

God of the Nations - Part 1

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes God's sovereignty over the nations and His redemptive plan through Abraham and Israel in response to human rebellion.

Duration: 1:08:29

Scripture: Psalm 2:2-4, Psalm 96:4-6, Psalm 96:8

Topics: "Nations"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the historical and ethnic background of the Slavic people who had become Muslims during an invasion four centuries ago. He highlights the warfare, bloodshed, enmity, rape, and vengeance that has occurred as a result. The speaker emphasizes the need for the Lord to judge between nations and bring peace. He also addresses the importance of having a deep and profound sense of God as the Creator and the need for the church to teach this to the people. The sermon concludes with a call to give glory and honor to the Lord and to recognize His power over the nations.

Transcript

...continuum of something building, from the flood, from Noah, from the remarkable prophecies over his sons, and then it gives chapter 10 the whole genealogy of those nations that issue from three sons. The nations themselves issue from the three progenitors of all mankind. And then chapter 11 is the Tower of Babel.

The nations from the beginning, evidencing a spirit of rebellion and arrogance against God, doing their own thing, establishing their own location, not where God intended, but wanting to exalt themselves above God, building a tower, not of stone, but of bricks that they could bake and fabricate synthetically and artificially, and put together with slime. Boy, if that's not a formula for the labor of men seeking to glorify that and exalt themselves above God, I don't know what is. But the Lord looked down and saw it, and was concerned.

And so what their intention was, to make a name for themselves, and to exalt themselves above God, and he confounded their language and dispersed them. So the configuration of nations today, where they are located, and the strange language they speak, like Danish, is altogether the judgment, as anyone who will hear the language will readily agree, of the nations, and dispersed. And ever since, there's been a propensity of the nations, again, to formulate themselves as an entity unto themselves and for themselves, and make a name for themselves in such enterprises as the United Nations, the League of Nations, etc.,

etc.

So there's the whole, can you see the progression? The sons of Noah, the nations that issue from them, the cryptic statement of God that his salvation for the nations has somehow to do with this mystical tent of Shem, but of course the nations who are rebellious will not heed God's provision, but seek their own. And they sought it in the Tower of Babel, he brings it to naught, and then, at the end of chapter 11, we read about Shem's, the descendants of Shem, from verse 10, of which one is Aber, from whom the Hebrews come, and then the descendants, a man by the name of Terah, in verse 26, the father of Abraham, and then the genealogy of Terah getting Abraham, and so on, and Lot, and then they took wives, and the chapter ends with the conclusion of the life of this Terah. Chapter 12 then begins with a Semitic son of Terah, named Abram, to whom comes a distinctive call.

And that call is in response to the rebellion of nations. I don't know if you've ever understood, but you need to understand. The advent of Abraham is not just to give rise to the church, or perform other of the redemptive and precious purposes of God.

It has as its essential and first purpose as to countermeasure God's antidote to the rebellion of nations. From this one man, he will form a nation that will bless all the nations, and bless all the families of the earth, and bring them into that alignment with that Semitic love that will heal their propensity toward rebellion, arrogance, conceit, and self-sufficiency, which has been the undoing of mankind, especially in our own century. So we need to see Abraham as God's provision against the Tower of Babel, the rebellion of nations.

That God would make his name great. Let's look at the call of Abraham. Get out of your country and from your family.

Get out of your nation. In order to be a father of nations, you've got to come out of your own. Not just physically, but in every way in which nationality and national identity might have its hook in you, because I'm going to do in you something altogether unique.

You're going to represent something above and beyond all nations. You're going to establish a nation for all nations, and you can't come to that possibility of bringing anything of your own antecedents, of your own culture and origin. You've got to come out from your nation, kindred, and father's house.

If you ever want the depiction of the cross, it's right there. This is the first powerful setting forth of the cross in its totality. We're called sons of Abraham? We're sons of Abraham? Then it's contingent upon us to have heard that call and received it for our own, and to come out with the same radical totality with which Abraham was called.

We still linger in our nationality even as Jews. We're still not in the Abrahamic place. So that's not my subject.

I don't want to dwell on that just to tease you a little bit and have you to dote upon it at your own leisure. And if you'll do that, that the first principle of God is radical separation, totality. And it comes by God taking the initiative with one man, Abraham.

There's all kinds of speculation as to what kind of man he might be, that he was already chafed by the idolatry of his own civilization or of the Chaldeans, and God saw a potential candidate for himself. That's all speculation. Nobody knows.

It could just be the very sovereign choice of God to pick a man. Maybe not because he showed propensity, but because he had none. Just like the choice of Israel.

Just like the choice of us, when you get down to it. Not because of our distinction, but the lack of distinction. That he might be all in all, for of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever.

So probably, seeing the way God characteristically works, Abraham probably had no distinction that would qualify him for selection and for choice. God begins by choosing and calling a man. But he is a Semite.

He is a son of Shem. He is derived from that line of descent and genealogy, and he must be, because what will be formed of him has got to be a fulfillment of what Noah had already spoken about that one son, Shem. So you can't get away from that, folks.

We don't want to get away from it, we want to get more deeply into it, for it's the heart of the mystery. So I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great.

You shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse him who curses you.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Or all the nations of the world. God's intention from the very first, in the great redemptive saga or drama that the Germans call Heil's Geschichte, salvation history, is the intent of God for the nations.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. There's a love for the world and for the nations, rebellious though they are, stinking and arrogant though they are, full of conceit and contempt for God, full of blasphemy, he's still a lover of the nations. For he made of one blood all nations of men and established their bounds and habitations, that they might seek after God, if happily they might be found of him.

Where am I quoting? Acts 17. Paul's address at Athens, which the theologians say was Paul's single boo-boo. He didn't evangelize and was drawn off to become philosophical and speculative and speak about the purpose of God for the nations.

So much for theologians. Those theologians. Actually it was a great address.

And he told men who were everyday looking for some new thing and some novelty what the whole purpose of life is, to be found of God. And that's the purpose for which God has given of one blood all nations, their bounds, their habitations. We've got to understand the design of God.

He's the creator. He has created the nations. This world, the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, and the nations, and those that dwell therein.

Believest thou that? Psalm 24. Where else we can find it? The world, the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, and the nations, and those that dwell therein. He's the God of the nations.

The thing that's distinctive about the Old Testament and Israel is that what is different about them and all of the other pagan civilizations around them in the Near East is that their God is not a tribal deity. Their God is not the God of fertility for whom they can put up a phallic symbol and have temple prostitutes in order to placate that demonic entity and have abundant harvest. Israel's God is different from all of the other gods.

He's not a local deity. He's not to be placated. He's the God of all the earth.

He's the creator and the Lord over all nations. That's the flying ointment. That's why Israel is hated and despised.

Because what she represents, even in her present unbelief and apostasy, is a threat to all nations who want to continue in their autonomy and independence from God and from his rule. So first we'll go to Psalm 96, and we can go to many psalms, and see how this theme is expressed by the psalmist in many places. And what he's singing and celebrating and commemorating is the historic faith of Israel.

The faith of the psalmist, the faith of the prophets, the faith of the patriarchs, of Moses. Psalm 96, O sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Mark that. Every reference in this psalm that goes beyond the issue of Israel itself and touches the larger purpose of God through Israel. Israel is not an entity unto itself or for itself.

Nor was Abraham. I will make you the father of many nations. In Romans 4 it says, He would be made the heir of the world.

No wonder that a perverted and unregenerate mind can take that and turn it into a Zionist conspiracy where Jews want to take over. Can you see? It doesn't take much to bring a warp to the divine intention of God and make it a hideous kind of thing that will excite anti-Semitic hatred. What it is, is Satan bringing the twist and bringing the warp.

But that God's actual intention is that the nations would come under that tent of Shem. Under the Semitic oversight of God through the people appointed who are the descendants of Abraham. So we need to understand the drama.

Why? Because it's going on still. And we're going to be witnesses and participants to its final enactment. Where the evil one knowing that his time is short will ventilate his wrath foaming at the mouth to seek to avert the catastrophe of losing control over the world.

Jesus said, the prince of this world comes but he has nothing in me. He acknowledged that there is a prince of this world and he wants to remain prince. And he's got his lieutenants and subordinates and the whole network of political influence in the air over nations called the Principalities and Powers of the Air.

If you want to read one of the most incisive and broad examinations of that phenomenon get the book Apostolic Foundations. It's worth the price of the whole book. I don't know anyone else who has that comprehension and has set forth so incisively that subject as the author of that book.

Who is the Holy Ghost? I caught you if he was boasting there. He was boasting in itself. There's a war on saints and we may not recognize it.

It seems like it's low key at least for us here. In other places the bombs are bursting. Why is it that the time of Jacob's trouble will be a greater bloodletting and a greater annihilation of Jews than the Nazi Holocaust? I was tempted to pipe in last night and I didn't want any way to distract from Reggie when somehow at the end the question came up about what survival would there be in Israel? And Reggie rightly quoted two thirds will perish.

One third will remain and be brought through the fire. And what I say just speculatively, not thus say the Lord, but it has everything to commend it. If two thirds in Israel will perish, what will be the ratio of survival and annihilation elsewhere in the world for Jews? If that same ratio holds true in the land or out of the land and there are roughly 15 million Jews in the world, 10 million will perish in the time of Jacob's trouble.

In a shorter period of time than the Nazi process of the final solution that ran from 1938 to 1945, seven years. Half that time, a double amount, almost 12 million will be annihilated somewhere, not just confined to Europe, but worldwide. It's going to take some moral stamina on our part to be present in the earth and not hold God accountable and not be grieved or disappointed at his failure to preserve the state and the nation and to preserve his people.

But he says, I will bring you out of all nations wherein you rebels who transgress against me and express your transgression by saying, this shall not come upon us. I'll bring you out of the nations wherein you have sojourned, but I will not bring you into the land. There are going to be graveyards and bodies cast out like dung over the earth.

Only a remnant will survive, called the redeemed of the Lord, that returned to Zion with mourning and sighing, fleeing away. Not only for the loss of their state, but the loss of their relatives, the loss of their fathers, their uncles, their bubas and their zetas, grandfathers and grandmothers. But there'll be everlasting joy, for they shall not again be plucked up and rooted out.

I will plant them in the land is a remarkable... What's the word for that? A simile or a... Metaphor. Metaphor, that's the word. Planting is so gracious, so gentle.

The great husbandman. What would we call Zionist Israel? Certainly not a planting, more a rude usurping, a grasping, more like Jacob than it is Israel. And so how can that be the nation that will bless all the families of the earth? How can it bless when it is not itself blessed? Jacob had to become Israel in order to have his own altar and place of worship before the God of his fathers.

And so must this present nation equally. There's going to be very great nutrition. That's why Jesus said, if this time were not cut short, no flesh would survive.

But for the elect's sake, this time will be cut short. He said, this is going to be a greater trouble than the nation has ever known from its inception and will not again know. And I'm disputing with men who have reputations that are international, who say that that is past tense, that's already taken place.

That was the Nazi Holocaust. And that present Israel need not fear another catastrophe of that kind. Well, then how come Jesus says it has to begin in Jerusalem with the abomination of desolation.

Let those who read understand and flee to the mountains of Judah, pray that it doesn't come on the Sabbath. Every indication is that it has its inception in the land. Nazi Holocaust had its inception in Europe.

So this is yet future and a greater trouble than the nation has ever known. It must then exceed the Nazi Holocaust. That's why they're going to come to us so beat up, so completely demoralized, so suddenly uprooted, so disheveled.

They'll not be on their best behavior. They'll not be cute. They'll be loathsome.

They'll be bitter. They'll be spitting out their vexations because they'll think that the whole thing is the fault of Christianity. That's how they interpret the Holocaust past.

They're issued out of Lutheran Germany out of Luther's own incitement. How will we receive them? With what grace? When God says the whole issue is that in the wilderness of the nations they will meet with me face to face and there come under the rod of my under the bond of my covenant, the rod of my authority. That they might return as redeemed of the Lord but they didn't leave in that condition.

The whole issue is what kind of face greets them in the wilderness of the nations. Who's in the wilderness with them? In Isaiah 35 when it says the wilderness will be glad for them. But will we be glad for them? And they will be dispirited and broken and desolate.

Have you ever been in a wilderness where you've never been before? I've only recently come from it in Mexico. We spent the night in the wilderness and I'll tell you what, it's not too cheery. Frightening.

But I was with a Mexican brother who knew the location so I wasn't rattled. But if I was there in ignorance not knowing what tomorrow would bring or where to go and everything is desolate there's no water and stifling fierce heat this is what Jews will be going through. But someone in Isaiah 35 is addressed who is not Israel and says say to them your God will come.

And when they hear that the blind eyes are opened and the lame weep and water breaks out of dry ground. Praise God there's someone there who can speak a prophetic word your God will come. When there's no evidence of his coming it's got to take prophetic faith to believe for that according to the scripture and our own prophetic experience with God who has come for us at times of our own desolation in our wilderness experience.

Mark that statement. Okay. Sing to the Lord all the earth blessing to the Lord bless his name proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day declare his glory among the nations his wonders among all peoples.

How inclusive that is. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised he is to be feared above all gods. Small g for all the gods of the peoples are idols but the Lord made the heavens and we can add the earth honor and majesty are before him strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

God's right to rule is predicated upon God being creator. The earth is the Lord's and therefore what he created and what is his he has every right to govern. The basis for his authority and his rule is his creatorship.

That's why we see references to God as creator in psalm after psalm after psalm. Israel knows that. Its God is not a local tribal deity.

Its God is the God of all creation the very creator himself. Do we know it? Have you realized what an assault there has been in our generation upon God as creator? What do you think evolution is all about? That is taught in the schools as if its science. That anyone who dares to suggest that there's another way of understanding the world that's been created that guy is out.

And so what has become conventional wisdom and they're looking for the the pilt-bound man and some other missing link that will show that man has evolved from lower primates and prove their theory. Somehow they're never able to come up with a final proof. Of course they've got the carbon dating system

that they can show that what they have found goes back millions of years and so there can't be said that man has only a 6,000 year history.

But they're forgetting that God can create old. Is anything impossible to him? Even to stupefy the wisdom of men. And he'll give them all the evidence they want to confirm their atheism until they'll stand before the creator one day and their knees will turn to jelly.

All their hot shot assumptions will go up in a puff and they'll stand before the creator and king at his throne who is a lone judge. But we need to know, dear saints, there's been an erosion for us. We don't subscribe to evolution but it's in the air.

Our kids bring it home from school. We read it in magazines. It's the unspoken premise and assumption of our generation.

So we have, to the degree that that has had a corrosive effect upon us, we have lost the sense of God as creator. It needs to be restored. It's foundational to the issue of his rulership.

He rules because he creates. And he judges because he rules. All of those three things are in tandem.

But if we lose the first, we lose the rest. If we have not an abiding and deep and profound sense of God the creator of the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, the rest is not followed. Except verbally.

It's not really with deepest conviction as the psalmists knew it, as the prophets knew it, as all Israel once knew it and needs to know it again. And we'll not know it except the church teaches it. He is to be feared above all gods for all the gods of the people are idols but the Lord made or created the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give to the Lord, oh families of the peoples, give to the Lord glory and strength.

Give to the Lord the glory through his name. Bring an offering, come into his courts. Of course, where will you have to come to do that? You're not going to do it in Geneva or New York City.

You have to come to his courts. You have to come to his location, to the house that was intended, a house of prayer for all nations which is only another statement of the tent of Shem. You have to come to the place where he has designated for he is in that place alone.

And if you're paying homage to him, oblation and sacrifice to him, that's the place where you'll come. And there's a priestly people there to receive you and receive your offerings whose skirts you will clutch because they know your God and will take you to him. Bring an offering and come into his courts.

Oh, worship the Lord and the beautiful and tremble before him all the earth. The psalmists are always crying out that his praise might be sounded to the ends of the earth. We have to travel a little bit to the ends of the earth to understand Hebraic faith.

The most degraded places of the earth full of pagans and idols and Hindu temples and every demoralizing thing that can rise up out of depraved man. God says, in that place my praise will be sounded. And the psalmists believed that.

The prophets believed that. And understood how much that will be contended against by the powers of the air that want to keep men in bondage to false gods for they are the gods of this age. What will they do then

to pick up where left off before? To avert the threat of their loss of governmental influence and rule? You say, ah, don't tell me that some invisible spirit phenomenon called the principals and powers of the air can actually affect government and society and the earth? Of course, you silly sap.

What do you think, they're just hoping? They are the most profound influence. They're jerking and dangling entire nations and societies by strings. You can't understand present-day genocide in Africa, Rwanda, and this one and that one, and what took place with Serbia, the ethnic cleansing, that destructive pride, national pride that sees the enemy to be eliminated and it's women and girls raped as an instrument of warfare without understanding the influence of those powers.

You can't understand pop, punk rock culture or any of the idolatries of our age without understanding their influence. They are powerful. Paul himself said, if the rulers of this world knew, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

He's not talking about Pontius Pilate. The rulers of this world are the invisible spectral realm of fallen angels whose prince is saved. And they want to remain in control.

You say, ah, they may influence, but they certainly can't take over. What do you call Nazi Germany? That's the land of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Kant, Wagner. Come on, you can help me with composers, with philosophers, with writers, with the genius of culture and Western civilization honed to its finest edge.

And boom! Within the space of months, some gutter snipe, some despicable occultic jerk who couldn't get beyond the corporal's stripes and failed to enter into art school and is just a kind of cast off of society became chancellor and ruler over the entire nation and set in motion a series of edicts by which demonic tyranny settled upon a whole people who is the nation of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche. How long will it take in America? That's our culture of the civilization, that it was thousands of years in the making, deep. That's why Jews didn't want to leave.

They said, how could this scummy guy succeed? The nation will come to its senses. There's no place for a man like that in rulership. We'll hold tight.

After all, Uncle so-and-so fought in World War I and received the Iron Cross. We Jews are loyal Germans. In fact, we're more German than we are Jew.

Those same ones went up the smokestack. And evil prevailed over those powers. Because the only agency in the world and in nations given of God both to recognize that demonic entity and to combat it and to defeat it is the church.

But the church of what kind? The church that is steeped in the scriptures, steeped in the psalms, steeped in the understanding of God as creator, king, and ruler over all and knows the fierce contest going on between two princes and that this is the whole parameter and context of our faith. If we don't know that, we're condemned to a series of Sunday services. Our whole Christian life becomes provincial, narrow, selfish, an issue of enjoyment.

But when the structure of the faith is cosmically established, a struggle, that will have its final culmination in our generation, then are we alerted, then are we brought into the context by which everything is made clear. The Holy Spirit then is no longer a luxury or a denominational distinctive. It's God's profound gift to function and to serve in an age of ultimate conflict, where we need the gift of prophecy and wisdom,

knowledge, to guide us where we've not been heretofore.

We need to come into the context of the faith that God intended as normative and which we have lost in modern times. For which reason God raises up this pathetic little thing called School of the Prophets. Not to make them, but to bring us back again into the prophetic understanding of the context of life and reality.

And given the wisdom of these powers, which is destructive and chaotic, they understand the Jews to be a greater threat to their false usurping continuance than we know. Yes, you can explain anti-Semitism to a degree, sociologically, culturally, historically, but you'll not understand it fully and deeply until you understand the bitterness and the hatred against a people who, if they are redeemed and returned to the Lord and to the land in covenantal faithfulness, bring their king and his rule and the end of their false usurping power. How do you get rid of that threat? You annihilate it.

And that's how we're going to see all of the unregenerate elements available to those powers after Jews were the venom. And they'll say about Jews what Paul's enemy said about him, they're not fit to live. Read this literature.

See the venom against men who are just acting civilly and being called Jew-lovers. And we'll hang you from the nearest lamppost. You're despicable.

You want to preserve a people we want to annihilate. So in verse 10, say among the nations, the Lord reigns, even now when it doesn't give that appearance. The world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved.

He shall judge the peoples righteously. A king who rules and a king who judges. Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad.

Let the sea roar in all its fullness. The sea is always symbolic of the nations. The rage of the seas and the tumult and the noise, the crashing waves to power.

It helps to be on a liberty ship as a 16-year-old kid standing at the bow watching for mines yet remaining from World War II and feel like a little cork popping up and down in tumultuous seas to know the power of the seas and why they represent the nations and the rage and the fury of the nations against God. Where under the havoc of those waves the ship listing to such a degree that we took water into our smokestack and they sent up this Jewish idealistic kid who wrote poetry and wanted adventure to travel in the world to tie up the block and tackle that had broken loose from the mast that weighs about at least two tons with a rope hoping that I would fall off and into the sea because the bosun's mate which is the master sergeant was a Swedish alcoholic and anti-Semite who hated my guts as a Jewish kid looking for adventure. That I'm here with you today is only by the grace of God who knew me and that I was elect before I had dreamed of his existence for I was an atheist in those days.

I'm being reminded of the sense that I had as a cork bobbing on the sea. Those liberty ships were built by Kaiser factories. You guys already know there was a Kaiser Frazer car that came out right after the war and now it's extinct.

They built these liberty ships with women velvets. And it was not unusual for them to pop their rivets and sink into the deep. I'm not blaming the women, God bless them.

But God never intended them to be riveters and velvets. So you feel absolutely defenseless and at the mercy of the elements and raging seas. And that's what the psalmist is saying.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the sea roar it's all vain that they make a lot of noise but that shall not threaten the purposes of God. Let the field be joyful and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.

For he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth. So from where will he judge them? And when will he judge them? When he comes as king.

In the very same place where he was crucified. Where over his head in three languages was the taunting mocking sign, Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews. Ha, ha, ha.

And they put a purple robe on him and they braided a crown of thorns and they gave him a staff. Everything to mock any reference to himself as king. He bore that with complete equanimity, patience and grace.

For he knew that that was indeed his call. That's what the word Mashiach means, his anointed king. Came to his own in his own name and received him.

Is the father going to allow that to be the last statement in history? Or if you know anything about God and how he vindicates his sons, will he not give him in the place of his greatest humility, the place of his greatest glory? Yes. In the place where he was defamed and mocked, will he not in fact be king in that place? Yes. And not only to his own people, but to all nations? Yes.

That's right. We've got to know the end from the beginning. We've got to know where all things are attending.

And how it will be mightily resisted by every power of darkness who dread this conclusion. That's why they crucified him. They wanted to crucify the king and get Israel to say, we have no king but Caesar.

Give us Barabbas. We'd rather have a thief than a murderer. We'll not have that man to rule over us.

Oh yeah? We'll see what that's going to cost you. If you'll not have that man to rule over you, you'll have a greater tyrant. He'll extract and that king will wait to hear from you.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. So pray for the best expression of our contemporary Jewish life. The Lubavitcher Hasidim, the ultra-orthodox of Brooklyn, waiting for the resurrection of Rabbi Schneerson.

They think he's the king. There are big billboards in Israel and in New York with his face and white beard in Hebrew and in English saying the Messiah King. And when I was with them on one recent occasion, I said how can a man be Messiah and king? There's only one king.

It's the Lord of Glory. It's the God of Israel. It's the one king.

How can you say a man is king? Well, what I didn't know is that under their breath, they believe he is deity. So deranged, so wanting, sound, Biblical messianic understanding, so exalting a man that they're willing to ascribe to him deity. This is the people to whom I'm coming.

Because if that man can be exalted, then they can be exalted in their humanity. So let's look at the great song that establishes the king that is altogether eschatological. That is God's statement against the fury and rage of nations of what he will and has established.

And that song is Psalm 2. An American theologian that some of us had the privilege of hearing recently in my old seminary there in St. Paul, Walter Brueggemann, also of German descent. He's an Old Testament commentator, theologian of the Old Testament. This is his classic work.

And he says, over the long haul of the Enlightenment, Western Christianity has been progressively privatized in terms of individual families and domestic communities. By and large, out of bewilderment and embarrassment, the ecclesial community's church have forgotten how to speak about national and international matters, except in times of war, to mobilize God for the war effort. The inevitable outcome of this privatization is to give up or relinquish geopolitics to practical technical analysis of the cynical kind that Stalin commented about.

How many divisions does the Pope have? Like, what does religion have to do or Christianity have to do with earthly matters of rule or governments or nations? Their Christianity is a Sunday matter. That has come with the whole privatized Christianity and the faith that has been domesticated and lost all sense that we're in a world and there are purposes of God in the world. In fact, the faith is given for those purposes from Abraham in answer to the resignation of the nations to the establishment of a king in the holy hill of Zion that we'll be reading in Psalm 2. And we're going to be reading a lot out of this, and he speaks fancy, he speaks theologically, so I'm going to try and interpret that the church has forgotten how to speak about national and international matters except in times of war to mobilize God for the war effort.

That if the theological dimension drops out of international purview and with it any credible, critical moral dimension then the world becomes one in which might makes right. That's fancy language to say if the church loses this consciousness and relinquishes its influence that God intends for it in the world and in the nations, and the nations take it over and completely secularize the issues of politics and government and rule then in the last analysis the world becomes one in which might makes right. It's only the church that has a moral dimension to bring to the consideration of nations.

And if you've not read the newsletter available at the table there it's the message given in Israel to a messianic congregation about the role of the church, the prophetic function of the church to the state. And if the church does not function, does not take on this responsibility, what shall you expect the state to perform? It will always do the expedient thing the thing that will accomplish its ends it doesn't allow moral consideration to interfere with what they consider to be necessary and functional. Only a church can bring a moral dimension to the consideration of nations.

And if the moral dimension is lost to the nations what do the nations necessarily become but battlefields and gross places of sin and darkness. So he's saying in keeping with this other commentator that the loss of this awareness and the spiritualizing of scripture and the way in which our Christianity has become privatistic and personal has meant a critical loss in our comprehension of all the faith and the kind of role that God intends for the church in the world. If the characteristic urging of Israel's prophets that arrogant nations which overreach and imagine self-sufficiency operate autonomously at their own peril Yahweh in this rhetoric is a critical principle of restraint which arrests both self-aggrandizement and brutality.

Don't get scared. I'm going to paraphrase because it's worth hearing what's on this man's mind. It is the characteristic urging of Israel's prophets that arrogant nations which overreach themselves because they

distance themselves from God and think themselves self-sufficient and operate autonomously do so at their own peril.

When the Lord comes as judge what does he judge? He judges the nations in their sinfulness, in their bestiality, in their arrogance, in their power, in their criminality. Now the world is first trying to bring to judgment this Serbian ruler in the international court of law in The Hague but I don't think they're going to succeed very well. We're going to have to wait for the justice and judgment that comes from God when he judges the nations and the principle judgment is the forsaking of him.

Therefore acting in their own arrogance, in their own self-sufficiency and justifying themselves on national grounds have steeped the world in bloodshed and ruined entire generations as well as the earth itself. But it was Israel's prophets that urged this consideration that God intends a principle of restraint. What is my statement about the Tent of Shem? That the Japheth nations bowing to enter would receive something in that tent that is not available to them anywhere else.

The spirit of restraint, the spirit of governance, the moral quotient that makes the difference between a nation that becomes bestial and a nation which is civilized and is concerned about and takes into consideration the rights of men, the helpless, the orphans, the broken. That's God's provision for Japheth nations who are enlarged. The name of Japheth enlarged, powerful, commercial, military, left to their own arrogance.

That's a formula for disaster. That's what history has taught us. What's God's answer? That they should come up to Jerusalem.

That they should hang on to the skirt of a Jew who will teach them the ways of the Lord. Let's just look quickly in Isaiah chapter 2. Who's speaking this? The prophets. Who's speaking it now? The prophets.

This is prophetic concern and prophetic urgency. But what have we done with Isaiah 2? The same that we've done with Psalm 2. We have spiritualized its literal meaning away. The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, it shall come to pass in the latter days, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house, the word mountain is always symbolic of government and rule, shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills.

That is to say, Zion and Jerusalem shall be the pervading rule over not only Judah, but over all nations. It will be above the mountains and the hills of human governments. And all nations shall flow to it.

The same theme as in Psalm 96. All nations to the ends of the earth. This must come into our consciousness as the prophetic church, that the whole intention of God's salvation history is all nations.

The world He so loved the world He called the man Abram out of a nation and through him all the nations and the families of the earth shall be blessed. How shall they be blessed? They shall come up to Jerusalem. They shall come into the tent of Shem.

They shall learn of God and of His ways. Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. Interesting, the identification? Not some abstract deity, but Israel's specific literal God.

And this is where the fly is in the ointment. Where men don't mind some general reference to God, but when it gets this close to Jews, the God of Jacob, they get a little edgy. And that's exactly the point.

This is the stumbling stone in Zion for Gentiles who don't want to acknowledge the specificity of God in the choosing of a people and a nation and a location, a Zion, a tent, a Shem. And in order to receive the benefit, they cannot enter except they bow. And that's exactly what they refuse to do.

For arrogance characterizes Japheth nations from the Tower of Babel to this present day, even when they're saved. All nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us His ways. And that means Torah. Torah is not a code of legal requirement.

Torah is the all-inclusive word for teaching, for the revelation of God's way. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, the Torah, not dictates. The Lord is not going to become a dictator.

And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, He shall judge between the nations. We're not going to have any more catastrophes like Rwanda or Serbia and Croatia and I always forget the name of this other people. Albania? The Albanians in Kosovo.

It's a bloodletting, this ethnic cleansing, this national ambition to root out the enemy. The remarkable thing is that ethnically they are the same Slavic people. But historically they had become Muslims in the invasion four centuries ago and retained that character.

And so there's been warfare, bloodshed, enmity, rape, and vengeance until the Lord Himself shall judge between the nations. When we say come Lord Jesus, this is what we ought to be thinking and meaning. And rebuke many people.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.

There's no commentator who can do that justice. And hint at what that will mean to the world economy, to what has been diverted to instruments of death will be diverted now to those things that forward life and not death. There are children dying by the carload every moment for want of nutrition, for disease, for the most elemental things that nations cannot afford, but they can afford the implements of warfare.

We often talk about my privileged visit to the Douglas Aircraft Plant in Fort Worth, Texas nearby, where they make the F-16 fighter bombers. Never forget the experience of seeing what this means, beating swords into plowshares. And each one is like a billion dollars to 25 million, I don't know what.

Some astronomical sum. And men who did not look human working overtime and making were splendid salaries in order to fit these things together. They lost... I was stunned.

The Lord gave me the word gnomes, G-N-O-M-E-S. I had never ever spoken of that word. It's a stunted humanity because when you invest your life to produce death, it's going to affect your person.

And I'm pleading with this brother who works there as an engineer to find some other source of employment. But the security and the benefits are overwhelming. The world is predicated on death and profits that issue from it.

And I'm looking at the planes and it says Burma, or whatever Burma's new name now is, and some other Pakistan and nations that don't even have a pot to urinate in and a window to throw it out of, are buying these \$25 million planes for prestige. Because their neighbor has one, they have to have one. It's a

system predicated upon death.

And the only thing that will ever alleviate and alter it is the coming of the king. He will mediate between nations. There will be no need to study war.

He will arbitrate in righteousness and in justice. This is not poetry, you dear saints. If we continue to hold this as poetry, as the commentator warned us in Psalms, we lose not only the meaning of Psalm 2, but the whole faith is integral to it.

We need to have restored to us the theocratic intention of God through the restoration of Israel, through the mercy expressed through this church, in the latter days it shall come to pass. It will not come to pass if we don't believe it, don't expect it, and are unwilling to sacrifice for it. So let's look now at the Psalm itself.

I've got in italics under the designation Psalm 2, this statement the Messiah's triumphant kingdom. What do you have in italics? Do you look at that when you read the Psalms? In every edition it's a little different. We rarely think of Messiah as king.

We rarely think of Messiah politically. We rarely think of Messiah as the Israel rule. But that's what Messiah is, an anointed king.

And so it begins, why do the nations rage? I'll tell you why. Because they don't want him to succeed in his theocratic intention. They want to remain autonomous, independent, arrogant, and self-sufficient, doing their own thing as if their turf is theirs.

Hey, this is our country, we own this land, we got it through victory, through warfare, the earth is the Lord's. It's not your playground, it's not your place of exploitation, it belongs to him. And you're unwilling to acknowledge that.

In your arrogance, you think it's yours. You've got to be reminded, the earth is the Lord's. Why do the nations rage? And what is rage? It's an uttermost emotion.

It's not, why are the nations irritated? Or even, why are the nations vexed? Why do the nations rage? Rage is ultimate anger, hatred, foaming over at the mouth. This word is not arbitrarily inserted. This is by the Holy Spirit, putting the divine finger on the condition of the nations against God in their inveterate hatred of him and their independence from him.

That anything that will threaten them and bring them into an alliance of having to come into his tent, whew, hatred, anger of the kind that I glimpsed in Canada. We'll come back to this at a later time and say, well Art, it's all your fault. Because had you listened to what the man said, you wouldn't have then taken the microphone back and said, my invitation still stands.

You probably would have removed the invitation because that's what bugged him so much that he had to strike you with his Bible and call you Jewish pride, Jewish flesh. Well, possibly. Or is it that something even beyond the man's own cognizance, something in his deeps as a Gentile and a man of the nations, particularly Anglo-Saxon British Commonwealth nations, was pricked of the kind that is expressed in the very first statement of Psalm 2, the rage.

I don't have a word saying it. This is prophetic intuition. There's the deepest inveterate anger against God.

Rage is when you are frightened and terrified that something that is of the profoundest vested interest for you, your self-interest, is being seriously threatened. You don't react to that lightly. You react to that with the fiercest anger even to the point of rage.

Rage is almost uncontrollable. What would you call the motivation to destroy the two trade towers in the Pentagon? It was calibrated. It was coldly and cruelly deliberated.

But the animus to bring that destruction even at the loss of the lives who affected it is rage. What are we seeing with the suicide bombers? Rage. What do we see when the missiles came over in the Iraqi war and fell on Tel Aviv and Palestinians were dancing on the rooftops? What happened when the bomb exploded at the Hebrew University and five of the seven killed were Americans and that the devastation came in a place where it was least expected? It was celebration.

Palestinians were giving out candy. We can't plumb the depths of this rage because the root of this rage is satanic. As God is love, Satan is hatred.

And hatred against the people of God, hatred against God himself, hatred against the purposes of God, let alone those purposes that will once and for all and finally end the false usurping reign of these powers that prevail right now even as we speak. The only thing that will end it is the Lord ruling from Zion. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take council together against the Lord, against his anointed saying, let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away, shred them, shred their courts from us.

But he who sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then he shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deepest pleasure. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion.

I've got that in yellow underlined asterisk verse 6 speaking as if it's already accomplished. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. So this is future and yet spoken of as if it's already taking place, which is a typical prophetic thing that is beyond time.

But before we dwell on that, we mustn't miss verse 2, the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take council together. Is this an unnecessary repetition? What is called a redundancy? The kings of the earth and the rulers? Is that like saying the kings and the kings? Or is the psalmist indicating two levels of rule? One is the kings of the earth, the visible magistrates, and the other is a realm of rulership that is invisible but potent. In fact, actually influences the visible kings, the monarchs and the rulers.

And they take council together showing that what is the nexus of opposition to the rule of God? The powers of the air in concert with those that are operating in the earth. You can't understand Hitler without that. Hitler had an experience listening to a Wagnerian opera that affected all of his subsequent life and gave motivation for his dictatorship and his vengeance and vehemence against the Jew and precipitating a great world war.

Almost the end of civilization. Well, Hitler was influenced by Wagner. Something came into him listening to that pagan triumphant music that draws upon pagan heroes and heroines.

It's another celebration that is anti-Hebraic and anti-biblical that celebrates pagan deities and classic conflicts of these mythological figures that came into Hitler's whole spirit and consciousness and influenced his whole subsequent conduct. So, we cannot understand Nazism. We can't understand evil.

We can't understand mass destruction. We can't understand our own generation if we exempt the influence of these powers who rage and rule and influence governments and societies now. This is the context of our faith.

As I said, there's only one agency given by God by which they can be recognized and combated. It's the church. But a church of what kind? A church that is not under any of their influence, who do not in any way allow their influences to permeate their own conduct because they rule by fear, by intimidation, by threat, by ambition, by appeals to lust, appeals to power, appeals to all the kinds of things for which men are motivated in the world.

Where is there a church that has understood this and consciously has refused and rejected it and is not marching by that beat but by another, that celebrates humility, trust, faith, love, peace, quiet, and is not in fear and insecurity for its life no matter what happens in the world? That church can oppose the powers of the earth. Its very presence is an opposition. Its very presence is a freeing influence in the community where it has its life.

So we'll not come to that condition unless we come to it together and know that there's a battle. There are two wisdoms contending for dominance. And that's why Paul says in Ephesians 3 that God has created all things of that order through the church.

The manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities and powers of the earth. We'll not be conscious of that unless we understand Psalm 2, unless we understand the whole context in which we are called as the church. We're saved for this.

We often tease congregations when I'm on this subject by reminding them what these powers say. Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you? We're not obliged to know you until you exhibit to us who recognize what is authentic, what we saw in Jesus and what we saw in Paul. Until you exhibit that, we scorn you.

What, you're going to take cities for Christ by worship and by shouting? Ha ha ha. Until we see the character of God in you, the total submittedness to the purposes of God where your life is not held as dear unto yourself, you live as sacrificially as Jesus and Paul. We're not obliged to consider you.

So this is the moral struggle that is taking place. Amen. Okay.

So they take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed. Let us break their bonds and pieces, cast away the courts from us. But God enthroned in the heavens laughs and holds them in derision.

He shall speak to them in his wrath, distress them in his deep displeasure because God's answer is, I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. And of course, that's the whole tent of Shem. Zion is that place.

That's where the nation shall come, as we read in Isaiah chapter two, to learn of the ways of the Lord and be domesticated, which means be tempered. Though we are enlarged, our very coming and submitting and bowing to come annually into that place will have a redemptive effect upon our character and life. Otherwise, we will continue to be high, arrogant, violently disposed, nationalistically minded nations that have brought woe to the world since time immemorial.

This is the provision by which not only will we be tempered, but become changed and become ourselves Shem-like, that all nations shall become Hebraicized, including Israel itself, and then shall peace prevail

and righteousness in the earth because he set his king on his holy hill. It says in Acts 3.21, Jesus is retained in the heavens waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. He cannot come and occupy the throne of David, though he is a descendant of the son of David and has every legal right and qualification to be king until all that has been spoken by the prophets of restoration shall be fulfilled.

And that is the restoration of Israel herself. I will declare the decree the Lord has said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you, ask of me I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. And then the warning, be wise, O kings, and be instructed, you judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. So the privilege of the king and his right is the nations for his inheritance and the ends of the earth, the same phrase used in Psalm 96 for his possession. The issue of Zion is the issue of the nations to the ends of the earth that the rule of God shall go forth from the holy hill of Zion.

Is that hill holy now? No. Anyone who goes to Israel has got to be pained at the political cultural condition that now prevails and that's why Isaiah 4 talks about Jerusalem being submitted to a spirit of burning and a spirit of purging. It is not fit for the king.

I go reluctantly on the occasions when I'm required by the Lord to go. I would never go of myself.

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