

Finn-05 Mysteeri Israelinjakirkon (Mystery of Israel)

by Art Katz

The church must identify with Israel through their covenants and promises, and demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God through a sacrificial and corporate approach to faith.

Duration: 56:38

Scripture: Matthew 25:34-36, Ephesians 3:4, Ephesians 3:6

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the central and ultimate purpose of God. He highlights the cosmic contest between two wisdoms and the role of the church in demonstrating the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers. The speaker challenges the audience to not reduce their Christianity to mere succession of services, but to seek a deeper understanding of God's purpose. He also discusses the mystery of Christ, specifically the inclusion of Gentiles as fellow heirs and members of the body. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to change and sober the audience, leading them to a deeper revelation of Himself.

Transcript

At least for me, preaching is finished. Although no man enjoys it more. But I don't know that I will again be given the luxury.

For me it's the blowing of the trump. Sounding a warning, calling the church to alert. Waking the sleeping saints.

Raising the dead. I think someone said that that's what true preaching is. Is the raising of the dead.

But I have an additional privilege. My word brings death, before it brings life. So having said all those things, I'm going to pray.

And take off the jacket that was given to me on the night of my departure from Minnesota. That fits me like a glove. In the wonderful provision of the Lord.

Who knew that I would need a suit in Finland. So Lord, You provided that. How much more the word of God tonight.

Not a word about God. Or even about Israel. The thing in itself.

Prophetic proclamation. The word as events. A word that requires.

That sets in motion things. That will affect time and eternity. And if that's not the result of our speaking.

Why bother? For time is short. And we're asking that you would express your urgent heart to us. And not only the subject that's in your heart.

But something of yourself. In a dimension and reality that we have not known you. Sober us and change us.

Even out of our comfortable religious categories. Which are correct. And true.

But not true enough. Change us. By your word.

Even when speaking. And thank you and give you the praise. In Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll turn to Ephesians chapter three. I came in my usual condition.

Uninspired and not knowing. Trusting that the Lord would at the last moment quicken what he will. And we'll find out shortly if I have discerned his spirit alike.

I wish I could devote the entire evening to this text. I wish I could devote a three-day seminar. It's about a mystery of a particular kind.

Of which Paul himself was a steward. He calls it in verse four of chapter three, the mystery of Christ. Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men.

As it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit. To be specific, in verse six. That the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body.

And fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I know that you don't know what that means. Why should you be different from saints elsewhere? When you hear the word body, you think the body of Christ.

You immediately invoke your New Testament mentality. And you miss the mystery. This is a body into which you have been inducted.

Before the body of Christ was formed. It pre-existed and came before the present body. The mystery is that you were invited to participate in it.

Because as Paul says elsewhere, you were far off and without God and without hope in the world. But now you are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body. Fellow partakers of the promise.

Fellow with whom? Those who came before you. The believers of Israel. Jewish saints.

The church is not some innovation. It's not some second thought. It is a continuum.

A continuation of something that existed while you were far off and without God. There was a Jewish believing body. The righteous saints of all generations before the advent of Christ.

But with His coming, you have become partakers of the promise of Israel. Through the Messiah, Jesus. You see why we need three days? What are you suggesting, Katz? Are you striking at our New Testament faith? No, enhancing it.

Bringing it into its Hebraic context. One which God had always intended. Which was a mystery even to the Jewish believers.

Like Peter. Who required a special trance and a revelation of a sheet of unclean animals coming down before him. And three times he protested.

Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean. I'm an Orthodox Jew. I won't even enter the house of a Gentile.

And this while the representatives from Cornelius's house were coming to his door. But the Lord said, what I have made clean, call down that unclean. God wasn't speaking about diet.

He was speaking about a mystery. Something radical has happened. With the advent of Israel's Messiah.

That you who were far off and without God and without hope in the world. Drinking beer out of skulls. And fornicating like rabbits.

In all of your tribal and pagan wars. Without God and without hope. Now you have been brought near.

Through the blood of Christ. And you have been called to the promise of Israel to the people. To the covenant of God's ancient people.

Do you understand this? God is not talking about some cultural increment. He's talking about the substantial character of the faith itself. Which had been known by Jewish believers throughout their generations.

Who had anticipated a Messiah who was to come. But did not understand the mystery. Now revealed to the holy apostles and the prophets.

That Gentiles are to be included. In the faith of Israel. In its covenants and promises.

In its hopes. In its commonwealth. Did you know that? Did you really know that? And even now that you're being told.

Are you rejoicing over that? Do you want to leap and click your heels? That you have been made partakers with God. That you have been made partakers with them. Or are you a little sullen and chafed and resentful? This mystery glorifies God.

And saves you from being dull Gentile religionists. It brings a remarkable Hebraic quality to your faith. If you know these things.

If you understand this mystery. If you appropriate it consciously. If you walk in it willfully and joyfully.

It's transforming. And my how you need that. Lest when my people pass through Finland.

When God will sift them through all nations. You will confirm them in their present prejudice and stereotype. Judaism for Jews and Christianity for the Goyim.

God forbid you should be guilty of confirming that prejudice. What God is hoping for. Is the fulfillment of the mystery.

That when they see you. And pass through your midst. And obtain mercy because you extend mercy.

They're going to see a dimension beyond what they can define. An astonishment. To recognize the Hebraic quality of their faith and their God in you.

Who are Gentiles but not Gentiles. Even exhibiting more gloriously than they are able. The fruit of a covenant relationship with their God.

For you have been brought into their covenant. You call it the new covenant. They will call it the everlasting covenant.

But it's the same. Believe me dear saints. I'm not trying to do a cultural number on you.

I'm not asking you to wear skull caps and prayer shawls. Or even a star of David. That would actually defeat and contradict the mystery.

It's not an external thing that God is wanting to exhibit. It's a spiritual thing. Found in the root of their faith.

Into which you were grafted in. When our branches were broken off. Have we stumbled that we should fall? God forbid.

But through your fall, Paul says, salvation has come to the Gentiles. So as to move Israel to jealousy. You know what I said to a German congregation not too long ago? Having visited a rare Jewish cemetery that survived the Nazi devastation.

These were two stones that could not be broken. They were cut out of granite so thick. And the Hebraic letters were carved in so deeply.

That they were visible and could be read from the 14th century until now. I love to visit Jewish cemeteries. In Europe.

Especially in Germany. It strangely affects me. To be reminded of how long a tenure we Jews have had in your midst.

And we're unaffected by it. Do you know what I said to the Germans that night? Precious, charismatic German Christians. I raised for them a question.

How is it that my people have been 2,000 years in your midst. And the thought never once occurred to them that your God is the God of Israel. That your God is the God of Jacob.

And that this is not some mere appendage or insignificant appellation. It is God's very designation for Himself. Lest we be guilty of projecting a God of our own imagining.

And calling that God Jesus. Is your God the God of Jacob? The God of Israel? I mean, of course I know that He is. But do you know? Really know? And do not just receive this designation as a necessary thing to which you must give acknowledgment.

Begrudgingly. But joyously. You know what I suspect? We don't know God as we ought.

For all of our amens and hallelujahs. Both of which are Hebrew words. We don't know Him in the fullness. That comes by knowing Him as the God of Jacob, the God of Israel. There is something that needs to come into the consciousness of the Finnish church. And when it does, it will be transforming.

And this is not a mere luxury provision. It's actually a matter of life and death. Oh brother, you're so dramatic.

Here's what I believe. According to the prophetic scriptures. Jeremiah chapter 30.

The time of Jacob's trouble. Referred to by Jesus in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. A time that will eclipse all previous Jewish suffering.

Including the Nazi Holocaust. A fierce anti-Christ global persecution against the Jewish people. In the last days.

Not just the Jacob which is in Israel. But wherever Jacob is to be found. In the nations.

Where most of us still are. But we will be plucked up. Driven out.

We will be in flight through the wilderness of the nations. Oh I know that you've grown a little tired from Stephen Lytle's Exodus 2 that has not taken place. And you've grown weary of expecting it.

And that people say that it's already taking place. And Jews coming to Israel out of Russia. Usually by plane or ship.

Bypassing Finland. I want to put you on alert tonight. The real drama has not even begun.

But it will come. According to Amos chapter 9. And Ezekiel chapter 20. And Hosea chapter 2. I will sift you through all nations.

As one sifts corn in a sieve. And not one grain shall fall to the ground. That is future.

And you are not exempt. Because we Jews are in all nations. But it's not only the Jews who are going to be sifted.

The church is going to be sifted. The nations are going to be sifted. By the passing through their midst of this undesirable people.

I can't explain the weight that God gives to this final historic act. In which the majority of world Jewry will not survive. But a remnant will return.

That will constitute the restored nation. Who will return to Zion. With everlasting joy upon their heads.

And mourning and sighing fleeing away. You have to get yesterday's tapes. I don't want to repeat myself.

I can't afford the time. Don't think that your religious respectability will be sufficient for the challenge that comes. Oh, we'll take your people in brother cats.

And discharge our religious obligation. Well, you better enjoy the doing of it much more than you seem to be now. Because God says in Ezekiel 20, I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations.

And there I will meet with you face to face. We will have missed this once and for all historic occasion. If all the Jews see in us is the face of grim religious oppression.

And think that by that we're doing God's service. Well, brother, what else should it be? If I understand the prophetic scriptures are right, this is going to be the time of Antichrist. Taking them in will open us for their persecution.

And if we have not taken the number of the beast, how shall we buy and sell? Why should we share with them our meager supply? Great questions. And you have every reason to be self-conscious and concerned for your own survival. But don't miss it.

There's a mystery waiting fulfillment. Which has been hidden in God who created all things in verse nine. In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Will you bring me back for a three-day seminar? This one verse deserves it. Did you know that there is a moral cosmic contest between two wisdoms? That there's a God who has created all things in order to fulfill it? Through the church? That the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated? Through the church? To the principalities and powers of the air? If you don't know this, if you don't know this central and ultimate purpose in God, you condemn your Christianity to a mere succession of services. Your criteria are all wrong.

Success, numbers, programs, services, budget, how did you like the service? How did you like the speaker? Are all earthly and degrading considerations for the church. Just the place where the principalities and powers like us to remain. There are two things that must come into your consciousness tonight.

Your mystical and authentic identification with Israel. Having come into their covenants. The hope of their promise.

Through their Messiah. How many of us even know what the word Christ means? Derived from the Greek word Christos. The translation of the Hebrew word Messiah.

You have come into the continuum of the righteous of Israel. Though you were far away. By the blood of their Messiah.

Into their promises and covenants. Into the very commonwealth of Israel itself. And I'm not talking about the Zionist political state in the Middle East.

I'm talking about an enduring, eternal, millennial, Hebraic glory. Listen, saints, either we're going to be Hebraic or we're going to be Greek. So take your pick.

And don't think that I have it by virtue of being born Jewish. It is a spiritual appropriation. By those who consciously understand the mystery.

And desire it. And appropriate it. The Messianic congregations don't look too fondly upon me.

I want to tweak their ear. And push the yarmulkes off their heads. And mischievously pull their tzitzis, the little braided things that come out from under their garments.

Not because I'm malicious and a tease. But because I know that the soulish thing inhibits the spiritual. That it's easier to acquire an external and a cultural identification than it is to obtain that which is spiritual.

And to exhibit and demonstrate that. When these Jews will be passing through. And will sense that you're not doing something out of religious obligation.

But out of deepest identification with them. As your brethren. Who will be brought into the faith by the demonstration that you unselfconsciously give.

That will move them unto a jealousy for salvation. Thus fulfilling the mystery of Ephesians 3.10. You say, how can that be, brother? What has that got to do with demonstrating the manifold wisdom of God? To the principalities and powers of the air. Whoever they are.

Whatever it is. Are you listening? This is the manifold wisdom of God. That Gentiles are willing to extend themselves for Jews.

Not only at their inconvenience. But at the very threat and peril of their lives. It's not to be naturally expected.

Because the wisdom of the powers of the air is contrary. That wisdom says, take care of number one. Don't be a fool.

Don't risk your security. What could they ever do for you? This cannot be performed religiously. Or as a matter of principle.

It's a wonder. It's a marvel. It's a mystery.

Such an identification. Such a sacrifice. With a people with whom we have no natural identification.

Who will not even be thankful for the way in which we shall extend mercy to them. They're going to be in the worst of all conditions. Unkempt, deranged, upset.

To the fury that shall suddenly come upon them. Don't expect their gratitude. But their hard words.

And their angry looks. Can you bear it? Can you be gracious in the face of it? Is the issue of who constitutes the true church. That Gentile church in the nations.

That can identify with that hated people at that time. At the risk of their own lives. Are demonstrating another wisdom.

But you'll not be able to find it in a final moment. If you have not been moving toward that now. You'll hear from one of the tapes yesterday.

How when I spoke in the morning. In America about by your mercy they may obtain mercy. A woman cried out in the congregation spontaneously.

Oh she said, but we don't even have mercy for each other. How shall we have it for Jews? Exactly. Are we open for the radical? Sanctifying work of God.

That we should not fail him in that historic moment which comes. For nothing has ever provoked the church like the Jew. We have historically been the fiercest critics of the church.

We know how to get under your skin. You think that you know your Messiah. And it's our book and our scriptures and our language.

Even Luther could not pass this test. When he was provoked by the resistance of Jews to an angry bitterness. What are you better than Luther? You had better become that.

By giving yourself to the preparatory work of God. In anticipation of what shall conclude human history. The sifting of the lost sheep of the house of Israel through the nations.

By which they see their God face to face. In their final extremity. And return to Zion as the redeemed of the world.

With everlasting joy upon their heads. Mourning and sighing fling away. Have you understood me? Prophetic speaking requires prophetic understanding.

You're being tested tonight. Because we have not the time to spell out every detail. You have to intuit what God is saying.

You have to sense its implications. Brother, there's no way that we can be the kind of church that you're describing. As we are presently constituted.

Where our Christianity is a series of services. We don't know how to move from faith to faith and glory to glory. So long as we're sitting in pews like this.

And have no opportunity to behold in each other's faces the glory of God. Well, let's get the pews out. Let's become apostolic.

Let's become the community of faith. Let's go again from house to house daily breaking bread. Without telephoning in advance that we're coming.

Oh, I could tell you so much. Twenty-three years in community. With the same saints.

Not just on Sunday when we're wearing our beatific faces. But in the cold gray dawn of Monday. And every day.

Community is humiliation. Community is suffering. Before it becomes a glory.

It is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be demonstrated. But not the church as the congregation of islands of isolation. In privatistic lifestyles.

Broken only by the coming to services. The church that is the corporate genius of God. As it was in the beginning.

And must again be at the end. Or my people will pass through you. And be totally unaffected.

You will have missed the mystery. Which it says in verse eleven. Is in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

This is the eternal purpose of God. That's why you were born. That's why you were saved.

Not for your satisfaction. For his. It has nothing to do with the benefits that you'll receive.

There may not be any benefit. They require the loss of your life. It fulfills something for him.

That he might demonstrate to the powers of the air. The manifold wisdom of God. Which he exhibited at the cross of Calvary.

In selfless sacrifice for others. Independent of his own unrighteous suffering. Can again at the end be demonstrated through the church.

Not the islands of individualism. The corporate body. Joined.

Sacrificially. For the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. This one thought.

Has opened for me the whole subject of eternity. And the church that is not preoccupied with the things that are eternal. The fulfillment of his purposes and glory forever.

Is not the church. By any apostolic definition. Now, I was going to introduce another text.

Are you at your limit? Is this as much as you can contain? Can I, a few minutes? Matthew 25. The first judgment. That the now seated.

Returning Messiah as King. Performs. In the nations.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory. In verse 31. Matthew 25.

And all the angels with him. He will sit on his glorious throne. This is in poetry.

This is in symbolism. This is actuality. Literally.

Which throne is that, brother? The throne of David. According to God's covenant promises to David and to the patriarchs. Upon your throne.

Upon the holy hill of Zion. In the city of Jerusalem. Shall the law go forth to the nations.

And the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. Believest thou this? Anticipatest thou this? Are you millennially minded? Kingdom minded? God's rule is coming into the earth. Through the restoration of the nations saved through you.

So, what is the first thing that he performs now being seated? He separates the sheep from the goats. And he says in verse 34. Come you who are blessed of my father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Who are these blessed of the father? Who inherit the kingdom? He explains. I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.

I was thirsty, you gave me drink. I was a stranger, you invited me in. Naked and you clothed me.

I was sick, you visited me. I was in prison, you came to me. Then the righteous answered and said.

Notice the language here. The righteous. Did not become righteous for doing these things.

But being righteous they could not help themselves but do it. Because they said. Lord, when did we see you hungry? When did we see you thirsty? When did we see you as a stranger? Naked and clothed you.

In sick and in prison. And the king will answer them. Truly I say unto you.

To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine. Even the least of them you did it unto me. Oh this is remarkable.

It needs another three days. I may end up living in Finland. That one issue alone determines the eternal status of nations.

One issue alone. What did you do for the least of these my brethren? When did we see you thirsty, hungry, naked? If you have done it for the least of these. You have done it unto me.

What a sense of identification. That Jesus has with his yet unbelieving brethren. For all their stubbornness and hardness of heart.

For all their apostasy and backslidenness. They are still his brethren. Are they yours? Those who did not give, who did not extend.

Who say, Lord, Lord, when did we see you hungry? Are religionists who use the language of the faith. But did not really know him as Lord. And failed the test.

Because to fail in this one thing is to fail in all. The ability to discern God's people in the least of these his brethren. And to extend yourself to them.

As if unto the Lord himself. Is the measure of the true church. Who will inherit the kingdom.

I want to pray for such a church. In this very locality. Whose name I can't even pronounce.

In your impossible language. But God knows you. God sees you.

And God has sent his servant unto you. And you'll be accountable for what you've heard. So let that teach you.

Don't just come out for curiosity because a Jewish speaker is passing through. It may be more than novelty that God has called you for. In these last days.

I want to pray for such a church. Of the righteous. Who cannot consider anything else.

No matter what the cost or the sacrifice. How can we let this persecuted people pass through our community? Even if it means the risk of our life. Righteousness requires it.

Whatever the cost. And that is the manifold wisdom of God. When the principalities and powers see a church like that.

They are finished. And God's kingdom comes. Let's pray.

So Lord. You're going to ask us to extend mercy that they may obtain mercy. And really Lord.

What mercy have we ourselves now required? Certainly we didn't need it to conduct church. But you're putting before us tonight a mystery. One that will affect eternity.

And our own eternal reward. Or loss. Our glory or our shame.

And we'll not be able to decide it in the final moment. If we're not willing to give you every moment till that moment. Then we might become the righteous of the Lord.

In true church. That is more than the conglomerate of individualities. By a people who are willing to bear it's suffering.

Before it becomes a glory. May it become that glory here. Before my Jewish kinsmen come.

That when they see this. They will know assuredly. That there is a living God.

The God of Jacob. The God of Israel. And nowhere is he more dramatically dead.

Than in the Gentile church of Finland. Lord fulfill this mystery. Give us every grace.

To those who take hold of it. And want to see you glorified by it. Thank you for our privilege.

To be partakers with them. In their promises. May we be partakers also.

Of their sufferings. For your sake. In Jesus name we pray.

And as many who agree with this. And are willing to sacrifice for this. And be dealt with by God for this.

Say amen. Aloud. Amen.

Amen.

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