

Finn-04 Paluu Ja Palauttaminen Israelin (The Return and Restoration of Israel)

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the prophetic implications of Israel's current state and the church's role in its future restoration amidst judgment and desolation.

Duration: 52:21

Scripture: Isaiah 6:8-10, Isaiah 55:11, Joel 2:1, Matthew 24:21

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of reading and loving the word of God. He emphasizes the need to put aside personal opinions and expectations in order to truly understand and embrace the truth. The speaker also explores the concept of present-day Israel and its role in God's plan. He suggests that Israel may be called to be a crucible of judgment rather than a nation that succeeds. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the future of Israel and the potential challenges they may face as a despised and rejected people.

Transcript

I need to pray. Thank you, precious God, for mercy upon mercy in these days. You cannot help yourself.

It's what you are in yourself. And so we ask yet another expression. And the way it pleases you, forgive it.

Come, my God, and take possession of this night. And employ it as if it were a once-and-for-all occasion. As if life and death rested upon it.

Eternity itself. Who's sufficient for these things? Be our sufficiency. Thank you again, and give you the praise.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I had the best night's sleep last night in quite a while.

But I would never know it when I see my present condition. Feeling extraordinarily weak and tired. I don't share that just as a matter of mild curiosity.

But something in the mystery of the prophetic calling. Just in case it might be your experience one day. Not in the bringing of the word, but the fulfilling of it.

Wouldn't that be something? The church itself called to prophetic stature. Corporately. Not when you're feeling inspired.

But just the opposite. When you're feeling especially uninspired. And weak.

And tired. Then God calls for ultimate service. When we're not at our spiritual best.

Wouldn't that just be like the Lord? If the object is to reveal His glory. And not our expertise. Or spirituality.

Well, I want to encourage you to get this book while you can. Not because it's mine. But because the subject is so precious.

There's so little respect, let alone reverence for truth in our generation. And yet the Lord warns us. That it's not just respect for truth that will keep us from deception.

But the love of it. That will bring you to places of inconvenience. So this encourages that kind of love.

It's a critical examination of what truth is. What it takes to both obtain and maintain it. One woman said, I can't read more than one page a day.

That's the kind of book it is. It will change you. So I commend it to you.

Now, what do you mean by truth, brother? What do you mean by loving it? Well, to the point where you would be willing to put aside your own opinion. Of things as you would like to see them. As you have been taught to expect them.

For example, like Israel. That present Israel, however embarrassing its condition, will one day assuredly succeed in the future. And they deserve to succeed.

They've had enough trouble in the world. Enough suffering. They deserve a national homeland.

And God gave it its beginning in 1948. And it will become the prophetic fulfillment. That is conventional truth.

But what if God were to say, present Israel is not going to succeed. But what if God were to say, present Israel is not going to succeed. What if God were to say, I have called their land for judgment and death.

I have assembled them not for success, but for testing and trial and judgment. That they might find themselves yet again, once more, dispersed into the nations. As the outcasts of Israel.

Who thought that they could have established their own state. By their own admirable Jewish ability. Which I had to allow them a last opportunity to attempt.

So that they could finally realize. Not by might and not by power. But by my spirit, saith the Lord.

What if that is the truth. A painful truth. Requires a radical readjustment of our whole view toward Israel.

The girding of our loins to expect calamity and disaster. And not success. That would mean re-examining not only our view about Israel.

It would mean that we would have to examine not only our view about Israel. But also our view about God. How could He? Is that love? I present to you my view.

And of course there are many views and interpretations of prophecy. But I don't offer my view as another opinion. I offer it as a prophetic interpretation of prophetic scripture.

Because someone I think rightly said that not the least of a prophet's functions is the interpretation of prophecy itself. So you have to examine my credentials. Because there are many presuming today to be prophetic.

Even the oracles of God. So it's a bewildering and confusing hour. Where perhaps only the love of the truth will save us.

So you're going to have to weigh me up and assess my speaking tonight. And see what the witness is in your own spirit. What is your own discernment? I'm on my way to Israel.

Where I have not been in four years. I used to go every year. It was there that I came to the Lord 32 years ago.

As a Jewish atheist looking for philosophical answers. I kept a journal of that 14 months of travel. It became a book.

It was even published in Finland. But it's out of print now. Maybe you could persuade Patmos to reissue it.

It's a remarkable saga of a man apprehended by God. A God whom he was not seeking. Who was thrust out into the world and through the nations.

When all of the categories of his modern life collapsed. Something of a preview of what will befall Jews in the world before the end comes. They will be thrust out again into the nations.

Amos chapter 9 says that. I will sift you among all nations. So prepare yourself.

For the odd catches that will be coming through your land. Likely from Russia. But may well be other places.

Men facing a sudden urgency. Global anti-Semitic fury. That compels them out of their places of security and affluence.

And be brought through nations of the world where they had not expected. A national road to Calvary. A despised and rejected people.

Even by those who formerly approved them. This is for me the final scenario of the sifting of Israel in the world. You'll need to get last night's tape.

I spoke of it then more extensively. I used to go to Israel every year taking groups from America. The believers there used to say that when At comes to Israel the word of the Lord comes with him.

That's what they used to say. But they don't say it anymore. Now he's a man in error.

Who's missed the mind of the Lord. He may be a false prophet. Because his message now has become very somber.

Very threatening. He speaks of impending disaster and calamity in the land. By men who don't want to hear that.

Who expect some degree of trouble. But not to the extent that he expects. So brother why are you going back now? I can tell you I don't enjoy going.

But a Jewish brother who is a minister whom I had led to the Lord and baptized. He said At we're conducting a tour in Israel. And my spirit leaped when I heard that.

I said count me in. But not just a tour. But a conference tour.

On the theme of my most recent article in my newsletter. The coming time of Jacob's trouble. The coming calamity of Israel.

Oh he said our brochures are late with the printer. What title shall we give it? I said I'll pray and I'll call you back when the Lord gives it to me. Well the next day I prayed I asked the Lord for a title.

And when I lifted my head. These words came into my thought and spirit. It's from the prophet Joel.

Blow the trumpet in Zion. And proclaim a warning in my holy mountain. That's what we shall be speaking.

Four days in Jerusalem. October 18th through the 21st. Will you be praying? They say you're not a prophet unless you're stoned in Jerusalem.

And this might well be that time. I sent out 80 copies of this message around the world. Before it was published.

To every responsible biblical commentator that I knew. And especially leaders in the body of Christ in Israel. Only one responded favorably.

Even those who had to agree with the truth of the scripture. Who felt that I was carrying it too far. And who are you to come from the safety of North America.

And warn us of disaster and calamity in the land. Why don't you come here and live with us and experience it. Or else your word is not valid.

Answers like that. Well I wish I had copies for you in Finnish. Maybe if you persuade Patmos they might publish it.

But can I pick out some major thoughts from this article? To show you why I have a biblical expectation of the time of Jacob's trouble. That must necessarily take place in the land. Though it will not be confined to Israel.

But wherever Jacob is to be found. Even in Finland. One of my key texts is Isaiah chapter 6. It's the time of Isaiah's call to a particular and ultimate form of service.

When he saw the Lord high and lifted up. And was made conscious that he was a man of unclean lips. And he lived in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For his eyes have seen the king. The Lord of hosts. That is a very particular kind of seeing.

It wouldn't hurt us to perceive the Lord in that way. A soon coming king and a soon coming kingdom. Will very much affect the way in which we see God.

See ourselves as the church. And see his purposes. But that's another subject.

So he heard the Lord say, who will go for us? And he said, send me. Having had his lips purged by a cold from off the altar. Here am I, send me.

And the Lord said, go and tell this people. That keep on listening, but they do not perceive. They keep on looking, they do not understand.

Make the hearts of this people insensitive. Their ears dull, their eyes dim. Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears.

And understand with their hearts and return and be healed. What a remarkable prophetic message. To be born by one sent by the Lord.

Not to bring blessing, but judgment. That in the hearing of the prophet's words. They lose their ability to hear, their ability to understand.

Their ability to see, their ability to be changed in their hearts. Their ability to turn. The word of the Lord to the nation through the prophet is a judgment.

And who of us have not seen this condition in Israel to this very day? Ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see and a heart that does not understand. Except for a small remnant of isolated Jews like myself. And elect from every generation.

There is a judgment that yet remains upon the nation. We are incapable of seeing. No wonder that the prophet says, Lord how long? How long is Israel going to languish in that condition? And here is the remarkable answer in verse 11.

And he answered, the Lord answered. Until cities are devastated and without inhabitants. Houses are without people.

And the land is utterly desolate. The Lord has removed men far away. And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

Yet there will be a tenth portion in it. But it will again be subject to burning. Like an oak whose stump remains when it is felled and the holy seed is in its stump.

So here is the way that I read this. This until has not come. Or else Israel's present condition would be changed.

They would be hearing, seeing and understanding and be turned. But God has established an inexorable barrier to understanding and to conversion. There is a divine until.

Until the cities are devastated and without inhabitants. Houses without people. The land utterly desolate.

The Lord has removed men far away. And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. I believe that that's a statement that is future.

And yet must come in the land. That God has allowed a preliminary return to the land. In order that these final episodes can be fulfilled in the land.

That will again be made desolate. And forsaken. And many removed far away.

If this were the only text. I could understand how we would resist this truth. But I want to assure you there are many texts.

An enormous number of texts in all the prophets. That speak of future desolation and ruin and waste in the land. As for example, Ezekiel 36.

It says in verse 33. On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. Now listen to this you Bible scholars.

Has Israel's sin been removed? Has Israel to this day been cleansed from her iniquity? We're still waiting for something. Spoken in Romans chapter 11. That when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

So the deliverer will come out of Zion. According to the covenant that I have made with them. And take transgression from Jacob.

There is going to come a day. In which God is going to purge and cleanse the people. Just an act of his divine mercy.

But that day has not yet come. It waits for the fullness of the Gentiles to be come in. It's got nothing to do with them but with you.

Whatever that fullness of the Gentiles means. God is waiting on it. Then the deliverer comes out of Zion.

And takes transgression from Jacob. Jacob is inert and helpless. And must be so.

Because we Jews are so self sufficient. We're so able to come out of disasters and succeed. But God says not on that basis will you bless the families of the earth.

Not on the basis of your ability. On the basis of my mercy. That is extended to you without qualification.

For it is not you who is to be glorified among the nations. But the God who is your deliverer and your redeemer. After I have judged you.

I will return you. And you will build the waste places. And the cities that were left in ruins.

And the land that was made vacillating. Verse 33 of Ezekiel 36. On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities.

I will cause the city to be inhabited. And the waste places will be rebuilt. Which waste places? Which cities? Haifa? Tel Aviv? Siberia? Jerusalem? Can you see why I am not welcomed back in the land? Who wants to hear such dread things? Though there is such a weight of scripture confirming it.

Men don't want to hear. There is something in us that doesn't want to consider that unthinkable. There is something in us Jews yet that says this too shall pass.

We said it in Germany in 1933. But it didn't pass. It came.

The unthinkable took place. But we had celebrated German civilization. It didn't save us.

We went up as smoke through the chimney. And we are still saying the same thing. This too shall pass.

This shall not come upon us. I preached something like this in an American city once. And many of the Jewish believers came out to hear me.

And they were stupefied by that word. And one girl came up to me complaining. She said, but I have an aunt living in Tel Aviv.

Don't you understand, Brother Katz? I don't care what you are saying about the scripture. I have an aunt living in Tel Aviv. Therefore, this cannot be true.

This cannot take place. Can you understand why the church must be the ground and pillar of the truth? Who else is jealous over it? And will love it. Even when it is painful to consider.

The church that can love that truth is the church. And only a church of that kind can save Israel from its final distress. The prophet in Ezekiel 37 who spoke to the dry bones and Israel will come into that death and come into those graves where only a word that comes to it prophetically will raise it from that death.

That prophet had to come out from where he was. The hand of the Lord came upon him and he came out and he was brought down into the midst of the valley of dry bones. And he was forced to move through the midst of them.

And God even teased him with an agonizing question. Son of man, can these bones live? Before you can speak for God prophetically you have to see as God sees. And not as you would like things to be.

This is the prophetic requirement. If we will not see, neither shall we speak. And if we don't speak, Israel will remain in its grave.

Now can I be truthful? I don't know when I've looked out on an audience like this with less hope that they can understand what I'm saying and be willing to hear it and to receive it. This is not just a service tonight, saints. This is a prophetic event.

The issue of Israel, unbeknownst to them, is being decided here. For you are the representative church in the land. No better, no worse than others.

God's people. Housewives and widows. Young men with ponytails.

All of the variety of the condition of God's people. And will you believe me when I say the issue of Israel is not Israel, but the church. Whose word to Israel can raise it from its grave.

If it will first see as God sees. That it can speak as God would speak. All of these thousands of Sundays and services that have proceeded tonight.

Have they prepared you for this? All of that passive sitting in pews and looking up and listening. Has it fitted you to be a prophetic people? Who are able to bear and to love painful truth. Who understand that before there is any glory there is always a necessary suffering.

That the issue of Israel is not the success of a state. But the glory of God forever. And that you are called to be participants in this drama.

Not when you are feeling spiritual. Or strong. But in your weakness.

In your tiredness. Without the sense of being spiritual. God will call you to obedience.

As he has called me tonight. For your sake. Because if this is the way that the foolish message must come to you.

Out of weakness. By what means will you fulfill it? Verse 34 of Ezekiel 36. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.

They will say this desolate land has become like the garden of Eden. Waste desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. Well brother that may have been some statement out of Israel's past.

There have been desolations before. What makes you so sure that this is a future condition? We don't want to have to consider Haifa and Tel Aviv and Jerusalem destroyed and made desolate. Because the next verse says Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I the Lord have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate.

I the Lord have spoken it and will do it. So I'm asking you. Is this future or past? The nations around Israel today.

Do they know that God is the Lord? That there's only one God and that is the Holy One of Israel and the God of Jacob who performs what he speaks. Do they know that today? Not yet. But they will know it when they see with their own eyes the desolation and the ruin being restored which they themselves have brought upon Israel.

The nations that are left round about them indicates a regional disaster which is yet future but near. You think I'm enjoying this? You think I want to make you distressed? You came expecting blessing to hear a Jewish believer to reinforce your present view of Israel's happy future. And he's speaking nothing but calamity and disaster.

But if I didn't speak this I would be accountable before God. I'm accountable to bring this perspective to God's people. And you're accountable to hear it and to prepare for it.

I think I shared somewhere in these days what my message was in Odessa in the Ukraine. Only a year or so ago and I didn't come there with that message because the Christians there were so happy to tell me how much they had helped Ukrainian Jews to leave Odessa and get to Israel. Oh, I said, you think you've done God's service? The greater requirement is still before you to receive them back in flight and in terror in seeking to escape the violence and the disaster that will come.

Let's see how spiritual you are then. How much you can receive them then in the condition of panic and terror in which they will come. Because the cities of Israel are going to be made desolate and without inhabitants and in ruins.

And if it's true in what is said in Isaiah 49 that the land of Israel has become our destruction where shall they go who are taken captive or flee in terror but pass again through the nations in which God will sift them and sift you. Oh, I'll take them in, brother. In the anti-Christ time when to be caught taking in a Jew is Christ you're going to extend yourself? What did they ever do for you? Why take the risk? It was one thing to love Israel from afar and enjoy the sentimental effulgence to go to a conference and plant a tree but to take them in at the risk of our life and the peril to our families in all of their ingratitude is the ultimate test of the church to move them to jealousy no other demonstration has succeeded God's final dealing with them and with us will the real church please stand up?

One thing will identify it those who will extend themselves sacrificially for this people at an anti-Christ time where it might mean one's life by a people whose life is not dear unto themselves nor for themselves and even if they get caught and it costs them their life they count it a privilege to receive a crown in helping a remnant of Israel to survive and to be restored that the redeemed of the Lord can return to Zion with mourning and sighing fleeing away and everlasting joy upon their heads that the Lord might come and be their king that his law might go forth that his law might go forth out of their Zion and his word out of their Jerusalem unto all nations who will not thereafter study war anymore Let's pray So I thank you for tonight Lord Where did this strength come from when I was so weak in my beginning and who are this people whom you have assembled tonight who came for blessing your people and the hope of Israel when Israel shall be without hope and cut off and as dry bones and Lord you have spoken mysteries tonight who can comprehend it and I'm asking blessing that the word that you have been pleased to express shall not return to you void it shall accomplish every purpose where unto it has been set that there are men and women sitting in this room tonight who will not die in a bed whose blood will be shed for your people Jacob that they might become Israel such an hour beyond sermons and services where the word is a trumpet call to wake the sleeping of the soon coming disasters and calamities out of which the restored nation shall be birthed bless these children may they take hold of this their privilege to have part in this last day's drama and enjoy the eternal reward of it that will result in your glory forever stir them lead them into your word give them, my God, new seeing a new understanding of the prophetic scriptures and of the things that shall shortly come to pass give them a heart of courage to put aside all imagining of things as we would like them to be and give them a heart to agree with you and to see things as you see them for that alone is truth have a church in the land that is the ground and pillar of truth for only in that condition can it save the remnant of Israel may it be a help to the remnant of Israel that passes through it Lord, seal these things tonight may tonight be an historic event in the history of the church of Jesus Christ in Turku in Finland and we thank you for giving it and God's people said Amen

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