

Dvd 37 - the Nations in the Purposes of God

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the centrality of nations and Israel in God's eternal purposes and the church's prophetic role in demonstrating His wisdom.

Duration: 1:21:43

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, Joel 2:28, Malachi 4:2, Romans 9:15, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "End Times"

Description

This sermon delves into deep spiritual warfare, emphasizing the importance of understanding the invisible realm and the ultimate combat we face against rulers and powers of darkness. It highlights the significance of the church in identifying and defeating these spiritual forces, the mercy of God towards Israel, and the prophetic role of the church in the last days. The speaker challenges the congregation to wrestle in prayer and spiritual warfare, to extend mercy to Jews fleeing persecution, and to embrace God as the God of Israel. The sermon calls for a deeper commitment to God's purposes and a willingness to engage in the spiritual battles of the end times.

Transcript

If you are the familiar faces, are you hearing okay? Well, I want to pray in just a moment. Jim Mathis is my traveling colleague and the pastor of Ben Israel and my own, watches over me. And you can ask him all the questions that I will raise for you in a bewildering way today.

He provides the answers, I provoke the questions. So look him up. If I look wilted and lousy, I am.

And I don't know what to attribute that to. I think my greatest reason is the proximity to your nation's capital. Last night was hell.

I was roasted and I still have a pounding headache and debating whether to take something to alleviate it or just speak through it. So that's auspicious. That suggests resistance.

And the enemy is probably more aware and concerned than we ourselves are. So I just want to pray. I have no, how shall I say it? I was going to say I have no ground plan, no agenda.

I do have burdens and be interesting to see how the Lord will express them. It's been essentially themes addressed in the advertising, Israel and the church in the last days. But how that is expressed has been uniquely and variably different in every place and occasion.

I'm expecting the same for today. So are you really honest that you can hear me back there? Yeah. You see? Okay.

Now you may have to come down from the bleachers with the more ordinary saints and take a place closer here or somebody who's at the controls, turn up the volume of it. I'm still the high school teacher who wants to make sure that the room is amply ventilated and everybody hears and that the light is good. All those necessary conditions.

Well, do you have the faith to believe for an historic occasion? Do you sense that we need historic occasions and that the word should constitute an event? So I boast on the Lord in that way and I leave him holding the bag to deliver the goods. And Lord, we do it again now. We boast on you.

Nothing is too difficult for you. And you know better than we, my God, that except that every speaking be an event, how shall we be fitted and prepared for the things for which we alone are called that conclude the age? And so we're asking my God that you would pull out the stops and let the enemy have it right in the kisser who dared molest your servant through the night hours without mercy. And now let him reap the consequence of that harassment in a way that he will eternally regret.

So set forth, my God, your mind and heart, not only to us who are assembled here, but those who will hear these messages through tape or the video and let it have a wide circulation and profound telling effect, not only for the church, but the secular world and the nation itself. Let the reverberations be felt and set in motion things that will be consequential both in time and eternity. And for that, we give you the praise, the glory, and the honor.

In Jesus' name and God's people said, amen. And God's people are now expecting me to say, now turn to so-and-so. Well, I ain't ready yet to tell you.

I don't know yet myself. Are you sure you're not sitting too far back over there? No, I don't mean the bleachers, I mean the father most rose here. We don't realize how much that affects the Lord when we give him vast spaces between the saints.

He likes it when we cluster near the speaker as if we're sitting at the feet of the Lord himself. And then you get something like that. So as your faith is, be it unto you.

You want a distant place? You receive the distant echo. And if you come close, you'll get the spittle and everything that goes with the word. Well, that did it.

I wish we could enjoy the format that we employ at Ben Israel in our prophetic school, where we sit at a table and can look at each other eyeball to eyeball and dig in and probe and examine the Word in a wonderful interactive way. This is one of my least favorite forms of communication that I should be standing, you should be sitting, but so be it. Well, it's either we begin with Deuteronomy 32.8 or Isaiah chapter 2. So turn to both.

Let's do Deuteronomy 32.8 first. I was just reminding myself this morning in my numb and strange condition that I often say I've not heard anyone on this verse. But I have read someone's statement.

And I believe it was from some commentator here in New Zealand. And it was brilliant. I wish I had it with me to quote.

But I think I have imbibed the sense of it. And by the grace of God, I communicate something of the importance of this remarkable cryptic verse that kind of sticks out at you and deserves pages of commentary. And it's all there alone by itself.

But we can sense when we read it, how remarkably pivotal and central this statement is. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people.

Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Well, I'm becoming increasingly preoccupied with the nations. I don't know that you'll be hearing it in these days.

But the Lord has given me a message on the nations. And that the emphasis, I think, will be increasingly shifted from attention to individual salvation, to attention to the nations and their own obligation toward the God who has made them. So I just want to put that in your thinker.

The word nation and nations needs to come into the consideration of the church. Our view has been too myopic, too small, too narrow, too individualistic, and we have not rightly regarded the scope of God's cosmic concern and interests. That's what makes these speakings prophetic or apostolic, because it's the large view.

Don't bother me with the details, but I like the large, sweeping view of God's cosmic and eternal purposes for which reason he has created the nations. We need to think in the perspective of God himself. And of course the enemy will do everything to keep you from such consideration.

He wants to keep you narrow, small, and preoccupied with trivialities. But we have cosmic purposes to fulfill, and there's only one agency appointed for that fulfillment, and it is the church. Just the recognition of that perspective breathes the spirit of maturity into the church.

So the nations are on God's heart. They need to recognize their Creator and the purposes for which they have been created. And I don't know of a single nation that has begun to give God that consideration.

Even the thought that there is a God who has created is in itself an offense. The nations would like to believe that they are an accident, a kind of ecological, geophysical, evolutionary accident, because to accident you cannot ascribe purpose. But if there's a God who created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, if the earth is the Lord's and the nations and those that dwell therein, then the nations have an obligation to consider the God who created them for His purpose.

Maybe it's not an exaggeration to say the whole of the tragedy of human history, of the history of nations, their warfare and their violence, the ecological disasters, the raping of the earth, the whole melancholy and painful thing is the consequence of the failure to consider the God who has created for His purposes. Now why hasn't the church made that known? Because it hasn't adequately considered why it has been created. How then shall we tell the nations? Got the point? We are created for His purposes.

And in fact if anyone wants an A for the day already, what text would you cite as the most profound single reference in the New Testament that identifies the purpose of the church for which reason God has created all things? You've been listening to my tapes. You know it. Ephesians 3.10. Good for you.

A for the day. God has created all things in order. And shouldn't we kind of pause there in order? Here it comes.

What will follow? What's the reason for creation? In order that--and our hearts begin to pound and we palpitate, if not sweat, now we're going to hear it--in order that through the church--wow, is it that important? We thought it was a Sunday addendum, an institution to provide services. What? The whole of creation established that in through the church? Through the church what? That the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated--oh, praise God for that word--not just articulated, but demonstrated to the principalities and powers of the air, the world rulers of this present darkness. I'm paraphrasing and adding.

If you have never contemplated that text, dear saints, count it worth your trip here this morning. You have been challenged so to do. That is the pivot of what we are about in the earth.

And the next verse says, and this is the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus. If we but knew this and took this to heart, we would be already emancipated. What a call.

What an ultimate call. So we've left saints hanging on the ropes in Christ's church and gasping, and whosever child that is will have to be taken for a walk. And for the first time, Christians were saying, who is sufficient for these things? When have you last said that? You'll begin to say it when you glimpse and take to heart the eternal purpose of God, for which reason He has created all things that the church might make this demonstration.

I'll probably come back to that. If I don't, you remind me. Because who sitting here knows what the manifold wisdom of God is.

It's not wisdom as we conventionally use the word. Maybe we would say more the value system of God, the mind of God, the way of God. Two value systems in conflict, God's and the powers of darkness.

And God is waiting for a triumphant demonstration of His as it can only be made manifest through the church. Not individual virtuoso saints, but the totality of the church in all of its constituency, all of its diversity. When that's made, the age is finished.

Now, that mystery is related to what we've already read in Deuteronomy, the centrality of Israel for the nations. So, I want to go on record as saying that I uphold God's choice of Israel, not because I'm Jewish. I would be just as enthusiastic if God had chosen Pygmies, but I uphold God's choice because He's God.

He has chosen Israel to be central to all nations. And according to this text, even the number of nations is related to the number of the sons of Israel. Isn't this chock full of mystery? How many sons of Israel are there? However many there are, that's how many nations God has intended.

Because the nations must be in tandem relationship with Israel itself. God never intended independent fluctuating entities doing their own thing, let alone presuming to take the role that God intended uniquely for Israel itself. And if there's any nation in the world that has arrogantly attempted that, perhaps not even consciously, what nation would you say? Has desire to be central to all nations and bring all nations into a commonwealth relationship with itself, whereby it is the central pivot for all.

Namely, the nation whose language you speak, Great Britain. This is a fresh observation for me. And the British Commonwealth is the employment of the same word found in Ephesians 2, where it says, you who are far off, speaking, Paul speaking about Gentiles, without God and without hope in the world have been brought nigh by the blood of the Messiah Jesus into the covenants, promises and hopes of Israel, even into the commonwealth of Israel.

So isn't it remarkable that Great Britain should usurp that word and in fact usurp that intention and do a pretty smart job of it? Is it any wonder that in my own experience, the people with whom I find the greatest resistance to the acknowledgement of Israel and her centrality in the purposes of God are those of English descent? That the most vicious and vehement forms of anti-Semitism emanate from Anglo-Saxons? That the first expulsion of Jews from Europe came in York, England in 1200 and something? I'm just speaking like the fool. Don't take me all that seriously. I'm feeling for something, but it's something significant and probably to whatever degree you come out of an Anglo-Saxon British root and orientation, something of it lingers that needs to be consciously examined and dismissed.

In the same way that I myself as a Jewish believer was required with other Jewish believers to go through a deliverance from a vestigial anti-Gentile, anti-church spirit that the Lord identified, or I would not be free to speak to you today. I'm a cutting man, but you imagine if I had a little spite in that to get even with you? A little salachus as we say in Yiddish, a little, not only to put the knife in, but to turn it is the kind of thing that I used to surreptitiously enjoy before the Lord showed me that's a no-no and that I had to be delivered from that together with other Jewish brothers in ministry to the church. So to what degree are you harboring something from which you need to be delivered? Hallelujah.

Now look saints, you see how I'm already roaming the landscape? Don't get frightened. Whatever you do, don't panic. Everything is being recorded and I can't help myself.

If you want to be here a systematic teacher, don't come to me. This is prophetic sweep. This is spontaneity.

This is a man who has not slept last night and still has a booming headache and was churned up and done in and done over and is just opening his mouth and hearing what God has to say. And I think that this is part of a necessary thing for you, because not the least of your Britishisms is order and understanding something intelligently before you can approve it. Well, that's limiting the Holy One of Israel.

You need to be more Hebraic than that. You know, this line upon line and precept upon precept is actually a judgment. You read it in the context in Isaiah that hearing they will fall backward.

It's not God's prescription for His saints, at least through me. So we just throw it out on the table like a piece of wet, oozy, soft clay and turn the wheel and stick our wet fingers in and see what form God will give. But don't panic.

In the first message in Australia, given under circumstances much like this morning, where we came a day late, stopped at the Manila airport because we didn't have a visa for Australia and didn't know that we needed one, had to be delayed in the Philippines and break our heads and go through all kinds of torment to get that visa and to learn that every flight was full up and there was no possibility to get to this conference already a day late. But nevertheless, the Lord got us there, panting and out of breath and to open my mouth and to be as foolish then as I am now. And some woman came up at the end of those days and made a brilliant statement.

She said, I realized that I had to dismiss my conventional way of hearing and approving something by submitting it to my intelligent examination. I just had to yield my spirit, to affirm in my spirit what God was saying and trust later for the understanding that would follow. If that woman does not make the Lord's Hall of Fame, I'll be surprised.

Can you understand a statement like that? Okay. You see, it's not only I who is required to be prophetic. You also.

That's not to say you have the same calling individually, but the church per se, as church, has a prophetic function. So we need to proclaim something as the church in a prophetic way, but we need to apprehend the truth and understanding of God in prophetic ways also. As for example, Deuteronomy 32, 8 requires.

Who can make sense of this? Why doesn't God explicate? Why isn't there an asterisk directing us to the bottom of the page where we see it spelled out in full clarity? No, it's just a cryptic statement that's left to hang there, but it's resonant with all kinds of remarkable meaning. Some biblical scholars have suggested that when Jesus sent them out by twos, where they should not take script and staffs and kick the dust off their feet if they were not received, he sent out 70, because 70 was the number of the appointed nations that God himself had created. How many are there today? I think well over 200.

And the way things are going in former Yugoslavia, there'll be another three or four added because of the atomistic and individualistic propensity of men to do their own thing and to be independent and have their own identity, as is part of the struggle of your own nation and many nations today in its growing ethnic consciousness. But in the beginning, God created 70, some suggest, or at least a much smaller number than what now prevails. And when the smoke clears, and God has finished dealing with the rebellion of nations, when he will bring judgment on the nations in the day of the Lord, of course New Zealand will be exempt.

Then I think we will find ourselves going back to that number. In this message on the nations that the Lord gave me of all places in Germany, in Nuremberg, very significantly, he's had me to look into Genesis to see the origin of the rebellion of nations, when it says that a certain people were moving or came out of the east, they were moving eastward in the plains of Shana, where Babylon was subsequently established, and chose their own location and built their own city out of mud, not even willing to have it baked in the sun, but it should be burned in the fire, showing the impatience of men to do their thing and to establish their autonomy independent of God, and build a tower into the heavens. See, this is not just a single historic episode, this is the quintessential antagonism of nations against God in their desire for autonomy and independence from him.

But he holds them in disdain, for he has set his king on the holy hill of Zion and said, ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance. So, we are moving towards something, saints, and if it's to be accomplished, it will require the centrality of this Israel with regard to all nations. And if you don't send up a delegation from New Zealand to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, I'm not talking about the one conducted now by the Christian embassy, that's a little preview, I'm talking about the one that shall be required by God in the millennium, and that nation that will not be represented in Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles to honor the God who has made his sanctuary and dwelling in that nation and with that people, and whose government goes forth from their capital city of Jerusalem and the holy hill of Zion upon that nation, God will bring a curse.

If you want a glimpse of what is God's intention, see what the fulfillment is in the millennium. The millennium is what God has all along desired and will then have after the crisis that concludes the last day's struggle between the deceiver of the nations, Satan as Antichrist, and the final showdown and conclusion. We're moving toward that, and it will be fierce and resisted, for it says in Psalm 2, see how the heathen rage.

Can we turn to that? Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? Who wants another A for the day? What's the Hebrew word for people? Goyim, and that word can also be translated as nation and nations. Any Hebrew word that ends with the suffix i-m like kibbutzim is plural, goyim plural, heathen or the nations. Why do the nations rage and the people, the goyim, imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.

What are they foaming at the mouth about? They do not want to have him to rule over them. Nations are a more visible expression of the rebellious heart of man in his desire for autonomy and self-will, self-aggrandizement, self-gratification, doing his own thing. But somehow when nations do it, it has a kind of air about it, a greater legitimacy that gives their conduct and their actions a certain kind of validity that if individuals acted that way, it would be shameful.

As for example, the American national debt, running to what, five trillion dollars? If we as individuals had even a scintilla of debt like that, it would be scandalous. But for a nation to indulge itself in that kind of madness of the economy is somehow okay. For nations to fight and to war over boundaries or their imperial ambitions, and even to sanctify that by employing God as justification, somehow is okay.

You should have been with me in Scotland. I forgot which city. I think Edinburgh.

And we went into some memorial for the two great world wars. It's a great mosaic and shows the crosses of the soldiers who died on the battlefield and their blood was spilled, and the central figure is Jesus on the cross. That somehow there was a parallel or a connection between the crucifixion of Christ and the blood of men spilled on battlefields for imperial and national ambition and destiny as being one and the same thing, God and country.

That's a bunch of hokum, and you saps have eaten it up and subscribed to it and encouraged and endorsed it. When the veil is removed from our understanding, we will see how much God has been in the sacrifice of entire generations, the cream of nations for the rivalry between Great Britain, France, and Germany, back and forth over no man's land, over a few kilometers of ground, that you can't find a single tree that has not been splintered by the profusion of shells and bullets that have prevailed. You need to make a trip to Verdun, V-E-R-D-U-N, as I have, and visit the ossuary.

What is that? That's where the bones have been kept. It's a building that makes this look like a doghouse. It's larger than several football fields, and it is crammed full with the bones of the French and German youth who bled to death in those trenches and over that no man's land, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, for years that availed nothing but the opportunity of imperially minded men to play, not with tin soldiers, but with human life.

And we have never recovered from that. World War II is only its continuation and the further outworking of the issues raised in World War I. We will never return to our pre-World War innocence. We have been inducted into new experiences called genocide, the systematic annihilation of race, that having begun with Jews, we can go on to Cambodians and Rwandans and anybody else without even so much as a flicker, because we have lost our capacity not only to blush, but to be horrified.

Is there anyone hearing me who is saying, come Lord Jesus, I'm waiting for another king, saints. I'm sick to the teeth of human government, however well intending. It's becoming increasingly pathetic, especially in my own country, but we're getting exactly what we deserve.

As the Germans did with Hitler, every country gets what it deserves. As the priests, so the people. So, we need to see the whole drama of what we are about as the struggle between God the Creator and a whole fallen angelic residue led by its Prince Satan seeking for dominion over the creation of God.

The whole issue of the faith is government. You don't believe that. Okay, stay right there.

Don't move. And don't even bother to turn. As I read to you, Isaiah 9.6, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

The word Messiah means anointed king. And we have lost our credential to assert that and to make it known to the nations to the degree that our government is not on his shoulder. Like, when are you taking your next vacation? And where are you going? And your retirement? And your present occupation? And who said that you were to go to college and obtain a career? Was that the Lord? Or you just assumed that, of course, he intends for you to have a significant livelihood, and that he would come behind you and endorse your choice, who has never consulted him? Can you see why we're so feeble before the nations? Why we're so wanting in authority? The government shall be upon his shoulder.

God forbid that I, in my ability, experience, and memory, and knowledge, should determine myself what you should hear today. It's a moment by moment thing. And you need to go back to the moment where your government was, and repent for that, and yield to what he was wanting, however much now it will make a radical requirement of you, maybe even the forsaking of the vocation and profession you have chosen that was never his intention at all.

Now, I'm not bawling you out. I'm speaking to you and through you to much greater numbers who are being pricked right now and convicted as they ought. Better now than in the day of eternity when the king comes.

Who would want to face him then when in the moment of that revealing, the whole of our mindless self-assertion and acts of will, independent of him, will come before us in a moment like a flood, too late to be altered and remedied. The government shall be on his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor of Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of his government.

Gets a little repetitious, doesn't it? It's as if we missed the first reference, we'll get it the second time. The issue of the Lord's coming is government. And he's going to rule in the very place where he was humiliated.

And what do they put over his head in three languages on the cross? Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Because if he can be king over them, who else is going to give him a hard time? Once he's got us, he's got everyone. From the place where he suffered his greatest humiliation and mock and taunt, there will emanate the greatest glory.

Are you anticipating that? When you say, Lord, come, are you saying it in the sense, come with your kingdom, your rule and your glory and your beneficent wisdom, that the Lord might go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem, that nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and study war no more? Or are you saying, Lord, come and get me out of this mess? Come on, you rapture escapists. Just as a little side note, what's the Greek word for meeting the Lord in the air? It begins with a P, I think. Parousia.

Right. Parousia. Excuse my pronunciation.

Do you understand? I'm not a Greek scholar at all. It means meeting a coming dignitary and accompanying him to his place of rule. And you know where that place is? You would never have guessed.

You yourself would never have chosen it. You would have said Geneva, New York, London, Wellington. It's the holy hill of Zion.

You say, why would God choose a hill? Your very question is an embarrassing revelation of your ignorance of God, his character and his way. He must choose a hill because he's the God who chooses a stable. He's the God who chooses caves.

He's the God who chooses us. He's the God who chooses Israel, not because they were the greatest, but because they were the least. Not because you were the most promising, but because you were the most dumb dumb.

He takes us off the dung heap to make us to sit with princes. Do you know this verse in Psalm 8? Don't turn to it. Verse 2, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.

Why? Because of mine adversaries, that you might avenge, you might still the enemy. Stop the mouth of the accuser of the brethren. Stop the mouth of that one who wants his perverse and false wisdom to be established with mankind that says you need prestige, learning, title, distinction, the kinds of things that the world admires and pants after, and that even preachers seek to be called doctor.

They don't know that in seeking that they've lost the whole thing. They're already out of the manifold wisdom of God and into the wisdom of this present world, the power of darkness that celebrates prestige, knowledge. That's why it was so important that this woman forsook, she's English by the way, living in Australia, forsook her conventional means of hearing a speaker waiting for her intelligence to accept or to reject his statements, her approval through the exercise of her mind, and submitted to another mode of apprehending the truth of God in her spirit, believing that later it will rise to her understanding.

She's on another ground. She's chosen another wisdom. When Abraham went out, he went out not knowing.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies. See, God is in a moral showdown. The whole thing that we are about is a moral contest, and he's got to win it by means that are consonant and in keeping with his character.

That's why he's born in a stable. That's why he's born at all. A child shall be born unto you, and a son shall be given.

How humiliating. Jews can't believe this 2,000 years later. It's totally incomprehensible and incompatible with their view of the dignity of God, that he should allow himself to come as an infant, doing doo-doo in his diapers, and totally dependent on someone else to clean him up.

That's God? The God of Israel and the Creator? No way. Of course, where do they get their idea that God is the God of dignity? By the projection of themselves. You thought I was such a one as you are.

Well, you got it all wrong. You're a piece of arrogant flesh, and I'm a God who is humility through and through. It's my nature.

I have not yet recovered. Boy, my head hurts. Are you praying for me? Oh, thank you.

I have not yet recovered from that day that I stumbled on an article entitled, The Humility of God. I went down like a sack of potatoes. The humility of God? I knew that we were called to humility, but I never knew that God was.

I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and will open, I'll come in. But if you don't hear and you don't open, I'll just stand there with my hat in my hands, waiting.

That's why God had to wait 35 years for me, because I was so full of my own hot shot bravado and arrogant ideology and philosophical nonsense and noise that I couldn't hear a still small voice if my life depended on it. It took crisis and devastating failure unto death to hear the still small voice of God, who can shout if he wanted to, and he can knock down our doors if he wanted to, but it would not be in keeping with his character. Unlike us, he's insistent that his means be in keeping with his ends, and that's why he's ordained strength through children, through the mouth of babes and sucklings.

Well, Art, you don't look like a babe and a suckling. You've got a couple of university degrees, so explain that, huh? Okay, I will. If you thought last night was bad, that's only one night.

What about the months of my first experiences as a young believer 32 years ago returning to the teaching profession with much greater incentive and purpose than ever I had as an atheist before, and failing more significantly than I did as an atheist? The paradox of having been an impressive teacher as an atheist, where students would follow me over a cliff in the kind of human eloquence and ability that I had to mesmerize my students. And what happened to me as a Christian coming back to the same school district? A flop, a miserable, wretched flop, where the students would laugh up their sleeves at the pathetic debacle taking place before them of a man who couldn't put two words together, couldn't even compose his face, lost his charm. Pathetic day after day after day after day, beyond counting, that to go to school in the morning was nothing less than the ascent to the cross.

It was the road to Calvary, and humiliation, and sure failure. You haven't experienced that? How come me? Why me, Lord? Such agony, dear saints, and without a God to explain, until the day came when a mature saint came into my focus, and I said, Brother, I don't know what's happening to me. I was so impressive as an atheist, and now I'm a believer, and I have such intentions for my students, and I have more access to them than their own families, and parents, and pastors, and I'm a pathetic flop.

I've lost everything. I have no charm. I have no ability.

I have no eloquence. I can't articulate. I can't even arrange my face.

Oh, he said, oh, don't you know what God is doing? No. He said, God is emptying you out that you might have no confidence in the flesh. I'll tell you, if we're not babes and sucklings, he'll make us one, because only there has he ordained strength.

For the enemy's sake, for the adversary, who says, no, if you're going to succeed, you need prestige, power, education, knowledge, titles. That's why God chose the hill of Zion. Have you chosen it? Have you chosen what God? Okay, and it ain't gonna be easy if you have a German background.

Okay, and you know why God has chosen Israel? Because he saw the depth of the Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, deep gentile opposition to that little Semitic people called Jews. He put a stumbling stone right smack dab in Zion, calculated to reveal the depth of our Gentile intransigence that certainly would not have chosen them over ourselves. Interesting, isn't it? God is full of sublime purpose.

And I can tell you, dear saints, that in my experience, and bearing the kind of message I do all over the world to many nations, it's been my experience that nothing more reveals the secret heart of the church than the issue of the Jew and of Israel. You know what I think anti-Semitism is? You know what the word means, don't you? Anti-Jewish hatred? Put on your seatbelt, you ain't seen nothing yet. It's warming up in the scenes, it's taking place in the walls, there's a short already, the wires are already freaking out and spluttering their sparks, and the things are beginning, the combustion has already begun, you can't see it.

But there'll come a moment, whoosh, the fury of that hatred will billow out in all nations, including yours. Only the most exemplary saints will be exempt from the power of that hatred. That probably will come in conjunction with toppling economies, financial world crisis, or some war in the Middle East in which Israel uses her atomic arsenal, and everyone will be clucking their tongues against them for their lack of conscience, and I don't know what it is, maybe all these things together.

But those who want simplistic answers to crisis, and who are unregenerate Gentiles, or only shallow, nominal Christians, will be swept up into that fury of hatred that will astonish them. I was interviewed, was it yesterday before coming out here, the day before? One of your magazines? And the brother said, surely you don't believe that this could happen in New Zealand, do you? I said, well, if it happened in Germany, I can believe for New Zealand also. Where is your Goethe, Fichte, Schiller? Where is your Beethoven? Where is your Kant? Where are your great philosophers, and composers, and ethicists, and you're just a shallow Johnny come lately, your culture is skin deep like ours in the USA, and will go down like the proverbial deck of fallen cards when the gush of this power of demonic fury comes, who will be able to resist it? If Germany could not resist it in the depth of its culture, what shall we do? Boy, I'm running all over the place.

Bring me back to this. The issue of God's choice of Israel is the issue of God, for he will choose what he will choose. He will elect whom he will elect.

He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. And the first thing that rises up out of your Britishly tinted, Germanic heart is, but they don't deserve it. And you're right, they don't.

But did you? You see how this unmasks the secret heart of the church? We sing about the grace of God, amazing grace. We subscribe to the doctrine, but where we effectually live, we are still prompted by human performance, doing human merit as the basis for divine acceptance. They don't deserve it.

It's not the statement of them, it's the statement of us. And it would never have been revealed except that God's mercy would come to Israel. Israel is for our sake.

It serves more purposes for the church in their apostasy and unbelief and alienation from God than you can know. And this is not the least of them. How many of us will rejoice when the Son returns and the Lord brings him a garment of a handsome kind and a ring and kills the fatted calf and has a party? And you come and say, you never did that for me.

And I've been faithful all along. Why for them? They've been apostate and they blasphemed your name in every nation where you've driven them. And even now their track record stinks.

And Israel is a daily and increasing embarrassment, and it'll become more scandalous and worse before it will ever get better. Why for them? But don't you know that all that I have has always been yours? You didn't know it. You were not as accepted in the beloved as you needed to understand.

You were insecure, jealous, envious, resentful, fearful that maybe if they come back on the scene, they will get all of God's glory. And where will the church be then who has been faithful all along? Don't think I didn't raise that question myself, because my destiny is not with a restored Israel. My destiny is with you as the church.

I said, Lord, is there enough glory to go around? Israel is going to be a restored nation, and you'll give her a new name and call her by a new name, and she'll be a royal diadem in your hand. Nations will come up and honor her, and they will bring their substance and their riches and their wealth and bow at the feet of this nation that is now so increasingly hated and despised. What's left for us? Well, we're getting glorified bodies, and they only get the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Did you know that? They will be filled with the Spirit of God. What we have now as Charismatics and Pentecostals is only their down payment, only the foretaste, the forespice, the... what's the word that Paul uses? A pledge. Only a faint installment, and we've built whole denominations on it.

I've accused the full gospel businessmen of robbing the church of futurity. That's the way I talk. Because you have taken something given only as a down payment and an earnest and made it the thing in itself, forgetting that it points to the fulfillment for whom it was intended through the prophet Joel, none other than Israel itself in that day.

They will be filled with the Spirit gloriously. Their sons and their daughters shall prophesy. Their old men shall dream dreams.

So what do we get? We get a glorified body so that we can ascend and descend upon the Son of Man as we function in His theocratic rule, establishing His kingdom from the heavenly place, while they function from the earthly place, and the two in tandem and in an agreement, thy kingdom come. Isn't that glorious? Well, class dismissed. Are you getting indigestion? Are you getting, yeah? So you understand about why Israel, why the holy hill of Zion, it reveals God.

Why the mercy of God, it reveals God. Israel's function is not to be celebrated in herself, but to reveal the glory of God as a God who will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy. And they will desperately need it.

And listen to this, they'll not get it except through you, that they'll only obtain mercy as you extend mercy. Paul says in Romans 11, and are you ever going to have opportunity before the age ends and sooner than you think, as Jews will come pouring through New Zealand in flight from persecution unto death, in the relentless pursuit of them by the powers of darkness who want to annihilate them, so as to remove the threat of the loss of their usurping false power over the nations. Boy, my heart goes out to you.

How can you contain all this? Don't panic, hold steady. What did we read in Psalm 2? Oh, how the heathen rage the nations and the kings and the rulers take thought against God, against His anointed and want to break their fetters apart. But God has set Him on the holy hill of Zion.

The kings and the rulers, is the Lord being redundant? Is it like saying the kings and the kings? Or is there a difference between rulers and kings? It wasn't the kings that kept me up all last night, it was the rulers. The prevailing principalities and powers of the air that dwell over Wellington and its environs as the capital of the nation that they manipulate and jerk in an uncontested way, knowing that this little Jewish rat is more a threat to them than a thousand Benny Hinns or other names that I could name who have taken seven million dollars out of Australia in the recent quote times of ministry. We're hoping to take out seven hundred dollars.

Keep Ben Israel in toilet paper. You think that this is not an insignificant and unrelated thing also? Personalities, their celebration, their prestige, the kind of finances that have to do with their ministry so-called, and the numbers that run after them. Now where was I? The rulers kept me up last night, kept me up.

It's a wonder that I'm alive today. Crunched, physically, mentally harassed, unbelievable, horrid, erotic contemplations that should have awakened a man in horror that he's capable of them if he were not already awake. Why such treatment? Why such opposition? My first thought this morning was because we're near Wellington.

The kings and the rulers take thought against the Lord and against His anointed. The kings are the visible earthly magistrates, but the rulers are the invisible, spectral, angelic, fallen realm over the earth that occupy the heavenlies. Not heaven, the heavenlies.

I remember coming to Singapore for the first time and speaking in a big church. There were hundreds of Chinese believers and all around the church were the plaques commemorating the deaths of the missionaries who had come to them from England, America. Alice Jones arrived 1903, died 1905, malaria.

Jack so-and-so arrived 1904, died 1907, malaria. I got back home and the Lord wakened me in the middle of the night to go to the dictionary and look up malaria, and I shouldn't have needed it. Mal means bad air, bad air.

A man who travels like me from nation to nation senses something in the air when you go from one nation to another. As we went from East Germany to Czechoslovakia in the old days, just to go from West Germany to East Germany instantly brought another air, another atmosphere, because there were different prevailing rulers over them. Don't think that they're absent from New Zealand.

Don't think that this Maori uprising that is such a vexation for the nation is being motivated through men, in men. It has its origin from below. So we're in a great contest, saints, and the church is God's calculated agency to both identify and defeat this false rulership.

And why will Jews be fleeing through New Zealand? Thank you, Lord, for reminding me that I don't get off the track, because they will be mercilessly pursued by the powers of darkness through unregenerate men who will not be satisfied with anything less than their annihilation. If you think Jew hatred can only be understood sociologically, you've got another thing coming. The hatred of the Jew in the last analysis is the hatred of God.

And the Jew, however alienated and apostate, is still the physical symbolic representative of the God of Israel and the God of Jacob. As I had to tell the German audience just weeks ago in Germany, whose God are you celebrating? I just came from a Jewish cemetery near Bayreuth with 14th century tombstones

where the Hebrew has been effaced by the elements over that length of time, but reminding me of the long tenure of Jews in Germany. And I said, how come they lived that long in your midst and never understood that the God whom you ostensibly celebrated as Christians is their God? Do you yourself understand and have consciously and willfully embraced God, not abstractly, but as the God of Jacob, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, the God of the Jewish patriarchs? It's not an appellation.

It's not a little tack-on. It's God's intended designation that believers understand and know Him as their God, or you don't know Him and don't communicate Him as Israel's God to Israel. These powers of darkness want to continue their uncontested sway over nations.

Look at the field they had in Germany. If they could take captive an entire nation of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and do with it what they did and make it an engine of systematic destruction for Jews and gypsies and still reside over Germany, waiting their next opportunity, what chance have we? We've got to see the invisible realm where the issues are really joined, and we need to defeat them in a spiritual warfare. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but for God's sake, do we wrestle? I was very alone last night, although my brother was only 12 feet away, and my light was on and off all through the night, and I'm getting up to soak a washcloth with cold water to put on my forehead and eyes, but he didn't wake.

I was alone in my wretchedness. It's a we that needs to wrestle, and if you're getting anything good out of me this morning, it's because we did wrestle this morning before coming. We wrestle.

Wrestling is ultimate combat. How many guys have I beaten at the ping pong table who are more skillful than I, but not as tenacious? Wrestling is more than the issue of skill and strength. It's the issue of will and grit.

It's the ultimate issue of what we really are in our gut, and God says, we wrestle, not play ping pong. Oh, well, that can be warfare also. As the brother greeted us in Wellington that I defeated him at the table, he still remembers.

We wrestle saints is ultimate combat more than the issues of our spiritual strength and our skill. It's the issue of our determination, of our recognition of the seriousness of the thing to which we are called, and there's only a we who can perform it. So long as we insist on being the conglomerate of the casual and islands of individuality, living privatistic lifestyles, and coming out of it for Sunday services and midweek Bible study, there'll be no wrestling at all.

Only a we can wrestle, and we're not yet that we. I'm amazed at the faith of God. He's put all his eggs in one basket, the church, but the church in an apostolic sense and not an institutional one that purveys services for men.

Only a real church can identify the invisible spirit realm and the issues represented and need it. Only a real church can demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God and defeat them. Only a real church can take to its heart and bosom Jews fleeing in their midst for their life and succor them and provide for them refuge and reveal to them their God in their distress, which is God's final strategy, employing the fury of the evil one that seeks to annihilate them to uproot them from their places of security and affluence, and put them in wilderness flight that he might reveal himself to them in the extremity of their condition through those who will befriend and succor them in their identification with them, no matter the peril to their own lives.

That's the drama of the last days. Well, that's as much as I can speak right now, and as much as you can hear. We'll probably come back and develop some of these things.

So let's just pray that the God who has given us this beginning, He's thrown in everything, including the kitchen sink. We'll also spell it out and illumine our understanding and transact with us and call us to a place that we have not sought in order that there might be a fulfillment of these things to his eternal praise and glory. If you're feeling faint-hearted and your heart is beating a bit, and there's a sense of peril about hearing more, you probably should not come back for the other installments, for God will require of you.

And it's about time we've been required of. You'll be eternally grateful that he did. So Lord, thank you for this morning, quite an introduction, quite a beginning, full of portents, somber, deep, raising great questions, even as to what the church itself is, and our call, our eternal purposes, so beyond any capacity in ourselves to perform.

We're a bunch of sissies, Lord, and we're shy and private, and we like to have it so. But we're asking grace to fill this man's mouth with your words, that we can hear your heart, your understanding, your perspective, that you'll speak to us as sons and daughters who can bear such words, and are willing for them, and will surrender totally to the God who speaks to them, that our government might be upon his shoulder before that of Israel and the nations. Lord, bless these children whom you've assembled today.

Give them a second wind. Give me, my God, an ability to continue. Bring us back for the further unfolding of the thing that was historically intended for this day in a once-and-for-all way that shall not be given again, that we will not be ashamed to say, it was historic.

Art wasn't just talking out of his hat. Change us by it. Grant us the grace to rise up to it.

May we experience a maturity even in the hearing of it. And we bless you and thank you for the privilege of that high calling in Christ Jesus. Put your seal on this day.

Keep us from harm. Keep the enemy at bay. Let your blood be upon every head and upon this building and upon these grounds to preserve us, my God, from any malevolent intent of powers of darkness who would desire to obstruct and to thwart or worse.

Let this day be blessed for New Zealand's sake. Let it be blessed for Israel's sake. Let it be blessed for your sake.

We thank you and give you the praise in Jesus' name, and God's people said, Amen.

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