

Israel, the 'Servant - Son'

by Art Katz

The speaker warns the Church about a soon-coming catastrophe, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting Israel's destiny to bless the nations.

Duration: 56:14

Scripture: Isaiah 52:13

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the Jewish people's future journey to Calvary and their need to experience rejection and suffering like Jesus did. The speaker believes that this experience will open their understanding and lead to their salvation. The sermon also highlights the literal and factual description of a future event where the Jewish nation will be uprooted and scattered, and the role of believers in providing hope and support to them during this time. The speaker urges the audience to be prepared to take in and help the Jewish people, as failing to do so would be failing to serve God.

Transcript

As I said, I'm bearing an unusual burden and speaking it on every occasion. Putting the Church on alert for a soon-coming catastrophe. It's the catastrophe of Israel.

As I am expecting... I'm looking for an appropriate word. Debacle. D-E-B-A-C-L-E.

A complete collapse of the present state. A probable expulsion from the land again into the nations. And triggering reactions throughout all nations where Jews are.

It's called the time of Jacob's trouble. It's future and it's near. Chief source would be Jeremiah chapters 30 and 31.

Where that phrase is drawn. The time of Jacob's trouble. Jesus at the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Luke 21 speaks.

Such a time as never was before since the world began nor will be again. And at that time we're not cut short. No flesh would survive.

But for the elect's sake that time will be cut short. I think he's speaking of the same event. And then he warns us here that they should flee to the mountains or the hills of Judah.

Pray that it doesn't come on the Sabbath or in the winter. So there's every indication that he's talking about an event that has its inception in Jerusalem and in Israel. But it's not confined to Israel for it's a time of Jacob's trouble wherever Jacob is.

So I'm expecting a massive sifting of Jewish people throughout the world in one last exile. One last expulsion in which the majority of them will not survive. And a remnant returning to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads and mourning and sighing fleeing away.

That's found in Isaiah 35 and I believe also Isaiah 51. All of this would be unnecessary if Israel had not the destiny and calling that it does. To bless all the families of the earth.

To be the center of the locus of God's theocratic kingdom and rule. Because out of Zion must go forth the law and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. That's not poetry.

That's a literal designation of God's chosen people and God's chosen location to be the center of his kingdom throughout the world. The church has been historically guilty of spiritualizing such references and thinking that Zion is a synonym for the church. But God means the literal holy hill in the city of Jerusalem.

Psalms 2 speaks of it. I've set my king on the holy hill of Zion and given him the nations for his inheritance. And yet the heathen rage.

The nations rage and the peoples and the kings and their rulers take thought against the Lord and against his anointed to break their bands asunder. The world does not want God's kingdom to come. They would love to keep the church in a state of sleepwalk to think that the kingdom is some kind of interior thing.

The kingdom of God is within you and that it's which is certainly true in many ways. And to disguise or to remove the understanding of the kingdom as a very literal political rule of God over his own creation. The whole of God's salvation history culminates with the coming of the king who has to be a descendant of David.

Because he can only be enthroned upon the throne of David on the hill of Zion in the city of Jerusalem. That the law might go forth out of that place and the word of the Lord to all nations. Isaiah chapter 2 speaks of it.

Repeated exactly word for word in Micah chapter 4 from verse 1. That the mountain of the Lord will be higher and above all the mountains and hills and the nations will make their way unto it. And come to the God of Jacob that he might teach us his ways. So there's a destiny, a remarkable destiny that affects all nations.

In fact it was God's intention from the first that Israel should be central to all the nations of the world. And what a test for the nations and even the church in the nations who have not Israel as their preference. They would have chosen some other nation.

Israel would not be their choice. Israel's track record leaves much to be desired. God doesn't mince words.

You blaspheme my name and every nation will have driven you. But that does not negate nor nullify God's call, promise and gift and calling. The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.

He does not take them back again. He does not disqualify them. A nation doesn't have to rise to a standard in order to attain to it.

He supplies the standard. That standard is the new covenant. Israel is notorious as a covenant breaking nation.

But in the end when they come to a place of everlasting joy, not the least of the reasons for it is that he has made an everlasting covenant with them. Why everlasting? Because it shall not again be broken. Why will it not be broken? Because it does not wait upon Israel's faithfulness to keep it.

He who gives it also keeps it. He writes it in their hearts and in their understanding that they will all know God. Is all this familiar? Is all this strange? Is all this uncomfortable? All this is the God who has mercy upon whom he will have mercy and chooses whom he will choose.

Because the issue of God's choosing is the issue of God. So if you have any complaint, if Jews rub you the wrong way, if you have no native disposition for them, something is amiss in your relationship with God for nothing measures that relationship more accurately than your understanding, your disposition, and your heart toward the people whom God has chosen. Now, tonight I've been brooding a bit and I'm in a mood I believe that the Lord has established appropriate to the text that I think he wants us to consider which is Isaiah 53.

As we all know, that is the greatest classic statement of the suffering servant Jesus. But you may not know that Jewish authorities and commentators, rabbis, sages have disputed the Christian interpretation of Isaiah 53 as pertaining to our Messiah and say that no, it pertains to Israel, that Israel itself is a suffering servant and has blessed the nations through its suffering. Well, I think that if that's not been true in the past, it will be true at the end.

There's a way in which in the wisdom of God I believe that the nation that is called to be a son, the first use of that word in Exodus chapter 4 is for Israel. In Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh, let my son go that he might serve me. And so this intention of God yet remains.

Israel is called to be like its Messiah and Lord before it, also a servant's son. For its call is to be a nation of priests and a light unto the world. Do you believe that? Or do you think it's needful? I would say that the lamentable condition of the world today is to a great extent the consequence of Israel's failure to fulfill that calling.

Remember that one out of the twelve tribes was exclusively a priestly tribe. It had no inheritance in the land. God was its inheritance.

And its function was to serve the nation and stand before God on behalf of the people, to teach the law, to teach the people the difference between the sacred and the profane. God did not think it lavish to take one of twelve tribes and give it no other function but an exclusive priestly function to mediate the reality of God to the whole of Israel. You can watch the rise and fall of Israel's fortunes throughout its history by just examining the condition of its priests.

For as the priests, so also the people. So why am I saying that? Because the same principle by which God would take one of Israel's twelve tribes and give it the exclusive designation and service of a priestly kind and of a teaching kind, God intends that for the entire nation, to all the nations. You better get lined up with the saints if this is God's program and design and not oppose it, but welcome it, anticipate it.

And before I finish tonight, I hope to indicate how graphically you're going to have part in this whole concluding saga. There's a certain requirement for priestly servant sons. It's called suffering.

That should not be a novelty or an unusual thought for those of us who feel that call ourselves. And indeed, it is the call of the church to sonship, to servanthood, to priestliness, not from a racial or genealogical origin, but in the form of the son of God, a Melchizedek priesthood. And we know that Jesus learned obedience to the things that he suffered.

There's a necessary suffering. There's a humiliation that precedes the exaltation that God bestows on servant sons who are honored to bear his name and his word and the revelation of himself to the nations. Israel is not in the condition to bless all the families of the earth.

I don't know if you've noticed. I don't know how informed you are. I don't know if you're reading the Jerusalem Post.

I don't know what information you're getting. But I can tell you that anyone who is a student of the state of Israel has any kind of sympathy is coming increasingly day by day to a kind of sad and melancholy sense of profound disappointment in the things that are taking place morally, ethically, in the conduct and the life of a nation whose back is forced to the wall, surrounded by enemies who are determined to her destruction and having within its own borders a Palestinian presence that has exactly the same intention. God is the author of Israel's predicament.

And I would say that the whole state of Israel has been established by the grace of God or by His, and I always grope for this word, not His providence, not in order to succeed but to fail, to demonstrate to Jews that they are not in themselves capable of establishing a nation state that will bless the nations of the world. It has got to be God's exclusive work. And for that reason, this self-sufficient people will be brought down into the place of death before they will be raised up to a place of resurrection and newness of life, alone by which they can fulfill the promise of God and the intention of God throughout their history.

So I've started to read Isaiah 53 with a double application, one for Jesus, which is certainly and unquestionably accurate, but also with a slight substitution of the pronouns from a singular to a corporate, there'll be so much that will be suggestive of what I believe is going to happen to Israel that will be required to follow its Lord in a road to Calvary. And maybe on that road, when they taste something of the rejection and suffering which their Lord experienced before them, which they have historically rejected, it will open their understanding in a way that nothing but their own mutual experience would have fitted them to see. How are we doing so far? Catch the control tower, over.

Testing. Are we okay? Yeah? Am I English is clear? Sensible? Not elaborate? Okay. You know that Isaiah 53 properly starts in Isaiah 52, where I have an italics over verse 13, the suffering servant.

See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Anyone who knows Israel's final destiny knows that that is almost as descriptive of a restored nation as it is of the Lord. It's the exaltation that follows humiliation.

Nations will come to Israel, will bring their riches. Kings and queens will bear the last of Israel's exiles on their shoulders and suckle them. Ships of Tarshish will bring their wealth, their tribute, the honor.

God says Israel will be a diadem in his hand. It will be a jewel. He'll call them by a new name.

The city of Jerusalem will be called the city of righteousness. That nation that refuses to come up annually to the feast of tabernacles will suffer a curse. If it still allows its ancient anti-Jewish disposition to keep them from the recognition of a nation which God has exalted.

Not because it deserves it, not because it's a reward for services rendered, not because it has anything to do with the merit of Israel in itself, but simply the statement of a God who lavishes on a prodigal and returning son a ring, a garment, and a feast. Now, we may have the disposition of the elder brother who's not too happy about that, who begrudges the father's lavish reception of a son who had wasted all his inheritance. But the father said, son, speaking to the elder, this is one who has come back from the dead.

Why don't you rejoice and enter the party? Why couldn't he? What was in his heart that was not like the father? Why was he envious and jealous? What kept him from enjoying the return of the prodigal brother? There's something in the heart of the church for whom that parable is intended. And you know what I can say about that? There's nothing that searches the heart of the church and reveals the truth of its condition than the subject of Israel itself rightly considered. And I hope you understand when I keep referring to Israel, I do not mean the present political state.

I'm talking about the nation, not the state. The state is, God is not under obligation to preserve this political entity. It was an expedient, a provision to set in motion the things that must necessarily take place in the Middle East and in Jerusalem that sets Israel on its road to Calvary.

But when I talk about Israel, I'm talking about that people that God said will never be abolished so long as the sun gives its light and the moon holds its course in the stars. They are established before him forever. Deuteronomy 32.8 says that when God established the numbers of the nations, he did so in terms of the sons of Israel.

I've never heard anyone preach that text. This one allusion to the significance of Israel with reference to all nations. And there'll never be peace for all nations until Israel is fitted in to the schema of God where nations will bow and be broken in their arrogance and opposition to God by their surrender to the center that he has established in that nation and with that people.

Now, I suppose you think I'm saying all this because I'm Jewish. No. I've been Jewish for 71 years and I'm only holding these Jews for the last 10, 12, 15 years by the grace of revelation and understanding given me.

If God had chosen Pygmies, I would be celebrating Pygmies tonight as God's chosen people and as the epicenter of this whole mode of coordinating the nations and submission unto himself. God is going to rule from the throne of David, from the holy hill of Zion. Eat your heart out.

What can I do to accommodate you? You may be as tough as my Anglo-Saxon audiences if your background is Dutch or German. That's Aryan, Anglo-Saxon. You don't know how deep it is.

You don't know. And I just stumbled across an article in a Christian magazine on the history of Jews in South Africa and there is a remarkable history of anti-Semitism and according to the article, I'm just a newcomer to the subject here, it says that the Afrikaners were more disposed to have a bitterness toward the Jew than the English. In fact, the Afrikaners thought that the Jew was part of the English design to subvert their South Africa.

Whatever it is, you need to search your heart because I believe that this people on their road to Calvary will be coming right through Bindura, Zimbabwe. God is going to sift them through all nations because their ultimate destiny is to all nations. But in sifting them, by uprooting them and moving them through the nations in a state of chastisement described in Isaiah 53, he also sifts the nation itself and the church

within the nation.

How do you know about it? Because Matthew 25 persuades me that God's first judgment when he is seated as king after the restoration of a remnant who returned to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads, mourning and sighing, fleeing away, sifts the sheep from the goats throughout the nations on one question only, What did you do with the least of these, my brethren? Well, if that's true, according to Amos 9, that you will sift this nation through all nations and not allow one colonel to fall to the ground. If it's true, according to Ezekiel 20, that it's through the wilderness of the nations that they ought to be sifted, not the great urban centers of Johannesburg where Jews like to have their affluence and dwelling, but the out-of-the-way places they would not have chosen, what makes you think that Bindura, Zimbabwe, is one of those places? Just my presence tonight. That's all.

And because your location has all the earmarks appropriate to their being sifted, brought down dirt roads and dark areas that are not illumined and tracking through places where a Jew would never have thought to set his foot. So what will you do when they come upon you in their untaught condition, suddenly uprooted and totally disconcerted and agitated and confused and wondering how again in the same century there could be yet another holocaust, global, worldwide? Are you prepared to take them in? Will you take them in? Or will you say, Lord, Lord, when did I see you? Naked, thirsty, hungry and in prison. Only to answer, if you did not do this for the least of these, my brethren, you did it not unto me.

And I tell you, saints, they are going to become the least. Do you know why? Because they're going to become the most. Because they've got to go all the way down in the most profound humiliation, like the Lord before them, in order to be exalted in a place above all nations, without it affecting their ego and giving them a sense of superiority over gentile nations by which they would lord it over them rather than serve them in a priestly humility.

So verse 14 of Isaiah 52, just as there were many who were astonished at him, or let me say, astonished at them, so was their appearance beyond human resemblance and their form beyond that of mortals, so shall they startle many nations and kings shall shut their mouths because of them for that which had not been told them they shall see and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. How can this be a statement of the effect of the crucifixion of Jesus upon kings and nations when virtually the kings and nations of the world today are not startled, are not astonished, have not been apprehended? In fact, it's a moot question whether even those nations that think themselves Christian have rightly understood and appropriated the holocaust of Jesus. I think that God is going to set it before nations again.

They're going to see the drama again enacted before their faces through a people who have become the least of his brethren. They're going to see the whole drama of being without any appearance that they should be desired, marred more than any man, rejected and despised. It will be a complete reenactment of the road to Calvary which Jesus himself trod.

And not only will kings and nations be startled and understand what had been enacted 2,000 years ago and is yet available for their salvation now, but Israel itself will be startled and astonished. Their own experience, resembling that of the Lord before them, will give them pause to consider what they had 2,000 years ago rejected and keep rejecting until this day. For who has believed what we have heard and to whom is the armor of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, like a root out of a dry ground, and he had no former majesty that we should look at him.

This sounds now like Israel in some future time looking back at that crucifixion of their suffering servant Lord whom they had rejected and now in the light of the suffering through which they have passed beginning to understand the mutuality of their experience and his. There was nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering acquainted with grief and as one from whom others hide their faces.

He was despised and we held him of no account. This sounds very much like a future recognition that Israel will not come to unless it in some measure walks the same road to Calvary. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases, yet we had accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the punishment that made us whole and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we've all turned to our own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. This is a recognition to which Jewish people have not yet come.

It's a recognition to which they will come and I believe that the key to their coming to it is that they must in some measure experience his suffering, his rejection, be found despicable, unlovely, unwanted, acquainted with grief and then understand that he fulfilled the same purposes for their salvation and by it come to salvation. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Probably they will open their mouths, they'll grumble, they'll complain, they'll knock their fists at heaven, they'll wonder why it is that in the same century a second holocaust, they'll not be silent, but they'll appreciate his silence and the fact that they themselves were unable to hold their own mouths.

He'll stand out in remarkable contrast as the Lamb of God which they themselves are not. He was cut off, it says, from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. The word cut off is also to be found in Ezekiel 37.

We are cut off. We are without hope, we are as dry bones. If you read that great prophetic chapter in Ezekiel, it's a statement of Israel's future because that acknowledgement has never been historically made.

Even the Nazi holocaust did not bring an acknowledgement on the part of world Jewry. We are cut off. We are without hope, we are as dry bones.

This experience that is coming, of which Jesus himself spoke, referred to also in Daniel, spoken also in Jeremiah, alluded to in Psalms, referred to by other prophets, is a future and concluding event in the prophetic salvation history of God. And it's going to be played out in all nations. And it will bring that people to a place where they will cry out, like the Lord.

He was cut off, we are cut off. Out of the land of the living. We are without hope, we are as dry bones.

And when God hears that acknowledgement for which he's waiting, he's released to raise Israel from that death by sending a son of man to prophesy to those bones that they might live. Do you know who that son of man is? Who has the authority to speak for God, as God, with a creative word that can raise the dead? Because Paul says, what does it mean that Israel should be raised from the dead? It will be life for all nations. The issue of Israel's restoration from the death that is coming is the issue of life for all nations.

But Israel itself must first be brought to life as the Lord was brought to life. It's the reenactment of the whole drama of which Jesus was the prototype. And the same power that raised him will raise them.

It's the first resurrection of a nation, or at least a remnant of the nation, that will stand for the entire nation. But he himself does not speak the words of life. A son of man speaks it.

You wonder why he didn't take the occasion himself. It's because that's our place. The son of man, in my opinion, is a picture of the church that has come of age in the last days.

That has come to prophetic stature. That sees what God sees, even reluctantly, had it been brought out and down into the midst of the bones. It has to have a faith to believe that those bones can live, and a faith that desires to see those bones live.

If there's something rankling in the heart of that prophetic son of man that has not that desire, and he wants exclusively to be the object of God's whole devotion, it will not be a word that will raise them. It has to be with an ultimate faith, with an ultimate agreement in God's desire to raise that people from its death. And it has to be a faith that works by love.

See what the requirement is for us? It's a radical requirement, and an ultimate requirement. And if we don't meet that, if we don't have any intention for it, no desire for it, are unwilling to be brought into it, as the one people who can speak such a word in the moment that the Lord commands it, we will be eternally, what shall I say? Embarrassed. We will suffer an eternal grief for having fallen short of the glory of God and been satisfied with a modest Christianity that did not make such requirement upon us, for we did not desire it.

We live beneath God's intention and God's glory, and therefore we will have forfeited the reward that would have been commensurate with having come into the maturity and prophetic stature that would have constituted Israel's deliverance and salvation. So long as you're in Isaiah, take a look at Isaiah 35. My italic statement at the commencement of that chapter is, the return of the redeemed to Zion.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom. The crocus shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

Isn't it remarkable? God starts with nature. God starts with creation. What is happening that nature, dumb, insensate, unable to speak, can actually experience something and rejoice for something that is happening on its very soil? What makes it joyous? We're going to find out.

It's a people being moved upon it and through it, who are on a holy path to Zion. It is the highway of holiness through the nations, through the dry lands, through the grasslands, through the least inhabited places, the out of way places. The desert shall rejoice and blossom.

And what an embarrassment for us. That dumb nature shall rejoice and we be glum? That nature should be moved and we be unmoved? For they shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Something's going to happen in that future time that reveals God's glory and God's majesty.

For Israel itself must see God as God. For they do not know him as God and require a revelation, both of his majesty, his power, and his glory that shall be revealed and given to them on the highway of holiness in the backward, out of the way places of the wilderness of nations. Have I prayed? Yeah.

Then there's a break in the text and God seems to be addressing someone that is not Israel itself. Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be

strong, do not fear.

Here is your God. He will come with vengeance. With great recompense, he will come and save you.

This is not Israel speaking. This is something spoken to Israel who is evidently so disconsolate, so broken, so dejected, so hopeless that they are about to perish except that a word comes to them in their wilderness place. The study of the holocaust shows that men who were weaker survived, men who were physically stronger.

Stronger men died while weaker ones survived and the difference was that one had hope and the other was without hope. Hope is a remarkable life-sustaining virtue but it needs to be imparted to a people who have been so reduced and so without hope that it must come to them from another who is somehow near them and with them in the place of their hopelessness, in the place of their wilderness, in the place where God has them move. And could say to them who are of a fearful heart, Be strong and do not fear.

Your God will come with vengeance, with recompense. He will come and save you. That has got to be more than just well-wishing.

It's got to be more than just a nice, polite word or it will fail. It has got to be a prophetic word. It's got to be a word that when they hear it, it's an event for them.

Something happens as is described here. For then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For water shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert and burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water, etc. Dear saints, this is not poetry. This is literal, nuts and bolts, factual description of something that is yet future and must take place or there will be no Jewish survival as this nation is uprooted and scattered again through the wilderness of the nations.

Who will be there in that wilderness to speak these words that will constitute for a people who would otherwise perish? Hope that they will leap and the blind will see before the Lord comes to deliver and to save them if it is not you. You see what God is after? He is after not only a nation that is restored out of death and sin and apostasy but a church that is raised up to a maturity and use that it never would have sought nor attained except that Israel required such a people to save them. Can you guys follow this? Are we in a condition today to speak like this? Do we know God so well as to say your God will come? How do we know that? Because we have had a wilderness experience before them.

We have been brought to a place of destitution. We have had our faith shaken. We have experienced a kind of hopelessness that God can produce even in the midst of our ordinary circumstances.

In order that we should know Him and be able to convey the truth of Him who would otherwise perish unless someone could say with conviction your God will come. Mere Sunday pew sitting will never attain this. Ten thousand Sundays of proper religious Sunday attendance will never attain this.

Something is going to have to be radically altered about the whole framework and knit of our present religious life because it is not conducive it does not lend itself to raising up a people of this kind of prophetic stature and authority. We may have to go again from house to house daily breaking bread. We may have to give God the opportunity to form this kind of character and this kind of faith in a quality of relationship and an intensity of life together that offends us.

We like our privacy. We like a Christianity that is reduced to a Sunday service and a mid-week Bible study. We think we are doing God exceptional service to come out on a Monday night.

Can you understand? Israel is God's provision for the church all the more and especially because she is in this despicable condition. There is a destiny for us as there is a destiny for her and neither they nor we will attain to it independent of each other. We are in something together and God has sent you a queer man weeks, months or years I don't know when this will take place I don't think it is too distant to begin to sound to you those things that you need now to consider that when they come and it will be abruptly when the bottom falls out with them it will be with suddenness that you will not be taken by surprise and find yourself all together unprepared to be for them what you want.

It is too late then to take the challenge seriously it needs now to be considered. Well, it says in verse 8 A highway shall be there, it shall be called the holy way the unclean shall not travel on it it shall be for God's people no traveler not even fools shall go astray no lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it I think the ravenous beast are not lions they are men in a Nazi like condition who if they had the ability would do again to Jews what they did 50 years before.

God will not allow ravenous beast to be upon this, this is a holy highway and it is going to go through Zimbabwe how do you know that?

Because I am in Zimbabwe it is going to go through South Africa because I have just come from South Africa I have been in New Zealand, Australia Japan, Philippines it does not matter where I am God says I will sift you through all nations better to be prepared to anticipate them and it should not take place than it does take place and you find yourself unable to respond if they are driven through nations by a relentless pursuit of a persecution that demands their annihilation what will be the consequence to those who take them in and are caught doing so this is not going to be some idle casual hospitality this is going to be something extended at great personal risk as it was for Corrie Ten Boom and she was Dutch in fact Holland gives us more encouragement about a people who are willing

to extend themselves at risk than perhaps any other European nation during the Hitler time and they are going to have yet another shot at it I will be there in April speaking the same message who, what Gentile however impressive a Christian is going to extend themselves for a people in that condition when if they are caught doing so it means you know what Paul says in Romans 11 that by your mercy they might obtain mercy when have you ever extended mercy to a Jew when has a Jew ever needed mercy until now have you a mercy to give as I said I'm bearing an unusual burden I'm speaking it on every occasion putting the church on alert for a soon coming catastrophe it's the catastrophe of Israel as I am expecting I'm looking for an appropriate word debacle a complete collapse of the present

state a probable expulsion from the land again into the nations and triggering reactions throughout all nations where Jews are it's called the time of Jacob's trouble it's future and it's near and a chief source would be Jeremiah chapters 30 and 31 where that phrase is drawn the time of Jacob's trouble Jesus at the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Luke 21 speaks of such a time as never was before since the world began, nor will be again and if that time were not cut short no flesh would survive but for the elect's sake that time would be cut short I think he's speaking of the same event and then he warns us here that they should flee to the mountains, the hills of Judah, pray that it doesn't come on the Sabbath or in the winter so there's every indication that he's talking about an event

that has its inception in Jerusalem and in Israel but it's not confined to Israel for it's a time of Jacob's trouble, wherever Jacob is so I'm expecting a massive sifting of Jewish people throughout the world in one last exile, one last expulsion, in which the majority of them will not survive and a remnant returning to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads and mourning and sighing fleeing away that's found in Isaiah 35 and I believe also Isaiah 51 all of this would be unnecessary if Israel had not the destiny and calling that it does to bless all the families of the earth, to be the center the locus of God's theocratic kingdom and rule, because out of Zion must go forth the law and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem that's not poetry that's a literal designation of God's chosen

people and God's chosen location to be the center of his kingdom throughout the world the church has been historically guilty of spiritualizing such references and thinking that Zion is a synonym for the church, but God means the literal holy hill in the city of Jerusalem Psalm 2 speaks of it I've set my king on the holy hill of Zion and given him the nations for his inheritance and yet the heathen rage the nations rage and the peoples and the kings and their rulers take thought against the Lord and against his anointed to break their bands asunder the world does not want God's kingdom to come they would love to keep the church in a state of sleepwalk to think that the kingdom is some kind of interior thing, the kingdom of God is within you which is certainly true in many ways and to

disguise or to remove the understanding of the kingdom as a very literal political rule of God over his own creation the whole of God's salvation history culminates with the coming of the king who has to be a descendant of David because he can only be enthroned upon the throne of David on the hill of Zion in the city of Jerusalem that the law might go forth out of that place and the word of the Lord to all nations Isaiah chapter 2 speaks of it repeated exactly word for word in Micah chapter 4 from verse 1 that the mountain of the Lord will be higher and above all the mountains and hills and the nations will make their way unto it and come to the God of Jacob that he might teach us his ways so there's a destiny a remarkable destiny that affects all nations in fact it was God's intention

from the first that Israel should be central to all the nations of the world and what a test for the nations and even the church in the nations who have not Israel as their preference they would have chosen some other nation Israel would not be their choice Israel's track record leaves much to be desired God doesn't mince words you blaspheme my name in every nation where I have driven you but that does not negate nor nullify God's call promise and gift and calling the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable he does not take them back again he does not disqualify them a nation doesn't have to rise to a standard in order to attain to it he supplies the standard that standard is the new covenant Israel is notorious as a covenant breaking nation but in the end when they come to a place of

everlasting joy not the least of the reasons for it is that he has made an everlasting covenant with them why everlasting? because it shall not again be broken why will it not be broken? because it does not wait upon Israel's faithfulness to keep it he who gives it also keeps it he writes it in their hearts and in their understanding that they will all know God is all this familiar? is all this strange? is all this uncomfortable? all this is the God who has mercy upon whom he will have mercy and chooses whom he will choose because the issue of God's choosing is the issue of God so if you have any complaint if Jews rub you the wrong way if you have no native disposition for them something is amiss in your relationship with God for nothing measures that relationship more accurately than

your understanding, your disposition and your heart toward the people whom God has chosen now tonight I've been brooding a bit that I'm in a mood I believe that the Lord has established appropriate to the text

that I think he wants us to consider which is Isaiah 53 as we all know that is the greatest classic statement of the suffering servant Jesus but you may not know that Jewish authorities and commentators, rabbis sages have disputed the Christian interpretation of Isaiah 53 as pertaining to our Messiah and say that no it pertains to Israel that Israel itself is a suffering servant and has blessed the nations through its suffering well I think that if that's not been true in the past, it will be true at the end there's a way in which in the wisdom of God I believe that the nation that

is called to be a son the first use of that word in Exodus chapter 4 is for Israel in Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh, let my son go that he might serve me and so this intention of God yet remains Israel is called to be like its Messiah and Lord before it also a servant son for its call is to be a nation of priests and a light unto the world do you believe that? or do you think it's needful?

I would say that the lamentable condition of the world today is to a great extent the consequence of Israel's failure to fulfill that calling remember that one out of the twelve tribes was exclusively a priestly tribe it had no inheritance in the land God was its inheritance and its function was to serve the nation and stand before God on behalf of the people to teach the law to teach the people the difference between the sacred and the profane God did not think it lavish to take one of twelve tribes and give it no other function but an exclusive priestly function to mediate the reality of God to the whole of Israel you can watch the rise and fall of Israel's fortunes throughout its history by just examining the condition of its priests for as the priest, so also the people so why am I saying that? because the same principle by which God would take one of Israel's twelve tribes and give it the exclusive designation and service of a priestly kind and of a teaching kind God intends that for the entire nation to all the nations you better get lined up with the saints if this is God's program and design and not oppose it but welcome it, anticipate it and before I finish tonight I hope to indicate how graphically you're going to have part in this whole concluding saga there's a certain requirement for priestly servant sons it's called suffering that should not be a novelty or an unusual thought for those of us who feel that call ourselves and indeed it is the call of the church to sonship to servanthood, to priestliness not from a racial or genealogical origin but in the form of the son of God, a Melchizedek priesthood and we know that Jesus learned obedience to the things that he suffered there's a necessary suffering, there's a humiliation that precedes the exaltation that God bestows on servant sons who are honored to bear his name and his word and the revelation of himself to the nations Israel is not in the condition to bless all the families of the earth, I don't know if you've noticed I don't know how informed you are I don't know if you're reading the Jerusalem Post I don't know what information you're getting but I can tell you that anyone who is a student of the state of Israel has any kind of sympathy is coming increasingly day by day to a kind of sad and melancholy sense of profound disappointment in the things that are taking place morally, ethically in the conduct and the life of a nation whose back is forced to the wall, surrounded by enemies who are determined to her destruction and having within its own borders a Palestinian presence that has exactly the same intention God is the author of Israel's predicament and I would say that the whole state of Israel has been established by the grace of God or by his, and I always grope for this word not his providence not in order to succeed but to fail

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