

Grace and the Election of Israel - Part 1

by Art Katz

The sermon explores the relationship between election, covenant, and resurrection, and how these concepts are essential for Israel's redemption and the church's role in it.

Duration: 58:39

Scripture: Romans 9:11

Topics: "Election", "Covenant", "Grace"

Description

Art Katz emphasizes the significance of Israel's election and covenant with God, arguing that this relationship is not based on human merit but solely on God's sovereign choice. He highlights the danger of humanistic thinking within both Israel and the church, which often seeks righteousness through personal virtue rather than acknowledging total dependence on God's grace. Katz warns that Israel's rejection of its covenantal identity leads to spiritual destitution, and he calls for a prophetic church that can speak life into Israel's dry bones, emphasizing that true resurrection and blessing can only come through God's grace. The sermon challenges both Israel and the church to recognize their need for divine mercy and the importance of covenant faithfulness.

Transcript

Okay, I'm just going to read it. I'm leaping right in. If anyone has a copy of Becky's paper, and maybe we'll see that all will have it before we leave.

I'm starting on page six. You can believe that from the very first paragraph, it's an outstanding statement. But because of the brevity of time, I'm leaping into the central thing that I want, I believe the Lord wants us to consider, especially for Lloyd's sake, because this is our last day, and I want him, I believe the Lord wants him to take home a perception of the centrality of Israel in the way that Reggie sets it forth.

So I'm going to read two paragraphs. It's not to be commented upon, although it's rich. It would be a field day just to sit for those two paragraphs.

And then we're really going to begin at the bottom of page six, where Reggie talks about the covenantal reinstatement of Israel as a redeemed nation. We're going to come in at that point. But here's what precedes it in part.

It's about the truth of unconditional election. The issue of covenant is the issue of election, that God has elected, chosen, appointed a people to be in relationship with himself, and that relationship is defined by the covenant which he himself establishes. He gives it the terms.

Israel is not the one who is co-defining the terms, only agreeing to them. God himself is the initiator of covenant. So Israel is elected to be the covenant or the covenantal people, and that election, the whole concept of election, even as we talked about it this morning in the nations and their flaring up against God's choice, is really against the God who chooses.

He elects. And that it blocks the reach of reconciling mercy namely confidence in the flesh. It destroys all hope of a righteousness that is one's own.

Election is devastating because it has not to do with the qualification either of men or of nations. They're not elected because they qualify. They're elected because they're chosen.

And this is a direct assault upon the nature of man in flesh, the desire to be chosen because of qualification. So Reggie is underlining the fact that election itself, which is the basis for covenant, destroys all hope of a righteousness that is one's own. The best virtues of which fall hopelessly short of the righteousness which is Christ's alone.

Therefore the most admired of those virtues that can be generated by human will and moral ability can never be the basis of divine acceptance. That one statement says more about the present mentality of Jews in the world than anything that I know. What is our distinctive Jewish mentality is that we do have virtues that are admired and that we ourselves can generate out of our own human ability and our own moral ability that should be the basis for divine acceptance.

God says no, that's not the basis. So there's a basic ideological conflict between this quote Jewish mentality, which is to say the world's that celebrates man and wants acceptance on the basis of what man can generate in himself as against God saying, no, there's nothing in men that's good. I alone am good.

And the basis for my choosing and electing and covenanting is not your virtue or your qualification or your morality, but simply my freedom as God to choose. That's a direct assault upon this unspoken fortress of human self-assertion, self-will, and self-acknowledgement. So we have to understand that election and covenant is a whole thrust of God, contrary to the whole ideological tenet of the world.

When I say Jewish, it's yes, it's essentially Jewish, but the world has adopted it because we Jews are so in the world and of the world and have shaped the world and provide the world's mindset and mentality all with a veneer of religiosity or ethicality or morality, which has its center in man and not in God. You understand what's at stake in the great conflict of the ages as we come to the end, these conflicting views are going to come head on. Now, to what degree does the church, though it subscribes to the ideology of God and the supremacy of God and denigrates man, that in fact live and has its being out of this premise.

In other words, the church is more humanistic than it itself knows that though it gives a lip service acknowledgement to the doctrine of God's election, God's choice, and that in man is no good thing, yet in its action, its conduct, its innermost thoughts, it is essentially humanistic. And one way in what place where that is revealed most conspicuously is its adoration and love of present Israel and its desire to see present Israel succeed on the basis of its humanity, as if that could be any basis at all. It is a revealing of the church's own implicit wrong faith, because if it is hoping that Israel is going to succeed on that basis,

on what basis is it hoping that it will succeed? And how many of its programs and its conduct are humanistically derived to obtain certain ends? They have not really agreed to the radicalness of God's view of man and why election and covenant is God's prerogative, and that there's no other basis for righteousness but what is important both to man and to nations than through the God who keeps covenant and gives himself in covenant.

So, because the election assumes the total destitution of the natural man as spiritually dead, it ultimately becomes the yes of grace to all who justify God's sovereign right to quicken whom he will. This is typical, Reggie. That's why it needs to be expounded, explicated, repeated, because there's so much contained in one statement.

Election assumes the total, you can believe that every word that's being used here is not capriciously or arbitrarily chosen. This is finely honed. When Reggie is saying total, he means total.

The total destitution of the natural man as spiritually dead, or else there's no yes to the grace of God in his election and in his covenant. There's got to be an acknowledgment of the death of man and his own inability to obtain anything that's righteous, and that's why Ezekiel 37 is so classic a text. God is waiting for this proud Israel, this nation of self-sufficiency who has given to the world Karl Marx and Eric Fromm that I quoted the other day, and who's the great psychoanalyst, the Freud, and all of the movie makers and writers and thinkers and novelists and cultural shapers, this people of such vigor and animation, so centrally, small in number, but so influential in their humanity.

Maybe even in the misused, perverse expression of the giftedness of God for them, for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. But how are they being employed? Not for God, but contrary to God. So that this must come to a total destitution of spiritual death, and that's why God is waiting to hear from, as in Ezekiel 37, we are cut off, we are without hope, we are as dry bones.

Can you imagine a proud Jew saying that, or a proud Jewish nation saying that? And yet, unless they say that, God will not turn in his mercy to a prophetic son, which is the church of the last days, and say prophesy to these bones that they might live. He's not released to establish their resurrection until they acknowledge their death. And so what the question is, how is that death going to be obtained? By which every natural thing will be rendered destitute, in very Israel itself and in world Jewry itself.

That's why the time of Jacob's trouble is going to be the greatest debacle and catastrophe of modern times, eclipsing even the Nazi holocaust. And so, are you sure that Israel is going to be cast out of the nation? Are you sure that this is that they're going to be pursued? I said, well, scriptures seem to give an evidence of ruined cities, devastated land, left desolate. But what I don't want to say with certitude, but whatever it is that will obtain the death, God will require it.

It's got to be this kind of destitution of the natural man, if there's to be a yes of the grace of God, who will justify it by his sovereign right to quicken whom he will. And apart from work, so that is not of him who wills or nor of him who runs, but God strategically has concluded all in belief that no flesh might glory, so that mercy might appear to the praise of glory of grace alone. If grace is to be demonstrated as free, unconstrained and uninfluenced, it must be according to election.

The issue of grace is the issue of God. Grace is the unmerited givingness of God that has no reflection of any constraint imposed upon him and a requirement made of him. It is God acting out of his total uniqueness of God, who is absolutely free of any external requirement or pressure of any kind.

It is something utterly free and given of God, which is to say that that givingness of God, that is called grace, is the greatest statement of God as good. See what I mean? No one's twisting his arm. He simply elects to express his mercy.

That's grace. So grace is the statement of God. And if nations or Israel or Jews can obtain any righteousness independent of that grace, where is his testimony? Where is the demonstration of him? Where is the knowledge of God as God if his grace is not made palpably visible and demonstrated on a people who are destitute of anything out of their own humanity and are only surviving or established because of his grace? That's why the issue of Israel is the issue of God.

He wants to demonstrate himself as the God of grace. And how amazing is that grace to us if it's only become a glib kind of a thing that we sing, but that we have not ourselves been brought to an utter destitution of our own humanity? And that's what God's dealing with us for the residue that remains, that we think spiritual is still a semblance and an expression of some cleaving to something in ourselves that we call our spirituality, that is yet more our humanity than we know. And he has to bring it to death that he might be all in all for his grace is total or not at all.

I'm enjoying grace right now. I don't know how this is going to come forth. I'm trusting the grace of God in finding our way through a complex, rich, detailed paper that gets at the very heart of the faith.

Okay, now we come to the real beginning point. All of this was prelude. Reggie leaves you hanging on the ropes.

Here's his statement that now brings Israel into this context with the principle of covenant rejection as background. We turn now to consider the process that affects the covenantal reinstatement of Israel as a redeemed nation. This is the issue of the ages that that nation that God did appoint to whom grace had come through election has forfeited it.

It has rejected the covenant and has dis abused itself and, and is contemptuous of the God who makes it. And the most recent evidence is the thought that they themselves can obtain the land without being in covenant relationship with God for the land is not something to be grasped or to be obtained by one's exertion or political or military power, but it is given in covenant faithfulness and keeping the land is the critical issue in the issue of covenant. And just another aspect of covenant is our treatment of the alien in our midst.

God makes our treatment of the alien and the stranger, the most powerful statement of our obedience to his covenant requirement that we should love them who are strangers in our midst. Just examining the two things alone of land and Israel's relationship with its strangers shows clearly this is a nation, a political entity that has, is not acting or seeking to obtain or preserve its place in the land on the basis of covenant. It's a fact, a covenant rejecting people without even a covenant consciousness.

And the question is how far behind Israel is the church in its own covenant consciousness, looking at the way in which our marriages are put up for grabs. Where's our covenantal sense of obligation before God that the issue of our marriage is not our compatibility or sexual satisfaction or any of the other things that are valid, but essentially and primarily to the glory of God, who is the third full member in that covenant, the threefold court that enables us to keep covenant when any of the other two courts tend to slip or about to snap or to break to disregard covenant in marriage is a statement itself. And the statistics are just as great in the churches in the world.

Our numbers of divorce and marriage and remarriage are as frequent as theirs, showing that there's very little covenant consciousness in the church itself. And that's why the church celebrates present Israel and hopes for it to succeed out of covenant. Well, Israel may have rejected covenant and even lost covenant consciousness, but the terms of covenant are yet applicable, namely the penalty of covenant failure where the forfeiture of the blessing becomes curse, where the God who is the one who blesses becomes the enemy.

They receive that even though they're not conscious that they are under covenant obligation. And that will explain the judgments that are to come in the time of Jacob's trouble and are already presently gathering and brewing. Covenant is a very precious thing and something that should inspire the fear of God as Moses reviewed it in Deuteronomy 28 through 32.

Bless it if you keep it, but if you forfeit it, at day you will wish it with night and at night you will wish it with day. The sword will pursue you. So now how is this nation that God elected in his grace to demonstrate to all nations what his basis for relationship with nations is to be, namely a covenantal relationship? How is he to demonstrate that if Israel itself, the nation appointed to that purpose, is out of that relationship? And that is the issue of the last days.

Israel's return, not this military political thing that has taken place since 1948, though there's a measure of God's grace in that. There's a measure of God's, and I always lose that word, God's, what's the word? Help me someone. Providence.

Providence in the establishment of the state, not as the statement of his approval, but as setting the stage for setting in motion the uprooting and violence that must have its origin in Jerusalem in fulfillment of scripture and of prophecy and then affect all Jews in the world as the time of Jacob's trouble. So how is that nation to be reinstated as a redeemed covenantal nation? Then Reggie goes on, there's one condition for which Israel waits that must be realized before the Shekinah glory can return to a resurrected and reborn nation. The rebirth of Israel is its resurrection, and we who have known resurrection personally and individually are at the threshold of the first demonstration of that phenomenon and that power for the first time in history for a nation in total as nation.

We've understood individual resurrection. The church has a resurrected body, the people of resurrection, but we have not seen a resurrected nation. And as I have so often said, there's no way that Israel can fulfill its own covenantal obligation to bless all the families of the earth except as a nation that has been resurrected.

It's not Israel in its present chutzpah and energy and dynamic and know-how that it may impress, but blessing is something else. God did not say to Abraham that you're going to impress the nations through your seed, you're going to bless them. And blessing is unquestionably and intrinsically a resurrection phenomenon.

If you are receiving blessing at these tables, it's only because of that. If it comes out of any human ability or religious expertise, it's interesting, but it's not a blessing. A blessing, you know, even this word needs to be resurrected.

Blessing is one of the deepest phenomena that is available to man in the earth that only God can confer. And the form through which he expresses it, and especially through the church, is the form of resurrection, because resurrection brings life. Adam was a living soul, but Christ is a life-giving spirit, because he's

been raised in the power of newness of life to impart that life.

And so also the church joined with him in that life, being raised from the dead, is a resurrection phenomenon. And in fact, if it is not, point blank, ipso facto, I can tell you, there'll be no resurrection of Israel. Israel's resurrection waits on the operation of the church in its essential resurrection ability, or it will continue to wait in vain forever.

It will be dead bones, unless there's a church who can say to it, let your bones be joined together, and flesh be put in upon you, and the Ruach and the Spirit of God come into you. That has got to be prophetically spoken, not as a well-intending spiritual thought, but as a resurrection expression that will bring the life. And only a church who is in the resurrection mode can perform it.

So the issue for us, if Israel is going to be resurrected, and the nations to be blessed, is resurrection merely an article of our credo that we subscribe to as being correct, or is it the essential issue and explanation of our life and being, that we are corporately a resurrection phenomenon. We move and live and have all being in him. You know why? Because we're in covenantal union with him, and what he has imparted in that union is his life.

The issue of Israel is the issue of the church. But a church of what kind? A church that can raise the dead, because it itself has been raised from the dead, and has not shrunk from the deaths that have come to us, even as believers, as we experienced yesterday in this room in the Sunday morning service. We did not withhold ourselves from those deaths.

We made ourselves candidates for those deaths, because we were seeking the glory of God. And death is always painful before it's glorious. The church's willingness to be a resurrection phenomenon is its willingness to suffer death, deaths.

And what is community? But the greatest provision, the platform for these deaths, and the rubbing, and the grit, and the strain, and the tensions, of the compacted relationships of a people who do not just see you in the foyer of the church on Sunday and say, bless you brother, but are there on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, in every strain of every difficulty of what to do with the five thousand dollar check that has come in the mail when your wife is pregnant, and you're living in inadequate housing, and there are vital needs that seem to eclipse the need to go overseas in ministry. Those are real issues that bring up from the depths things that you would not have known you contained. And it's always clothed in a spirituality that quotes scripture.

But what it invariably almost always is, is rebellion and self-will that never would have been seen, never would have come to the surface, so long as you continue to live privatistically and comfortably and have been the most amiable and admirable of saints. It's community, the intensity of daily relation, the grit of it that reveals what needs to be seen and brings us to the deaths by which his life can be triumphant. Okay, so when he sees that their power is gone, and when he appears, Reggie is quoting from Deuteronomy 32 to 36, and again from Daniel 12 7, when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

The last dealing of God empties Israel of any chutzpah, of any natural ability in itself. It's reduced when the power of his people is gone. And to a comparable measure, the same thing is true for the church.

Revelation 13 7, and he gives him, how does it say it, war here, allows him to make war against the saints and to overcome them. He's going to allow us to be demolished. He's going to allow our power to be broken.

That somehow, this is in keeping with the great theme that Reggie has stipulated, that there's required a total destitution of the natural man is brutally dead. It's our future experience, our present experience to the degree now that we're willing, but it will be the church's corporate experience as it will be Israel's, because out of that death, God will be glorified. And it's how we face that death and accept that death that will destroy the powers of darkness.

He'll give them the opportunity to ventilate their characteristic spite and devastation and violence against us as he did when he allowed himself to be crucified by that same power. But how one receives that death is the issue of the triumph of God forever and ever. If we're surly, if we're pouting, if we're resentful, if we're how come me, why us? We would have lost the point.

But when we can receive our suffering and our death with the same magnanimity and grace that he received his, he made at that time, for that reason, the powers, an open spectacle and broke their power and removed their, how does it say it, in Colossians, he stripped them of their of their armament by how he received their worst by exhibiting his best. The magnanimity of God, the ability to forgive those who inflict, how are we doing that with our own husbands or spouses is the issue at the end of the age. God is waiting for a church that will demonstrate at the end what he demonstrated at the first, the magnanimity of the cross in suffering, not being resentful.

He was jeered at. He was taunted. He was mocked by his own people.

My God, if ever there was a provocation that would break the, the, the most perfected saint is people for whom you're dying, mocking you while you're dying. Well, if that's the way you're going to be, if you don't even now recognize that I'm suffering this for you, then you dirty brack of bracks deserve all you are going to get. And this is going to come upon you, ain't it? Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

And this dumb centurion, this gentile adult who had never ever opened the Bible, didn't know from beans, a professional murderer who had put many men up on crosses looking at the spectacle of this anguish, suffering, and the magnanimity that that suffering revealed, because there's nothing more revealing that suffering. Reggie calls me in this paper, crisis reveals an absolute crisis reveals absolutely what we reveal in suffering is what we in fact are. There's no time then or any disposition to put on an act.

What we are through and through by the cumulative grace of God over the course of time in the history of the preparation of our life, both personally and corporately, is the thing that will be revealed in suffering. That's what Jesus revealed. He didn't take a deep breath and all of a sudden get magnanimous at a final moment.

What he was in his final moment was what he was in all his moments. So if we're easily offended, Bruce, someone steps on our toe, looks at us the wrong way, how are we going to take the cross? How are we going to take ultimate suffering? If we can't even take now a slight issue of offense without reacting in kind, as I did with Inge last night, thank you, over something petty. Isn't that remarkable? Our brother's right.

It's the little thing that finds us out. So Reggie says and asks, is this not also a principle that the church must realize for itself if it will attain to its own eschatological victory and fullness? In fact, if the church has

not attained to it, Israel will not attain to it, because Israel will be inert, helpless, done in, incapacitated, unable in any way to exert anything of a human, religious, philosophical, or ethical kind that can save it. It will become dry bones.

The issue of Israel is the issue of the church. It has come to its own fullness and its own victory by the sufferings it's willing now to bear, the humiliations it's willing now to bear, and counted all grace, counted all privilege. Thank you, Lord.

I needed that. And even though I don't subjectively verify that, I'll receive that as coming from your hand. I'll acquiesce, I'll condescend that the brother who brought that, being older, having a place of authority, has better discerned the situation than I myself, because I'm too subjectively involved even to be able to understand it.

But I bow in submission to an authority. Even if he's wrong, he's right. And my bowing is of greater consequence than anything of the issue that has been raised.

And it's by that that we're going to come to that place, that we can be for Israel what we ought. There's a drama going on, totally unbeknownst to Israel, who look upon the church with contempt and don't know what goes on behind our walls, and in our homes, and in our meetings, and in the struggles that we're facing, by which we're being shaped to be for them God's salvific agent. It's not going to come by well-meaning intention or running to plant the tree and making nice.

In fact, running prematurely to make nice and to console before the time of consolation is to rob ourselves of any efficacy and any authority to bring consolation when the consolation is due. The prophet that speaks prematurely robs himself of his own validity. And when the prophetic word is really needed, he's incapable of speaking it.

Imagine the tragedy that the cross that is the symbol of this remarkable call and reality should become only a church decoration or something dangling around the neck of athletes. Have you noticed that in their photographs? Or popular rock stars or rap stars, big crosses that are removed from the cross, its meaning, its suffering, and its sacrifice, and are living the very antithesis in a life of abandoned indulgence are dangling this cross and by that negating its meaning. So may the Lord have restored its centrality and our understanding and our counting ourselves blessed by the privilege of being called to it.

Now there's a title, The Mystery Explained. The same mystery of the gospel that seals the judgment of natural Israel gathers in the Gentiles. The gospel is at once a door of faith to the Gentiles and the eschatological judgment of Israel, who by reason of the hidden fulfillment could not recognize the time of their visitation.

After generations of being hewed by the prophets rising early, the plummet of judgment came in the form of the messianic secret when the long awaited Messiah appeared in the unexpected role as the eschatological stone of stumbling and rockable fence. This is vintage Reggie. You have to read it slowly, like any rare wine.

You don't pop the coke. This isn't Coca-Cola. This is rare stuff.

This has to be held on the tongue. And what is he saying? You can feel the thing darting on your tongue, but it hasn't yet come to your consciousness. So what's the mystery? The mystery is that the very intended Messiah was not perceived or recognized and was indeed slain.

That was Israel's intended eschatological visit. It was the time of their visitation, though they had been prepared by the prophets rising early. It was for them a judgment in their failed recognition and their opposition to their own Messiah who became for them a stone of stumbling and a rock of the fence.

The death of the Messiah came as a result of the mystery of his identity. Who do men say that I am? And Reggie raises the question, why was his identity hidden from Israel to affect the dual purpose of judgment and atonement? There was a necessity for Israel to fail, to be broken off out of its own trade, to miss its own Messiah in order somehow at the same time in the mystery to establish the atonement of God, not only for Israel, but for all the nations. Because if they had recognized the Messiah and therefore there would have been no necessity for his cross, what then would be the provision of God for the salvation of mankind? There's a mystery in the predetermined purposes of God, which Peter refers to in his first message at Pentecost.

And he says, don't think that you're off the hook because you were a participant in the death of your own Messiah because he had to die for the sins of mankind does not absolve you. You were only too willing to be a participant and therefore you're guilty. You're held culpable, even though by the predetermined counsel of God, his death was necessary.

The fact that you have made yourself so willing an instrument does not absolve you, but judges you. In fact, we're under that very penalty now. And the one thing that Jews cannot bear to hear is the word Christ killer, because it has been the antagonism that has released wave after wave of anti-Semitic persecution throughout the centuries.

In every German city, the blood has flown in the streets, particularly at the Passover Easter time, Christ killer. But the irony is that however it has been misused and satanically employed, it's still essentially true. But God is waiting for prophetic people who can tell Israel their sins and Jacob their transgressions, not as one being superior in our spirituality and looking upon them with disdain and getting and setting them right, but as ourselves being Christ killers.

Our sins have put them on the cross together with theirs, and we come to them out of a broken repentance and to persuade them that though he had to die, we were all culpable in that death. The mystery means that the hidden wisdom of redemption is only accessible by the spirit of revelation. Wow.

That's right. Because there's so many Jews say, well, what do the rabbis say? As if a scholar or a rabbi is going to have a better explanation, understanding of the mystery than another. If it's not revealed, it's simply not known.

And God is the God who gives or withholds revelation. Remarkable. And he says to the church, I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery.

And yet it's not something that, by which we can, by our own exertion, obtain. The mystery, if it's to be known, is to come through revelation. Why then does not the church have it? Because we have not an attitude and a disposition that seeks it.

We have not a humility willing to receive it. We have our own opinions of Israel and its place, and look with disdain and contempt, and to that God will not reveal. I remember a well-known speaker who happened to be English, living in America, came to our church.

I was a young believer, and he took such delight in Israel's fallenness. He almost dropped his hands in glee that Israel was finished. The church has now been the inheritor of God's purpose through Israel.

They got what they deserved. I mean, my stomach was not a, I had not one word to say in answer. I was too young.

I didn't know anything about the subject. But I did find, we went to a retreat. We were both speakers together, came down for breakfast.

The only seat that was vacant was alongside him. And I said to this brother, it may well be that you're right, that God has finished with Israel, and that she deserved to come up in the judgments that she has received. But to speak it with glee and with delight is altogether wrong.

And that very attitude would forbid any better understanding of Israel's tragedy than what you possess. There's a reason why we don't have Revelation. God is only too eager to give it, if indeed it can be received.

So the mystery means that the hidden wisdom of redemption is only accessible by the spirit of Revelation. The mystery of two Advents, Messiah's death and resurrection, in the midst of history and his subsequent return at the Day of the Lord, was completely hidden from Israel. And if this much was hidden, how much more the time between the two Advents that must see the full extent of the Deuteronomic curse.

They didn't understand that, so they understand what is yet ahead for them in their history, and the judgment that yet must come as the time of Jacob's trouble. So who's the not a people? Calculate to bring Israel to jealousy in this interim between two Advents. It's the church.

You were not a people. You were a bunch of dun duns. You were Gentiles drinking blood out of skulls.

You were fornicating like jackrabbits. You were raising altars to pagan gods and running amok in swords and killing and death mayhem. But you who are far off and without God and without hope in the world, God has brought nigh by the blood of their Messiah that you might have entree into their commonwealth, their covenants, their blessings, their hopes, their promises.

I'll tell you if the church understood that, wouldn't it change the church? Just that one thing, would it not bring a breaking and a gratitude that God had mercy on the Goyim, on those who are far off? He didn't allow you to remain far off. There was only one faith. There was only one salvation.

There was only one nation, but he allowed you to come in and be part of that commonwealth by the blood of their Messiah. The church that despises Israel, that seems to think to have replaced it, is not the church. It's a perverse religious and institutional caricature that can neither minister to the Lord Sheep of the House of Israel to move them to envy nor minister to the world.

It's a self-perpetuating kind of institutional thing that has missed the central issue of the faith. But here's another thought that I'm going to move you to envy by a people who are not a people. One or so commentators have suggested that Nazi Germany has been reduced to not a people.

This great and eminent civilization of the land of Goethe, Hegel, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and so on, became a no people in their bestiality. Their veneer of civilization was removed, and they became again the most pagan, fierce, atheistic, God-hating, and Israel-despising nation in the world to the point of the

annihilation of world Jewry and the almost complete destruction of civilization itself. They became a no people.

They lost their distinction as being a nation of civility and culture, and God used them as a no people to rub Israel the wrong way. In fulfillment of what God spoke through Moses in Deuteronomy, that you would be affected by people that are no people, and you who are once a people shall become not a people until again at the end of the age. I will receive you again as my own.

So this fulfills the scriptures of the prophets, being none other things which the prophets and Moses had said should come, and brings the stroke of judgment quietly in an unexpected advance of the day of the Lord. It was foretold in the prophetic writings, had been known there could have been no atonement for Jew or Gentile, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But because of the plan, although foretold was hidden in the mystery, the builders rejected the cornerstone of the entire covenant edifice.

The secret which is a trap and a snare to apostate Israel becomes a revelation of the gospel to the remnant. What was rejected in ignorance and failing to see the mystery, that very rejected and failed thing becomes for the Gentiles the revelation of the gospel and a door of faith to the Gentiles and an all strictness conforming to what stands written in prophetic scriptures. Thus by means of a prophetic ministry, the dividing word veiled in the mystery of incarnation and prophetic paradox passes through Israel like a winnowing scythe, separating the remnant, the true ecclesial assembly of God from the rest who are blinded.

This is remarkable. What Reggie is showing here is that the church is that remnant from among Jewry who did have the revelation of the hidden mystery and saw what was the stumbling stone and the offense to others as being God's very provision. And it is that that becomes the door of the gospel to the Gentiles, that they might also be admitted to that same faith retained by that remnant and go on together in the revelation and the mystery of God.

That the church is not some innovation but a continuation of the most holy faith upheld by those who did recognize Jesus as Messiah and that you are joined to that body. That already existing body of Jewish believers is already the continuation of the matrix of the faith that we today call the church. I want to read this again.

That this paradox passes through Israel like a winnowing scythe, separating the remnant, the true ecclesia, that's the good word, the called out ones or assembly of God from the rest who were blinded. Paul shows that his own turning to the Gentiles is according to the judgment threatened by Moses. This judgment continues through the balance of the period from the times of the Gentiles, reaching to the fullness of the Gentiles.

So something happens with the advent of Jesus. Rejected by the builders, he came to his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, Jews, who expected Messiah, to them gave him the power to become the sons of God.

But going beyond that, his grace being so magnificent, he admitted into that mystery of the gospel Gentiles, the called out ones, the ecclesia, the assembly of God. So Paul will show that the Israel of God is now as always the preserved seed, the election of grace. However, according to the revelation of the mystery, the remnant of the holy seed is now extended to include a remnant from among Gentiles, a

people for his name.

These are grafted in to the spiritual Israel of God. And by this gain and interest in the promises covenanted with Israel. Here's a description of the church as the church ought itself to know itself, that it's not itself an innovation or something separate from or contrary to what has preceded it, but by the remarkable grace of God admitted into an already existing Israel of God and to its covenants, its blessing, employment and hope.

The church that lacks this conception and understanding of itself will see itself independent from Israel and also antagonistic to it. And will react to men like myself and Reggie, who seek to bring this message as being threatening to their understanding of themselves as a church and their own purposes. And ironically, will even use the language of restoration intended for Israel's restoration as being meant for themselves.

And this is probably the principal friction of the state of the church today in this great issue. And that's why one of its leading spokesmen, called prophet by all the fawning world, upbraided Reggie and me for being off base and on a bias that we were giving Israel too great an attention, too great a significance, too great a centrality, as if we were robbing Jesus of his glory. He was speaking the correct language in the seeming celebration of Christ.

And he believed in present Israel. He's for present Israel. Yes, Jews ought to go back.

And he's supportive of that. Okay, I'm just going to read it. I'm leaping right in.

If anyone has a copy of Reggie's paper, and maybe we'll see that all will have it before we leave. I'm starting on page six. You can believe that from the very first paragraph, it's an outstanding statement.

But because of the brevity of time, I'm leaping into the central thing that I want to believe the Lord wants us to consider, especially for Lloyd's sake, because this is a last day. And I want him, I believe the Lord wants him to take home a perception of the centrality of Israel in a way that Reggie sets it forth. So I'm going to read two paragraphs.

It's not to be commented upon, although it's rich, it would be a field day, just a shift of those two paragraphs. And then we're really going to begin at the bottom of page six, where Reggie talks about the covenantal reinstatement of Israel as a redeemed nation. That's we're going to come in at that point.

But here's what precedes it in part. It's about the truth of unconditional election, the issue of covenant is the issue of election that God has elected, chosen, appointed a people to be in relationship with himself. And that relationship is defined by the covenant, which he himself establishes.

He gives it the terms. Israel is not the one who is co-defining the terms, only agreeing to them. God himself is the initiator of covenant.

So Israel is elect to be the covenant or the covenantal people. And that election, the whole concept of election, even as we talked about it this morning in the nations and they're flaring up against God's choice is really against the God who chooses. He elects and that it blocks the reach of reconciling mercy, namely confidence in the flesh.

It destroys all hope of a righteousness that is one's own. Election is devastating because it has not to do with the qualification either of men or of nations. They're not elected because they qualify.

They were elected because they're chosen. And this is a direct assault upon the nature of man in flesh, the desire to be chosen because of qualification. So Reggie is underlining the fact that election itself, which is the basis for covenant, destroys all hope of a righteousness that is one's own.

The best virtues of which fall hopelessly short of the righteousness, which is Christ's alone. Therefore, the most admired of those virtues that can be generated by human will and moral ability can never be the basis of divine acceptance. That one statement says more about the present mentality of Jews in the world than anything that I know.

What is our distinctive Jewish mentality is that we do have virtues that are admired and that we ourselves can generate out of our own human ability and our own moral ability that should be the basis for divine acceptance. God says no, that's not the basis. So there's a basic ideological conflict between this, quote, Jewish mentality, which is to say the world's that celebrates man and wants acceptance on the basis of what man can generate in himself as against God saying, no, there's nothing in men that's good.

I alone am good. And the basis for my choosing and electing and covenanting is not your virtue or your qualification or your morality, but simply my freedom as God to choose. That's a direct assault upon this unspoken fortress of human self-assertion, self-will, and self-acknowledgement.

So we have to understand that election and covenant is a whole thrust of God, contrary to the whole ideological tenet of the world. When I say Jewish, it's yes, it's essentially Jewish, but the world has adopted it because we Jews are so in the world and of the world and have shaped the world and provide the world's mindset and mentality, all with a veneer of religiosity or ethicality or morality, which has its center in man and not in God. You understand what's at stake in the great conflict of the ages as we come to the end, these conflicting views are going to come head on.

Now, to what degree does the church, though it subscribes to the ideology of God and the supremacy of God and denigrates man, does in fact live and has its being out of this premise? In other words, the church is more humanistic than it itself knows, that though it gives a lip service acknowledgement to the doctrine of God's election, God's choice, and that man is no good thing, yet in its action, its conduct, its innermost thoughts, it is essentially humanistic. And one way in what place where that is revealed most conspicuously is its adoration and love of present Israel and its desire to see present Israel succeed on the basis of its humanity, as if that could be any basis at all. It is a revealing of the church's own implicit wrong faith, because if it is hoping that Israel is going to succeed on that basis, on what basis is it hoping that it will succeed? And how many of its programs and its conduct then are humanistically derived to obtain certain ends? They have not really agreed to the radicalness of God's view of man, and why election and covenant is God's prerogative, and that there's no other basis for righteousness but what is imparted both to man and to nations, then through the God who keeps covenant and gives himself in covenant.

So, because the election assumes the total destitution of the natural man as spiritually dead, it ultimately becomes the yes of grace to all who justify God's sovereign right to quicken whom he will. This is typical Reggie. That's why it needs to be expounded, explicated, repeated, because there's so much contained in one statement.

Election assumes the total. You can believe that every word that's being used here is not capriciously or arbitrarily chosen. This is finely honed.

When Reggie is saying total, he means total. The total destitution of the natural man as spiritually dead, or else there's no yes to the grace of God in his election and in his covenant. There's got to be an acknowledgment of the death of man and his own inability to obtain anything that's righteous, and that's why Ezekiel 37 is so classic a text.

God is waiting for this proud Israel, this nation of self-sufficiency who has given to the world Karl Marx and Eric Fromm that I quoted the other day, and who's the great psychoanalyst, the Freud, and all of the movie makers and writers and thinkers and novelists and cultural shapers, this people of such vigor and animation, so centrally small in number but so influential in their humanity, maybe even in the misused, perverse expression of the giftedness of God for them. For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, but how are they being employed? Not for God, but contrary to God. So that this must come to a total destitution of spiritual death, and that's why God is waiting to hear from, as in Ezekiel 37, we are cut off, we are without hope, we are his dry parts.

Can you imagine a proud Jew saying that, or a proud Jewish nation saying that? And yet unless they say that, God will not turn in his mercy to a prophetic son, which is the church of the last days, and say prophesy to these bones that they might live. He's not released to establish their resurrection until they acknowledge their death. And so what the question is, how is that death going to be obtained by which every natural thing will be rendered destitute in very Israel itself and in world Jewry itself? That's why the time of Jacob's trouble is going to be the greatest debacle and catastrophe of modern times, eclipsing even the Nazi Holocaust.

And so are you sure that Israel is going to be cast out of the nation? Are you sure that they're going to be pursued? I said, well, scriptures seem to give an evidence of ruined cities, devastated land, left desolate. But what I don't want to say with certitude, but whatever it is that will obtain the death, God will require it. It's got to be this kind of destitution of the natural man, if there's to be a yes of the grace of God, who will justify by his sovereign right to quicken whom he will.

And apart from work, so that it's not of him who wills or nor of him who runs, but God strategically has concluded all in belief that no flesh might glory, so that mercy might appear to the praise of glory of grace alone. If grace is to be demonstrated as free, unconstrained, and uninfluenced, it must be according to election. The issue of grace is the issue of God.

Grace is the unmerited givingness of God that has no reflection of any constraint imposed upon him and a requirement made of him. It is God acting out of his total uniqueness of God, who is absolutely free of any external requirement or pressure of any kind. It is something utterly free and given of God, which is to say that that givingness of God that is called grace is the greatest statement of God as God.

See what I mean? No one's twisting his arm. He simply elects to express his mercy. That's grace.

So grace is the statement of God. And if nations or Israel or Jews can obtain any righteousness independent of that grace, where is his testimony? Where is the demonstration of him? Where is the knowledge of God as God? If his grace is not made palpably visible and demonstrated on a people who are destitute of anything out of their own humanity and are only surviving or established because of his grace. That's why the issue of Israel is the issue of God.

He wants to demonstrate himself as the God of grace. And how amazing is that grace to us if it's only become a glib kind of a thing that we sing, whether we have not ourselves been brought to an utter

destitution of our own humanity. And that's what God's dealing with us for the residue that remains that we think spiritual is still a semblance and an expression of some cleaving to something in ourselves that we call our spirituality that is yet more our humanity than we know.

And he has to bring it to death that he might be all in all for his grace is total or not at all. I'm enjoying grace right now. I didn't know how this is going to come forth.

I'm trusting the grace of God in finding our way through a complex, rich, detailed paper that gets at the very heart of the faith. Okay. Now we come to the real beginning point.

All of this was prelude. Reggie leaves you hanging on the ropes. Here's his statement that now brings Israel into this context with the principle of covenant rejection as background.

We turn now to consider the process that affects the covenantal reinstatement of Israel as a redeemed nation. This is the issue of the ages that that nation that God did appoint to whom grace had come through election has forfeited it. It has rejected the covenant and has dis abused itself and is contemptuous of the God who makes it.

And the most recent evidence is the thought that they themselves can obtain the land without being in covenant relationship with God for the land is not something to be grasped or to be obtained by one's exertion or political or military power, but it is given in covenant faithfulness and keeping the land is the critical issue in the issue of covenant. And just another aspect of covenant is our treatment of the alien in our midst. God makes our treatment of the alien and the stranger, the most powerful statement of our obedience to his covenant requirement that we should love them who are strangers in our midst.

Just examining the two things alone of land and Israel's relationship with its strangers shows clearly this is a nation, a political entity that has is not acting or seeking to obtain or preserve its place in land on the basis of covenant. It's a fact, a covenant rejecting people without even a covenant consciousness. And the question is how far behind Israel is the church in its own covenant consciousness looking at the way in which our marriages are put up for grabs.

Where's our covenantal sense of obligation before God that the issue of our marriage is not our compatibility or sexual satisfaction or any of the other things that are valid, but essentially and primarily to the glory of God who is the third full member in that covenant, the threefold court that enables us to keep covenant when any of the other two.

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