

# Ger-06 the Apocalyptic Perspective

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the apocalyptic perspective in Christianity, highlighting the coming judgment and the end of the age, and the need for the church to restore this lost context.*

**Duration:** 1:00:00

**Scripture:** Isaiah 4:2, Isaiah 6:1, Isaiah 6:9, Acts 2:16

**Topics:** "German"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by acknowledging his physical fatigue but emphasizes that God's strength is perfected in weakness. He then prays for God to use him as a vessel and asks for understanding of the prophetic dimension of faith, particularly in relation to Israel. The speaker highlights the importance of true revelation and ministry, using the example of Isaiah's commission to speak a message of judgment rather than blessing. He also criticizes the church for not preaching the gospel in the context of impending judgment and emphasizes the need for a prophetic and apocalyptic perspective.

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## Transcript

I've taken a very healthy walk this afternoon. Maybe as much as 8 kilometers. At least it feels like 8 kilometers.

So my legs are feeling a bit strained. But the Lord's strength is perfected in our weakness. So Lord, I offer you up the use of this weak vessel only dust, but one that you have formed for yourself, even from my mother's womb, as you have each of us.

So come, Lord, and employ this vessel again, for you are the ultimate high priest and the apostle of our confession, and the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Teach us what that means. Open our understanding, the whole prophetic dimension of the faith, for which Israel is the key.

Thank and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

So we started last night out of the prophet Isaiah, who is the ultimate classic prophet, called the prince of the prophets. And his testimony and statement is not unique to himself alone, but perfectly in harmony and related to other of the prophets, so that there's a whole prophetic testimony, consistent and integral within itself, but essentially lost to the church and needs to be reclaimed. It's a way of seeing, of perceiving not just the issue of Israel, but reality itself, for from the earliest times a prophet was called a seer.

He saw as God sees. And it's even in the book of Isaiah that we read this. My ways are not your ways, nor are my thoughts your thoughts.

For as great as the distance from heaven to earth, so great is the difference between my thoughts and your thoughts. So it ought to be a continual concern for us to bring ourselves into alignment with the thoughts of the Lord. It will affect all you're seeing.

And it was intended to. Or else we will be subject to the deceptions of the last days. So when you invest yourself in the prophets, you are required to make a choice.

If you continue in the way in which they see things, it will put you in disunity, not only with the world, but with the church. You'll be looked upon increasingly as strange. You're not likely to continue to be fun.

Because something has come into your spirit. A way of perceiving that affects everything. You have been inducted into another reality.

God's reality. So we spoke about chapter 4 of Isaiah last night. Where the prophet begins with the phrase, on that day.

And that comes up continuously in the prophetic testimony, on that day. And Paul and the apostles take up the same phrase. It's critical to their whole view of the faith.

There is a day toward which all things are tending. That day is the polar event. And everything needs to be seen in regard to it.

It's a day of judgment. It's an apocalyptic day. Destruction, violence, fire.

But the day of the Lord's own coming. The intervention of God in human history. This was foundational to the whole perception of that which was true of the prophets and the apostles.

If you remove that one consideration, you remove them. But is it true for us? Are we looking for the day of the Lord? Because Peter speaks of it, that the very anticipation affects our conduct. Seeing this day, what manner of man ought we to be? Hastening the appearing of the Lord.

So this is an apocalyptic view of the faith. Why doesn't the church share it today? Because we have no stomach for apocalyptic endings. The world is too much with us.

And we want it to remain, not end. All of our comfort and future is invested in this world. We don't want to anticipate its ending.

And if there are certain injustices and defects in the world, we hope progressively they will be made better. We are humanists, more than we are prophetic and apocalyptic thinkers. And it has robbed the church of its vitality, its authority, its message.

Yes, we preach the gospel. The benefit you'll receive if you believe. But it's not presented in the context in which it was first spoken from the day of Pentecost.

In which it was an invitation to come out from this untoward generation. Because upon them is coming the impending judgment. Because this is that which was spoken in the prophet Joel.

In the last days, the sky would become covered with smoke, and the sun darkened. When Peter preached the gospel, it was a salvation from coming judgment. Yet 2000 years distant.

And we who are closer to that consummation, do not preach it at all. Because we do not expect it at all. And so our message has become something else.

And the fruit of it has become something less. It can't be said of all converts what was said of Pauls, who turned from their idols to serve the living God. And to wait for his son who comes from heaven, and will save us from the day of his wrath.

Paul's gospel was apocalyptic. And it affected the profound conversion of those who heard it. So we have lost a great deal.

Part of what we are about is to restore. Prophetic seeing. Apostolic anticipation.

The dynamic of urgency that makes the church the church. Even in Innsbruck. Where everything contends against this kind of understanding.

This is the best of all possible worlds. Who wants to anticipate its end. That would be a Christianity of another kind.

That accommodates this world. And gives us a biblical context and services and benefits. We will be in for a shock.

As they were in New York City. And Washington D.C. When the apocalyptic event comes suddenly. But when it comes, it will come suddenly.

And take us unexpectedly. Who are living in the best of all possible worlds. And don't want to consider such reality.

Until it is thrust upon us. So one reason for the loss of this kind of mindset. Is that we have been tempered by the world.

And the second is the loss of the mystery of Israel itself. Israel is set in an apocalyptic context. It has to do with the end of the age.

The coming of the Lord. And judgments that will come upon it. So when we have lost Israel, we have lost this key.

And even the way that we view Israel is less than God's intention. So you will appreciate the difficulty of my task. And pray for strength to deliver it.

And to contend myself for this faith. Because what was so alive in our spirit in the early morning hours. And was for us so compelling a reality.

If only we could have spoken it then. As by four o'clock in the afternoon. It is greatly altered.

It is not quite as imperative as it was this morning. So we ourselves must contend for the faith. Once given the saints.

Or you lose it. So in the verse that was quoted yesterday in chapter four of Isaiah. That begins with the phrase on that day.

Often spoken of as the day of the Lord. The Lord's day, the day of judgment, the day of wrath. The branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious.

And the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. I don't know what word you have in German for the English survivors. What do you have? Escaped.

Those that have escaped. It's also to be found in English translation. Escaped from what? Escaped.

From the apocalyptic violence that we describe. The judgments of God. An elect remnant.

That Jesus himself speaks about in Matthew 24. When he speaks of the days that are to come on that day. That there will be a trouble unlike anything the nation has ever previously known or will again know.

And if that time is not cut short, no flesh will survive or escape. But for the elect's sake, a surviving remnant, that time will be cut short. So we see a remarkable consistency through all the prophets and into the apostles and the testimony of Jesus himself.

It's called the time of Jacob's trouble. The final calamity of Israel's history. A sifting for a surviving remnant.

Who are the elect of God. Who escape from that judgment. Some of those who disagree with me say that this time has already taken place.

It was the Nazi Holocaust. So present Israel has nothing to fear for its future. But if we look at this text carefully.

It is clear that it is something yet future. As terrible as the Nazi Holocaust was. The greater trouble is yet future.

How do you know that brother? Because it is clearly set in the context of Israel and in Jerusalem. Flee to the mountains of Judah. Pray that it doesn't come on the Sabbath.

The whole context is clearly armies on the borders of Jerusalem. Matthew 24, Luke 21. So it couldn't be the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was entirely set in the context of Europe. Here is something that clearly has its inception in the land itself. Which therefore requires a presence of Jews within the land.

And those tensions that will result with its neighbors being destroyed. Because of its presence. Establishing a conflict that only an Antichrist will seem to resolve.

That's why Jesus can quote Daniel. When you see the desolation of abomination spoken in Daniel. That speaks of an Antichrist figure in Jerusalem.

Demanding the worship of Jews. Who had already brought them a kind of false peace. This is more than I can possibly communicate now.

I'm just saying this much to begin to open your understanding. Of a remarkable context expressed throughout all scriptures. And validated by Jesus himself.

And in his own words, if this that is to come. Will eclipse all previous times of Jewish suffering. What must be the magnitude of it.

So I believe that this is future. Though it has its inception in Jerusalem and in Israel. It will affect Jews worldwide.

Because it's called the time of Jacob's trouble. And we know that Jacob is proliferated through many nations. And God says in the book of Amos.

I will sift you through all nations. That not so much as one kernel will fall to the ground. It's the final time of sifting for all Jewry.

World Jewry. But it will sift the nations also through which they pass. And sift the church in the nations.

Which is why when we read Matthew 25. Jesus now established as the king. Separates the sheep from the goats one by one.

Among the Gentiles of all nations. On the basis of one question only. What did you do for the least of these my brethren.

That would not be a valid question to ask Gentiles in the world. If they did not have occasion to see. The least of these his brethren.

So there's a final sifting of both Israel. The church and the world. Those who have failed to see and identify.

With Jews in that distressed condition. They will suffer a terrible eternal judgment. But those that extend mercy.

He calls them the righteous. And come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you. So this is the crudest outline.

Last day scenario. But one with which I live continually. And speak in all nations in which I travel.

And all continents. Including Africa. So that when I was with my brother in South Africa.

Facing an audience of Christian Zionists. Who look at me in a hostile way. And want so much to believe for the success of present Israel.

That they would not have to face the kind of catastrophe of which Jesus speaks. And the possible expulsion and flight again into the nations. That I could say to them pray for me.

Tomorrow I go to Zimbabwe and Zambia. To prepare for Jews in flight out of South Africa. From Pretoria and Cape Town.

Who will have their backs to the sea. And will be required to pass through your nations. In your dirt roads.

With your deep pockmarks and holes. And if you don't take them in. There will be no Jewish survival.

Someone told me that there is actually a route from Cape Town to Cairo. That goes through the spine of Africa. And it has a special name, do you remember? Something like the Exodus route.

And I believe that Jews will find themselves upon it. And having been in Egypt. And in some of the primitive places close to Ethiopia.

Where I was the first Jew that they had ever seen. I could tell them prepare to receive my kinsmen. For God will yet bring his son out of Egypt a final time.

So there will be survivors of Israel. Those who will escape. Who will be left in Zion and remain in Jerusalem.

Who will be called holy. That's not an honorific title. It's not a spiritual condition to which they have grown by process of change.

It's the very nature of their God. Conferred and given them. As it is given us.

In union with him. In baptism. In death and resurrection.

They'll be holy because he is holy. There is no other way of obtaining holiness. Than to appropriate the very life of God himself.

And except that there be Jews who have come into this reality. How shall they bless all the families of the earth? For that which was spoken to Abraham must have its final consummation. That which was spoken to Abraham.

Must have its final consummation. A final fulfillment. That out of your seed will be a people who will bless all the families of the earth.

That out of your seed will be a people who will bless all the families of the earth. Clearly we have not yet experienced this. But we will.

Through those who survive and escape. And are called holy. And will be a nation of priests and a light unto the world.

And teach the nations the difference between the sacred and the profane. So will God's word be fulfilled. Which has to be fulfilled.

Or how then is God God? For the issue of God is his ability to fulfill his own word. Through a people who do not even desire to be chosen. And have no concept of themselves as being called to be a holy people or a nation of priests.

The light unto the world. Whose present ambition is to be like all other nations. And yet God must succeed.

But how far must he go in order to succeed? Is the issue of the last days. And the sifting through all nations. So Isaiah speaks of a judgment that must come in Jerusalem itself.

In verse 4. To cleanse the city of its own blood stains. By a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning. And anyone who has been following the recent events of Israel.

And anyone who has visited Jerusalem. Or has visited the city and the nation. Realize clearly that it is not a place that is appropriate to the coming of the king.

It will be his sanctuary and his dwelling. When it has been made appropriate for him who is holy. In a judgment that comes through burning.

And then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion. A cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night. And over all the glory there will be a canopy.

Which will serve as a pavilion, a shade by day from the heat. And a refuge and a shelter from the storm. Is that poetry? Is that the inspired imagination of a prophet? Or is this a reference to a literal conclusion that will come? That God's presence in that holy city will be marked by a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day.

To the kind of Bible students we are required to be. To read these texts carefully. To know whether what is spoken is literal or poetic.

But if this is to be a refuge. A shade by day. And a refuge and a shelter.

Then clearly it's speaking of something actual. And if it does not exist now. Then it must be for a future time.

When is that future time? After he has purged the blood of Jerusalem. By a spirit of burning. And saved a holy people.

Then he will create this statement over his own presence. Which he calls a glory. It's a Shekinah glory.

The light of God. Day and night. But it's not a glory that he will share with any flesh.

So all that you admire in present Israel. And is the basis for your hope for its success. Jewish ability.

And all of the other kinds of things that make them an exceptional people. Are the very things that cannot stand in the presence of God's glory. So take your pick.

Take your pick. Choose. What do you prefer? A city and a nation.

Appropriate to the accomplishment of a Jewish people. One in which we could admire and even boast. Or a purged city fitted for his glory.

Over which his Shekinah glory is a permanent presence. That all the world will have to acknowledge. Because it's actual and visible.

That God reigns out of Zion. And has chosen Zion. And purged Zion.

And fitted it as his locus, his center. That all nations shall come up to Jerusalem. To honor this God.

To pay homage to him. And to the people whom he has saved and rescued. And established as holy.

And out of whose nation his government goes forth. The issue of God's government is the issue. Which does not expect the day of the Lord.

Does not desire to consider apocalyptic things. Has lost the mystery of Israel. And sees it only as a hopeful state to be established.

To that same degree we have lost the understanding of the kingdom. There is little or no actual expectation of a kingdom come. Although it's the one prayer that Jesus taught his disciples.

Pray this. Thy kingdom come on earth. As it is in heaven.

We do not pray it, we do not expect it. We have even transmuted the word kingdom to mean something less than something other. The kingdom of God is within you.

Or the church is the expression of the kingdom. Yes, there is some truth in that. But not at the price of obliterating the greater truth.

The actual rule of God. Over all nations. Established as king.

In chapter two of Isaiah. That in the last days. The mountain of the house of the Lord.

Will be established as the highest of the mountains. And shall be raised above the hills. All other lesser governments.

And all the nations shall stream to it. Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob. That he might teach us his ways.

And we might walk in his paths. That's government. That's rule.

That's the benevolent wisdom of God on how to live. Because even the word government needs to be rescued. Because what does it mean today? What does it mean today? With men like Clinton.

And others of a comparable kind. That are self-seeking. Coarse, crude men.

Seeking their own advancement, their own pleasure. Their own fame. There's a disrespect even for government.

Something that we have to patiently tolerate. But we don't expect an enlightened rule. That is actually righteous.

Just equitable, merciful, gracious. That is a model to teach us how to live. That can only come through God.

Human government is at best a grace of provision from God until he comes. But when he comes, he comes as king. And he'll be king in the same city in which he was crucified.

Where he was marked over his head on the cross in three languages. Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews. Ha, ha, ha.

That's a mock. That's a travesty. That's to demean God.

To make him less than what he is. And they suffered that humiliation. But it was a humiliation.

And in the very city in which he bore that mocking taunt he will indeed become king. Not only of Israel, but through Israel to all nations. For God has promised David that upon your throne will come a son from out of your loins and he will rule over the house of Israel forever.

And when the angel came to Mary, what did the angel tell her? You shall call his name Jesus and he will rule from the throne of his father David over the house of Israel forever. Oh, dear saints, you cannot understand the issue of Israel if you forsake the issue of his kingdom. And that's exactly what we have

lost.

And Israel itself has no consciousness that it is called to be the heart of a kingdom. For as we read in Psalm 2 out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord out from Jerusalem. I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion and given him the nations for his inheritance.

So we must restore to the church this lost context of the theocratic intention of God his rule from the place where he has appointed it not one that we would have chosen but that he has chosen Zion and called it a holy hill and must have in that land a holy people. How much do you think the nations will appreciate his rule? Will they take delight in going up to Jerusalem annually and paying homage to that king and to that nation? Not at all. How does Psalm 2 begin? Why do the heathen rage? Foam at the mouth.

They are delirious with distemper where they will not have him to rule over them because the kings and the rulers take thought together against the Lord and against his anointed to break their bonds asunder but the Lord holds them in contempt. I have set my king on the holy hill of Zion. Kiss the son lest he be angry against you.

You can foam at the mouth all you want but to me every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father over all nations. The nations are in rebellion dear saints full of self-will their own autonomy their own desire they do not want to submit to the king. The kings and the rulers take thought against the Lord and his anointed We know who the kings are but who are the rulers?

The invisible spirit realm the principalities and the powers of the air that influence, jerk and manipulate nations even the greatest of them Germany overnight wearing the skull and crossbones on the insignia of the officers hats of the Nazis controverting its whole civilization overnight by burning books and then burning men annihilating the people Israel because the powers of darkness have seized possession of the entire nation no longer content to manipulate but to possess and if they could possess Germany what hope for any nation when these powers have their interests threatened and know that they have but a short time and want to defeat the purposes of God for when he will rule from Zion they are finished their false rule is over they are the gods of this age who serpent the rule of

God and if the Lord returned to Zion and said I will set a prince over you a king even David the greater David Jesus born to rule king over Israel if there is indeed an Israel over which he can be king and is not totally annihilated as the powers of darkness come so close to succeeding and will attempt again in the last day everything for Isaiah began with his vision of the king and once you see the king in his glory once you see the king high and lifted up once you see him as exalted everything else falls into place your view of the church your view of suffering that precedes the glory you know that he is not going to come into this glory and fullness without there being an opposition but you are prepared to bear it your whole view has been altered because you have seen the king and

that's why chapter 6 is the key to Isaiah he saw the Lord high and lifted up he says in verse 5 my eyes have seen the king the Lord of hosts and to see the Lord and the king as he is is to see ourselves in the midst of unclean lips this is true revelation of the truth of God and of ourselves until we come to this there is no true seeing and that's why his true ministry begins with this revelation he saw the king in the first verse sitting on a throne high and lofty and everything is to be viewed from that point including Israel her destiny her suffering her end and when he sees he receives his commission who shall go for me here am I send me and after God purges his mouth by a coal from off the altar he can be sent and sent to do what a

very strange commission go and say to this people in

verse 9 keep listening but do not understand keep looking but do not see make the mind of this people dull stop their ears, shut their eyes so that they may not look with their eyes and listen with their ears and understand with their minds and turn and be healed isn't that strange? do you want to be a prophet? but whatever you are speaking is not to bring blessing but to bring judgment will you be obedient so to speak that your word constitutes an event for your hearers not to bless them but to judge them this is a frightening call and I don't think that Isaiah would have had a stomach for it it's not gratifying to serve God in that way you'll be misunderstood and condemned you'll suffer rejection death forced to hear such a word and who would be obedient to bring it except one who has

first seen the king Isaiah was obedient to this commission how do you know that? because Israel today world Jewry is still under that judgment I've been a missionary to the Jews for four years that's how I began when the Lord took me out of public school teaching and made me a missionary to the Jews and was the director of the mission in New York City in my last year I know the frustration I know the defeat near and yet so far the doors to the Jewish community are closed and if you have access they don't hear they hold their own wisdom and knowledge such a contentious spirit their ears are stuck their mind is dull they cannot see, they cannot hear, they cannot believe they are still under judgment but brother you can say it yes Paul says there's a remnant in every generation but still as

a nation we are under judgment and so the prophet said how long Lord? because he knows that judgment is not God's final word it's a necessary preliminary and out of judgment will come restoration and so he rightly says how long, when? and now we have to immerse ourselves in God's answer for we are still waiting for this answer until the cities lie waste and without inhabitants houses without people the land is utterly desolate until the Lord sends everyone far away and vast is the forsaken places in the midst of the land which land? the present land the land of Israel so that if we understand correctly there's something that must yet come upon the people in the land in order for the judgment to be completed until the until of God will come that their eyes will be opened their ears

unstopped their hearts be given understanding that they might be healed and be saved and what is the statement what are we waiting for? that has not yet taken place and must take place in the land desolation and ruin until the cities lie waste without inhabitants which cities brother?

Haifa, Tel Aviv Jerusalem, Tiberias Ashkelon all the present cities of Israel that's my belief that's my prophetic understanding the text itself compels such an understanding because we see that this is the people whose eyes are still closed the nation is still under this judgment until this greater judgment falls upon the land itself cities without inhabitants left in ruins the land is utterly desolate the Lord sends everyone far away vast is the emptiness and forsaken places in the midst of the land I believe that is future and near and all of the present disturbances in Israel are a preparation for this coming disaster we need to anticipate that he is going to send them far away from the land is this not the sifting of which Amos speaks throughout all nations that begins with this

catastrophe in Israel and affects Jews worldwide until finally the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion with mourning and sorrow fading away and everlasting joy upon their heads Isaiah himself speaks this chapter 35 don't turn to it now the very last verse Isaiah 51 in the last verse the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion a remnant shall return the elect those that are preserved those that are sifted this is the drama that concludes the age and I'll say more about it tomorrow but I want to say now in conclusion for

this time there will be no return at all there will be no survival at all even for a remnant even for a remnant because they will be pursued unto death by the powers of darkness they want to eradicate them as a people that there will be no return to Zion and to

coming of their kings and if there will be any survival at all it will be because of you or it will not come at all a remnant will save the remnant not the majority of Christians today who will not want to extend themselves who will not want to be implicated with this people will not want to identify and take the risk but they will be hated and despised and for you to take them in and get caught at it is to imperil your life and your family and why should you do it what did they ever do for you don't they deserve what they are getting only a remnant will understand and be willing to sacrifice that they would come as the redeemed of the Lord no matter what the cost because their return is his coming and his coming is his kingdom and his kingdom is his glory and that's the reason for our

salvation and we count it privilege whatever the loss to ourselves whatever the sacrifice to have part in their redemption you righteous enter the kingdom prepared for you for only the righteous do not count their lives as they are unto themselves I will love what God loves when they are otherwise hated in all the world it's coming friends and you're hearing the word to set in motion your preparation both physical and spiritual that you might take them in I want to pray and I want to pray so Lord is the time passed when we can no longer enjoy the privilege of preaching nice sermons for we take such a delight in expositing your word for we take such a delight in expositing your word and we love the intricacies of your word and its richness and we love the fullness of your word and its

richness but are we so close to the end that we need something now much more radical a preparation an understanding for realities that will soon be upon us for which we have had little anticipation a handful of your people a handful of your people a remnant from within the remnant a remnant from within the remnant a representative of several nations a representative of several nations that you will set in motion by this word that you will set in motion that preparation that will serve in good stead in the day of Jacob's trouble in the day of Jacob's trouble that they might be saved out of it that they might be saved out of it and be restored to Zion and be restored to Zion as the redeemed of the Lord with everlasting joy upon their heads with everlasting joy upon their heads bless the

church of Innsbruck bless the church of Innsbruck the church of Austria the German speaking church the German speaking church given a final opportunity given a final opportunity to be to the Jews at the end to be to the Jews at the end where they failed at the first where they failed at the first bless this word it's not a pretty word it's a hard word but a necessary word put iron in our souls put iron in our souls to be able to hear and receive and bear it to be able to hear and receive and bear it and lead us my God in those things that are needful and lead us my God in those things that are needful that when that day comes suddenly that when that day comes suddenly that you are not unprepared thank you for the privilege of these days open our ears open our hearts open a understanding

for what all the prophets have all along spoken for what all the prophets have all along spoken we thank and give you praise we thank and give you praise we give you our privilege to be participant in its fulfillment to be participant in its fulfillment in Jesus name we pray Amen.

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