

Even So Come Lord Jesus - Part 2

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the cosmic view of the faith, breaking out of narrow dimensions of Christianity, and facing the issues of the past in order to repent and be restored to a right relationship with God.

Duration: 1:25:41

Scripture: Psalm 102:13, Matthew 25:41

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recording and preserving the preaching of the word of God. He explains that the recorded word of God will inform and instruct future generations about the glory of God. The speaker also discusses the final revelation of God in Zion, where all nations and kingdoms will serve and worship the Lord. He encourages believers to be willing to go through trials and difficulties in order to experience the transcendent place of faith. Additionally, the speaker highlights the need for believers to show mercy and compassion to those in need, particularly the Jewish people, despite the potential risks involved.

Transcript

Because I believe this morning you're wanting to take us within the veil, into dimensions of an ultimate kind, from which we have been shrouded by the commonplace, everyday, predictable, mundane character of our contemporary Christianity. So, roll it back, Lord. You've paid the price for our entry into the ultimate cosmic dimensions of the faith that make the faith the faith and the church the church.

So, what more pedestrian audience can you have that has not been schooled in this, is even intimidated by it, even recoils and shrinks from it, than an Australian congregation. But, you're triumphant. So, my God, if you can succeed in Australia with the cosmic view of the faith, where then shall you fail? So, we ask your blessing, Lord.

Precious God on high, enlarge our hearts, our minds, our understanding, for we have been shrunk and reduced, crippled even. Bring us into the full parameters of the faith, my God, larger than life, by the operation of your spirit and word, this morning and this day. Let it be an historic penetration.

Let the powers of darkness shudder and tremble and break and flee at the reality that is conveyed this morning and today by your word and spirit. Not ever to recover. And we thank and give you praise in

Jesus' name.

Amen. That's called a didactic prayer. D-I-D-A-C-T-I-C.

It means you're praying, but you're teaching. You're praying to the Lord, but you're communicating something to the hearers as well. So, I have let the cat out of the bag.

Now you know what I'm after and what I'm about and what I am suspecting. It took through the night, hours, and this morning to finally make it a little bit clear what the obstacle and the difficulty is. It's you.

You're stunted and you have been inducted into a Christianity of such narrow and commonplace dimensions that when a speaker tries to introduce a larger sense of the faith as it touches all the earth in a cosmic sense, you're altogether rattled. You've not been trained for it. You're not fitted for it.

But we're going to change everything today. Hallelujah. And what a coincidence, my morning devotional readings have encouraged me in this direction.

Both of them are by Eugene Peterson. Ever hear of him? He's a professor at Regent College in Vancouver. I think it's Canada or British Columbia.

And he has paraphrased the entire Bible and put it into idiomatic and colloquial English of American kind. Like he'll say something like, Jesus will say, cool it. You know, all of a sudden you're stunned that the Lord is talking in everyday English, but it arrests your attention.

And the man has a remarkable grasp of the faith. In his selection, it's called Praying with the Prophets. He takes you through the major prophets, minor prophets, not all of them, and verse by verse, day by day.

And then his own comment, and then a prayer. The comment was about Babylon serving the purposes of God as the arm of his judgment upon Israel. But she must not think because she wins a military victory over God's chosen people, that she's being rewarded or is exempt from God's dealings.

So this guy has got his head screwed on right. He understands God's action in history. And this is his prayer.

God of righteousness and justice, of mercy and grace, wide-eyed, I mediate on your ways among the nations, on your judgments in history, on your will accomplished in human affairs, ruling and judging all the earth. I give you my praise in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

And here's what I've written under his prayer. That praise, like the faith from which it issues, is weak and inadequate, except that it perceives God in his sovereignty over all nations, especially in his judgment. Our praise is weak, if not inept, unless it issues from a faith that comprehends the majesty of God in his action in history through and over nations, and especially in his judgments.

If we see God only narrowly, like what did he do for you today? He healed my bunions. Yes, you can praise him for that, but it's limp next to the great chorus of praise that goes out when you recognize God as God in his cosmic dimension. And don't ask me to define cosmic.

It's larger than life. It's larger than the world. It's larger than our present reality.

It's the all-inclusive, ultimate, eternal intentions of God. What we really are about is something set in cosmic conflict between the powers of darkness and God. I don't know if I'll speak of that more explicitly in the time that's left, but just to say that much now, and you can do your own homework in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 10, where Paul tells us in one fell swoop, what is the eternal purpose of God for the church? It's cosmic.

So I'm not using that to say, to get fancy, look mano hands. I'm throwing weighty things at you because I enjoy them and they sound lofty. I'm communicating them because they are nuts and bolts provision of God for the church.

To omit the cosmic dimensions of the faith is to stunt us and to limit us to just what is before our own immediate nose and to shut out any view of God that includes his majesty. So we can sing about it and attempt to praise him for it, but it will be weak and hollow unless it's out of a context of faith and understanding that embraces the whole cosmic dimensions of the faith. Follow that? Well, then you're an exceptional saint if you can, because statements like this need to be heard several times over.

Somebody has said about me, you need to be unpacked, Art. Your statements are so compressed, contain so much. Someone needs to unpack them.

Will you do that when you hear the tape recording with several others in a small circle and go over it slowly and shut the machine off? What did he say? Where's the scripture? Get into it. Dig out that truth. Make it your own.

So that's one statement. And then in another of his devotional books, today's selection is remarkably apt. Hope is not a doctrine about the future.

It is a grace cultivated in the present. It is a stance in the present which deals with the future. As such, it is misunderstood if it is valued only for the comfort it brings about everything going to be all right in the future, because God is in control of it.

Therefore, relax and be comforted. Christian hope is different. Christian hope alerts us to the possibilities of the future as a field of action.

It's not the end of a nice story. It's a place of participation that will not be concluded for the future unless we have part in it in the present. And it fills the present with energy.

I would have said it brings a dynamic to the church that nothing else will bring. The early church had a dynamic that we lack, namely an expectancy about the future, the Lord's own coming, the bringing of His kingdom, His glory and honor. All the earth will praise Him.

The psalmists are full of that kind of expectation. Expectation of that kind is dynamic. It has an energy for the present.

It's a contemplation of the future, but the result of it is to activate the present. For unless the present is activated, that future is not obtained. So you have to get out of your little narrow Australian categories, past, present and future, and come into the realm of God, where there's such a dynamic of the present moment as containing the future, as well as the past.

We are an extraordinary people. We're peculiar. We're not limited past, present, future.

Well, that's the future. The future is now. Eternity is now.

The past is present. What do you mean, Art? What I mean is right now. Are you ready for this? Invisible and overhead of this place where we are assembled is a cloud of witnesses of saints who have gone on before us, who have suffered and died for the most holy faith and are not complete without us.

God sees to it that the past is configured into the present and the present into the future. Unlike earthlings who only know the present moment, they have no past, they have no hope, no expectancy, no future. Beautiful, limited things.

Living beneath God's intention for the expansiveness of those created in his image. So, you have to break out of those categories that the world has clamped upon you. For example, secular and sacred.

Well, sacred is Sunday, but secular is Monday through Saturday. Baloney. It's all sacred.

It's all holy. So, the world has its little confining categories that make it safe for the timid who like to know, you know, what the limits are and not to exceed them. But God calls us to an expansive apostolic and prophetic faith that runs over the edges.

Got the idea? Eternity is now. You mean right now, Art? Yes, I mean right now. Right now, this morning, time is standing still.

Something is being touched. A moment of time has come in the appointment of God that will affect everything everywhere henceforth in the future and for which everything till now has been preparation. Believe that? Sankhood is a phenomenon and it's remarkable to have a view like that, to have a faith like that, an expectancy like that, that something is taking place in a moment of time that touches all eternity and that that moment was known of God, prepared for God, and that what is actually happening this morning is a work to walk in and to fulfill that was established before the foundation of the earth was laid.

Class dismissed. You're freaking out. You can't take it.

Class dismissed. That's your limit. Can you believe that this morning we are fulfilling and performing something that was established in the mind and heart and will of God before the foundation of the earth was laid? He foresaw a moment of time in Australia when some Jewish squirt would come by invitation in the arrangement of God and be given the burden to speak from Psalm 102 that would bring a dimension of understanding into the church that makes the church the church and the agent of God's salvation for Israel and the issue of his coming.

Now you know why Paul gasps frequently, Lord, who is sufficient for these things? If Paul gasps, what shall we do? God is always calling us to things beyond our ability, cosmic and ultimate things. Okay, back to the drawing board. Psalm 102.

I'm not going to let you get away without immersing yourself in the grandeur of this great state. Okay. You want to read it? You want to read that? Okay.

Amen. Have you been reading my Holocaust book? That's the principal scripture of the Holocaust book. That which is past is now.

That which has always been, and God requires that which is past. See, he's not fixed in these categories of past, present, future. The one runs into the other, which means you cannot bury the past, which the

world loves to do.

It wants to sweep the past under the carpet and so you can go on without being distracted by the uncomeliness of the past. That's not God's way. God's way is a full integration of facing the issues of the past, even the failed past, maybe especially the failed past, that you might receive the benefit of correction and instruction in the present as it will affect the future.

Well, I'm an ex-history teacher, so I have a preoccupation with the past, but you know what I've noticed? When I go to Switzerland and the city of Basel, where the Anabaptist saints were imprisoned in towers or burned at the stake for their radical Protestant faith that was more radical than Protestantism, and you go into the building where they were imprisoned that still remains, it is now an art gallery and the information center, and you say to the woman at the desk, what remains here from the Anabaptist history of suffering and persecution in the 16th century? And she says, huh? Doesn't know from beans what is represented in that building. You go to Dachau, the concentration camp outside of Munich, and every barrack in which men rotted before they were sent into the ovens has been removed. And the whole place is nicely tidied up and landscaped with crushed rock.

And one barrack has been rebuilt according to specifications. But that is not the statement of the past. The past has been buried and put away because Germany is embarrassed by it.

But they have an obligation to maintain some kind of historical reminder. So what do they do? They build one barrack according to specifications. That's very German.

But it's not the barracks of death that I remember from 1952 when the stink of death was there and they had no time to tidy up. The whipping posts were still in place. Bones were still in the ovens.

So there is the propensity of man to bury the past and the desire of God that the past is now. Okay. So last night we began a review of this great psalm that begins with some kind of sufferer who sounds very much like a concentration camp inmate.

And if this is an eschatological psalm, that is to say, though it's written in the past, it speaks of the future. Could this be descriptive of Jews suffering in a future concentration camp? Because the Lord himself said, there's a time of trouble ahead for Israel that will exceed anything they have previously known, both in magnitude and in horror. He doesn't say that.

I'm supplying that. So that this is perfectly appropriate to begin with one man, but he's descriptive. He's a picture of a people who are being mocked and taunted in their imprisonment, whose flesh and skin clings to their bones.

They can't even eat their bread. They're like an owl of the wilderness in the waste place, like a lonely bird on the housetop. Verse eight, all day long my enemies taunt me.

Those who deride me use my name for a curse. I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink. What a pathetic statement.

But what makes it different from the Nazi Holocaust is that this man who is expressing the heart cry of his suffering has come to a realization of a kind to which Jews did not come as the result of the Nazi Holocaust. Because he says in verse 10, because of your indignation and anger for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside. My days are like an evening shadow.

I wither away like grass, but you, oh Lord, are in throne forever. You know that God is waiting to hear this from his people, Israel, that our sufferings historically, when our blood flowed in the streets of German villages in the Easter time, when we were called Christ killers, right through to the Nazi Holocaust, that God is waiting for us not to see ourselves as victims pouting in our self-pity, but as those who acknowledge that everything that has befallen us is in consequence of our sin and that God's judgments are altogether righteous. When we will acknowledge that, the set time to favor Zion has come.

Instead, what have our bravado, what does a Jewish word for it? It's chutzpah. It's arrogance and conceit to think, well, they got us last time because we were defenseless, but this time never again. Now we have our own army, our own air force, our own atomic arsenal, never again.

As if we are the agents of our own safety, our own preservation, our own salvation. We have displaced God entirely. You think he's going to be satisfied with that? His judgment saints are not punitive, but redemptive.

They have an object in mind and they are the consequence of our sin. He's not inflicting something. He's allowing our sin itself to have its outworking in exact proportion to the magnitude of the sin.

That's not only true of Israel, it's true of us. So he's not malicious. There's just a divine law that the wages of sin are death.

They are the consequence of a violation against God at the indifference or the rejection of him or yourself becoming Lord and it's cumulative. God is not required to pronounce the verdict the day after your sin. He may allow it to linger for over a period of time, maybe waiting in hope that you will see the error of your ways and come to a repentance before the necessity for judgment through the word.

And that's why he sends the prophets who rise up early and beseech and appeal to the nation to recognize their transgressions, their covenant unfaithfulness and to repent in turn. But when the word is not heeded and received over a period of time, when that grace is exhausted, then God has got to convey the same message through judgment. If the word will not instruct us, then our judgments will instruct us.

So God is waiting for Israel to recognize that its sufferings have not been an accident, an aberration of history, the coming of a Hitler, that if he had not been born that could have been avoided. No, he was born for that purpose because God is enthroned in the heavens. You know why Israel remains in this kind of stupor of ignorance that compels God to bring yet greater judgments for its awareness? Because the church in its midst has not instructed it.

Rather, they have made nice. They have appealed to their self-pity. You're more Christian than Christians, I know.

Oh, you're suffering. Oh, those nasty people who inflicted that upon you. Yes, those Germans, you didn't deserve that.

You confirmed them in their own self-justifying error. And yet the scripture says, hold not back, but let your voice be like a trumpet and tell Jacob their transgressions and Israel their sins. And you didn't do it, cowards.

You make nice, you soothe, because you're doing for them what you would have others do for you. You want to make nice. You don't want to face hard reality facts and deal with them.

No painful. You rather cover it over with a plaster or a whitewash and soothe. You can't believe how much of the church's present attitude toward existent Israel is so much the projection of its own desire for itself.

They want present Israel to succeed. Why? Because they want themselves to succeed. They want the church to succeed because success is the ideal, the end of Christian contemplation.

What's wrong with that art? Here's what's wrong with it. The real purpose is not success, but the glory of God forever. Paul doesn't bend Romans 11 with of him and through him and through him are all things to whom be success, but to whom be glory forever.

And any Christian who has the most rudimentary knowledge of the faith knows that there is an inescapable principle central to God at the very heart of reality, that there's a suffering that precedes a glory, for which even the Lord himself was not exempt. He could not ascend to be at the right hand of the Father and have a name given above every name in earth and in heaven, except he was first abased. He first went down into unspeakable suffering and humiliation.

Therefore, God has exalted him and given him a name above every name. We don't like that. We don't want exaltation because we don't want suffering.

What we want, and maybe Australia is the case in point, is a middling success. Not too harsh, not too high. Get by.

It's a very gentle attitude. Yeah, it's the fear of man. But what in the last analysis is the fear of man? It's fear of being threatened, intimidated.

We want to surround ourselves with a shield so that we're in a kind of cocoon of safety and reasonable middleness, neither extreme of heights nor the depths of despair. But if you read the biography of Oswald Chambers, how many people do not know the name, have never read him? Oh my Lord, that has got to be rectified right away. Get into a Christian bookstore and get Oswald Chambers' daily devotion called My Utmost For His Highest.

No Christian books? It's not carried? Oh, it's available worldwide and in many languages. Maybe I've come all this way to tell you about Oswald Chambers, who died when he was 36 or 38 in Egypt of the complications of an appendicitis. Talk about the Lord taking someone too early.

But his wife fastidiously took notes of all of his preaching. He was a missionary, spoke to the English troops, the YMCA in Egypt before World War I or during World War I. I have been to Zeitoun in Egypt and have served the Lord there and have looked for his tomb and cannot find it. All they can find is the remains of the mission outpost which he served, which is now a used car lot with old German Mercedes Benzes stacked up on that lot and being repaired.

And there's one old building with the debris and the clutter of the older furniture that goes back to that mission post, but no one can locate his body. What a saint, what insight, what a grasp. Why did I bring him up? Oh, when you read his biography, you read of a man who went through the dark night of the soul, that while people were applauding him for the exceptional quality of his insight and his extraordinary eloquence, the man was inwardly being devastated and grasping and fighting for reality of God in his life.

No one could see it, no one was aware of it, but he himself, he went through a long protracted night of the soul where he was tempted to give up the faith and even to forsake his own life. That's how the Lord

allowed him to be brought to such a pitch of despair. He went all the way down in multiple deaths, but the day, the moment came, the set time to favor Zion came for him and the Lord lifted the veil and brought him up and into a place of remarkable perspicuity of the understanding of the faith that has blessed generations of saints ever since.

Our problem is we're unwilling to go down in order to come up. We'd rather have a middling course that is neither extreme the one way or the other that gets by. As a history teacher, I had students come to my desk at the commencement of every school year, Mr. Katz, what is the minimum that we need to do in order to get by? I thought the true motto of the United States of America is not in God we trust, but get by.

We'll let the world play that game, but it's unbecoming for the church. We're not in the get by business. We're in the risks of the faith.

Okay. So the Lord is waiting for an acknowledgement on Israel's part that he is enthroned forever, which means the past, the present, and the future, which means the Nazi Holocaust and the Holocaust yet to come. Spoken of in my Holocaust book and one for which you need to brace yourself for the Lord said that this will exceed the Nazi time, both in its magnitude and in its terror.

So if the Nazi time only took 6 million Jewish lives in Europe, this Holocaust will take maybe almost twice that number worldwide and cause Jews to be uprooted in every present place of security and affluence and to be cast out into the world and through the nations in a final sifting by which a surviving residue and remnant constitute the redeemed of the Lord that returned to Zion. If I don't speak of this tomorrow, don't let me leave because they're going to be passing through Australia as they will be the Philippines and Singapore and Indonesia and in every country where we are sent because my message in every nation is prepare yourself and anticipate Jews in flight through your nations. How do you know art? Because I have in my faith to believe what God says.

I will sift you, it says in Amos chapter 9, through all nations and not so much as one kernel shall fall to the ground. It's a global sifting because God's intention is not only to sift Israel, but to sift the nations through which they pass. For the first question he's going to ask when he takes his throne and establish eternal judgment or blessing is what did you do for the least of these my brethren? He could not ask that question of the Gentiles of all nations except that they had opportunity in their nations to see the least of the brethren coming through.

Can you see why what we are about is so important? The fat is in the fire. The church is not some passive Sunday entity enjoying its services. It is the vital salvific agent of God for Israel's ultimate redemption because something has got to happen and be transacted in their passing through in their final hour of extremity.

When you will have opportunity to fulfill what Paul speaks in Romans that by your mercy they may obtain mercy. But what if you have no mercy to give? What if your mercy is only a doctrine? A verbal acknowledgment but not an actuality? Because you haven't needed it. You're nice middle class people.

You haven't offended anybody. You don't need any mercy from God. Your salvation is of course what you expect.

You would go in the kingdom. He needed you. You don't see yourself as destitute, desperate, saved out of death, undeserving of any consideration.

You're as bad as any whore, any drug addict, any bank robber, any murderer. Though you've never committed those things, you're entirely capable. The fact that you didn't is not a statement of your virtue.

It's just the accident that did not require it. But you have as much gratitude for your salvation as any despoiled who are plucked up out of the gutter. Because you know that there but for the grace of God go I am entirely identified with her.

And I have received mercy. And what is mercy? Mercy is something that is totally undeserved. There's no requirement, nothing that we can perform that compels God to be merciful.

It's because of what he is, not what we are. And when he will have mercy on all, it will be the exhibition of what he is before the face of all nations. Israel is his witness people.

Not because of their virtue, but because of their failure. What they demonstrate in their apostasy and backslidenness and stiff nakedness is the grace of God in his mercy. Because he said, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy.

You want to know what I am as God? I'm a God who chooses. I have perfect right because I'm the creator. I'm the almighty and I will do what I will do.

And I'll elect what I will elect. I'll have mercy upon whom I'll have mercy. And in that chosenness in my privilege as God to do what I will because I am that I am, I make the statement to all the world that I am God.

And to make it convincingly, I'll show you that I'll choose to have mercy on the last one that you would think would deserve it. Because you are full of conditions of deserving. You have criteria to which people have to live up in order to deserve some consideration.

Your husband was a preacher. But I'm a God who does not reward mercy as if it's deserved, but is because I cannot help myself. It is what I am in myself.

And my whole object is that the world should be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the seas. No one, not many really know me. Very few seek me.

And the knowledge of me is salvation, because to know him is life eternal. So Israel has chosen to reveal him and the church. So somehow this victim of God's last days judgments is not really a victim and recognizes that somehow the God who has had indignation and anger has lifted me up and thrown me aside.

And that my days are like an evening shadow. I was away like I'm a vapor. I'm nothing.

But you, O Lord, imagine you saying that I am nothing. But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever. And your name endures to all generations.

When the Jewish people, the nation Israel has chosen once, will come to the acknowledgement that God is enthroned forever. And that that forever includes the times of their worst sufferings, which they acknowledge that he was aware of, and didn't look away, and that evidently intended, and that they will rest in the righteousness of God who permitted those judgments. The end will have come for that constitutes knowing God.

To know God is to know he is righteous all together. That he is perfect in all his ways. That he's a living God from eternity to eternity, self-existent.

That nothing takes place independent of his knowledge. And that it is serving his ultimate purpose, including the hard things. Maybe especially the hard things.

When we will acknowledge God in him, we have acknowledged God. When we rejoice with his judgments, not just tolerate them, we know God and love him. For you cannot extract his judgments from his, from God.

His garment is seamless. You can't like his mercy, and his love, and his patience, and his wisdom, and feel cool toward his judgment. No way.

You've got to take the whole lamb. You don't pick and choose the taste of the whole lamb with the head, the legs, and the appurtenances thereof. Because what you think is the least desirable part is the most choice.

Because when God's judgments are in the earth, the world will learn righteousness. And I'll give you a reward if you can write a simple paragraph on what righteousness is. Try it sometime.

It's virtually indefinable. You have to intuit what righteousness is. Righteousness is God.

His judgments are righteous. They have to be. They issue from him.

So the Lord is waiting for this acknowledgement, and it's for that reason that the Holocaust book was written. If you look closely at the cover, it says, an appeal for Jewish consideration. That Jews might have a key of interpretation of their own worst historic experience, the Holocaust, as not being an accident, not being the result of a madman Hitler, but the fulfillment of God's prophetic warning given in books written by Moses going back to Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and made mention of throughout all the prophets of what would befall us in the latter days.

So I've only gotten one response so far from the head of the Israeli Bible Society, a Jewish scholar by the name of Dr. Bacon, or bacon, depending on your pronunciation. And he said, usually when trash like this comes across my desk, I throw it immediately into the wastebasket. But your book was so foul.

I don't forget his language. I mean, it was he was beside himself. It was so execrable.

It was so that I had to take the time to write you. You phony, you pseudo intellectual. Don't you haven't you ever heard of the Spanish Inquisition? Don't you know about the crusaders in the Middle Ages, extorting money from the Jewish communities in Europe on the way to the Holy Land and setting them afire in their synagogues? Don't you know, don't you know, don't you know? Sure I know.

You dumb dumb. That's what the book is about. They were all statements of judgment because Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

And so if you had known the time of your visitation, but now a lack and alas, you have set in motion by your rejection, something that will haunt you throughout all of the generations in every nation in which you will be dispersed. Your rejection of me is unspeakably costly. And it will culminate in a holocaust.

And even that will not be sufficient to instruct you. So there needs to be one final time of Jacob's trouble in which those who rebel against me and transgress against me. I will bring them out of the nations where they have sojourned, but I will not bring them into the land.

They'll perish along the way. But a remnant will return the redeemed of the Lord. I would have taken you under my wings as a chick, as a hen takes the chicks, but you would not.

So this acknowledgement in Psalm 102 has never yet been historically established. That's what makes this an eschatological Psalm. It speaks of something future that one day will be expressed.

So why is it written now? Because the book of Psalms is closed because the canon is closed. Everything that is in the scripture is already all inclusive. It only waits its fulfillment.

What did someone say about two thirds of all prophecy yet remains unfulfilled that is to be found in the old Testament. And so they knelt down and prayed with him and hung upon his neck with tears that they would see his face no more. That is a picture of Israel and the nations in the ages to come.

They're not going to be a bunch of hot shots. You needn't fear them. They will be broken.

They'll come under you in priestly supplication. They'll give everything for you. You'll love them.

They'll not withhold anything and they're not seeking to take from you. It'll be a nation of priests and a light unto the world. God will have fulfilled his intention.

When the set time to favor Zion has come, you will rise up and have compassion on Zion for your servants hold its stones dear and have pity on its dust. Dear, dear saints, this requires remarkable perspicacity to take this little statement and open it because prophetic statement and the Psalms are poetry. And tell me what is the difference between poetry and prose? If this were to be in prose rather than poetry, it would have taken two pages to express.

But poetry is an intensely concentrated form of communication that uses words sparingly and symbolically to suggest meanings that you need to draw out by the operation of the spirit. It will do something for you. So what does it mean that the set time has come? How do you know that? Because his servants, God is waiting for something in his servants, not the Jews, not Israel.

Israel is in prison, but his servants have compassion on her stones and pity on her dust. And I can only interpret that and intuit what that means, that the servant people of God, the true church in the world, far from what the world is doing, that delight and are taking great relish in Israel's predicament for the stones and dust are not the antiquity of Israel's ancient past. They are the present cities of Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Ashkelon, and every city in the present state, reduce the stones and dust.

How do you know that? Because the prophets say that upon your return, when I will return you and bring you back from every nation in which I have expelled you, you will rebuild the cities that have been laid waste and have been left in ruins. There's a desolation coming to present Israel. And I don't know how many present Christians will be able to bear it when it comes, who have an idealistic and romantic view of Israel, that God cannot allow it to suffer loss because they think that present Israel is the fulfillment of prophecy and that God has an obligation to defend and maintain it.

They will be crushed because their notion of God will fall with Israel's fall. And they'll say, where was God? And when they see this nation cast out again and Jews dispersed throughout the world and another Holocaust, well, that's the end. That's it.

If that's the kind of God that he is, if he's going to let them suffer again a second time within a century, and that he was not able to preserve their state, then that's it. I'm pulling out. And indeed, what does Paul say in the last days? There'll be a great falling away.

I think for two essential reasons, a disappointment that Israel will again have to suffer and a failed rapture that does not take place for our convenience, because we had romantic, idealistic, and inadequate views of the things that pertain to the end, predicated upon our convenience, and altogether unknowing the centrality of God's great principle, the suffering that precedes the glory. Remember what Jesus had to say to the disciples after the road to Emmaus, they could not even recognize the resurrected and glorified Lord. He had to open to them the scriptures, their hearts burned.

And he said to that church, what not? Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, what not the Messiah to have suffered and to die before he ascends to his glory. You dumb dumbs, don't you realize what the scriptures have all along said? Don't you understand the central and inescapable principle of God, that there's a suffering and a death that precedes the glory for which I am not exempt, but must be the personification and the greatest statement. Why were you expecting, you were disappointed, your faces had fallen because you saw me on the cross and you had hoped that it would have been he who would restore Israel.

Yeah, but how? Some great David and a conqueror who's going to oust the Romans and a lack of the less. He's a victim himself, helpless in weakness, crucified like a criminal. And all of our hopes crushed because our hopes were vain and were not rooted in the knowledge of God, but in our own human and religious expectant.

We're coming full circle. And God can say no to Christians who have the same kind of naive expectation for present Israel, all fools and slow of heart, not to believe all that the prophets have written, what not the nation to suffer and die before it extends to its glory. So what is the key to God's deliverance for the nation? Because the nation will be inert and helpless and altogether out of it.

If its cities are stones and dust, rubble and ruin, what condition are the people in? But the least of these, my brethren, dejected, broken for all of our height, for all of our prowess, for all of our ability and movie making and affecting cultures and influencing the world, we will be the worm Jacob, reduced utterly and capable of nothing, not even our own minimal survival, that unless you extend mercy, we perish. If you don't take us in, if you don't give us clothing, water, food, encouragement, we're gone. You say, well, why shouldn't we ought to? I mean, you know, if we see anybody hurting like that, we would do it.

But what you don't understand is to get caught doing it can be your end. If there's an antichrist hatred of Jews, that's worldwide. And you're going to extend yourself and take them in and be found out doing it.

You'll catch with Corinth and Boom Court. You'll find yourself in a concentration camp and you'll not survive it. Are you going to run that risk? It's one thing to have a sympathy for Jews, but after all, I have a family.

I have to take care of my own first. Well, until you come to a place where you have a consideration greater than your own and where your own life is not the ultimate issue, because what are your children, but the extension of your own life? That's why God required Isaac from Abraham to require Isaac was to require Abraham. You have not yet come to the place of God's desire.

You're not yet a bride for the bridegroom. You're still essentially egocentric and selfish and taking care of number one. Yes, you can extend a minimal thing so long as it doesn't threaten your security or your wellbeing.

But until you've come to a place where your life is not your own, they overcame by the blood of the land, the word of the testimony and love not their lives unto the death. Until you've come to that place, you're not yet his as appropriate to the bridegroom. For that's what the bridegroom is.

He didn't love his life unto the death. He gave it up. And what a life, how noble, how precious, ultimate humanity.

And yet he was reduced to such a frame that they had no beauty that any should desire him. He's looking for people like himself. And you cannot attain to that by principle.

You can't imitate Christ. You can only, what should I say, be like him because you're joined with him. And he has become your life.

Not in a final moment, but in all your moments that you could say with Paul, for me to live is Christ. What was this brother identifying yesterday? Who was exalting me? What was he really saying? Art. There's a God.

There's a dimension of God in him. Not by any magic, but by the same means available to every saint. The laying aside of your own life and being joined with him.

And his purpose is call. Tony and I, we joke and we punch each other in the ribs to say, what is it with humanity? They're afraid of the Lord, like taking castor oil as if it's some kind of distasteful medicine. And we're having a blast.

We're treated like kings with our cup overflows. Before we can think of it, we have it. And we come out of a conference in the Philippines.

And I was soaked wet through with sweat. I poured myself out for those saints. There was nothing less than the Lord himself pouring himself out again, as he did on the cross for the saints.

And I was drenched in sweat. You cannot believe what they received in two days. Absolutely turned.

The most profound incursion of God that could ever have been imagined by men who were caught up and fixed in their little careerist self-seeking to ascend the religious ladder of success. The most narrow dimensions and the Lord exploded it and set forth another view of the faith that caught them up and brought them to a transcendent place. And I'm drenched with sweat.

We come out on the sidewalk. I'm panting finished. And if I could only fall back into the swimming pool.

Within an hour, we were swimming in an Olympic pool at the Marco Polo Club, the most exquisite and exclusive upper class joint in the whole of the Philippines, because the lady who was taking us to our hotel

was a club member and had only to hint and lean back and the Lord put it in motion. The brothers brought me a watch. I didn't even want to watch.

I don't even need a watch. I didn't need my Mercedes Benz either. I had a nice Honda.

The Lord insisted. He's always lavishing more than I think I want, because I'm a depression baby and my wants are very minimal. The Lord is exceeding.

He's lavishing. Because we pour out, he pours out. So what is the set time to favor Zion? The church that is not just merely sympathetic toward Israel or has a romantic or idealistic notion, but has come to such a place in union with the Lord himself that it cannot do other than to take in the least of these, his brethren, no matter what the consequence.

Righteousness requires it. And when Jesus comes to judge those two groups, both of whom say, Lord, Lord, when did we see you naked and thirsty? One is cast into the eternal lake of fire for their failure, and the other is called up to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. You righteous, receive the kingdom prepared for you, righteous, because you were so righteous that the issue was not whether you were taking a risk where your life might be lost in the process, but how could you do other than to let the ancient people of God pass by you in terrible want, suffering the scorn and rejection and hatred of the world and not take them in and comfort them.

One woman said to me, Art, how do you know that there will not be another expulsion, even after this one? What makes you think this is the last and that the return will return to Zion and will not again be uprooted and plucked out of their land? I said, that's a good question, because the pattern of God with Israel has always been their sin, judgment, expulsion, exile, restoration, return, sin, judgment, expulsion. What makes this different? I think this is going to be different because this time when they are expelled and they will be taken in, it says in Revelation that there will be a place prepared for them where the woman will be fed in the wilderness for three and a half years. But the feeding is more than just vittles.

They're going to be fed prophetically. They're going to have their predicament explained to them, not by some tough heart. Look, you guys suffer this because it says here, but with a broken heart and with compassion to explain to them, you have suffered the consequence of your sin.

But in the last days, there's a final sifting and the Lord is in this and the end of it will be joy, unspeakable and full of glory. There and then the rebound of the Lord shall return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads, mourning and sighing, sighing, falling away, because they have learned the meaning for their suffering, for their exile, for their expulsion, for their return. You have instructed them.

You fed them with the word. You have spoken to them prophetically. You have opened their understanding.

It says in Ezekiel 20, I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations and they will come into the bond of my covenant and under the rod of my authority. Something's going to happen to you when you're trekking around in the most forlorn patches of Australia and New Zealand and the Philippines. You're going to be encountered and taken in by a special people and they will reveal to you the meaning of your present suffering and show you a glimpse of the future glory.

Then you'll give up your rebellion against me for you'll not only be instructed about your condition, but you will see me in them. I will meet with you face to face in the wilderness of the nations. So we have looked

into many faces in these weeks of every shape and size and color, brown and black and white and Chinese and Asian oriental.

But what a glorious revelation of the God of Israel and of Jacob to shine through the continents of all of these races and ethnic minorities and nationalities exhibiting one face, the face of the Lord himself, which is the face of unconditional love that makes no requirement and cannot be offended because I tell you, these Jews are going to be offensive. They're going to be so matted, so broken, so out of it, so vexed by the sadness of what has hit them and they'll take it out on you. They don't like this, they don't like that.

How come? Well, if that's the gratitude you're going to show, don't forget it. I've done my best and if that's the best, that's not showing that's showing Australia. That's not showing the unconditional God who cannot be offended.

This is beyond anything for which you would be humanly capable. In a word, God has got to be with you and in you and as you so that when they meet you, they meet him. Well, Arthur, I'm not quite in that place today.

You know what you're telling? How do we get from where we presently are, well-meaning Christians who keep our noses clean and avoid conspicuous sin and get by to come to this transcendent place where Israel that has always been the most severe critic of the church will see in us their God and their Lord and be saved. I can tell you easy through suffering and through the cross, through going down before you come up, by becoming discontent with what you presently are and knowing that you have fallen short of the glory of God. That is not enough to be correct and to be nice, but that God calls you to, you ready for this? Theosis, which means God in you, the hope of glory.

Have you the faith to believe for that? Have you the faith to desire that? It is God's ultimate desire for the church for until the church comes into that form of theosis of God in them, how is it fit to be the bride for the bridegroom? It has got to be a for the bridegroom, that is to say, having his character, having his personality, being like him because it is of him. And you would have never sought this. You would have never desired this.

You would never have been willing for the suffering to obtain this were it not for the crisis of Israel that compels it. All the depth of the wisdom of the knowledge of God who has been what has Paul seen? That God in his great wisdom has brought circumstances to bear that compels the church to become the church for what it must be for Israel. And in becoming that, it becomes his bridegroom.

Israel is doing you service. Israel is compelling you to be what you would not otherwise have sought or been willing to obtain. You would have been content with much less and you would have gone into eternity with much less and you would have wailed and gnashed your teeth at your failed life that was lived beneath the glory of God.

Because when you enter eternity, all values are reversed and then you are seen as you are, then you see as you are seen. God is wanting to save the church from an unspeakable anguish of soul that we have lived our Christian lives beneath the glory of God and have been satisfied with less than his intention and fallen short of the reward. Yes, we're saved out of hell, but we're not close to the light.

We might actually be in an outer darkness because we can't even take the light. Israel compels us to be the church that will not suffer loss and not be ashamed, whose works will not be burned up in the fire, who

will receive the reward. For when he comes, he brings his rewards with him to give to every man according to his labor.

I'm going to be so unspeakably wealthy, I can't even begin to tell you, but come up to my mansion sometime and visit me. I'm laying up treasure saints, whoo, because I know that the works with which in which I am engaged will pass through the fire and will obtain reward. How do you know that, Art? Because they're not my works, because I didn't devise them, and because I'm not able to fulfill them independent of his life.

I said to the Lord, save me from being a Jewish charismatic darling and employ me in those things that pertain to your last day's fulfillment. So instead of being before some great audience in Melbourne, I'm up in the dinky boondocks with a bunch of saints that, you see what I mean? But this is where the action really is. This is the work, because my God has a propensity to conceive and to perform his greatest things in stables and in caves, in little nothing places, in some dinky retreat up in the hills.

The real work of God is being fulfilled and will obtain a reward. Now, can you take more? We talked about Israel coming to a new place of recognition, the church coming to a place of theosis of fulfillment, being of God and as God. Now, the last word that has always been the concern of God is the nations.

Look at verse 15. The nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth, your glory. The kings of the earth right now don't give a rap about God.

They are totally indifferent and unconcerned. They have their own agendas. They are high and feluccan and prestigious and powerful, the kings of this earth.

What can conceivably turn all the earth and the nations and the kings of the earth to recognize, acknowledge and honor God? This very demonstration of the Lord rising up to have a set time to favor Zion through the glorified church that even compels the recognition of the unbelieving nations and the kings of the earth to take note. What does Zion mean? Even T. Austin Spock stumbles and chokes and splutters trying to define it. You need to read T. Austin Spock's book on, I think it's like the mystery of Zion.

He takes a shot at it. It is almost virtually undefinable and ultimate. God loves Zion.

Zion will be his sanctuary and his dwelling. Out of Zion shall go forth the law. He has preferred Zion before every other consideration.

But what is Zion? The word is not even Hebrew. It's a mystery word, but it represents the ultimate of what God is about. In fact, what God is.

So it's both a geographic point in Israel, a hill of Zion where the throne of David is established from which Jesus must rule over all nations. But it's also a statement of an ultimate kind where Zion describes the church and that the deliverance comes out of Zion is not so much the Lord coming out of some physical place as being released out of a people who have come to a condition like him. The Zion of God is the Lord writ large in his own people.

When that takes place, he's released because the purpose for Israel has been fulfilled. The church has been brought to the place of God's intention. And now he can clean up the rest that remains Israel's restoration and the witness to the nations.

This is cosmic. This is why we couldn't continue last night. We were at your limit.

I was at my limit. The Lord saved us for the morning time. And we have the stamina to receive the totality of all that has been included in one Israel's restoration, the church's transcendence, the church coming into its place of the bride.

And now the nations and the kings of the nations having to acknowledge this massive thing that has taken place visibly before their eyes in the face of all nations. For when God rises up and perfects Zion, it says he will appear in his glory in verse 16 for the Lord will build up Zion. He will appear in his glory.

What is Zion? It's the Lord appearing in his glory because his glory is not his glory except that it is reflected and seen in the vessel by which it is to be exhibited. The people, the church, the temple, a temple was required to be filled with the glory of God. Well, there's no glory that can be visible.

So it became so visible, so demonstrable the priest could not minister. They had to come out. The glory had filled the temple of God.

The glory of God is not visible glory except that it has a vessel and the church is that Zion. I'm sorry. Yeah, that's right.

You'll see all of a sudden the scriptures going to come together. Click, click, click, click. Things that had been in isolation and separate from come into a coherent whole.

Once the key of Israel's redemption is fitted. Now the church comes into its place of understanding for itself and now also the nations. And that's where Zachariah can end with the nations coming up to Jerusalem with 10 Gentiles taking the skirt of a Jew where the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all kings of the earth, your glory for the Lord will build up Zion.

He will appear in his glory. He will regard the prayers of the destitute and will not despise their prayer. Who is the destitute? Israel is destitute, but they're not likely capable of praying.

It could be that the same church that has compassion on her stones and pity on her dust is looked upon by God as being as destitute as Israel itself, because having compassion and having pity is not some sentimental thing in the distance projected to Israel, but it is an identification with Israel. You're one with them, even in their judgment and in their shame. Now all the rest of the world gloats.

You are not just extending sympathy. You are identified with that people in the same way as the Lord was identified with us while we were yet enemies and while we were yet sinners. If he had not that identification, he could not have been our Redeemer.

His salvation was not from a safe distance. He had to be in our condition and in our sin. His identification made our sins his.

He became sin. And until we are willing to be that toward Israel, for Israel and with Israel, we are not like him. And that's why near sympathy falls short of the glory of God's intention, which is the full identification of the church with Israel, not while Israel is at its best, but at its worst.

For that's when he was in identification with us while we were yet sinners. And when we will be that for Israel, we will be to them what he was to us, and God will be all in all. But that's more than religion.

That's more than sentimentality. That's nothing less, nor other than what God is in himself. When Jesus was baptized by John, John said, you have no need of this.

It's unbecoming. You should be baptizing me. Jesus said, let all righteousness be fulfilled.

I need be immersed in the judgment of repentance for the sins of Israel. Yes, I'm impeccable. And when the prince of this world comes, I can say to him, you have nothing in me, but voluntarily I identify with the sins of my people by immersing myself in their baptism for repentance.

Though personally, I have no need. And when he came up out of the water, the dove was upon him and the voice of the father cried out, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. His salvation is not going to come with his skirts lifted and distant from the people he's run with them, even in their transgression and their sin.

That's what a priest is. And therefore he can be the medium of my salvation. Now, when my church will be for Israel, what I have been for it, then the end has come and all things have been fulfilled.

The set time to favor Zion has come and all the nations will see it and hear the name of the Lord. That's how great a demonstration of God it will be. He will regard the prayer of the destitute.

And then it says in verse 18, let this be recorded for generations to come so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord. Why does it have to be recorded? Because that's the end of history. There's no more, nothing more is going to be done or performed, but this final consummation and the report of it through the record will inform, instruct generations yet unborn of the glory of God.

For he looked down from his holy height from heaven. The Lord looked at the earth to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who are doomed to die so that the name of the Lord may be declared or revealed in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem. When peoples gather together and kingdoms to worship the Lord in that day, rebellion in the nations will have been ended.

All the nations and all the world will serve the Lord and worship and praise him. All kingdoms will be subject unto him because they cannot escape the final revelation of God in Zion. He will be revealed so that all nations must take note and surrender to him.

And this is the cosmic view of the faith. I have a concluding survey, but I'll save that and just pray for it. Lord, we need mercy just to understand and to lay hold of this cosmic view of the faith at the end of the ages, the end of history in which we have a decisive role to play, but one that we cannot perform out of religious or well-meaning intention.

It will have to be God in us as the hope of glory for only your nature can I so identify with Israel in her shame and judgment, because you are compassion, you are mercy and you are pity Lord. And so we just acknowledge we are far removed from the place to which we must ultimately come if you want to rise up and to favor Zion, but we're asking it. We believe you Lord, you're going to perform this.

You'll be glorified by it forever. The mere report of it will instruct unborn generations. And so we're asking my God to move us from where we presently are to that place in you where we need to be, that the world cannot say where we end and where you begin.

You are the life of our life, the speaking of our speaking, the compassion of our compassion, the love of our love, the patience of our patience. You have become all in all and we have fallen short of that glory. We were at a distance from you.

We admired you from afar. We could not have the faith to believe that you could be formed in us. And we welcome that Lord.

And we ask you to bring those necessary deaths that stand in the way as an impediment to this fulfillment, whatever narrow Australian based view of the faith that we have suffered that has kept us in a narrow dimension of faith, seeing only the immediate day to day things before us and making us the center, our security, our pleasure, our satisfaction. We invite you to bring all those things into the death and fill us with yourself and for yourself. We have been self-conscious, timid, fearful, and limited.

We have been fixed in the categories of present past as if they are unrelated. We have fallen short of your glory. And we believe that you're calling us to your glory in these days to come up here, to be with you and to be in you.

Christ in us, Lord, what a remarkable thing. Very God, the life of your people. So my God grant the grace of appropriation.

We're willing to go down through everything that is human, religious, limited, and conditional that you might raise us up unto yourself in the newness of your life, that the brightness of your glory might be seen in our faces by despairing Jews, all the more glorious when we're not even conscious that you're radiating out of us. We cannot be offended by them because our love is your love and can bear every insult. We don't have to be gratified.

We don't even have to be thanked. You are not thanked. You're not even thanked now.

And yet you pour yourself out. So we bless you, Lord. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Grant us the grace, the mercy to come into this fulfillment. Break the fetters, loose us, my God, from every hindrance, every restriction, every misconception of the faith that is modest, that is timid, that is regulated for services, Sunday-centered services, and bring us into the glory of this precious and cosmic thing for which you died.

We bless you for so great salvation in Jesus' name. Complain. Since you came, Art, and since that prayer that I said, Amen, everything has gone topsy-turvy.

My health, my marriage, my this, my business, my that. I've never suffered such mishaps, such setbacks. I'm misunderstood.

I'm insulted. I've been degraded. What happened? You said yes to the Lord, and he's bringing you down that he might bring you up into the fullness of his life and glory.

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