

Finn-03 Israel in Flight

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the complexities of Israel's future and the church's responsibility to support the Jewish people during times of crisis and upheaval.

Duration: 1:01:18

Scripture: Isaiah 35:6-41, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 7:21, Romans 9:25

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the need for believers to have faith in God, especially in times of fear and uncertainty. He emphasizes that God will come to the aid of those who are fearful and assures them that they should not be afraid. The preacher also highlights the importance of believers extending mercy and support to the Jewish people, particularly those who are in exile and facing difficult circumstances. He concludes by urging believers to be prepared and willing to give their lives for the Jewish people and to be part of a community that reveals God's face to those in affliction.

Transcript

I need to pray. Thank you, Lord. You made our strength now.

That your words might go forth with vigor and penetration. That we welcome your divine adjustment of our views. We want to be in agreement with you.

See as you see. For that alone is truth. Lord, speak now.

That your servants might hear your voice. Prepare and fit us for the things that are ahead. Thank and give you praise.

For the wonderful grace of your life. In Jesus' name. Well, it was not too long ago I was in Odessa in the Ukraine.

And I found myself saying to the Pentecostal saints. In a completely unprepared way. Don't think that you've done God a service by helping the Ukrainian Jews to get to Israel.

Don't think that you've done God a service by helping the Ukrainian Jews to get to Israel. You are demanded much more in the future. Not to send them, but to receive them.

When they shall be expelled in flight from violence and from destruction in the land. With that statement I introduce my perspective. Which is in total disagreement with the conventional view of encouraging Jews now to Israel.

As I say so often. To encourage a Jew now to Israel is to encourage him from the frying pan to the fire. We are just a little bit premature.

In encouraging a return to Israel. Before the time. There's a number of scriptures that indicate a violence in the land that will require a casting out again into the nation.

One that came to my attention again this morning is in Jeremiah chapter 31. That follows the description of the time of Jacob's trouble in chapter 30. In verse 7 we read, Alas for that day is great so that none is like it.

It is even the time of Jacob's trouble that he shall be saved out of it. I was trying to encourage a brother in Israel on my last visit there four years ago. That there is a future violence and devastation in the land to be expected.

And that Jerusalem will be rebuilt upon its heaps. And the brother pointed outside the window and he said, look Artie, Jerusalem is already being rebuilt. What you're expecting has already taken place.

I said, but it says in the scripture Jerusalem shall be rebuilt upon her heaps or upon her ruins. As unto the Lord. Yeah, I know that there's a verse in there.

Well, it's somewhere in chapter 30 or 31. And in verse 2 of chapter 31 is another reference to the same thing. It says the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness.

Even Israel when I went to cause him to rest. I don't know that there's a time when we're more required to be serious students of the scripture than now. To read very carefully these prophetic statements.

So that we might rightly understand whether God is describing something in Israel's past or something of her future. My own impression is that the people who will find grace in the wilderness. Were those who survived the sword in the land.

So that I expect a violence that will cast again people in Israel out of the land and into the nations. And that what God has allowed to be established in the land as present Israel. Is to precipitate the violence that requires their expulsion.

Perhaps not all but some. If not many. Because we read such words as those that are taken captive.

The outcasts of Israel. The dispersed of Judah. In the book of Joel in chapter 3. God speaks of in those days referring to the last days and the final time.

I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. It talks in verse 2 about my heritage Israel whom they have scattered among the nations. And parted my land.

Verse 3 that they have cast lots for my people. Verse 5 you have carried into your temples my goodly and pleasant things. And verse 6 the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have you sold unto the Greeks.

That you might remove them far from their borders. But I will raise them out of the place where you have sold them and return a recompense upon your head. In verse 19 of that chapter there is a reference to Egypt and to Edom.

That clearly is not a statement of their past but their future. Egypt shall be a desolation. Edom which is present day Jordan.

Shall be a desolate wilderness. Why? It's God's retribution and judgment upon them. For the violence against the children of Judah.

Because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell forever. And Jerusalem from generation to generation.

This is the pattern in many of the prophets. A last days violence. Within the land.

And then a casting out. And a return. Of a surviving remnant.

Brought about by the direct supernatural intervention of God himself. So much so that the survivors know that it is the Lord who has restored them. And then there's the references that they shall dwell after that in peace.

They shall dwell forever in Jerusalem from generation to generation. We need really a much longer time to develop this. I'm just saying enough to stir your own searching of the scriptures.

That there is indeed a final exodus and return. From all the nations where God will have scattered us. And that we are sifted in the process of that dispersal and return.

As the final chapter of the book of Amos describes. Chapter 9. From verse 8. That the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from off the face of the earth.

Except I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. For I will command and I will sift the house of Israel. Among all nations.

Just as corn is sifted in a sieve. Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword.

Which say the evil shall not overtake nor confront us. How do I know that this description is something of Israel's future rather than Israel's past? Because the context of these verses says so. Verse 11 indicates.

That in that day. Or at that time. In that period of God's dealing.

Will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen. Raise up its ruins and build it as in the days of old. That has not yet happened.

The tabernacle of David is not a form of Davidic worship. Is not a form of Davidic worship. This has been an arbitrary and charismatic definition.

It's not that I don't enjoy Davidic type of worship. Davidic sorry. It's a lovely innovation.

It's an improvement in our charismatic practices. But we must not miss God's point. The tabernacle of David is a statement of God's government and rule.

Upon the throne of David. To order it and to establish it as it says in Isaiah 9.7. Henceforth and forever. The government shall be upon his shoulder.

The tabernacle is the restoration of God's authority on the throne of David. And not a form of worship. How do you know that brother? Because verse 12 says so.

That they may possess the remnant of Eden and of all the heathen which are called by my name. This is not possess in the sense of dominating but in the sense of ruling over. In keeping with many other prophetic scriptures.

Perhaps the most important of which is Isaiah chapter 2. Also repeated in Micah chapter 4. That the law of the Lord shall go forth out of Zion. And the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the last days.

It says in verse 2 of Isaiah 2. That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of Jerusalem. At the top of the mountains. It shall be exalted above the hills.

And all nations shall flow into it. The reference to possessing Eden in chapter 9 of Amos is a symbol of all Gentile nations. So in verse 4 of Isaiah 2 he shall judge among the nations.

That they shall not study war anymore. Will lift up sword against nation. This is the context of Israel's restoration.

Much more than just a place of safety for Jews in the world. The location of God's divine rule over the nations. Resisted by all the powers of darkness.

Who are the false rulers of this present age. They are the spiritual powers of darkness. Who influence the conduct of all nations.

And in some instances possess entire nations. As was true in Nazi Germany. And possessing the organ of government and state.

And put in motion the act of destruction of the Jews of Europe. What makes the Jews leave a safe place, a place where they have everything, to flee somewhere? It is the anger of the powers of darkness against that people. Who knows that their restoration to their God and to their land in covenant.

Is the end of the false rule of the principalities and powers of the air. Who do not want the law of God to go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. Nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in Psalm 2. That begins with the question, why do the heathen rage? The people, the goyim, the gentiles, imagine a vain thing.

The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord against His anointed. Let us break their bands of sundry and cast away their courts from us. But the Lord shall laugh and He shall hold them in derision.

He shall speak unto them in His anger. I have set my king upon the holy hill of Zion. This is what they are raging and foaming against.

They do not want God's king on the holy hill of Zion. For it marks the end of their false usurping rule. They want to break the cords asunder.

But God holds them in derision. I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion. When Zion shall again become a holy hill.

With a holy nation. Restored of God. When He shall take away their sins and their transgressions.

According to the covenant that He has made with them. When the fullness of the gentiles be come in. My heart goes out to you, dear saints.

I don't want to confuse you. I don't want to bewilder you. But you must understand the dimensions of the issue of Israel in the last days.

You will not be able to understand the bitterness with which they shall be hated in all nations. Because if the redeemed of the Lord return to Zion. With everlasting joy upon their heads.

And David their king now is ruler over them. Then the law goes forth out of Zion. And all nations must come up to Jerusalem.

To honor and acknowledge the nation whom God has restored. In whose midst He has established His sanctuary. The place of His dwelling.

And of His rule and of His government. Be prepared to receive them in flight in your nation. Not because of your proximity to Russia.

Though it makes reasonable sense to expect the greatest outflow from there. But because God has said, I will sift them through all nations. Not only to sift them, but to sift us.

Will the true church please stand up? How will it be identified? By those who will extend themselves and mercy. To the Jews who will be driven in and through their nations. The greatest drama of God in the sifting of Israel.

Will not be in Israel, but in the nations. It will conclude in Israel when they shall see Him whom they have pierced. But the two thirds of the Jews who are already in the nations.

And those who will be driven out of the nation and again into nations. It is at that time that they will be exposed to the reality of their God. When it says, I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations face to face.

Let's look at that in Ezekiel chapter 20. Where God says, as I live, saith the Lord God. In verse 33.

As I live, saith the Lord God. Truly, I will rule over you with a strong hand, with a sharp sword, and with a wounded anger. The same people who said, we will not have this man to rule over us.

But if he will not rule over Israel. Then he will not rule over any other nation. Where does the final breaking of Israel's stubborn pride and resistance take place? In the wilderness of the nations.

That may actually mean remote and out of the way places. Where Jews may never have thought to have found themselves. Or it may be a term of a spiritual suggestion.

What is wilderness? But a place of ultimate stripping. From all of the amenities of civilization. The comforts of modern life.

Which give us a false sense of reality. Which affect the fact that we have a distorted picture of reality. But there is something about being stripped.

When a person has to be in the places of grim survival. When he has to struggle to survive in the spirit. Then life simplifies.

Between man and God. Time and eternity. That living in our comfortable places in our cities does not reveal.

How many saints are listening to me now who have themselves passed through wilderness experience. Even in Helsinki. In the midst of the amenities of modern life.

God knows how to strip his saints. And bring them into a fundamental and absolute confrontation with himself. The Christian that does not have and know wilderness experience.

Does not know their God as they ought. Nor can he make them known. To him whom we must reveal him.

Jacob in the time of his trouble. In flight in the nations. With fury poured out I will rule over you.

Why fury? Because that's what we Jews require. He has got to deal with us in a severe way. To divest us of our categories and our confidences.

Our humanistic presumptions. Our Talmudic Judaism. With fury poured out.

I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations. And there will I plead with you face to face. As I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness in the land of Egypt.

So will I plead with you. A final and ultimate confrontation between God and his people. That you might pass under the rod and enter the bond of my covenant.

I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against me. Which may well constitute the majority of Jews in the world. A remnant shall return.

The redeemed of the Lord. The surviving remnant. Who have survived the process of sifting.

And have received the revelation of the Lord in the midst of their wilderness flight. Face to face. You wonder how God could be in so many places at the same time.

For we ourselves are living in the midst of North America in a wilderness. You think it's cold in Finland? Come visit us in the winter. Where the temperatures are lower than that in Alaska.

Eight miles from the closest town. Call supernaturally to that place. Twenty three years ago.

To prepare a place of refuge for Jews in the wilderness. And the Lord has been testing us already. Not long ago a Jewish hobo, a drifter was picked up off the side of the road not far from us.

And he was brought to us because we're called Ben Israel. I was away at the time but a Jewish brother received him in. Gave him a place to stay.

And brought him some food. And he was just about to walk away. When this Jewish bum, this drifter began to complain.

It wasn't good enough for him. He didn't like the accommodation. Don't you have better? Is this the best food you have? You know what this Jewish brother said to me? When this man expressed his ingratitude.

Something rose up from my depths. That completely astonished me. Of which I did not know I was capable.

It's called murder. That's one Jew reacting to another. How will you react? After extending yourself to Jews in their final extremity.

When it's not convenient. At an anti-Christ time that sweeps the whole world. Worse than the Nazi time.

When to extend yourself for a Jew is to put yourself in the peril of their danger. Taking them into your home. And being discovered.

Is an end for yourself and your own family. I preached this somewhere in America. And a Dutch brother came up to me and he said.

Do you know what happened in many cases in Jewish flight in Holland? These middle class Jews could not stand the confinement. The small space in the attic was too claustrophobic for them. As we just saw two days ago in Corrie ten Boom's hideaway.

We saw the place where six or seven Jews were in a closet built within the wall. After the Gestapo had taken away Corrie ten Boom and her family out of the house. They were lifting up the floorboards and looking yet for Jews and hiding for two and a half days.

And these six or seven Jews were in the walls. With a metal pot with a lid on it for their waste, their excretion and their urine. Without the dignity of being able to relieve yourself privately.

Hearing the Nazis lifting the floorboards. And one scream, one cry, one exasperation you would have been detected. They survived.

Because they were able to contain themselves. Until their persecutors left. Then they escaped the house and were sent to other places of refuge.

Who can stand that confinement? The terror of that claustrophobic darkness and suffocating lack of air. This brother said some Jews could not take it and they fled and they were discovered. And under cruel interrogation and torture they revealed who it was who had done it.

And the Gestapo rounded up all those Dutch people. And they ended their lives in the concentration camp. Who wants to take that risk? And why should we? For them, what did they ever do for you? This is the mystery of God.

The mystery of God. That defeats the principalities and the powers of darkness. Whose wisdom says every man lives for his own self-interest.

Take care of number one. Nobody else will. To extend yourself for another.

At the risk of your own life. For a despised Jew. Is the demonstration of another wisdom.

Which man is not capable in the natural. This is not an issue of principles. Or altruism.

Or human kindness. It's the same spirit by which Jesus gave himself at the cross without spot unto God. It is the self-sacrificing nature of God.

Expressed through Gentiles. For Jews. Is the final demonstration of God.

By which Jews who have long resisted the gospel. And have been the enemies of the gospel. Will at last meet their God.

Face to face. Through you. Blonde, freckled faces.

And curly hair. That's why I'm saved. You could not have found a greater enemy of Christ and of the church than myself.

Until my crisis came. 32 years ago. And I was expelled out of my nation.

And was sifted through the nations. Being picked up by this one and that one. Standing in the rain, waiting for a lift.

By people who extended themselves. And in whose Gentile faces I saw the glory of the people of Israel and the light that lightens the Gentiles. There's no more awesome demonstration of Israel's God than Jesus.

It's the mystery of Israel and the church. But not a church of casual, charismatic saints who have a sympathetic affinity for Israel. But those who will exchange their life for them.

And count it all privilege. To obtain such a crown. Of eternal reward.

Are you prepared for that? Don't answer. The better question is. Are you willing to allow God so to prepare you? 23 years ago.

God called us to the place where we now live. In the wilderness of northern Minnesota. By just a few words.

End time teaching center. Community. Refuge.

Here's what I want to say saints. You who enjoy your charismatic anonymity. Love to be hidden in the pews.

And to leave the meetings and go back again to your own privacy. And your privatistic lifestyle. God says that will never do.

You have not the resources in yourself. In your private mode of life. To reveal my face to my people.

In the midst of their affliction. It will take a community to reveal that. Not a conglomerate of isolated individualities.

Or a church that is externally ecumenical. But the corporate people of God. That's the cross.

Try it sometime. You say brother what's the difference between your community and our congregation? Only this. When the service is over you go home.

When our service is over we are home. And have to meet the same saints tomorrow. Not with our Sunday face with our Monday face.

Not in our momentary spiritual condition. But in the truth of what we in fact are. Will you take my word for something? Church is a suffering before it's a glory.

And if my people are going to see the face of their God in you. They'll see it corporately or not at all. And before they will test the truth of our spirituality.

We will first test it among ourselves. When I spoke once from Romans 11. That by your mercy they may obtain mercy.

A woman cried out spontaneously from the congregation. She said but brother we don't even have mercy for each other. How should we have it for Jews? Exactly.

The time is short saints. And we need to be open. To God radicalizing our life.

Moving us from where we charismatically are. To where we need to be apostolically. Or we will have missed the historic moment.

When God passes them through our nation. And we show only the face of religious responsibility. Well I guess I have to.

The sense of religious obligation. That is so easily irritated. And shows it.

They will test us. We will be provoked. They will show ingratitude.

And something will rise up out of your gentile gut. Why should I? And who are they? Unless God has sanctified you wholly. We have to first go to the wilderness and then they.

And there we will be tested. For this final testimony. It is the mystery of God.

And his final glory. One more text. Isaiah 35.

There are many references to the wilderness. Many places in the Bible refer to how the waters flow into the wilderness. This is not poetry.

This is going to be truth. I have already been in some of these wilderness places. They are frightening in their destitution, in their emptiness.

You wonder how anyone could survive. And you wonder why they have to pass through such places. Can't they just fly from Helsinki or Copenhagen? No, if your name is Katz and you have a Jewish face.

You will die. Unless God brings you through a wilderness. Where such places are presently under preparation in the earth.

That's why it says in Isaiah 35 verse 1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them. The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Because nature knows better than us.

When they see this Jacob passing through their midst. We have come to the end of the age. It's time for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Which even creation prevails until now. So it shall blossom abundantly in verse 2. And rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God. How we Jews need to see the excellency of our God. Even in creation.

When the trees shall clap their hands and the hills skip a beat. Because we are unbelieving. Because we are secular.

Because we are skeptical. Because there's something about God as supernatural that offends our rational mind. We've got to see the glory of God.

In very nature itself. When the springs shall break forth from the mountains. When the rivers shall dry up the earth.

But in verse 4. Someone else is being addressed. It is not Israel itself. It's someone unidentified.

And God is commanding that someone. To say to them. That are of a fearful heart, be strong and fear not.

Behold your God will come. He has not come yet. You think he has abandoned you.

You have never been in such miserable circumstances in your life. You had abruptly to leave everything that you have ever owned. You have no security.

With a shirt on your back. You're a fugitive in flight and in exile. But your God will come.

And you need to hear that. You need to have a faith created by the hearing of that. Though you have never been a people of faith.

A word has got to come to us. When we are weak and our knees are feeble. When our hearts are fearful.

We need to hear a word. Or we will never make it to the land of promise. Be strong.

Your God will come. He will come and save you. When they hear that word.

Prophetically spoken. As more than a hopeful wish. Spoken with absolute faith.

By a people who are just about to throw in the towel and expire. As they died in the concentration camps. And in the cattle cars.

Not because their bodies failed. But because their hope failed. There needs to come a word.

A word of hope and of encouragement. When there is no visible evidence that there is any hope for you in that situation. For when they hear that word.

The eyes of the blind shall be opened. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The lame man shall leap as a hawk and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

For in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. Well I want to suggest a prophetic interpretation. Who speaks this word? That becomes a life giving word to people who would have expired without hope.

Someone in the wilderness with them. Whom God can command. And say to them.

Be of hope and of strong heart. Your God will come. We are that people.

But what kind of a word? A word in the hearing of which. The eyes of the blind are opened and the lame leap. The issue of Israel's restoration is the issue of the church.

Not in it's sentimental sympathy for Israel. But in it's corporate apostolic character. In it's prophetic credibility.

Whose corporate word brings life. Israel will not be able to save itself. Something must come to them from outside of themselves.

By which they see the face of God. And hear his own words. Before he comes.

Are you capable of that? That's the question. That's the mystery. That's the call.

So I want to pray. For the church of God in Finland. Of an apostolic and prophetic kind.

Who does not hold it's life as dear unto itself. Nor for itself. Who can reveal the face of God to the unbelieving and to the despairing.

Who can prepare a highway in the wilderness. The way of holiness. For the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransom of the Lord shall return. And come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness.

Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Lord. Mercy again we pray.

To be for them what we ought. The face of God. The voice of God.

Prophetic speaking with prophetic credibility. Through a prepared people. Who have moved through the wilderness of their own experience.

To know God as they must. Who can say to others, your God will come. When there's no visible sign of his coming.

In the midst of their despair. Because he has come to them. In the midst of their despair.

And they know that their God lives. Lord. Lead us to that place.

Whatever it takes. From where we presently are. With our shallow understandings of God.

Our equally shallow identification with Israel. Shape us and form us. We open ourselves.

To your dealing. To the church that is really the church. Whose word can save those who despair.

Is that your prayer saints? Do you want to turn a sermon into an event? It takes one thing only. To transact with God. To release him.

To be for you what he must. Before you can be to them what you must. It's not for everyone.

It's for a remnant within the church. For the remnant of Israel that shall be restored. Who will say yes to the Lord? Whatever it takes Lord.

I'm fearful. I'm timid. I'm selfish.

I'm private. In this condition I cannot be what has been described. But I invite you.

To come into my own life. With such dealings and wilderness trials. As will fit me to be for them.

Those who prepare me to be for them. What I must be. Who will pray that? Who will say yes to that? Who will raise their hands to that? Do it now.

To the issue of Israel. Israel's restoration. The coming of their king.

His blessing to the nations. Is the church. But the church of an ultimate kind.

Hold your hand up to the Lord. Let him know. I welcome whatever is required.

You have formed me for this. And I don't want to be ashamed in that day. That I have fallen short of your glory.

I have chosen that which is safe. Fit me and form me. To reveal your face.

And to express your voice. To a people who would otherwise perish. In the wilderness of our nation.

Except that they both see you and hear you. Through me. Lord seal this.

Seal this. And perform what you must. In your wonderful mercy.

We thank you for the privilege. Of being participants with you. In that which concludes the age.

And reveals your glory for them. In Jesus' name. Let's just sit quietly.

Let that consecration settle in our spirits. This is the end of playing games. Of shallow altercals.

So many decisions. That leave us the same. This is divine transaction.

For which we and they will be eternally grateful. Let it settle in your spirit. Out of the depths of your being.

To say to the Lord. Amen.

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