

Jap-07 Judgment Begins in the House of God

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for the church to recognize its role in confronting national sin and seeking God's mercy for healing and restoration.

Duration: 50:10

Scripture: Psalm 9:15-37, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 6:15-17

Topics: "Japanese"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the negative impact of technology and entertainment on society. He highlights the prevalence of violent and degrading content on television, which is contributing to a universal culture of violence. The preacher also criticizes Japanese technology, particularly game machines, for their hypnotic and demonic influence on American youth. He emphasizes the importance of the church standing up for what is made in God's image and raising questions about society's definition of success. The sermon concludes with a reference to the Bible, specifically the 16th verse of an unknown chapter, which speaks of the Lord making himself known and executing judgments.

Transcript

I think I just have to say a word about my own peculiar feeling and condition. I think it's important for you to know the way in which this word is coming forth. It's not the result of any systematic exposition.

It's not the result of any extensive scholarship or human preparation. It's the strangest kind of feeling. I can't describe it to you.

I'm trusting the Lord, verse by verse. Because these are holy things that have to come out of His own heart, directly. I don't know, humanly speaking, how to pick up from where we left off this morning.

I just pray that God will be with us now as He was then. I want to direct your attention to the 15th verse of Psalm 9. The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made, in the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught. Psalm 9, 15.

The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made, in the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught. First of all, the first thing that brings about the judgment of sin is the tragedy of sin itself. Sin brings its own immediate consequence.

It's the very mercy of God that it is that way. That we might stop and not go further. It's not an accident that moral sins are accompanied by venereal disease.

That improper living is accompanied by organic disturbances or nervous breakdowns. Rather, it's the mental or deep organic rhythm of one's own life that goes mad. Sin itself has a terrible effect on us.

Therefore, we pray to God for such a mercy. If we recognize this operation in individual human beings, can we recognize it in nations? The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made. That's true morally, that's true economically, that's true politically, that's true socially.

Is it an accident that it is England that has given us the rock culture of the Beatles and now the punk rock? Is this an accidental circumstance or already the symptom of a sin? The riots that have recently taken place in that land, what do they express? The same country is also suffering severe economic recession and unemployment. And because they lack the perspective of God, they do not see the connection between these problems. They think only in a human way.

And they look for a solution to the problem which is economic or social or political. They do not recognize that these are symptoms of the consequence of national sin. England is the land of Spurgeon and Westley.

Great saints of God, great missionaries, great leaders of the faith. And when they have consciously turned from such a tradition, it brings a consequence. But when they have turned from such a good thing, it brings a lot of national tragedies.

The country is struggling to save itself. We humans have covered this world with economic greed. The necessity for pure air and pure water is becoming increasingly a problem in nations of the earth.

It's a pit which we have made. We have paid a price for our success and for our prosperity. So we have filled the earth with so many automobiles that the very air itself becomes unbreathable.

We've enjoyed the advantage of TV and other forms of entertainment. But it's like a monster in every house. We went to the Japanese bath last night and the TV set was on.

Of course I couldn't understand a word of what was being spoken. And yet it was all so recognizable. There was a violent kind of drama on.

A lot of fighting and shooting and killing. And even the news, when it came on later, is the same way in which it is presented in the American TV. We're moving toward a universal culture.

It's all violent and it's all deadly and it's all degrading. Even the experts are trying to understand if there's a correspondence between the increase of violence in youth and the violence that is to be seen on TV. The nations are sinking in a pit which they have made.

In Denmark, which is my wife's home country, the progressive lawmakers have removed every restriction against pornography. They thought that this was emancipated and progressive. That they should not impose any restrictions on the freedom of men to do what they will.

And when this legislation was being considered, ministers came forward to testify in defense of it, that this would be a good thing for the nation. In the space of 10 years since that legislation passed, the entire nation has become corrupted. It's been 10 years since that legislation was passed, but when you look at

Denmark today, it's in a miserable state.

The world's pornography capital has become a reality. If you go to that country, you will be able to see all kinds of sexual disorders that we can imagine. But with animals.

So a civilization that has many centuries in making is brought down in the span of 10 years. So a civilization that has many centuries in making is brought down in the span of 10 years. But when you look at the results of these 10 years, nothing is left.

Do you know the impact of Japanese technology on the United States? It's becoming mindless automatons. Robots. Yes.

Many young people in the United States have become unable to understand the concept of the mind, and have gradually become humans like mechanical robots. As a result of Japanese electronics, they have made these game machines by which you can become involved in space combat. It is hypnotic and demonic.

And American teenagers can spend hours after hour after hour glued to these machines that even talk back to the player and taunt and mock him. Have you ever heard the sound of these machines? You get a chill just to walk by them. All of these eerie and strange electronic sounds and beeps and devices.

Mocking the player to put yet another coin in the machine if he can beat the space monster. And this is called amusement. And it's becoming like a plague that is over flooding the earth.

And even professional men come and play these machines and justify them. It helps me to overcome my tension. I get away from my problems.

It's harmless escapism. I'm not doing justice to all of these things. I'm not adequately discussing them.

And I don't want to linger on it any longer. But just to say this, human personality is being destroyed. Men are being robbed of authentic humanity.

By the very things that constitute our progress and our success and prosperity. The Word of God is true. The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made.

Who is speaking against these things? Who is showing to men what is the consequence of their progress? Who raises the questions of the meaning and the purpose of human existence? Who examines the unquestioned premises of life? The Japanese produce the technology because it is their success and prosperity? And the West employs it because it is money making and profitable? Who raises the question of the rightness of it all? That something that is made in God's image is being marred and deformed? That we're producing a mindless generation of robot mentality? I challenge the church in East Germany with exactly the same thing. I stayed in the house of an East German brother who works in an automobile factory. He said half of the employees are alcoholic.

He said, brother, we live in a schizophrenic nation. When he said that, something stabbed my heart. I understood why.

In all the streets you have the propaganda signs that all the people are required to see. 45 years of German-Soviet friendship, you see it everywhere in the streets. You say, what's wrong with that, brother? It's a propaganda lie.

There's no more lonely dog to be found in East German streets than a Russian soldier. There's not a German who would ever dream even to give them the time of the day. The Russian authorities prohibit the soldiers from fraternizing with the Germans, even if they could.

But for political purposes, these signs are everywhere, stating the lie. There's no truth or integrity in the land. And God designed the human personality to live in truth and in righteousness.

What happens when it lives in the lie continually? You drown it out with alcohol. The number one problem of the Eastern European countries. I said to the leaders of the church, you have an obligation to stand for what is made in God's own image.

You need to confront the secular authorities and tell them that there's something more important than production goals. If the church will not stand for what is made in God's image, who will? The church needs to raise the question of what men define as success. For they are digging a pit and sinking into it.

The 16th verse says, The Lord has made himself known. He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands, the wicked are snared.

He has executed judgment. What a mercy this is for those who do not have the Scriptures. The Lord has made himself known through his judgments.

Can they read that in nature? Can they see how the Lord has made himself known in earthquakes and typhoons? Does it matter whether we're talking about calamities of nature or calamities in society? Does it matter whether it's a drought or a riot? War, a fire, or an atom bomb? The Lord has been trying to make himself known in his judgments. But if men will not see that, if they will not understand that, if they will just dismiss that as just being an accident of nature, then they shall be required to face a yet stronger judgment. They need to understand what the fires that have come upon their cities mean.

It is to turn their attention toward God. That he might make himself known. For if they will not learn from these fearful fires, and if they will not learn from these terrible disasters, and if they will not learn from the tragedies of Berlin or Nagasaki or Hiroshima, then they have to face a fire that is eternal.

God's mercy is to save men from his ultimate judgments by his first judgments. That the smaller judgment will save us from the greater judgment. That the judgment in time and history will save us from the judgment in eternity.

This needs to be pressed on the consciousness of nations. Because it says in the 17th verse, all the nations who have forgotten God. The wicked will go to hell and even all the nations who forget God.

If you look at the 17th verse, it's a clear word that cannot be altered. Even all the nations who forget God. As we said earlier, if he will judge the nation of Israel, will he fail to judge the nation of Japan? If God will judge the nation of Israel, and if God will fail to judge the nation of Japan, there is no guarantee that God will not fail to judge the nation of Japan.

So the psalmist cries out in conclusion in the 19th verse, Arise, O Lord, and do not let man prevail. Let the nations be judged before thee. And who shall stand in that day? It says that the hearts of men shall fail them for fear, seeing that which is coming upon the earth.

Men who are now proud and arrogant and who have no knowledge of God, will cry out for the rocks to fall upon them and seek to hide in the cleft of the rock. And who shall be able to stand in that fearful day? Put them in fear, the psalmist cries out in the 20th verse, O Lord. Let the nations know that they are but men.

Let the nations know that they are but men. For the nations are the worst idolatry of all times themselves. The nation itself is a deadly idolatry.

It has become a god in modern times that requires the total allegiance of men to itself. It has become a god in modern times that requires the total allegiance of men to itself. It is in modern times that we have seen the totalitarian state.

That the highest good is the total loyalty of men to the state and nation. That the highest good is the loyalty of men to the state and nation. That is why many people do not make much effort for the sake of the state.

And in Japan especially has the state almost become deified or god in it. The nations need to know that they are but men. They need to cry out to God as David did, be gracious to me, O Lord.

In Psalm 51, according to thy loving kindness and thy great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done what is evil in thy sight. So that thou art justified when thou dost speak and blameless when thou dost judge. God is waiting to hear such a cry.

Against thee and thee only have I sinned. My sins are ever before me. I have made a god of nation.

I have put prosperity and well-being before your interest. I have lived an entire indifference to God himself. My transgressions are ever before me.

I have followed false gods. The god of state and the god of prosperity. Because these gods have not required anything from me.

And I have not sought to know you, who is the true god. This is the cry that God is waiting for. Or his judgments will come.

Until the ultimate judgment itself for which there is no remedy. But God gives us a hope. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and seek my face and pray.

I will forgive them their iniquities. And heal their land. Somehow again the key to everything is the church itself.

We are the chief actors of history. Our conduct will determine the issues of judgment. If we ourselves do not have God's perspective.

If we do not ourselves believe deeply that there is a day of the Lord which is coming. If we ourselves have not understood our own history and its meaning. If we fail to warn men.

Then the consequence is fearful. It is more than tens of thousands of Hiroshima's and Nagasaki's. The same God who allowed that fire, allowed the fire by which two million Jews went up through smokestacks.

Six million Jews. Brother, isn't such a God cruel? That he allows two great cities to be wiped out and six million Jews to go up in smoke. No, it is very mercy.

For Peter warns us of a day in which the very elements will be melted by a fiery heat. That the earth and all that is in it will be burned up. Two thousand years ago he had these burning convictions.

And we who stand so much closer to the event have not this awareness. That's why judgment begins in the church. Why aren't we seeing these things by the Spirit? Why are they not as burningly real to us? Because our own sins have had its consequence in the church.

To dull our own conscience. To make dim our own seeing. To rob us of the urgency of God.

Therefore if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and seek my face and pray. This is more than polite prayer. This is more than the prayer of obligation.

This is the prayer that is humbling. If they will humble themselves and seek my face and pray. This is the kind of prayer that will make them humble.

At the end of this morning's session a brother said to me, I have never seen Japanese people react like this. I've never heard such urgency. I've seen such passionate breaking.

This is the beginning of what God is after. A humbling that will bring ourselves down on our faces. That we might find his face.

That he will forgive us our iniquities. Our superficialities. Our casual religious attitudes.

Our satisfaction with mere Sunday services. I've never been able to solve the problem of what to do with children and services. Just what do you do with these poor little things? They can't be expected to understand what's going on.

We can hope that they will be reasonably controlled. But it's amazing the amount of latitude that we permit them. But after all it's only a service.

We somehow have learned to both hear the speaker and to tolerate the noise at the same time. It's after all only a message. And the kids are much cuter.

And it's my kid. You say, why do you bring that up? I'm just somehow struck by this. It seems somehow to be a statement of the condition of the church itself.

All this and heaven too. All this and heaven too. Children and services.

The Word of God and... You have something against kids? No, I have something for God. A certain reverence for the holiness of God and the sacredness of His Word. How many of us would bring our kids if we were invited to the royal palace? And while we were having a dialogue with the emperor, to have the kids running about our feet and making noise and gurgling and playing.

We would consider that an unthinkable distraction. How is it it's not unthinkable for the king? Do you know what the attitude is that is communicated to me? Just another service. And that's what it becomes.

As your faith is, so be it also unto you. You come with a certain kind of limited expectancy? That's what you get. A limited result.

When we will seek His face, He will forgive us our iniquities. Something about our attitude. Something about our casual way.

That makes one day like another and one service like another. And by which we miss God. Yes, we get a message, but we don't get an event.

So I just want to end in prayer again. I want to leave you with this thought. The church is the key.

The condition of the church affects everything. God calls the church the ground and the pillar of truth. And if this is not so in the world, what hope is there for nations? If our spirits are so dull that we ourselves cannot see God's judgment in the earth.

How shall we warn them of a judgment to come? So Lord, we ask your mercy upon us first. We acknowledge that we are dull of heart and of understanding. We have been spoiled religiously.

We have been schooled in limited expectancy. We don't expect your coming or your presence. We have satisfied ourselves with less than what you desire.

We welcome the judgment that does begin in the house of God. Let it begin with us. Forgive us our iniquities.

That you might heal our land. Japan, at the conclusion of the morning session. Let's spend a few minutes praying for the church.

For his people who are called by his name. Let's pray.

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