

Jap-08 God Requires the Past

by Art Katz

God requires that we acknowledge and repent of the sins of our fathers in order to break the unbroken continuum of sin and be set free from the power of the past.

Duration: 1:00:06

Scripture: Leviticus 26:40-41, Ecclesiastes 10:4, Matthew 23:30-31, Acts 7:52, Hebrews 9:22

Topics: "Japanese"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and confessing our sins and the sins of our ancestors. He specifically mentions the Jewish people and their failure to recognize the consequences of their ancestors' sins, leading to their continued separation from God. The preacher also highlights the need for repentance and confession to break the hold of darkness and allow the light of God to enter. He concludes by praying for a word from God for the nation of Japan that will bring eternal rejoicing instead of sorrow.

Transcript

Worship before them? All the nations. Why? Because by judgments have been made manifest. What a wonderful summary of what God has been saying in these days.

But there's more than a speaking that is taking place. There's a birthing, an event. Something is about to be born.

It is just about out of the womb now. We need only to cut the last connection and release it. And we are the participants together in that birth.

I have such a sense of history tonight. Something is about to be birthed of eternal significance. I even tried to find another subject for this lecture.

And the Lord would not allow me. I said, Lord, they've had enough of this history and judgment. Give us another theme, another conclusion.

But He will not. We've got to press all the way through. And I'm glad that it's just a family tonight.

This is a family affair. An intimate birthing. So I want you to understand this.

That what is taking place goes through us and beyond us tonight into the nation itself. So we need, as the word is coming forth, to lend ourselves to it. Pray in the spirit for this word.

I have never undertaken anything more difficult or more complicated than this speaking. It's a mystery of God. It is a divine perspective so different from our natural thinking that we stagger to hear it.

It's a word that offends us and attacks every natural human sensibility. It turns our world upside down. But it is the perspective of God from heaven.

That needs to be made known to men in the earth. And that's what the church is. It's a ladder ascending to heaven with angels ascending and descending.

It's like a ladder that angels descend on. It's Jacob's ladder. It's the house of God.

Jesus said, You've been impressed that I said to you, Nathaniel, that I saw you standing under the fig tree? I show you a greater thing. It's angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. It's the church and the house of God.

We are those angels. To bring from heaven down to earth the message of God. Let's pray tonight.

Bring forth precious God by your spirit we pray. Your holy word. Your event in the earth.

Birth it we pray. That there might be rejoicing in eternity. Because you have sent the word.

Give us a word for the nation of Japan. That shall affect all Asia. And bring eternal rejoicing.

Rather than eternal sorrow. We'll thank you and praise you for this. And give you all the glory.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. My text tonight is Ecclesiastes the third chapter.

Verse ten reads, I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves. He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their hearts.

I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves. He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their hearts.

God has given us a task. A holy task. One that justifies all of our being.

And he has made it appropriate in his time. Because he has also set eternity in our hearts. Haven't you thought it strange that we have been speaking so much about the past in these days? And I shall be speaking of it again tonight.

But not in a way that men in the world understand it. It is given to us to see the past in a radically different way. Why? Because he has set eternity in our hearts.

Because we have alone a view of the future. Therefore we are qualified alone to see and to understand the past. Because we are people who are informed of the eternal future by God.

Therefore we see the past from that viewpoint. I have never seen this before tonight. I have never spoken this before tonight.

Something is being birthed in my own understanding. Something that is unique to us, our task. Because he has set eternity in our hearts.

Because it is real. More real than the things that are visible. Therefore we can see the past in a different way.

The 14th verse says, I know that everything God does will remain forever. There is nothing to add to it. There is nothing to take away from it.

God has so worked that men should fear him. For us history is no accumulation of accidents. It is not a meaningless jumble of confusing facts.

It is everything that God does. There is nothing to add to it or to take away from it. And the whole purpose of it is that men should fear him.

Their whole history is calculated to bring them to a place that they should fear him. And all this prepares us for this 15th verse. It is a mystery of mysteries.

That which has been already and that which will be has already been. For God desires or requires that which is past. What a confusion.

That which is has been already? Yes. Everything that presently is has always been. The same timeless elements that affect men in the past are with us still.

All of the elements of the past are still presently with us. And also that which will be is also with us. It is the triumph of Jesus Christ.

It is already with us. It is finished. Has been with us throughout time.

And is now about to be made manifest. On one basis only. God requires that which is past.

In other words, God desires that which has already been. How contrary that is to human wisdom. Oh, let bygones be bygones, men say.

It's in the past. It's finished. Nothing in the past is finished.

It impinges upon us right in this present moment. There is an unbroken continuum of sin. It continues from generation to generation.

And no man is absolved from the past. You say, brother, what do you mean by that? I mean that every one of us stands before Pontius Pilate and is required to choose Barabbas or Jesus. No, brother, that's not my choice.

I was born after the event. That does not absolve you from the responsibility of choice. That which is past is now.

The timeless issues with which God confronts men is with them. And we are required to choose. We can't say that we were born after the event.

That is already in the past. We can't say that it has nothing to do with us. If we are silent, it is doomed to be sin.

What Pontius Pilate said was, Who do you choose? Him or Barabbas? The one chosen by God? And they cried out, give us Barabbas. And they sinned in their choice. And we who have been born after that time and remain silent choose Barabbas also in our silence.

If we have not affirmed the truth, we have chosen a lie. Where have you ever heard these things before? But this is as God sees. And men need to know it.

The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons. Until we acknowledge the sins of the fathers as our own, we are in the same guilt with them. But I never invaded Korea.

I never raped Shanghai. I would never do those things in Southeast Asia. We stand in the guilt of our fathers until we acknowledge that what they did is sin.

That which is past is now. There is an unbroken continuum of sin which only repentance alone breaks. Say, brother, have you got a scriptural text to prove this? Can you prove the scriptures by the scriptures? I think I can.

Turn to Matthew, the 23rd chapter. Matthew 23. The 30th verse.

Jesus is making exactly the same point. He is talking to the Pharisees who are so proud of their religious righteousness. And he says, because you say that if you had been in the days of your fathers we would not have been partakers with them therefore you be witnesses unto yourselves that you are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Because you are unwilling to acknowledge the sins of the fathers as your own. That shows that you are the children of them which killed the prophets. Because you think yourself somehow superior.

You assume that you would not do as they did. And that is your error. You are unwilling to acknowledge the sins of the fathers as your own sins.

But you are not better than they. And if the situation were to come again you would do just as they did. Because there is no man righteous, no not one.

He says in the 35th verse that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. Upon you must come all of the righteous blood shed throughout all of the past will come on you. Verse 35.

Verse 35. From the blood of righteous Abel until the blood of Zechariah the son of Barakias whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Well you can see that this Jesus is a little disturbed in his head.

What does he mean? Whom you slew between the temple and the altar. You weren't even there. This happened long before you were born.

But that accident of birth and time does not impress Jesus. God never is impressed with past, present and future. These are only human categories and human conveniences.

God only knows the eternal now. And he sees every man standing before these issues. Therefore he can say whom you slew though they were not even there.

So long as they are unwilling to affirm the truth they commit themselves to the lie. They are unwilling to acknowledge the sins of their fathers as their own. In Acts the 7th chapter we see the same point made

again.

It's Stephen making his last speech before he is the first martyr. Again he is talking to a self-righteous generation. But he doesn't spare them the words of truth.

In the 51st verse you stiff-necked and uncircumcised you do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did so do ye. 51 You are exactly the same as your fathers. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And they slew those who showed the Messiah to come.

Of whom you have now been the betrayers and the murderers. Your fathers slew the prophets who told of the Messiah to come. And you sons slew the one who came.

As your fathers did so do you also. There is an unbroken continuum between fathers and sons between the past and the present that is yet not broken. Do you know what the proof of this was? As your fathers did so do you also.

They slew Stephen too. We need to understand this. This unbroken continuum of sin that operates in history until we acknowledge the sins of our fathers.

Look at Leviticus, the 26th chapter. In the 40th verse, 2640 God speaking through Moses says If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers with their trespass which they trespassed against me that they also have walked contrary unto me And then in the 44th verse and that they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity then I will remember my covenant with Jacob. I'm just pulling up the 41st verse, the end of it and the beginning of the 42nd verse.

We need to study this. This is more than just ancient history. It's more than even Moses speaking to Israel.

It is an eternal principle of God. If God is going to be restored to a people they must first confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. And they must accept of the punishment of that iniquity.

The Jewish people have never done this to this very day. They have never acknowledged the sins of their fathers. They do not understand them as sins.

They don't understand why their temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and Jerusalem destroyed and the people cast into all of the earth. Though the word of God is clear they will not accept it as the consequence of sin. They will not see the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as a punishment coming from God as judgment.

Therefore even to this day God is withheld from them. Because it says in the 43rd verse because they despised my judgments. What would this mean then for Japan? Japan needs to acknowledge the iniquity of its fathers.

Yes, we have been an aggressive and militant nation. In our lust and our ambition we have invaded weaker peoples. In our racist national pride we have subjugated and devastated them.

All of this has been through the enablement and help that has come from our religions and our philosophies. False religions that have encouraged us to this kind of conduct. But we confess this now as iniquity and sin.

And we accept of our punishment. We recognize that the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not a mistake in the policy of the West. It was the judgment of God.

It was a terrible punishment. But so also was our sin. We don't argue with it.

We don't attribute this to the mistakes of men in their policies. We don't say that it was a mistake. We receive this as a judgment of God. And we repent.

Then will God restore his relationship. Our failure to acknowledge the sins of our fathers as our own implicates us in their sins. And joins us with them in that sin.

That needs to be broken by confession. Only a confession breaks the connection with the past. Do we really think that Japan is a new nation? Do we really think that it is immune to the perils of the past? That the evil things of the past could not come here again? Or are the same evil spirits continuing to brood over this land that have always brooded over it? Certainly that's true of Germany today.

And that's why it's so difficult to labor for the gospel in these countries. The powerful forces of darkness that brood over the land that had their origin in violence and war and bloodshed have never been challenged or broken. They have a legitimate right to remain.

And they can only be dispelled by one factor. Repentant acknowledgement of sin. Only that permits the light of God to break into this darkness and loosen these powers that hold an entire nation captive.

That's why God requires that which is past. But have we acknowledged this? Have we seen as God sees that there is an unbroken connection, a continuum with the sin of the past that needs to be acknowledged and broken through repentant confession? There's an interesting statement in the 19th verse in Ecclesiastes, the third chapter. The 18th verse.

I said to myself concerning the sons of men, God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts. God has allowed the violence of our past. Something needs to be demonstrated to men once and for all to recognize what their condition really is.

These are not my words, they're God's. In order for them to see that they are but beasts. Oh, but brother, what about the flower arrangements? What about the tea-serving ceremony? What about paper flowers? And all of the beautiful aesthetic aspects of the culture and the refinement and the courtesy.

Underneath that false outward appearance and subterfuge, all men are as beasts. This is the truth of God. It's a painful truth.

It runs contrary to our in-built respect for ancestors. But we must stand on the truth of God's own words. For the way that God sees is a lone truth.

The 19th verse says, for the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. There is no advantage for man over beasts for all his vanity. Do you know why we have difficulty in recognizing this? Difficulty in accepting this? Because we don't really deeply believe this about ourselves.

We think it's by some virtue in us that God decided to save us. He really needed us for his program. We are unwilling to face the very hard basic foundational fact of what is the condition of all men.

There is no man good, no, not one. There is no advantage of man over beast for all his vanity. And what has the 20th century taught us in its history? It's not that we are as bad as beasts.

We are worse than beasts. For beasts are not cruel to each other. There has been a violence and a cruelty in our history that goes beyond what can be reasonably understood.

It's not just the use of force to accomplish what seems to be a necessary object. It's not just putting the knife in, but turning it. It's humiliating men and degrading men.

Fierce and vicious and vile behavior. It's throwing babies out of church windows and catching them on the bayonet of your rifle. It is being in contempt of men and destroying their lives as if you're cutting hay.

God shows us this in order for us to see that we are but beasts. We need to acknowledge what is the truth of our history. What it has revealed.

However much it destroys our pride. Because deep down many of us still have a national pride. We are not yet operating on the true basis of the gospel.

The love of country and culture still has a deep place in us. We're proud of being Jews. Proud of being Japanese.

We exalt our history and find a complementary way to interpret it. God brings his fierce judgments and we interpret them in such a way as we come out like heroes. Six million Jews were systematically annihilated in ovens in Europe.

And instead of asking where was God? Why did he allow this to happen? We interpret it in such a way as we come out smelling like a rose. Look how we suffered for God. Look how we suffered for being Jews.

When the real truth of the matter is that you were not Jewish enough. You did not know the God of your fathers as you ought. You did not serve him as you ought.

You were the architects of modern thought and civilization that is against God. And it has cost you this judgment. But if they will not see it as judgment how much worse will the end be than the beginning? For God gives us lesser judgments to save us from greater judgments.

And if we will not receive the fire bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a lesser judgment God will give us a greater. All to keep us from an ultimate judgment in which there is no remedy eternally. God requires that which is past.

My brother was telling me tonight that there is a movement in Japan that is trying to encourage in a new way the spirit of militarism again. You explain to them the whole thing. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness in heaven.

No, we are not. We are fighting against you who rule the world in the air. And you in the air are still working.

That has been going on for a long time since the samurai and the warriors of Japan. Still secretly encouraged and delighted after. It's a dark spirit power that needs to be broken to release the nation for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For the revelation of light that comes from heaven. That men might understand and be saved. The power of the past must be broken by those who will acknowledge the sins of their fathers as their own.

Because God says if you will acknowledge the iniquity of your fathers and your own iniquity that you also have walked contrary to me and you also shall accept of their punishment. Then shall I remember my people. The church itself needs to be set free from the past.

I remember one morning when I was together with Jewish believers in New York City. It was the very neighborhood where I had been brought up as a boy. Six o'clock in the morning I was awakened by the windows rattling in the room where I was sleeping.

And there was no wind. And I woke perfectly alert. I knew that God wanted me to go outside of that house and to walk in the neighborhood in which I had been brought up.

And I can't tell you what a haunting experience it was to walk through those streets where I went to school, where I went to the synagogue as a boy. I came back about ten o'clock in the morning and my Jewish Christian brothers were up and I shared with them my experience. And the Lord showed us that though we were Christians there was something very deep yet in our spirit that came from our Jewish past.

A hatred of Gentiles. A despising of Christianity. A spirit of Antichrist.

We had all gone through the synagogue of Satan. We had taken this up with our mother's milk. And that morning the Lord had us to pray one by one in a new special way.

I still remember the prayer. Lord in the name of Jesus and in the power of His blood I cut myself off from the sins of my fathers and from ancestry from every negative and evil thing that has gone on in father and family and unseen generations. I cut myself off in the name of Jesus and in the power of His blood.

And we experienced a strange release of freedom. It was a Saturday morning and the Lord led us to the synagogue that day. We came into the service and we filled up the entire pew.

We came and sat in the service and filled up an entire pew. A row of seats. Could you share that? Do it.

We came into the synagogue and we occupied an entire row in the synagogue, sat down in a row together. We must have looked different from everyone else sitting there. The rabbi came by at the end of the service and he said, you look like a row of angels.

When it was over and we came outside one of the Jewish brothers said something that I'll never forget. He said, this is the first time since I have been a Christian that I'm able to sit in a synagogue and be at peace. A bondage has really been broken.

I really feel released. I could sit there but I'm not affected. It has no power over me.

Every previous time I came I was intimidated in that synagogue atmosphere. But some invisible bondage had been broken through prayer in the name of Jesus and the power of his blood. This needs to be begun in the church.

God requires that which is past. And so I'm going to suggest it to you. A prayer of this kind that will sever the connection between you and the sins of your fathers.

To be silent about those sins is to acknowledge them. If we will not deny them we affirm them. And I think that this is a key of release in the nation.

For the chapter ends in the 22nd verse in Ecclesiastes. The last verse. I've seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities for who will bring him to see what will occur after him? Who will bring them to see what shall come after? Those who truly understand the past.

Because eternity is in their hearts. Because they have been set free from the power of the past. Because they have broken the spiritual bondage that connects them with the past.

These are a people that can make a nation to see what shall happen after them. I have the same feeling about Japan that I have about Germany. What Germany was to Europe Japan has been to Asia.

Both have brought devastation and evil to the area of the world in which they are center in modern times. Satan has used both nations to bring evil into the world. And God now desires to use the same nations to bring blessing and good.

Germany is the key to the salvation of Europe and of Israel. And I believe that Japan is the key to the bringing of the blessing of the Gospel to Asia. Where Satan has come in like a flood God wants to raise His standard.

When you will acknowledge the iniquity of your fathers as your own. And that the punishment which has come has been just. Then, God says, He requires that which is past.

That's what the word says. That which is past is now. And God requires that which is past.

The world and the spirit of the devil says, Oh, bygones be bygones. It's all in the past. It's finished.

No, it's present now. And its power needs to be broken by confession of the iniquities of your fathers as your own and breaking the connection with the past and the power of the blood of Jesus. It will bring a release.

It will break up the principalities and the powers of darkness. And submit into the nation the light of the gospel. So I want us to pray together for this.

Something needs to be birthed. Something new coming out of the past. And yet cut off from it a new release according to God's own seeing a true recognition of the meaning of the past because eternity has been set in our hearts.

Let's pray for this. We thank you, Jesus, for the day of small beginnings. You have got to begin at some place.

And you have begun here. It has pleased you to bring this word here to birth this understanding here. And Lord, we want to be obedient to your word.

We want to be completely free from the power of the past. We want to be as angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. And not superficial Christians locked into their culture.

So we thank you for the word of God. For you we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free. We thank you for the blood of Jesus that can cut the power of the past.

We ask you not to hear our prayer. As one by one we speak a confession we sever ourselves from father and family and ancestry. We cut ourselves off from unseen generations that we might be free in the present to bring men the knowledge of the future and save them in eternity out of the punishment of hell.

Hear our confession and release us we pray. Break the powers of darkness. Let your light break into darkness and let it spread from here.

We release in this nation that you might send from this nation those who shall bring the blessings of the gospel in the world. The ministry of reconciliation where there has been pain and bloodshed. Come my God.

Come. Hear us. Amen.

Make a clear confession before God, before men and before the powers of darkness. Use the name of Jesus and the power of His blood. Lord, I sever myself from the past.

I cut the connection. I acknowledge the iniquities of my fathers as my own. I do not defend our history.

I acknowledge it as sin and evil. Set me free from the power of the past.

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