

Dvd 34 God's Purpose for the Nations

by Art Katz

God's purpose for the nations is for them to seek after Him for the purpose for which their bounds were given, and the failure to do so has led to tragic consequences.

Duration: 1:11:37

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:8, Psalm 24:1

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of nations recognizing God's sovereignty over the earth and their need to repent and seek after Him. It delves into the significance of nations, their rebellion against God, the role of Israel in God's plan, and the impending judgment on the world. The message calls for a prophetic church that confronts nations with the truth and urgency of repentance before the day of the Lord's judgment.

Transcript

I thought, what a monumental statement. Who has the ability even to communicate it? Especially after so long and historic neglect of God's truth. For example, the scripture, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Psalm 24, verse 1, the earth is the Lord's. Not in some ceremonial way, not some mere politeness, but actually and totally His. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and the nations, and those who dwell in them.

That's the reading from the English version of the Bible. The church itself does not really take such statements to heart. We have deferred to the nations and their understanding.

That somehow the territories are some kind of historical accident. Or maybe they were given by some mythological God. Or some sun goddess, the God of the Bible.

So I want to direct you to an enormously important text. Acts chapter 17, Paul at Mars Hill, in his statement before the Greek philosophers at Athens. He's not addressing men as individuals, but he's addressing the state.

Athens, the city state. And speaking to the ideological and intellectual leaders of that state. And speaking to them apostolically, the way that we ourselves today do not speak.

He speaks with an absoluteness. With an uncompromising insistence. Of the God who created heaven and earth and all things that in them is.

That this God has established the bounds and the habitations of every. That makes the world a difference. Whether the world is an evolutionary accident.

Or there's a God who has created it. Creation implies possession. And so Paul continues with his message.

It is God who has created the heavens and the earth. And that earth includes Athens. And Osaka.

And Tokyo. And the whole of Japan. Certainly Israel.

And even Germany. And the United States also. The earth is the Lord's.

And the fullness thereof. And he didn't create it for a hobby. He has divine and sovereign purposes.

And he has every right to expect their fulfillment. And so what does Paul say? God has established the bounds and habitations. That they might seek after him.

I don't know how many times I have preached from this text. And when I came to this part, I always assumed God is saying that individuals within the nation should seek after him. But there came a creative moment in time only some weeks ago.

In the nation of Germany and in the city of Nuremberg. The city where the great Nazi pagan festivals and rallies were conducted. Where the first racist laws against the Jews were established.

Nuremberg. In that city, God opened my eyes. I'm not talking about individuals.

I am talking about nations as nations. Whose boundaries I have established. That they might seek after God.

Which never done it. And what tragic price has been paid for that failure. You say seek him for what brother? For the purpose for which their bounds were given.

We might have had an entirely different history. Had sought him for his purpose for our nation. Rather than the seeking of our own.

And for the failure of that seeking. God will judge the world. And his warnings have already come.

In a preliminary way. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kobe. If you interpret it prophetically.

God is shaking the earth and warning the nations. In their terrible egotism. Their ethnocentrism.

Ethno means the root of nation. Their national ego. That the earth is the Lord's.

And you cannot do with it what you will. I haven't given it to you for your playground. Or your commercial success.

Or your imperialist ambition. And Paul said God has winked in times past. But he now commands all men everywhere to repent.

For he has appointed a day. In which he will judge the world. Where are the poles of Japan? Who will stand before the leaders of this nation? Where are the poles of Japan of today? And will stand before the leaders of this nation.

With the same warning, insistence. That the earth is the Lord's. Which Lord? The Lord of Shintoism? The Lord of Buddhism? You mean you say the Lord of Christianity? The Lord of the Bible? Isn't that rather narrow of you? Dogmatic? How dare you insist? After all, this is a plurality of religions.

In which we need to respect one another's faith posture. Paul would not have tolerated that for a moment. Nor should we.

The nation needs to be warned. For God has appointed a day. In which he will judge the world.

By that man whom he has raised from the dead, Jesus the Christ. What a staggering message. What audacity to insist on it.

By secular Greeks who have no biblical foundation. Yet Paul does not hesitate to call them to repentance. For everything in the last hour predicated upon this.

He will judge the world by that man whom he raised from the dead. Talk about adding insult to injury. What could be more offensive to the consideration of rational Greeks than the one of resurrection? And yet Paul makes that the key punchline.

Have you ever thought about it? How dare he presume to make such a statement? How should these intellectual Greeks know about resurrection? Even Christians stagger at resurrection. When the disciples themselves saw Jesus come back from the dead, they did not yet believe unto joy. He himself brings the ultimate confirmation of his word.

Do you know how they can believe for resurrection of Jesus who will judge the world? Because they are looking at a piece of resurrection right now. Paul himself brought back from the dead. No longer living unto himself nor for himself.

Nor by himself. This is not Jewish excellence being presented. This is the man of the resurrection.

And speaking out of the power and the authority of that life. And until the church becomes that, we cannot attain to the Mars Hill of our nation. So, there's a whole series of biblical concepts that need to be restored to the church.

We have ourselves too easily acquiesced to the world's view. So, here I am speaking in Germany and saying your nation should have consulted the Lord who made it. That he has a purpose for Germany that you've never discovered.

Because you have been so quick to assume your own. The result of which has been two world wars. The near extermination of the Jewish people.

And the near destruction of western civilization. When men propose their own purposes, the end is always death. So, what do you think, brother, that God's purpose might have been for Germany? Oh, I don't know.

I could speculate. I have been in those days to an ancient Jewish cemetery in Germany. Tombstones going back to the 14th century.

Reminding me that Jews have been in Germany for 2,000 years since the destruction of the temple in 70 AD and their dispersal in the nations. What have they meant to Germany besides an irritating presence? A presence that could ultimately not be tolerated. I said, supposing God's purpose for Germany was to come under this ancient people in your midst.

Who have come to you out of exile and judgment. And need to be instructed even about their own God. By a Christian Germany that ostensibly believes in him.

And that this would have been the first purpose for your being. This priestly function. But, of course, how could you assume it if you have purposes for yourself? Of a more grandiose kind.

Of an imperial kind. To be chief of nations. To bring a thousand-year order.

And yet, to be the principal nation of Europe. And the head of the confederation of European states. You have great ambitions for yourself.

But they are not God's. Just like Japan. No wonder that you found each other in World War II.

Such a similarity of nations. With imperial ambition. Not considering the God who made them.

And not considering him to this day. And you know what the remarkable thing is? Both peoples are so superbly equipped to fulfill imperial ambition. So for Germany to be subservient and come under Israel.

Would be to forfeit or forsake its own ambition and intention for another. It would have saved Israel. And it would have transfigured Germany.

Whose character itself would have been transformed. Had it submitted to the purposes of God. We see this phenomenon today among Christians.

I can look out over a Christian audience. And which faces are filled with the transforming grace of God. Which are conflicted and troubled faces.

The evidence of one thing only. The degree to which the Christian has given himself over wholly to the purposes of God for his own being. God has not called us to a Sunday faith.

Or a culture. Or a western alternative to our own native religions. He's called us to.

The total God and the total call. And we shall never confront our nation like Paul. Until we ourselves have submitted to it.

Israel. In this is the genius of God revealed. The least of all nations.

That's what God himself has said. I didn't choose you because you were the greatest of nations. I chose you because you were the least.

But it is only because you are the least. That I can subdue proud nations. God intends for Israel to be head of the nations.

And the millennium will reveal it. Nations up to Jerusalem to worship God. The law shall go forth out of Zion.

And the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. Literal Jerusalem. And nations will study war no more.

Or produce for war anymore. What an impact on their economies. When God's king is seated on the holy hill of Zion.

Do you think that your nation's rulers will celebrate that day? They could hardly wait looking forward to it? That's not what Psalm 2 says. Heathen rage. And foam at the mouth.

They want to break the Lord's bands asunder. And cast to the anointed from them. But God laughs and holds them in derision.

I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion. The kings and the rulers take thought against God and his anointed. The visible earthly magistrates.

Who then are the rulers? The invisible realm. The principalities and the powers of the air. That have manipulated and jerked nations since time immemorial.

Do not like God's plan. They want to retain their national autonomy and independence. And continue their historic independence of God.

Who is Israel's God. And has even determined the number of the nations. According to the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32, chapter 32, verse 8. God's divine ordering. Not because of some for Israel as an ethnic people. But because he will choose whom he will.

And have mercy upon whom he will. And elect whom he will. Because he is God.

I am that I am. And will be whom I will be. Nations go eat your heart out.

It's an American expression. I have chosen Israel. And it's Jerusalem.

And it's holy hill of Zion. And out of it will my theocratic order go forth to the nations. And you'll never know peace.

And you'll never be harmony in the nations. Until we are all related to that nation that God intended as central. No wonder the nations have not sought God.

This is the last thing they would have desired to find out. That nations that are mighty and imperial in stature and power. Should come under the authority and the influence of this nation.

Why Israel? Because it is calculated to find out the truth. And to find us out and reveal our secret heart. It's the stumbling stone set in Zion.

And reveals our proud heart. Especially if we think ourselves racially superior. Can you see the design of God? The wisdom of God.

And the rebellion of the nations. In refusing to submit to a God. Who will choose what he will choose.

And elect what he will elect. That makes the issue of Israel the issue of God. I have written here it is not the issue of ethnicity.

But of particularity. It's the scandal of a God who is specific. And has chosen Zion.

The question for the nations. And even for the church. Is will we choose what God has chosen.

The rebellion of nations is not only against God's choice. The choice of a nation which is less than themselves. But against the principle of election.

The rebellion of the nation itself. And the God who chooses. I wish we had all kinds of time.

But at your own leisure look at Genesis chapters 10 and 11. It talks about the nations. Establishing their own city state.

Their own Babel. Their own tower. In their one language.

They were wandering and seeking a place for themselves. They wanted to make a name for themselves. And so desperate that they would even use clay and pitch.

To build their city and their tower. The question is what were they doing wandering about. As if they could choose for themselves their location.

When God has established the bounds of their habitation. And we have one clue to this. In Genesis chapter 10.

I don't know what verse that is. But it says that a man by the name of Eber. A descendant from Shem.

Had a son by the name of Peleg. Whose name means division. And it says at that time God divided the nations.

What can we suspect? That the nations that were wandering around. In the plains of Shinar where Babylon has been built. Refused to submit to what God had appointed.

And chose their own location. For their own purpose. To make a name for themselves.

This is at the heart of nationhood. To this day. And God came down and stopped them.

And confused their languages. And dispersed them over the face of the earth. Some anthropologists say that Japan is the set at dispersal.

And you didn't do too good for yourself in the land that you found. Full of the risk of earthquake. Tidal waves.

You've done admirably with it. But how much better would you have done. If you had gone to the land God had appointed.

What am I saying by all this? That it seems from the biblical record. That all nations have at the origin of their history. Rebellion against God.

And God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world. That that judgment has not yet already come. Is because he is not willing that any should perish.

What is your purpose? For your creation. And for your new creation being born in the spirit of God. To be a church of apostolic and prophetic authority.

That can call your nation. That can call your nation to repentance. Before the day of the Lord comes.

You say what if the nations don't hear? Are you calling us to some kind of a ridiculous thing that cannot hope to succeed? That's what it means to be prophetic. Often men will not hear. But we are still required to speak.

And if men will not hear. Then hear oh heaven and give ear oh earth. For the Lord has spoken.

And if men will not hear. Then their blood will not be on our hands. For we have sounded a warning.

When you begin to put on the spectacle of God to the nations. It begins to change the way in which we perceive the whole message of God and the gospel of God. We have been so individualistic in our mentality.

But from the day of Pentecost God was addressing nations. Peter was warning the believers in Jerusalem to come out of this untoward generation and out of this nation. Be saved from it.

But the day of the Lord was coming. According to the prophecy of Joel. The spirit was being poured out.

They could expect the other signs. The moon being darkened and the sun not giving its light. The nation had crucified its Messiah.

Its prophets. Come out of this generation. Before the judgment of God falls.

Be saved out of it. Out of the nation. We have lost this understanding.

And we have made salvation entirely a personal matter. And we have reduced the gospel to some kind of formula for salvation. So you know what I think? If we will confront the nation with its necessity to repent.

And show even in its recent history the evidence of its rebellion. That even if the nation will not hear as a nation. Some individuals from within it will cleave unto us and believe.

There is a way in which men can see their sins more acutely in the context of their nations. Than to see them in the terms of their own personal conduct. Listen to this statement.

It may be that the indictment of nations as nations. Gives to the gospel message a quotient of power and authority. That the church has missed for the want of it.

But if we can. Hear the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The real depravity of man.

Is made more manifest. Is more despicuously revealed. In the conduct of nations.

And we have understood it in the conduct of individuals. What we will not do in our individual respectability. We will easily do in our corporate conduct.

The rape of Nanking and the rape of Shanghai. The cruelty of the oppression against other minorities in Southeast Asia. By a people who among themselves and in their normal circumstances.

Are quite polite. And considerate. But the truth of their condition.

Which their culture disguises. Is revealed in their cruelty as a nation. To speak to men outside the context of their nations.

Is to miss a dimension of depth in the proclamation of the gospel. So that even if the nations will not hear. There will be someone who will cleave unto us and believe.

The gospel is not God's provision to bring certain benefits to men. But to save nations from the day of the Lord's wrath. We cheapen the gospel.

If we represent it as a deliverance only from unhappy or guilt and other felt needs. Instead of as a rescue from the coming wrath. We have been proclaimed from another gospel of the benefits that will accrue to men by believing.

But when we read of the church that was founded by Paul, who confronted the Greeks on Mars Hill, he saved men from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for his son who comes from heaven that will save them from the wrath to come. The original gospel was eschatological. It was apocalyptic.

It spoke of the day of the Lord, the day of his wrath and the day of his judgment that will fall on all nations, and that the invitation that was given to Jews in Jerusalem was given to the Ephesians and to the Corinthians, and needs to be given to our nations now. For God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and we are 2,000 years nearer that judgment than when Paul spoke in Athens. That's why God is getting urgent, even to the shaking of, in those proud nations whose technology makes them earthquake-proof.

We need to be a prophetic church that sees what the events of our nation means, and to interpret that to the unbelieving nations, but not as an opinion only, but with apostolic authority, and the anointing that God gives men who speak the truth uncompromisingly, and do not offer their view as an opinion, but as a thus saith the Lord. But brother, you don't know what you're asking of us. We are after all Japanese, and this is contrary to our whole culture.

We can't afford to be so insistent. Our culture is of another kind, more deferring to one another. It would be offense to be so absolute in our convictions.

Exactly. God is calling to you, for Japan's sake, to come up and out of your own nation, and to have your citizenship in heaven. So God made a promise to Abraham that, from your seed, I will bless all the families of the earth.

Are you being blessed today by a son of Abraham? Who's fulfilling God's prophecy? Giving you a little taste of what the total fulfillment will mean. When it's not just an individual Jew who is saved, but a whole nation restored to the calling of God that is without repentance, that is irrevocable. A nation of priests, and a light unto the world.

God wants to bless all the families of the earth. But he'll only do it through the restored children of Abraham, who are presently so removed from any knowledge of their own God, and even within their own state of Israel today, are seeking to preserve themselves and make themselves secure, as every other nation in the world has done. They do not look to the God of Jacob, but to their own military ability, and political negotiating skills.

There's disaster coming for Israel, even for the present state. We might see them again expelled in earth and among the nations. The Bible speaks of it.

The time of Jacob's trouble. Jesus warned of it. He said it will eclipse any previous suffering that you have ever known.

And there will never be another time like it again. It will exceed even the Holocaust of the Hitler time. You will again be outcast in the nations, and the disperse of Judah.

I may not be the only Jew who is coming through Osaka. It would be too exaggerated to say, prepare for such a possibility. Because in the book of Amos, in chapter 9, God says, I will sift them through all nations.

And only a remnant of them will survive the fear of that time. And the redeemed of the Lord will return to Zion. They may not have left it in that condition, but in the course of their expulsion and sifting through the nations, God will save a remnant of them who will return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads.

And mourning and sighing will flee away. They will be totally reduced in the nations. A proud and self-confident people as they now presently are.

And they will be hated of all nations. And the rulers of this earth and of this world's darkness will seek to annihilate them. Because their restoration is the key to the Lord's coming and the establishment of his kingdom in their land and in their city and in their Zion.

How will they survive this last day's sifting through the nations? If there is a global anti-Semitic fury and hatred, that they will not be safe in any place, except that there is a place of safety and refuge found. And what is the first judgment that the king performs when he establishes his rule after their restoration? It says he will judge all nations in Matthew 25. What did you do with the least of my brethren? When did we see you naked? Or hungry or thirsty or in prison? As you have not done this to the least of these, my brethren, you have not done it unto me.

Be cast out into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and sin. But you righteous ones who have given them water and covered their nakedness and taken them in at risk to yourself, for you there is an eternal reward. Prepare for the righteous.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you. That the response to the Jew in his last day's extremity in the world and through the nations is a basis for God's eternal judgment of nations. It will separate, distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous.

How central is the Jew in the purposes of God? Sifted through the nations. And God says, I will purge out the rebels from among them. But the redeemed remnant will constitute nation to which the Lord himself will return and rule from the throne of David as the legitimate descendant of David and rule forever as both the Son of Man and the Son of God.

This is the end. Then is there peace. Then is Israel a glory in the Lord's hand.

Then are they called by a new name. Then are they the ministers of the Lord. Then will the Gentiles from ten nations clutch the skirt of a Jew and say, take us to your God for you know him.

Then will the law of the Lord go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. God's kingdom will have come for Israel and for all nations. Are you looking for that appearing? Not as escape from a

world that is inhospitable world.

You're looking for the Lord as an escape from a world that's uncomfortable. But you're looking for and hasting his coming. That the glory of the Lord would fill the earth.

And the rebellion of proud nations broken. And that nation that still refuses to come up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, still upon them God would pronounce a curse. He will have all nations restored to his purpose and will.

And the earth will be filled with his glory. We should be living now in anticipation of that. We are moving toward an end.

A catastrophic end. An apocalyptic judgment upon nations. For which they need now to be warned.

And it will be a suffering for us. A persecution. We ourselves will be hated among all nations.

Including our own. But we have view of the heavenly reward. And the privilege of ruling and reigning with him.

And the establishing of his glorious kingdom. This is the faith. May it be established in Japan.

To the saving of the nation. Or as many as will. Let's pray for this.

Precious God on high. Break our hearts Lord. That we more reflect the mentality of our nation than the view of the scripture.

We're happy to leave the nations alone to do their own business. So long as they don't interfere with our Sunday service. But show us that the earth is yours.

And the nations. And grow us up unto you. To be such an authoritative voice in the nation.

To warn as many as will. That the day of the Lord is at hand. The day of darkness and fierce judgment.

And our people are still going to their shopping malls. And thinking of their next vacation. And what they're going to buy and have and spend.

Without any sense of an end that is near. Bless the church to the nation. And to that Israel which will soon be cast again into their midst.

And we thank you for the privilege of being the people of God. And the precious high calling in Christ Jesus. By the grace and might of his life and power.

As the prophetic church of the last days. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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