

K-438 the Mystery of Zion

by Art Katz

The mystery of Zion refers to the relationship between the church and Israel, and the need for the church to understand its place in relation to Israel's restoration, and to be humble and submissive in the face of God's plan.

Duration: 1:09:26

Scripture: Romans 11:25-26

Topics: "Zion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of prophetic proclamation and the role it plays in the community. He acknowledges the difficulty and awkwardness of delivering prophetic messages but emphasizes the need for the church to embrace its prophetic calling. The speaker also mentions two writings on the word 'Zion' by notable commentators and expresses a desire for God to reveal the mystery inherent in this word. He concludes by highlighting the significance of extending mercy and the impact it can have on the church and the salvation of both Jews and non-Jews.

Transcript

The great words need to be apprehended, and we need to be apprehended by them. So I'm going to ask that remarkable grace of God, mercy, that that might even happen tonight. Or it will nullify last night and throw the conclusion tomorrow night under a shadow.

This is a pivotal linkage between what has already gone before and what will yet come as conclusion. And I've not been this way heretofore. I have two things with me written by other men who have tentatively explored the word Zion, both remarkable men.

And if you've heard of T. Austin Sparks, how many people have heard that name? Remarkable commentator. I don't know when he gave this address, but you can almost feel him palpitating in between his statements. He's gasping, he's drawing birth.

He doesn't know what the next line is, as I don't. And he's feeling for something. He's trying to apprehend something of a crucial, critical kind, and that's our task tonight.

Okay, Lord, precious God. This people are being treated or exposed to a number of things, and not the least of which is the phenomenon of prophetic proclamation itself. Awkward, choked, weak, inept, feeling

one's way through.

And it's important that they perceive this as you require me to demonstrate it, which is not comfortable, because they themselves are called corporately to be a prophetic entity in the community where they are. And so whatever it is that constitutes the prophet in himself is also the essential constitution of the body called to be prophetic. And it's good for them to catch a glimpse of the raw thing made manifest before them.

So come, Lord, because how are mysteries to be proclaimed and apprehended except through choked splurts and inchoate gropings and feelings our way? For if it were a mechanical matter, it would no longer be a mystery. And as I mentioned over the dinner table, we Americans are especially inured, I-N-U-R-E-D. We are incapacitated against mystery.

We're too matter of fact. We're too mechanical. We're too, what's the word? We don't have a mentality.

We don't have a disposition that lends itself to a respect for and a sensitivity toward mystery. And yet the deepest things of God are encapsulated in mystery, and that you gave to our brother Paul the stewardship of these mysteries that are now on time for their disclosure, not that we should become clever and hold forth impressively about them, but fulfill them. So come, Lord, in your great mercy and make the mystery known.

We thank and give you praise for the privilege in which we're required to participate with the speaker and in drawing out your heart and feeling our way through and apprehending, my God, what is inherent in that mystery, which if we fail, we lose the game. We cannot be the church. We cannot be to Israel what we ought.

The issue of your glory is left suspended and unfulfilled. So we're asking mercy, Lord. And we thank you because we're going to be called to extend mercy.

How shall we extend what we have not first received? So let tonight be an exercise in the mercy of God for me, for them, for us together. We thank and give you praise. In Jesus' name, God's people said, amen.

Is the sound coming through okay? I was told that if I had this too close to my mouth, it doesn't sound right. Warn me if I'm not sounding clear. Let's go back to our text in Romans 11, one of the epical chapters of all Scripture, where the steward of the mystery, the apostle Paul, takes the liberty of conflating a Scripture out of Isaiah and a Scripture out of Psalms to put it together in a new amalgam, a new way, in order to communicate a new thought of a kind that God has given him to express for the church of every generation.

Did you catch that? What a liberty the apostle takes to conflate and put together in a new expression one Scripture out of Isaiah and another out of Psalms and put the two together and make one new Scripture out of it, a statement, with a kind of apostolic liberty that I don't think offended the Lord. And that's the verse that we're looking at, 25 and 26. I would not brethren that you should be ignorant of this mystery.

You may be ignorant of others, but you'll not suffer the consequence that you will if you're ignorant of this one, which will be that you'll be made wise in your own conceit. You'll be given to an arrogance. You'll become inflated if you miss this because this mystery is calculated for your humility.

There's something about the mystery of our relationship with the Jew and Israel that has by its very nature the power to temper us and to subdue us in our arrogance and to bring a dimension of humility to the church, which if it lacks it loses its character as the church. Nothing else will provide this. Something like we who are so bumptious and presumptuous to think that we are the first and foremost consideration of God and that Israel may be a second consideration have to learn that our function in being established as the church is to play second fiddle to their restoration.

That we are called to be the axis, the provision by which they come into their fulfillment as if we are secondary and they are the foremost consideration and they will occupy a place eternally by that grace that is denied us. If that's not calculated to keep you down, to keep you in a proper place in your own understanding of the church, I don't know what is. And so that's part of the mystery.

That the relationship that God intends for us with them by its very nature is given to keep us in a place of subjection and humility appropriate to our character as the church. And if we do not receive the mystery and understand it in that way we lose that very provision and automatically become bumptious, arrogant, and conceited. Why we even think that we are the kingdom of God and if not we will bring it in single-handedly.

We'll do it through changing the economy and the social system and education and then we'll present it to the Lord as a finished fact. And we don't have to wait for the king to establish his kingdom, we'll do it. I'm not coining little notions.

These are current thoughts in many segments of the church today. And invariably when you examine those segments you find that they are non-compassionate on the issue of Israel. They have no regard, no understanding.

Or they may talk about, let's pray for the peace of Jerusalem and give it a 60 second acknowledgement. Or they want to see the establishment of the state as if they're doing God's service but they don't understand at all the magnitude of what adheres in the subject of Israel's restoration and in fact don't even expect that. They would be content with just the success of a political state not knowing that the political state is given not to succeed but to die.

They have not understood that there's a necessary suffering and a death before a resurrection and an ascension and that Jesus himself who is the pattern's son and the sum and substance of the genius of what Israel itself is is indicating the path by which the people itself must come into their glory. There's no ascension before there's a going down. And God will give something in order to bring it down.

In the humanity of Jesus, was there anything ever more perfect? And when that humanity hung on the cross and the dejected disciples on the road to Emmaus were crestfallen and crunched because they had thought it was he who would restore the glory to Israel but alack and alas, there he is, a dead cadaver on the cross contorted and so misshapen and brutalized that you can't even recognize his once beautiful humanity Jesus had to say to them, O fools and slow of heart, not to believe all that the prophets have written ought not the Messiah to suffer and die before he ascends to his glory? If you were here now he would say, Fools and slow of heart, not to understand that the state, the nation must first suffer and die before it ascends to its glory? Your problem is that you were thinking only in terms of political success. You had no understanding of the intention of God for the people of Israel that has to do with his glory. That they are going to be the center of God's theocratic rule that the law of God shall go forth out of their Zion and the word of the Lord out of their Jerusalem and nations shall come with every feast of tabernacles to

pay homage to the nation that God has restored and redeemed out of thousands of years of apostasy and given a place of preeminence before all nations not because they have earned or obtained it by their merit but simply because he's God and as they were abated now he will now allow them to abound.

Why is that such a... The reason that we don't comprehend it is that we ourselves not only have not experienced that we do not desire to experience it. We ourselves are content with religious success and have fallen short of any thought of God's glory let alone that there should be a suffering that precedes it. So we project upon Israel the small measure of our own vision for ourselves upon them and are offended if there's any greater intention of God that requires the centrality of the cross.

Well, take my word for it and ponder what I'm saying. Okay. So what should we not be ignorant of? That blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written there shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. What a remarkable statement that God is not even waiting for Israel's repentance but he will take transgression from them prior to any repentance. And after he takes their transgression after he restores them on the basis of his own mercy then they will abhor themselves as we read in Ezekiel 36 for all of the offenses which will then be revealed.

Isn't that a remarkable reversal of the way in which we understand and have received God's dealing with us but with them he has this special provision. He will take transgression from Jacob. He will act upon the nation.

He will not wait for it to deserve or to exercise itself in such a way as to obtain anything from God. It will simply be the recipient of a mercy that comes. Now why is this so critical a point? The answer to that question requires a week's seminar.

But just for the purposes of shorthand you need to understand that the issue of Israel is of a cosmic kind. Israel represents man. Man in his self-sufficiency.

Man in his initiative. Man in his own correctness. Man in his own righteousness which God cannot allow to succeed because it is in error.

There's no good thing in man. There's no natural thing in man that God can reward. For what is man whose breath is in his nostrils? There's only one righteousness and that's God.

There's only one mercy. That's God. There's only one love.

That's God. That the issue of Israel is not to demonstrate some special facility that they have. Look man, no hands.

We're Jewish. That they would impress the goyim, the Gentiles but that they are the statement of what man is in himself. And therefore, they cannot even take credit for their repentance.

When you read Zechariah chapters 11, 12, 13 when the Lord comes, when all nations come against Jerusalem to destroy it he comes with his feet on the Mount of Olives and destroy those armies that come to destroy Israel and in that day we shall look upon him whom we have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for one's only son and be in bitterness for one's firstborn.

Such a mourning it says that the family of David apart, the family of Nathan apart, this family apart, even husbands and wives apart that the depth of the agony of remorse that breaks upon Jewish consciousness in a moment in time when we see him whom we have pierced whom we have blasphemed, whom we have rejected whom we have violently rejected and scorned and dismissed as a sorcerer and a magician has actually come to be our deliverer and the depth of that repentance exceeds anything that any of us have ever known or will know it's a national repentance of a kind that heretofore has never taken place in the history of mankind so deep a repentance that man cannot even bear to be in the same room with another at the same time repenting before God husbands and wives apart, families apart and

the depth of what happens in an historic moment but that has been seeded by millennia of Christ's rejection I'm not doing this justice folks so that's why you need to join me you need to come into this you need to have your spirits engaged and draw out and understand what God is wanting to communicate I'm here to put together in a prophetic statement what would not occur to a saint to join it says there shall come out of Zion the deliverer that's the whole subject that's before us tonight what is this Zion out of which deliverance comes I think it proceeds or is synonymous with the coming of the Lord because this salvation that comes to the nation some will be in Jerusalem where the Lord's feet come on the Mount of Olives and they see him as deliverer but we're talking about a migration

of Jews maybe the greater number of Jews who have been uprooted from nations will be in passage through nations and will be encountering something because it says that the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion with mourning and sighing fleeing away and everlasting joy upon their heads indicates that some come as the result of this migration and sifting through the nation as restored and arriving as the redeemed of the Lord but something happens to them in the course of this exodus that exceeds and eclipses the initial exodus because it says in Jeremiah you shall not remember me as the God who brought you out of Egypt but you'll remember me as the God who brought you out of all nations wherein I have scattered you so there's an exodus yet future that exceeds the exodus out of Egypt

which till now has been the primary historic fact of Israel's identity as a nation and so why is it greater? because the magnitude of it and the number of nations to which Jews will be brought but that the redeemed of the Lord will return to Zion as redeemed and maybe that remnant that was in Jerusalem because there'll be an expulsion but there's always a residue that remains maybe the ones that look upon him whom we have seen although every eye shall see him and I don't have an answer for that how all of that can take place and in what order but for our concern tonight we want to examine what does he mean when he says that there shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob and why it is that Israel must be acted upon and cannot be allowed itself to

affect its own redemption or its own return because there's a cosmic issue that God is demonstrating before all nations that man is not the foremost consideration what did the, in the renaissance the humanist, man is the measure of all things you guys remember that college from college 1A, man is the measure of all things and God is saying no, God is the measure of all things and I'm showing you that by using a nation who are the epitome of man what is the distinction of a Jew he is man, epitomized he's man in his greatest ability man in his greatest self-sufficiency man in his greatest self-confidence and that has got to fail and fail before the face of all nations so that all nations will be instructed by the example of Israel as a nation that could not succeed on the basis of its own

merit though they took a brilliant stab at it in resuscitating a dead language and revamping a swampland the malarial wasteland and in half a century establishing a brilliant modern civilization with atomic and

nuclear possibilities in the greatest air force that by every measure it would be the admiration of all nations and the ultimate success of man in his own sufficiency which is why it must fail and will fail and the Lord has seen to it the exacerbating condition of Palestinians in the land vying for their place in it, having had residents for centuries and locked in conflict with Zionists who are using biblical grounds as a claim in which though not believing in the biblical grounds employing it as a justification for the possession of the land there's a conflict in which God

himself is the author, there's a conflict over which our sin as a people has been the preparation and that drama is being played out right before us in these days and is already affecting all the world though it's in a little corner of the earth called the Middle East all nations are affected by this this drama and this conflict and it will erupt it will fail, it cannot succeed on the basis of the rejection of God and the celebration of man in his own wisdom so there needs to be a deliverer but what does it mean that the deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob or take transgression from Jacob and it's my supposition that Zion is a mystery word that refers to the church that connects with the verse above it that when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in so

all Israel shall be saved as it is written, that the issue of Israel's salvation is not the issue of Israel but the fullness of the Gentiles being come in, something has got to take place that affects God's stratagem toward the nation but it's not because of anything that the nation itself does in Ezekiel 37, the valley of dry bones the nation is dead and they themselves say we are cut off, we are without hope we are as dry bones we are incapable of effecting our own deliverance, our own restoration even remarkably that the national anthem of Israel is called the hope, Hatikvah is the hope but there's nothing in the text of that national anthem that refers to a hope in God it's a hope in man, it's a hope in state, it's a hope in humanity in Jewishness but it's not a hope in God and

therefore it's a melancholy refrain that perceives their disaster God has got to be their deliverer but evidently he waits for certain things to release that deliverance that come from a mysterious source called Zion and it's connected with the fullness of the Gentiles and the fullness as I suggested last night is not just a numeric quantity from among all nations, a people for his name from among all nations, but a fullness beyond number that has got to be the measure of a certain quality and that quality of the church come of age is what I believe God is referring mysteriously to in the word Zion.

So let me read a little from Sparks in this series of addresses that he gave in which you can just feel the man gasping and trying to find his way through this difficult topic.

He says right at the beginning from the commencement of redemption history from Israel's first deliverance out of Egypt and the concept of coming into a land of promise the issue of Zion is already at hand thou wilt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thy inheritance the place O Lord thou hast made for thee to dwell in the sanctuary Lord which thy hands have established right at the beginning Zion is in view as the end the consummation of their journeyings and their experiences during the next 40 years yes and many more Zion is on the horizon from the beginning Zion is not the beginning, Zion is the consummation of everything you know are you familiar with Psalm 2 that remarkable eschatological psalm that mentions Zion in a remarkably significant way why do the heathen rage and the people imagine the vain thing the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord against his anointed saying let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us he that sits in the heavens shall laugh and the Lord shall have them in derision then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sure displeasure saying yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion I will

declare the decree the Lord has said unto me thou art my son this day have I begotten thee ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession the nexus of God's rule the consummation of God's whole redemption history is to seat a king upon the holy hill of Zion and that all nations will be affected by that rule he'll give him the heathen as his inheritance when he has a son upon the throne of Zion.

Zion is God's termination the climax of the age it's both a place but it's also a condition it's a holy hill and God has chosen it to confound the wisdom of the world that thinks that the locus of God's rule should be in a more prestigious elevation some great mountain peak something like New York or Geneva or world headquarters God chooses a hill and calls it holy and he makes it the place of his sanctuary and his residence and the issue of his law shall go forth out of it or shall not go forth at all Zion in God's sight is especially dear and its gates to him are more precious than any other place and yet when you read scripture and reference to Zion it implies that not only is it a place but it's a condition of an ultimate kind something that has come to a final pitch of perfection and

of maturity that I believe is referred to in the scripture in Romans that the deliverer shall come out of Zion is not so much his emergence from a physical place as the release for him to come out of a church that has come of age maybe I can give you a clue and a hint of that in Psalm 102 where there's another reference made to Zion it's a remarkable psalm another eschatological psalm that refers to the end of a yet future time that has not yet taken place in history but toward which we're tending in which it begins and we won't have the time to look at it but at your own leisure sounds like a man speaking from a concentration camp it sounds like a man who is desolate and bereft of hope who has been reduced whose days are consumed in verse 3 like smoke and my bones are burned as in a

hearth my heart is smitten and withered like grass so that I forget to eat my bread by reason the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin this is about as graphic a picture of the victims of the Nazi concentration camps as is to be given in scripture and yet in the context it's to be seen as a man speaking of a condition that is yet future but will very much be reminiscent of the concentration camps of the past and when I visited Auschwitz in Poland and Birkenau which is like 3 kilometers away which is the modern death camp of extermination because Auschwitz was the original Polish Army installation in which the Nazis began but was inadequate as a factory of extermination and a few kilometers away they built this most modern place for the systematic annihilation of millions of

people with train tracks going right up to the gas chambers and the whole remarkable thing, barracks and we walked over these acres of Birkenau with a brother from my fellowship and we saw the foundations of these barracks and there's one or two that remain you can see how crude a facility it was, how lacking in hygiene why typhoid and disease was rampant and daily they carried out the corpses or worked them to death and there over a million victims were systematically processed and turned up through smokestacks and this brother was saying as we were looking at that you're suggesting that the holocaust that is to come will eclipse the Nazi time because Jesus said that there's a time of trouble coming such as the nation has never known or will again know and if that time were not cut short

no flesh would survive but for the elect's sake that time will be cut short and this is an answer to the question what are the signs of your coming and of the end of the age and in that answer he gives a description of a time of Jacob's trouble drawing actually from Jeremiah and Daniel to give a picture of the last days calamity coming upon Israel that if it were not cut short there would be no Jewish survival at all and he says it's greater than any past trouble so if the past trouble took six million lives what will this future

trouble take if it must eclipse it and be greater and so this brother said to me if it took this kind of apparatus of a factory of extermination to remove six million Jews or millions in other places like this what will it take in a shorter period of time for we

know that the time of Jacob's trouble is established as a three and a half year period from the time of an antichrist seeking to be worshipped in Jerusalem and the rejection of that nation recognizing that they've made a covenant with death and with hell and that releases and initiates this time of Jacob's trouble what must be required then if in a shorter period of time a greater number of deaths must take place it would mean that there would have to be camps like this in places not just in Poland or Europe but throughout the world wherever there are concentrations of Jews I had not thought like that but this psalm and the way in which the psalmist is describing the plight of an inmate sounds very much like that it ends with because of thine indignation verse 10 and thy wrath for thou

hast lifted me up and cast me down here's one way that we know that this is not a description of past calamities but one of the future because here the calamity is of such a kind that the victim himself recognizes that God himself is the agent and that what we are suffering is in proportion to a judgment for our sin as wrath that acknowledgement has not yet come from the past of course so it must be something that is yet future because of your indignation and your wrath for you have lifted me up and cast me down it's an acknowledgement of God in judgment which is yet future in the nation's experience and confession and then he says my days are like a shadow that declined and I am withered like grass but you O Lord shall endure forever and your remembrance unto all generations so here's a

man in the midst of remarkable affliction yet because of it he's come to an acknowledgement of God in a way that is yet future in the history of Israel's experience and then he makes this remarkable statement having acknowledged that he passes away but God shall endure forever and his remembrance to all generations for thou shalt arise here's the language of resurrection and have mercy upon Zion for the time to favor her yea the set time has come what is he seeing that there will be now a deliverance for Israel what is it for which God waits that when it comes he's released to be Israel's deliverer that the deliverer shall come out of Zion he will have mercy upon Zion for the time to favor her yes the set time has come for thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust

thereof so the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth thy glory when the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory listen dear saints are you with me this is tough sledding this is difficult proclamation this is digging out and trying to bring credibility and sense to a mystery that is tied in with all of these verses in the way in which the Lord remarkably gives a little clue here and a statement there and we're required somehow to put together something and find its meaning so that here again there's something spoken that seems to reverberate in what Paul says in Romans 11 it may well be that Paul got his insight from this very psalm that Zion is the key for Israel's deliverance not Israel herself and that there's a set time for which God

waits to be that deliverer and what is it that he sees now that he's now released to be because his servants have favor upon her stones and mercy upon her dust what kind of a statement is that that this epical turning of God to be the deliverer of his apostate nation after centuries of backslidenness and alienation from God waits for something of this kind that his servants it evidently is not Israel itself and that they display something in having favor upon the stones of Israel and upon her dust that is so significant in God's sight that he's now released to be the deliverer of the nation because something has taken place in Zion for which he waits and that's something if you'll allow my prophetic interpretation is a coming to a

place of compassion and identification with a stricken

nation for which there is no natural explanation while all the world is indignant at Israel and rubbing their hands in glee at the misfortune that will have fallen upon the nation because the stones and the dust are the statement of judgment that will have brought down Haifa and Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and all of the cities of Israel they will be reduced to stubble and this is not the only text that indicates this ruin Ezekiel 36 talks about the return to Israel and that the first thing that is accomplished is the rebuilding of the cities that have been made waste and left desolate and I don't have time to spell all this out for you so there's a certain kind of witness that needs to take place in a short time that I'm on to something here that you can pursue at your own leisure and find

the scriptures that will indeed confirm the scenario that I'm trying to put before you.

The stones and the dust is a symbolic poetic statement of a nation reduced in judgment through devastation if you visit Israel today that's why I say I don't know that there will be other tours I don't know that making a trip to Israel will again be feasible I don't know when the bottom will fall out but I know this, the bottom will fall out and the proud trade towers of Tel Aviv, the diamond towers and all of the places that Israel has established as if there's no tomorrow as if they can continue and expect a security of an unrelenting kind will one day be reduced to rubble but in that reduction while the world delights in what has befallen Israel who will be blamed for every adversity that has come into the world, an oil crisis a collapse of economies Israel can do this a conflict in

Israel is sufficient to tip the whole scale of the world economy and the world balance and that's why it's so pivotal a thing and that collapse is going to come and the nations who lack a spiritual understanding and have a bias against the Jewish people even under the best circumstances will now relish Israel's plight and rub their hands in glee, you have it coming you deserved it, you were arrogant you refused to negotiate you wouldn't give up a piece of land for peace, you built a big wall, you aggravated the Palestinians you can just hear it coming, it's being said now Sharon is being called Hitler and Zionism Nazism is being called Nazism and Israel is being called a nation of apartheid and discrimination prejudice and violence because there's sufficient evidences being given in their

conduct to support allegations of this kind in the unregenerate who don't understand that Israel must come down, that there must be a failure, there must be calamity, and out of its ashes will come a resurrection of a people, of a new nation, a new character priestly, who will bless all the families of the earth including those families that are now their enemies oh lord help me with a little help lord so what is this remarkable significance that the set time to favor Zion has come when his servants have mercy upon her dust and compassion for her stones is more than antiquity it's more than a certain kind of respect for the ancient cities of Israel it's an identification with Israel in her judgment as being one with them not deserving of their judgment but we who are saved out of sin

while we were yet in our transgressions and in our iniquity can have a heart of compassion and mercy for the nation that will be saved out of their transgression and iniquity even as we were this is so remarkable a phenomenon that if we read the concluding verses of this psalm carefully, the nations themselves take note of this remarkable thing and it sets those nations in a new kind of attitude toward the God of Israel and toward their own salvation because what they see is so beyond anything that could be naturally expected it is so supernatural a phenomenon that there should be a people on the earth who are called his servants you say, well, shouldn't that be Israel? it should be, but it's not if they were his servants, they

wouldn't be under judgment so God is referring to another

entity in the earth at the time of Israel's judgment and debacle, it's collapse, whom he addresses and observes as servants and waits for something in them that is not to be naturally expected namely, an identification with a people in judgment rightly so for their sin and yet a compassion and a mercy for them in that very condition having compassion for their dust and mercy for their stones when he sees that the deliverer comes out of Zion why? because what he has waited for in the church has been obtained the church has come to a place beyond itself it has come to a transcendent place beyond its own disposition for being judgmental and condemnatory as we presently now are one with another in our fellowships we've come to a place of Christ-likeness of the forgiveness of God we're

suffused with his mercy we are not at all tempted to follow the world in its categorical denunciation of Israel something has happened, we have come of age in such a way that we stand in relationship to the people as the Lord himself does and when we come to that place of being as the Lord is in mercy and compassion, he will have obtained a bride for the bridegroom adorned for the bridegroom means fitted for him and having a character and a personality appropriate to the bridegroom who himself is mercy and is compassion that's the Zion for which God waits and how do we obtain it dear saints if presently and secretly we are already now judgmental what's the word pharisaical severe in our appraisals of one another and that our affection is based and predicated upon merit or admiration or

some performance of something that we admire we're selective, we're partial we're so far removed in the church for the condition for which God waits toward Israel and we will be fixed in our present condition unless we see what God is after and take it to heart and open ourselves to the sanctifying work of God first in our relationships one with another that when Israel comes to her final disgrace, we unlike any in the world are not offended and we are identified with them and have compassion upon their dust and have mercy upon their stones and I want to say that that transfiguring and sanctifying work can only take place in the church that is the church so long as we are seated and looking up to a platform and have no or little opportunity to see one another in our own faces and see the

shortcomings and disparities of our own life and failure and weakness and come to a place of compassionate acceptance of one another in that weakness will never come to be toward Israel what God waits for in Zion that's why the issue of the church is the issue of Israel that's why he waits that's why Israel's redemption must come out of Zion and out of no other place we are the issue of Israel's redemption and the fullness for which God waits in the Gentiles to come in is more than number, it's a quality of life and being that cannot be obtained in mere Sunday services that requires community, the intensity of life together, the dealings with God the siftings, the kinds of suffering that is unique and is to be found only in the intensity of life in the church as community that requires

more than a succession of services that's a suffering and we will not have a stomach for it and we will shun it and look upon it with suspicion and be content with a predictable Sunday Christianity unless we understand that the issue of Israel's redemption is more than the establishment of a nation state that the issue of Israel's redemption is the issue of God's glory forever for the king must dwell in Zion one of the reasons I don't want to go to Israel I'm pained to see Israel in her present condition, I don't want to see those flop houses and prostitution rings and Jewish kids with nose rings and belly rings and tattoos and every kind of thing that's disgraceful especially for a Jew to bear this is not a city fit for the habitation of the king and yet he has made Zion his intention as

sanctuary and as dwelling and the locus of his rule something of the deepest redemption must take place, there must be a judgment to burn up and consume in Jerusalem all those things that are vile and are steeped in blood and violence and we ourselves must not be repelled or alienated from that people as they suffer the judgments of God and their conduct every day betrays the need of that judgment and seems to confirm the criticisms that come against it from former allies all around the world where 77% of the Dutch nation believes that Israel is the nation most responsible, most dangerous to the well-being of the world the land of Anne Frank that once was so sympathetic has overnight shifted in its whole allegiance and attitude about Israel and the remarkable thing is that it spills out

beyond Israel beyond Zionism and onto the Jew himself that the Jew then becomes the object of contempt and the anti-Semitism that spreads the world which is why Jacob's trouble will affect Jacob wherever he is whether in the land or outside of it that's why Paul ends his remarkable dissertation Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God who has been his counselor where did he get this?

Who made the suggestion that there should be this reciprocal relationship between Israel and the Church where the one without the other cannot come into the fullness of God's intention? How did he get that? That was a divine stroke because these are the two entities that repel each other the Jews have little respect for the Church as an object of contempt Christianity to them is the very reason for anti-Semitism and the references in the New Testament Scriptures to the Jews and the crucifixion of Jesus and the Jews let his blood be upon our heads and upon our children that's why they don't want to see this new film by Gibson on the passion because it will incite a fresh wave of anti-Jewish reaction because Jews are incriminated in the New Testament account of the death of Jesus they refuse Barabbas they refuse Jesus, give us Barabbas and now a whole generation is going to see that enacted in such a vividness as can inflame Gentile hearts against Jews but break the hearts of believers in the seeing of the very same film Jews historically have every reason to despise the Church I have been in cities in Germany where Jews have committed wholesale suicide where they were locked up in the synagogue synagogues as the knights were coming through en route to the Holy Land to pillage and loot the Jewish communities to finance their coming into the Holy Land and gave Jews the ultimatum be baptized or perish and Jews chose to perish men would split the throats of their own children and their wives and kill one another that when the doors burst down of the Jewish communities enclosed in their own synagogues they found the bodies heaped up and not one survival and that's called Kiddush Hashem that's sanctifying the name of God rather than falling into the hands of Christians and be forcibly converted to have an alien religion by which they forsake their heritage and their Jewishness.

Can you understand that? Centuries of that so that even when it has passed historically the residue is in the air. We Jews have taken it in with our mother's milk I had to be delivered together with other Jewish believers of an anti-Gentile bias that I didn't even know I possessed that was in my deeps being brought up in such an environment the Lord gave us a time together where we recognized we had to be delivered so what about Jews who are not saved and see themselves as victims again at Christian hands the last place that they will expect compassion and mercy is the church and it's the only place where they will find it but it's not going to be some slobbery sentimental compassion which will go up like a puff when they disappoint us. I know all those Christian Zionists who think that Jews are cute and Israelis are cute and want to pinch our cheeks but what happens when we're no longer cute? What happens when we're disappointing? What happens when the allegations against us are more true than false that we are violent, that we do torture prisoners in order to extract from them confessions that will save us from another bus bombing and various other injustices and violences that we would never have thought Jews could be

capable but because of the desperation of our condition we're forced to actions that contradict what we ever hoped the state of Israel to be and so a lot of the sentimental affinity for Israel and the Jew will go up like a puff when they will be increasingly disappointed and when the state itself will collapse and Jews will again be expelled and become the off scouring of the world and have no beauty that any should desire them.

How many of those Christian Zionists who run now to the Feast of Tabernacles or to plant the tree will retain that kind of shallow and sentimental identification and loyalty? The likelihood is that their shallow sentimentality will turn to hatred. Who then will favor Zion? Who then will have compassion upon Israel's stones in judgment and upon her dust but a people whom God calls my servants. It'll be the making of you and the salvation of them and that's the mystery.

And when the world sees it so that he's and shall fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth thy glory when the Lord shall build of Zion he shall appear in his glory. He will appear in his people for they will reflect, embody, and demonstrate what he is in himself for he is mercy and he is compassion and though he's required to bring wrath and bring judgment it is in mercy. And mercy triumphs over judgment.

This is the great love of God that is unconditional and does not require from the Jew an acceptable, what do you call it, track record. It's in our failure. It's in our apostasy.

In our judgment that his mercy is most exemplified and shown. But how is he glorified when he has a people on the earth whose attitude and spirit is exactly as his own because for them to live is Christ. They have gone from mere creedal affinity and doctrinal correctness into an assimilation and a union with the very nature of the Lord himself and the test of it is their response to Israel in her fallenness.

And when he sees that he can now turn to Israel for what he has wanted now in the church as a bride for the bridegroom has been obtained. And it has been obtained in one place only in the church's relationship to Israel. This cannot be obtained except in the context of God's intention.

The radical sanctifying relationship with a yet apostate Israel which makes every ultimate demand upon the church. The church in its corporality. The church in its corporateness.

Not individual virtuosos. The church in its totality. It compels it to an apostolic identity on resurrection ground.

It's the issue of Israel that compels the church to be the church. It's the issue of Israel that compels us to welcome the sanctifying work of God that will be demonstrated in that day when the set time to favor Zion has come. We will not submit ourselves to the dealings of God and the suffering that takes place uniquely in the church when it has lived as community.

I can tell you, read my book on the true fellowship and of all my 40 years in the Lord the worst anguishes that I have ever experienced and are even current now is what I have experienced in the body, in the community, and not from the world. When he will have finished the internal persecution that we are to each other then we can expect they will come to us from outside ourselves. But if you're not experiencing the suffering in the church, you might well question to what degree is the church the church? Or just a harmless and predictable fellowship of a pleasant hail fellow, well met, slap on the back affinity by like-minded people because you have not lived together intensely enough and long enough to get at the root and ground of those things that are yet resident that need to be identified and met and can only be so

dealt with in the intensity of relationship called community.

It's a suffering, saints, before it's a glory. And I'm saying we will not be willing for it, we will not have a stomach for it unless we understand that the ultimate end of it is the glory of God forever. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Who's been this counselor? Who has given to him and shall be given again for of him, not our cats, of him, not even of Paul, of him, but through him, not through our well-meaning charismatic evangelical intention. That will fail as much as the failure of Israel on the basis of its virtue to succeed. There's something required of God ultimately.

It's of him and it's through him. It's by his power. The issue of church is a resurrection phenomenon.

The ability to love one another in our differences that are so galling and frustrating and difficult is beyond our nice guy-ism. It's the life of God that brings us again and again to his communion table where it's more than holding a little antiseptic crystal plastic cup and a little wafer and taking it as signal together. We come to that table thirsting and hungering for the righteousness of God, the mercy of God, the patience of God, the kindness of God for however much we were nice guys before community, two weeks into it reveal the paucity, the inadequacy to continue as nice guys.

We need him and the great sacrament of his body and blood is not a little monthly or once a year triviality. It's the most profound provision of God for covenant keeping for the reality of God for the power of God and not only the power of his life but the nature of his life as much as we will eat and drink of him in truth, in communion together. If it's not communion and we're just strangers holding the cup you might as well dump it.

It affects nothing. It is only validated when we eat and drink together in communion who have faced each other and come to the most terrible revelation of the condition of one another and the truth of what we in fact are and the most humiliating is the revelation of what we ourselves are. Then we come to the table and say Lord for us to live as Christ I can't be to my brother what I ought how shall I be to the Jew? Because when they come, they're going to come they'll be terribly out of sorts.

They'll be banged up. They'll be suddenly uprooted. They'll be in the worst frame.

They'll be mean spirited. They'll not be grateful. They'll not be thankful for the extending of ourselves in mercy to them.

They'll be critical. They'll find fault with this and that and we'll be blamed for their catastrophe. And if there's anything in us that wants to draw itself up to its full dignity and say well if that's the way you're going to be then tough on you.

We will have missed the historic moment that will not be given again because we're told in Ezekiel chapter 20, God speaking to his kinsmen, I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations face to face. And there you will come into the covenant the rod of my authority and into the provision of my covenant when I will meet with you in the wilderness of face to face. You're going to see me not as you thought I was but as I in fact am.

And the face that you're going to see is going to be black, white, yellow, Indians in Mexican villages in the Sierra Madre mountains, black believers in Africa and all of the variety of my saints that I will move you

through nations in a three and a half year period of time, not just one nation but a series and you will see the consistency of my people in every place who love you despite your mean spiritedness and cannot be offended at your insult and your lack of gratitude because their love for you is not predicated on your performance but is unconditional as the love of God by nature is. Listen saints, however poor presentation this is and it lacks much, this much we have to say, the Lord has said enough to show that there's a mystery of our relationship with Israel that is unavoidable and is intended in his divine wisdom not only for their redemption but for our transfiguration. Because when that nation will be redeemed in the earth, the law will go forth out of Zion and God will have a nation in the earth to promulgate his kingdom and to welcome those nations that will come to commemorate their God and pay homage to the people whom he has restored.

But in the heavens there will be an angelic entity who are ruling and reigning with Christ some over five cities and some over ten in wisdom and purity and compassion in things that they have learned in this earth that have fitted them for their own eternal destiny. And the final finishing school to have fitted us for that is our relationship with the Jew who is the enemy of the gospel for our sake. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

So let me read my little footnote again. This cannot be obtained except in the context of God's intention. You can stand on your head.

You can talk about the prosperity message or anything other. It will not provide the depth of the sanctifying work that can only come in this given divine context. Our relationship with this difficult, intransigent, stiff-necked and apostate people.

Oh, I know my people well, you dear saints. You don't know them. You're still too romantic.

You think that what you read in the Bible is relative to today's Jew. You'll be shocked when you go to Israel and find how other they are. Someone has said that the present-day Israeli is a Gentile people who have learned to speak Hebrew.

They show no semblance of a Jewishness that other Jews can recognize. They have become other in the hard conditions of their life and the preservation of their nation under great adversity and threat. Even if today priest was declared, they have already crossed a point of no return that they can never be the nation that they thought they would show to the world.

They are as coarse, as violent, as immoral, as corrupt as any nation, perhaps more so because we pay double for our sins. When we go into occultism, we pay double for our sins. We are twice disfigured and twice as dangerous in that condition.

And yet, God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy. That Israel serves the purposes of God, not in their success, but in their failure because it gives him opportunity to reveal his mercy where it is totally undeserved. Can you extend mercy where it is totally undeserved is the issue.

For he will be bound up and contained in the heavens and will not be their deliverer until he can come out of your Zion. It's not enough to be charismatic, Pentecostal, Evangelical. We must become the Zion of God.

And that will be costly, a sacrifice. And it begins now in the consciousness of our call. For the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. And of Zion it will be said, this one and that one were born in her, and the most high himself shall establish her. Not your well-meaning intention, not your Christian virtue, the Lord high himself will perfect and establish and glorify himself in Zion.

In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel, in Salem also his tabernacle, his dwelling place in Zion. What is this Zion? They go from strength to strength, any one of them, and they appear before God in Zion. Zion is a place set apart for the high worship of God, that I may tell of all your praise, the gates of the daughters of Zion, I will rejoice in your salvation.

The singers and players on instruments say, all my springs renew. Zion is the place of his anointing, his provision. The Lord has chosen Zion, he's desired it for his habitation, this is my resting place forever.

Here I will dwell, I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread. That's what I learned in Africa, those that are poor are rich in faith, and we are poor.

And if we weren't poor before tonight, we're poor now. You know why? Because we're catching a glimpse of what is our mandate and our call. And if we thought that we had the wherewithal to succeed for the Lord in this life, you know what we're realizing now? In terms of the magnitude of what you're requiring of us as your Zion for which you wait, we are poor.

But he'll give us bread, and strengthen us in our weakness, for the Lord shall build up Zion, when he builds up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. The issue of Zion is the issue of his glory. And for the want of this realization, this identity, our church is lackluster.

Our church is beneath the intention of God. We're living beneath the glory of God, for we have not seen the mystery, and identified with it, and taken it to ourselves, and made clear to the Lord, we're willing to come to the place by which your glory shall be demonstrated, and Israel restored, and a bride obtained for the bridegroom, and we're willing for whatever is required to obtain it. We're beneath the intention of God.

And we measure by another index our enjoyment of the services, the delight of the speaker, enjoy the fellowship, all of that is good. But it's a culture, and not yet a glory. And it will not be a glory until it sees the ultimate intention of God, for Zion is ultimacy.

A church brought to ultimacy, for ultimate purposes, nothing less than the redemption of a nation millennia long in their apostasy, and whose restoration is the release of the king to dwell in their Zion, and out of whose Zion the law shall go forth to all nations who will study war no more. Lord, we're asking mercy. Beyond what we're able to exposit, what we're able to understand and to receive in a single hearing, this is mystery of mysteries.

I can't even conceive, except perhaps for Paul himself, one who would have the ability to articulate anything of the dimension of this in a single sitting, Lord, that would communicate it. So we're asking mercy where we have failed, where we grope and fumble, Lord, let your spirit be triumphant. And in between the lines, as well as with the lines, let something go into our deeps that will not let us go.

That even as our minds have not quite put it together, there's still something that has been birthed in our inner man that has now a life of its own, and will affect not only our understanding of Israel, but all categories, the whole issue. And Lord, with that, I'm asking a jealousy for your glory. Only that jealousy will enable us to bear what we must in what will be revealed in our own coming to the reality of church as Zion, and what we must see Israel suffer before it comes to its redemption.

Only your glory will make that suffering plausible, because it's inherent, it's intrinsic, it's a principle of reality. There's a suffering that precedes a glory. And unless we can glimpse the glory, we'll not be able to bear the suffering or be willing for it.

And so I'm asking, Lord, something for this people, something that's been recorded, that a new jealousy of an apostolic, prophetic kind for the glory of God come into our deeps, for which we're willing even to suffer failure, for success as we have known it religiously and humanly is the antithesis of the glory of God, and perhaps the greatest prohibitant to the realization of that glory. And I was a demonstration tonight of a fool willing to fail in order that something greater than the success of a message or a night or the enjoyment of saints could be communicated through the suffering of failure, namely your glory. You demonstrated that on the cross, and we're called ourselves to walk in that demonstration and reality.

So Lord, let tonight's word, fitful, incomplete, partial, whatever it is, constitute a work in them that believe. A work that will have a significance for these immediate days and eternity itself. Set something in motion because of the foolishness of this night and these nights that will affect the salvation, the survival of Jews and the redemption of those who would otherwise have perished as they are moved through California though they may have had an origin in another place in order that you might not only them, but us.

Come my God, have the people prepared who could show forth your face in unconditional love, no matter how much they irk us, no matter how ungrateful, no matter how vexed, however mean-spirited, we cannot react because the unconditional love of God is our love. We have come to a union with you that cannot fail. Lord, we're short of that now, but we're asking that you would bring us to that reality in the church, with each other, and subsequently for them.

Grace upon grace, mercy upon mercy, we thank and give you praise for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which we accept tonight in your precious name. Amen.

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