the church in the nations, which we hope to say something more later.

In Daniel, these statements are corroborated where the issue of an abomination is spoken of in several places in chapter 9 and verse 12. And for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. I invite our viewers to read the prophets.

Isaiah chapter 51 and 54, 56, the word desolate, ruin, the cities that are devastated. Ezekiel 36 speaks about returning to the ruins and the cities that will be rebuilt. Even in Jeremiah 30, 31, Jerusalem itself will be built upon its heaps, upon its rubble.

Psalms 102 speaks of my servants who have pity upon her dust and compassion upon her stones, indicating widespread devastation and ruin. Desolation is the word that is most often mentioned. Jesus himself cites the verse, and your house shall be left to you desolate.

And I believe all of these refer not to the Holocaust of the Nazi time, but a Holocaust yet to come that will eclipse it, that will bring in its wake expulsion, ruin, devastation, and desolation. And it begins with an abomination of desolation within the city itself and even in the temple of the city, which shall be restored and established for a short period of time in a period of false peace established by an Antichrist figure who will demand the worship of Israel for the false peace obtained through him at a soon coming time, because we can see that given the state of military technology and the defenselessness of Israel, that there's no safety for the nation except through some kind of treaty that shall be established that has been attempted and has failed and waits upon some formidable international figure of prestige and prominence and anointing who will assure it. So the stage is being set for the fulfillment of this prophetic scenario that shall befall us in the latter days in chapter 10 of verse 14 when Daniel was made to understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days and yet the vision is for many days and is future, but we are now at the threshold of its fulfillment.

Again in verse 11 of Daniel, they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength and shall take away the daily sacrifice and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. This is all deeply prophetic language and symbolic, can only hint at what will come as actuality, but I believe that the stage is now being set for it. This time of trouble is again referred to in chapter 12 of Daniel, very much reminiscent of the language of Jeremiah and of the language of Jesus himself.

There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book. So may we take these scriptures seriously and brace ourselves for their realization and anticipate an uprooting of Jacob throughout the world in every nation where Jacob is presently established until he shall find himself like the Jacob of old with his head upon a stone and not upon the pillow of safety and comfort and affluence which we have found for ourselves in the cities of the world today. New York, Chicago, Moscow, Los Angeles, wheresoever it is, we're going to find ourselves uprooted and sifted and must be that the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads though necessarily mourning and sighing shall proceed it.

I believe further light is shed on all this in Hosea, and I'd like to read that. Hosea 5, 14 through 15. For I will be like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah.

I, even I, this is God speaking, will tear to pieces and go away. I will carry away and there will be none to deliver. I will go away and return to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face.

In their affliction they will earnestly seek me. Then Israel says in Hosea 6, 1, come let us return to the Lord. And I'd just like to read a quote that you have written about these verses.

This is now Israel speaking, who are now seeking God out of their affliction. Which I believe is yet future because there has never yet been this acknowledgement historically. For he has torn us.

This acknowledgement has not been made, that God is torn. World Jewry and Israel have not acknowledged that he has torn us. Circumstances have and Hitler has, but not he.

Isn't that key? This is a remarkable subject. We are so secular minded as Jews. We only see the externalities.

We see the rod of God's chastisement, but we don't understand who it is in fact who is wielding it. It's God himself. I will care and I will go away.

And so we need to come into a consciousness of God as the very agent of our distresses and turn to him and seek an answer to the afflictions that have come and see it beyond the agent that is being employed, the nations. Although the nations will suffer judgment for their only too willing compliance to be instruments of judgment and even exceeding the requirement of God and taking a tzolach, the Jewish word of delight, in being so used and rubbing the salt into our wounds. And as we can read in Isaiah 51, not only satisfied to defeat us, but to humiliate us in that defeat, in which they say, lie down and we will walk over you.

This is clearly future, but we can see in the nature of Islamic hatred toward us that this is a people so construed by the powers of darkness, desiring vengeance and retaliation, that they will not be satisfied with our mere defeat, but a grinding humiliation which the Lord will allow because out of that deep brokenness and contrition comes the suppliant character of a priestly kind alone that enables us to bless

all the families of the earth. We have to understand what our end is in order to appreciate the means that God will employ to obtain it. If it's just the success of a state, we'll be horrified by how far God will go.

And so therefore, again, we need to come into a framework of understanding given in the scriptures that exceeds our present categories. So even the church itself must come up out from its present safety and comfort of its convenient understanding and into a greater appropriation of the radicalness of what the last days must itself require. For once these things are fulfilled, there is no further act of God.

This is the end of history as we know it and the commencement of the kingdom and the millennial reign of the Lord in which the lion shall lie down with the lamb and righteousness shall pervade the earth. But until it comes, this is the final birth pangs, the havoc, the constraint, the spasms and the contractions that cannot be avoided. But the remarkable thing is, Israel itself cannot perform that birth.

We are going to be so enervated, so devastated as we must necessarily become, lest we in that millennial time take the credit that we performed this, we brought forth the true Israel of God, we even travailed in our own condition and even affected our own restoration. God will not allow us even so much as a scintilla, a hint, that we are such an agent. It must be the glory of God alone.

And therefore, if we are incapable of ourselves birthing ourselves as the enduring nation in the day, who will travail for us? And in Isaiah, in the last chapters of that book, we read of a mysterious willingness of someone else to bear those pangs for us, Zion. And I believe that this is suggestive of the church of the last days that will bear for Israel the paroxysms and anguish of birth that Israel itself will be too enervated to experience and cannot be allowed to experience less than our traditional Jewish way. We will boast as if it's our own accomplishment.

But more than that, we need to be eternally indebted to someone doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. And that that someone is remarkably Gentile, the church, that we have looked upon with vindictive disregard as being enemy. And yet in the last days, those whom we have scorned are the instruments of our redemption.

This is the mystery. But is there a church willing to bear that anguish of birth? This ultimate travail, which is itself a form of suffering and of death, will be the issue of whether Israel will be raised from that death to bless all the families of the earth. So again, we're brought back to the mystery.

Only a church of our ultimate kind can even see such a call and be willing itself to perform it. Who wants to birth someone else's child? Anyone who has passed through the paroxysms of birth for their own child will not want voluntarily to take upon itself another. And yet the text in Isaiah shows that we who have birthed through our willing anguish that Israel that will bless all the families of the earth will be suckled upon her knee and we will drink from her breasts and we ourselves will be consoled and nourished by that very thing that we have brought into being by our own willing sacrifice and suffering.

So again, the motif of the cross, that voluntary suffering for another, which is exactly what the Lord exemplified at the cross, needs now in the last days to be demonstrated by a church. And the church that will be able and willing to make that demonstration by that very fact becomes the suitable bride for the bridegroom for it has been adorned for the bridegroom having the very character of God itself. When we look at the church in its present condition and we say, oy vey, it is so far removed from even a willingness to embrace that suffering.

And yet unless it does, how shall it be fitted to be a bride for that bridegroom? It's the very exigency of Israel itself, the very requirement that Israel in its final last days condition that compels the church to be the church. And in this, we see the wisdom and the mystery of God that Paul saw. And that's why he cries out, oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, who has been his counselor? Paul is seeing something ultimate that the church has not seen.

And until it sees it, how shall it be willing for the sacrifice to obtain it? Therefore, we prophetic and apostolic men, to the degree that we have seen it and have the grace to communicate it, call the church both to see and to perform what only it must. In Zechariah, in the day of the Lord's own appearing on the Mount of Olives, when all the nations have come against Jerusalem to destroy it, and the Lord himself saves us out of an ultimate distress, when we shall see him whom we have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for one's only son. Even that deep chastisement of soul and ultimate brokenness of repentance is not something that we can perform of ourselves independent of God.

But he pours upon us the spirit of supplication and of prayer. Why? That we shall not boast that we, by our own effort, repented sufficiently to obtain this ultimate relationship with our God. Even that has to be provided.

We could take credit for nothing that to him alone, as the jealous apostle saw, be glory alone forever. And Israel will be grateful. And we will be indebted to that Gentile people, the church, that was willing to travail for us in its own supplication and its own intercessions that we might come through to be ultimately what we were intended from the first to be.

That nation of priests and light to the world, by which blessing shall come to all the families of the earth. That's our destiny. That's our calling.

And our every misfortune has come from an unwillingness either to see or to embrace God's distinctive call. But the calling of God, Paul says in Romans, is without repentance. It's irrevocable.

Or you may want to be the commercial center of the Middle East, the Hong Kong or the Middle East. You may want to be like all nations. But whatever you want to be, God himself has an intention and he is the Lord.

And that must be fulfilled. Or how is he God if he cannot fulfill the calling that has issued out of his own wisdom and will to make of us that nation of priests? We must be what he intends. And when he can affect it and perform it as against our own unwillingness to be and to be like all the nations of the earth, how much a greater testimony to his glory that he can affect it even without our cooperation and even against our hostility and resistance to this call so much the greater the glory of God and his mercy.

So this is a very great mystery. And we are at the threshold of its very fulfillment. And I'm not prepared for it either spiritually or practically.

And I have to say that so much of my own understanding comes not only out of my call prophetically to see these things, but out of the practicality of the place to which God has brought us for these last 27 or 28 years in the Arctic north central location in Minnesota where I had no intention to be with the divine call to establish a place of refuge for Jews in flight. And since that time the Lord has further expanded the contact and the knowledge of others with comparable callings. Even in the very state where we are now, where this video is being made, God is already positioning and bringing to pass places of refuge and flight for

Jews in the last days.

So I say all this not because it's dramatic or sensational, which I despise, but because there needs to be both a spiritual and practical preparation. And our own call of the Lord in our 28-year history in it confirms what the scripture itself shows. Or we ourselves have been barking up the wrong tree for almost a generation.

So I'm confirmed and reinforced in my conviction by my knowledge of others who have comparable calling at sacrifice to establish places of refuge for Jews in flight in North America. And I say so often that the church of Jews will be in flight for persecution in North America. Where will they be safe? If this has been our haven and we are in flight here, where then in the world shall we be safe? So there's a tremendous premium on the church coming of age and recognizing those things that must shortly come to pass.

And therefore, in whatever nation I'm in, from Singapore to Indonesia to Japan to Egypt itself, the most remote locations of the world, I can tell them with complete confidence, be prepared for Jews passing through in the last days time of Jacob's trouble. Because we're told explicitly in the scripture, I will sift you through all nations. For no nation will be exempt.

For it's not only Jacob who is being sifted, but the nation itself and its response to this misfortunate people, whom all the world then will despise, who then will take them in, who then will extend mercy that they can receive mercy. But those who have already been the recipients of the mercy of God, knowledgeably and experientially, which is to say, the church that is the church. And doesn't all this put such a premium on the church having an authenticity now so that it can have an authenticity then? In other words, your life and your community, what has it taught you in all the dealings that has gone on all those years in breeding the authenticity and reality that is necessary for the church in the last days? What you're saying is what I've long contended, unless we know the mercy of God, not only in our salvation, but in a continuing mercy, even now in the making of these videos, we require mercy.

I hope our viewers can recognize that it's not because we're professionals that we're able to communicate these things. There's a mercy even in the communication. How much in the fulfillment? And so unless we are the recipients of a mercy in an experiential way, how shall we extend it? So that is to say, if the grace of God is for only us nomenclature, if it's only theoretical, only positional, only doctrinal, what can we extend? We have got to see ourselves as that woman who broke the alabaster box upon the head of Jesus as desperately needing the mercy of God to save us out of our condition, whether we're prostitutes, gangsters, murderers.

If we are not actually those things, we are positionally, and whatever we were, God has raised us up out of death by a mercy that needs to be recognized and a mercy that continues, for we live from his mercies that are new every morning, and you'll not know that so truly until you come into the community that God desires for us. That is to say, unless we are a body of believers joined together in an intensity of life dependent upon God, we will not know the mercies that are new every morning. So long as we are wooed by the world into a pattern of life that is selfish and privatistic, and that is buttressed about by one provision after another that does not need God, how should we know the mercies that we are called upon to extend? And until we are that community, how can we bear the impact of Jews coming to us in their last days, desperate and crestfallen condition, angry and surly and not in their best frame, and be to them the expression of God, and not be offended by them coming to us like that, and not being incited to a resentment for their ingratitude? How shall we show them the face of God? Because God says in Ezekiel

20, I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations face to face.

And because you will meet me in that way, you will come under the bond of my covenant and under the rod of my authority. And that is that the face of God, which is to say the unconditional love of God, even in our untoward Jewish condition of anger, resentment, and destitution and desolation, is expressed through those who receive us. How shall we see him and come again into the covenant which we have violated and refused? The condition of the church will be critical.

So I'm saying what God said to us 28 years ago as we set foot on that property for the first time, where I myself never dreamed to be. End Time Teaching Center, community refuge. And I would say to the church who are watching, unless we are a community, how can we be a refuge? Because this is more than spiritual virtuosity that any one of us can attain personally.

We need the strength, the stamina, the tested relationship of a people who are a community before the Jews come. But the world has encouraged us to privatistic modes of living that are only broken by coming to a Sunday service. And we need ourselves willfully and consciously to seek what the church was at the first, the tested community of God's believers living together or in such sufficient proximity to each other that community alone provides, where the deepest sanctification can take place.

The church itself is its own agent in dealing with those deep places of selfishness, self-will, privatistic kinds of things that bring us from mere phraseological Christianity or mere affirmation of doctrine into the actualities that are apostolic, prophetic, and true, which Jews must see in us in the moment of final distress for which God will have fitted the coming together of a remnant of Jewry in his final desolation and distress and the remnant of the church that exhibits the unconditional love of God and cannot be offended. This is the drama to which we're tending and need consciously to expect and to prepare, and that alone is a suffering. A church to be a community is suffering, and the greatest sufferings that I've experienced myself in my 37 years in the faith have not been by the contending against me of my own kinsmen, but within the church itself.

The anger, the resentment, the frustration, the disappointment, the catcalls, the denigration, the things that we have to bear from the church in its condition of immaturity for which there's no shortcut is a suffering. Ultimate suffering is the church itself before it becomes a glory, and until it becomes a glory, how can it be to Israel what it must? So again, everything comes back in the last analysis to the church. Our willingness to become the church, the community of God's people, through the suffering that only intense frequency of relationship can bring when we move from the privatistic mode of living and Sunday services punctuated by midweek Bible study into that intensity of relationship of the community that can bear the impact of Jews in their last day's condition.

That needs to begin now, needs to be sought now. Whether we're in the country or in the city, if there are no Jews presently, there will be, for I will shift you through all nations. May we be ready in that day to provide what only we can to express the mercy of God.

All right, let's take another look at all this from maybe a slightly different angle. I want to read a quote to you from some very profound words from a Spanish rabbi during the time of the persecutions of Ferdinand. So it puts it way back there, and it puts it as a Jewish perspective, which will be interesting.

We are a nation on whom rests both blessing and curse. Now you Christians wish to exterminate us, but you shall not succeed, for there is a blessing resting on us. And a time is coming when you shall try to

elevate us, and you shall not succeed, for we are under a curse.

Is this not that time when Christians are trying to elevate Israel and it will not succeed, as is evidenced by Christians helping Jews to get back to Israel? I'm happy that you've raised the question, because even the world says that the path to hell is paved with the stones of good intention. We're at an hour when good intention is not only not enough, but can be a disastrous alternative to the intentions of God. So there's, in my brief history in the Lord, I've never seen an hour in which fidelity to the Lord and sensitivity to the Spirit and an understanding of Scripture is more expedient than now.

So that, for example, to encourage or to help Jews now to return to Israel, that seems to be such a grace, as in fact will later be a source of distress both to them and to us. If Israel is going to be the vortex of such powerful forces of desolation and destruction, what are we facilitating in bringing Jews now to that place? But bringing them, in fact, from the frying pan to the fire. So however the anti-Semitism increases in the nations, I would have greater hope for Jews within the nations than sending them to the very vortex of violence itself.

And I think this springs from a desire to be helpful. We want to do something. We're bored.

We Christians don't have an agenda of an apostolic kind that really occupies us. We're dabbling. And how nice to hate Jews in their return if we think that present Israel is that return.

But if it's a fulcrum, what's the word, for melting a crucible for judgment, what are we doing but bringing them to a likely doom and either of destruction or expulsion? So we really need to be led by the Spirit and not just do for doing's sake out of well-meaning intention. It even raises not only the question of doing, but the question of praying. How then are we to pray for Israel and for the peace of Jerusalem? Certainly not in some kind of snap 60-second accommodation, because to really pray for the peace of Jerusalem that is the enduring peace, knowing the scenario that must first come is to pray for the time of Jacob's trouble, for the judgments, for the distresses, and for the saving out of it a remnant upon whom God's eye has already fallen or that time would not be cut short.

It requires prayer of another kind. We cannot pray out of human well-meaning intention or human intelligence. We have now a new obligation, a new premium that the issue of Israel presses upon us, that is to say, to pray by the Spirit and not only individually but corporately, which is itself a suffering, because prayers of convenience that are only expedient can be prayed out of the top of our heads.

Yes, we prayed for the peace of Jerusalem, but what value is that prayer falls to the ground if it's not in keeping with the will of God himself? How do we pray in a way that is consonant with God's own intention? For if we find ourselves praying against the PLO or Arafat, which God himself has allowed or raised up as the rod of our chastisement and the instrument of our necessary distress, we are actually, in fact, praying against the will of God. So I'm saying by all that to say this, that the thing that distinguishes the church as the church is its knowledgeable prayer by the Spirit and the mind of the Lord by the Spirit. But to come to that kind of quality of prayer is to come to a certain quality of the knowledge of God and a certain quality in the relationship not only with God but with each other.

For the most powerful prayers are the prayers that are corporate. But how can our prayer be corporate when our life is not? So that comes back again to the church as community. And how do we come to that from the place where we presently are? This is not a theatrical thing that must automatically be fulfilled.

It requires some willing and voluntary sacrifice and desire on our part. So how was I myself brought to community? Not only by my ability but by the still small voice of God. When I stepped over a chain over a property for sale, living comfortably at that time in a 17-room Gothic masterpiece in New Jersey with nine bedrooms and five bathrooms and having two Valvos and a charismatic Jewish darling, to hear the voice of the Lord ever so faintly saying, end-time teaching center, community refuge.

That if I chose not to hear it because of its inconvenience, I would not have been faulted. And I today would be that Jewish darling of a charismatic kind celebrated the world over rather than the despicable and shameful thing that I'm increasingly becoming even with Jewish believers because of the scenario that we are positing of an end-time suffering that must befall us as Jews and the probable extermination of the present state of Israel and a casting to the nations. I'm saying by all that to say this, do we have an ear with a still small voice of God that calls us to loss and to sacrifice, who will not fault us if we choose not to hear it? Because I believe that the most profound requirement and calling of God in the last days must be a voluntary response, must be our willingness to hear and our willingness to sacrifice.

So I'm saying to those that are watching us, are you willing to give God an ear in which he can say, end-time community, look to me for me to alter your present configuration of a traditional Christian kind that allows you the privilege of privatistic lifestyle? Are you willing for the sacrifice of what community means in which you will be found out and the truth of your condition from which you are now safely guarded? Because Sunday after Sunday, a thousand Sundays will not reveal it, but the intensity of community life will within the very first few days and weeks of it. And who wants to be found out? Particularly if we're looked upon as being Christians of a substantial kind that our defect and flaws and the ghosts that we have in our closets must necessarily be revealed. And a community that can bear that revelation and can bring to us the corrective of counsel and prayer by which we ourselves can come to that condition of sanctified sons that can be to Jews in their last days condition what we must.

So I think that if we must seek God, he'll show us that wherever we are, whatever condition or community or city or rural district, there can be an expression of this apostolic kind that is called community. And one thing that comes to mind is when I spoke for a half hour to elders in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada on community and I left. A year later when I returned, they picked me up at the airport and drove me to an apartment building downtown Kitchener which they had purchased totally as a community.

And all of their members were occupying the various apartments and their parking lot was filled with their cars. Downstairs in the basement they had their common laundry facility and storage of food and other kinds of things. They had found an answer of a kingdom kind right within the context of their calling into this city itself which has encouraged me to believe that if we are but only willing, God will show us a pattern by which the reality that he seeks can be found in the location where we are.

For Jews indeed are in urban city conditions and they need at the very first to be rescued by believers within the city who anticipate their distress and will be able to accommodate them and move them from that place into the wilderness places through which they will ultimately be brought again to Israel as the redeemed of the Lord who return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads for they'll not again experience this distress and will experience a place of honor and esteem and everlasting glory. So this is the drama of which the church is the key but that will require of the church ultimate sacrifice. And what is, God says, my house is the house of sacrifice.

So long as it's the house of convenience and mere Sunday services that do not require much from us, how shall we be to Israel what we must and be to the Lord what he intends? Israel calls us to be the church as no other calling will and until that mystery is revealed, we will be content with a configuration and a pattern that more reflects the world than it reflects the kingdom. Israel calls us to that truth.

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