

K-447 Israel Overview

by Art Katz

The restoration of Israel is a central part of God's plan and purpose, and it is essential for the fulfillment of the prophetic promises and the fullness of God's intention.

Duration: 27:35

Scripture: Matthew 25:41, Matthew 25:46, John 8:46, Romans 11:25-26, 1 Corinthians 10:32, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of waiting for the fullness of the Gentiles to come into the church before the deliverance of Israel. He draws parallels between Jesus waiting for Israel's restoration and the church waiting for the fullness of the Gentiles. The speaker emphasizes the need for the church to strive for the same righteousness and devotion to God that Jesus exemplified. He also highlights the distinction between the role of the nations in restored Israel and the church's task of being a people for God's name from among all nations.

Transcript

...consequence of failing to understand this mystery, that the consequence, the judgment is itself inherent in that failure. Don't forget what I said when we talked about this. The greater astonishment is of men who are internationally known, who have not this mystery, and they know it, and yet they speak of it as if, well, I just missed that part, but God has shown me other parts, so it's not all that important.

That is to say, they are not stricken by the fact that they have not the revelations. They don't take it before the Lord with any kind of remorse or chagrin or concern that something is wanting, that I do not see this, but you've allowed me to see everything else, and yet I can read sufficiently to see how insistent Paul is over this mystery. It's central to him, and there's a consequence for the failure to receive it.

What's amiss with me? That question is not raised, and that bothers me, that there's not an adequate concern for the omission of the mystery. And if that's true on the part of the Church's most significant speakers, what then about those who are under their authority and under their influence? They also will shallowly disregard this to their own detriment. Just as the Lord has contained himself in the heavens, Acts 3.21 has imposed upon himself a restriction.

He cannot come, he will not come, until the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. And of course we know, what is the one thing spoken by the prophets? Whether it's Ezekiel 37,

whether it's Isaiah 35, and all of the subject of restoration, it's the restoration of Israel, not the restoration of the Church. My greatest conflict has been with the restoration movement, because they have configured and interpreted it to mean the restoration of the Church.

That's not at all what the prophets had in mind. They had only one object, the restoration of Israel. How is it then that these so-called apostolic movements have substituted the Church for Israel? It's a fatal mistake.

It's because, I think, of a deep-seated anti-Semitism, a disregard for the Jew, an unwillingness to acknowledge or concede that God yet has a destiny, a great destiny, and they suffer a conceit by which they have elevated themselves in that place and think of themselves as being the foremost concern of God, and that the whole issue is the restoration of the Church. Here's the very thing about which Paul warned. If you're ignorant of this mystery of Israel and the Church, you'll suffer a conceit.

There'll be a swelling up and inflation out of proportion that God does not intend. You'll think that you are the Israel. You'll think that God's finished with them.

You'll think that not only are you the agency through which the Kingdom comes, you in fact are the agency. You are the Kingdom. So, all of these things are, deform the Church.

It may be entertaining, it may be exciting, they may think that they're scintillating, they're really on the cutting edge because of the Kingdom, but the fact of the matter is that they are aberrant and out of order and out of the place of God's intention. And actually, in that era, are defeating the very thing that they hope to obtain. Because if the Church is going to come to a true apostolicity, it will come to it only in relationship to the way in which God intended it should relate to Israel.

As we saw before, the issue of Israel touches every aspect of the faith. We don't understand the significance of the Word of God, the mystery of preaching, the proclaimed Word, the prophetic phenomenon of being the mouthpiece of God. We will belittle it, it will take on a lesser significance, it will become an entertainment.

We'll be calling men oracles of the hour, who are not. And if we miss that there, then where's our foundation? If we have a false foundation, what can be erected upon it? Some slipshod, slapdash thing that will fall when the first press of last day's urgency comes. So we're talking about very critical things.

Just as Jesus limits himself by something, by waiting for something with regard to Israel's restoration, of which all the prophets have spoken since the beginning of the world, so also does he restrict himself waiting for something else, a fullness. He will be the deliverer that comes out of Zion, but it waits upon something not from Israel, but outside Israel, namely the fullness of the Gentiles to become in. And God leaves us in the lurch with a Paul who does not explain himself.

And that's for a good reason. And I prefer to leave these great statements undefined and leave it to us in the context of our last day's reality to understand what God is wanting in terms of fullness. And yesterday, and what God was doing with us in our nature, in freedom to be fully expressive of our humanity in our emotions, is no little part of that fullness.

Otherwise we'd be stunted at a diminished humanity which contradicts the very word fullness. So yesterday was important to the fulfillment of the mystery of Israel. However precious in itself, it needs to be seen in that context.

What else can you think and have you in your discussion have you considered constitutes fullness? For what is God waiting? How should we seek it and obtain it if we can't define it or anticipate it? The fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. As we say in Yiddish, Mamma Mia! What a definition! That fullness? My God! You're asking the impossible. You're asking the ultimate.

You're giving us a definition that we're afraid even to consider. It is so. He is the ultimate statement of what the Son of Man, the Son of God is.

And that stature? And that maturity? And that impeccable righteousness? And that single-eyed devotion to the Father? That's what you're wanting in the corporate life of the church? Yes. That's exactly what I'm wanting. He's the template.

He's the patterned son. That's exactly what I'm wanting. But my God, how should we obtain this? The function of the church is a people for his name from among all nations.

But that will constitute a fullness. But the issue of the nations per se as nations is restored Israel's baby. They are the priests unto the nations.

But a people for his name from the nations is the church's task. Because if the church misses this, here's again another piece of conceit. The world is our purpose, our object.

Well, you're taking on more than God intends. He's only wanting a people for his name from the nations, not the nations per se. You're taking Israel's prerogative to yourself.

And therefore, you're distorting your own understanding both of your task and your identity as the church. And Israel is the first of not only restored but resurrected nations. And in fact, let's underline this.

The issue of Israel is the issue of the nations. And we hope to amplify that in our discussion. Israel is to be a, as Jesus is the template for us, the pattern's son, a restored Israel in the fullness of God's intention for it as a Davidic nation is a template for the nations.

Israel is for the nations. You could put down Deuteronomy 32.8 as a pivotal verse which I never hear anyone explicate. That when God determined the number of the nations, he did so in proportion or in terms of the number of the sons of Israel.

It's a real mystery verse. You may have a somewhat altered rendering, but this is the nub of it. That somehow from the very beginning in the wisdom of God, the issue of nations was the issue of Israel.

And some scholars say that when Jesus sent out 70 and not to take anything with them and to proclaim the kingdom which is of him, the number of 70 is representative of the number of nations established by God. The fact that we have over 200 and close to 300 nations today shows the vanity of nations that God never intended as independent or autonomous entities. But everyone wants their own independence, their own borders, their own this, their own that.

And so there's been separation, wars, revolutions, uprisings for independence. But I think when the millennium comes, we will have the number of nations of God's intention. Maybe that's why we have the Balkan crisis.

Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, each one splitting off its own fragment and identity when the remarkable thing is both Croatia and Serbia are Slavic. But one has grown up in the Islamic identity, the other in the Orthodox,

and they've been historic enemies, though they are ethnically and racially one people. Well, when he comes who will judge between the nations in equity, those issues will be resolved.

There'll be no necessity for an independent Croatia, an independent Serbia. The whole of the Balkans may be the one nation of God's intention. But what does it wait for? Not the United Nations.

What it waits for is Zion. That the law can go forth out of Zion, and that he can arbitrate between the nations from the throne of his theocratic rule in Zion and the city of Jerusalem and the restored nation of Israel. That's why the enemy opposes this whole strategy.

They do not want to see a restored Israel with a restored Jerusalem, because Jerusalem presently is not a fit habitation for the king. I don't even like to go there myself. So there's a violence that must come.

That ties in with Jeremiah 30-31. The city will again be built upon its heaps. This was my argument with John Bender.

It's taking place right now. What are you talking about? Look, there's the earth-moving equipment. I said, dear man, please pay attention to the text.

It says the city will be built upon its heaps as unto the Lord. I said, this is not unto the Lord. This is unto man.

And this will constitute the heaps. With that, I could have been gently or violently ushered out of his office. Why? If I could take this liberty? He's Dutch.

He's a Gentile believer whose conscience is stricken with the abuse that had come to Jews at European hands. And he wants so much to make up for the injuries of the past by accommodating present Israel and seeing it being established. So that if anyone suggests that this thing that is dearest to his own heart, for which his own son is serving in the Israeli Defense Forces, is painful to consider.

And yet he calls me a prophet. And more than that, he says, you are the man art for the nation. You ought to be the voice.

They need to hear you. And yet when I speak to him out of that understanding, when it's in conflict with his own dearest heart's desire, the guy will go livid. That's why I say you cannot come to the prophetic text with an already formed position that you have established that serves your purpose and your desire.

You can only come naked before the word of God and allow him to form his perspective. If you come with any charged thing that has got to be established, reinforced, guarded, or protected, you cannot by that means see truly. You come with a bias and the scriptures will only be something that you'll pluck out to reinforce what you already want to see established.

That's going back again into the issue of propheticness. Okay. Anything more about fullness? It's such a precious word.

God waits for it and he'll be able to recognize it. How will he recognize it? He'll see the character of his son formed in the corporate body unmistakably. Why is he a deity who insists upon fullness? Isn't two-thirds full enough? Isn't it more or less enough? Why is he insistent upon a fullness, a completion and that we should not fall short of it? Because our nature is get by, approximate, come close.

But his nature is fullness. And what's the standard of that fullness? His own son. Surely we would have been satisfied with a much lesser standard that would be less demanding and less requiring because this standard cannot be fulfilled religiously out of any ability in ourselves or well-meaning intention.

This standard requires God to fill. And so that's why he has established it. It's the same reason why they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake.

Because to meet them in that opposition cannot be performed on our skill in evangelism, our instruction, our preparedness but only on the basis of his life which is also his wisdom, his courage, his strength, his love. Because we're going to be treated nastily by mean-spirited Jews. And they're going to find the one place where we are vulnerable and know how to finger it and to trip it so that we who have been well ordered and living nice complacent spiritual lives will come unglued in a moment when they know exactly the point to press.

And they know it. They'll instinctively go for it if it's there to be found. So if you can be tripped up by some depth of something that has not been sanctified that will embarrass you and defeat the purpose of God at that moment.

Because when you'll act with temper, rashly or in anger or unlovingly that's exactly what they're waiting to see. So they are absolved from the obligation of your message to them. Because after all then it's just your religious preference and you're no different than any man anywhere.

They have got to see a consistency that cannot be altered by their own provocation. And they are the enemies of the gospel for that very purpose. They are provocateurs.

They are ingers writ large who know where to find the area of the susceptibility just when you think you're writing pie and say one word and something comes out of you that has not been sanctified that you didn't even know was there. And you've lost it. So the question is where is this kind of fullness to be obtained? Where there will be no secret area that can be found by those who want to be absolved from your message and get let off the hook by a demonstration from you that they can provoke that frees them from the necessity to believe.

Where will we come to that kind of exacting sanctification that there will be no blind spots? And the intensity of life that community is which is a suffering and are being found out because you're dealing with one another in situations in which you'll see things that would otherwise have remained unobserved and they'll be dealt with. So read the book about the orange juice episode of Ben Israel and the various things that in which we have lived. When Jesus was apprehended he said to his accusers which of you can convict me of sin? There is no thing in me.

You cannot find a basis for accusation. That's why I have been on view before you for three and a half years. I'm fulfilling the exodus mandate.

Take a lamb without spot, without blemish on the tenth day of Nisan and keep it for the fourteenth day so that you'll not slay an animal that has defect or is blemished. You'll have four days in case you would have missed that it's cross-eyed or it's missing a testicle or a hoof or whatever. You'll have four days to examine that animal perfectly for if it has a blemish it's invalid.

Why was God so stringent in Exodus with the blood that would mark their door and set about the emancipation of the Passover death? When I see that blood when I see that blood I will pass over you

because God the Father foresaw the Lamb of God and put him on observation before the entire nation for exactly the same length of time. Not three and a half days three and a half years. Any half, any fraction is a portion of the whole.

Was that the statement of his deity that he was perfect and they could find no fault in him? Or was it the statement of his perfected humanity tempted at every point like as we, yet without sin. How could he be tempted in his deity? He was tempted in his humanity. Why? That we would be without excuse.

That the same kind of relationship that he enjoyed with the Father and the same provision for overcoming which we enjoy by the Spirit is as much ours as it was him. He's calling us to that glory and he had to be the patterned son and it was not attained by his deity but by his obedience unto suffering and to death in his humanity. But Paul groaned for those under his oversight that Christ be formed in them.

He was working and laboring that they should attain to the same relationship that he himself had because he knew that it's obtainable. In fact that's the genius of what Paul is. That's what makes Paul, Paul.

He's the apostle because Christ is formed in him and he's the very continuation of the Christ life that had Christ lived past that death and continued in the earth, he would not have done other or spoken other than what Paul himself spoke or did. That's what an apostle is and it requires the life. Have we the faith to believe for that? Or are we going to allow ourselves to be seduced away by humanistic well meaning, well you're only human.

I have to hear that every day at the Lutheran seminary, well you're only human. God knows you're a sinner being saved by grace. They do not desire, they do not believe for and they will not attain.

They will only be impressive Lutherans in their own religious humanity, but they will not come into the life and maybe the fact that they're satisfied with infant sprinkling already condemns them from any possibility of coming into that life because the life comes in union with Christ in baptism and immersion of burial unto death. And if you're only lightly sprinkled rather than buried, how shall you attain? So see how that affects those issues. That's why they are the enemies of the gospel.

For our sake, God is pressing us in to himself. But our ego, our vanity, our pride, wants to retain our own identity and succeed on our own strength, our own basis, our own righteousness. And that's why men will kill anything that threatens the prospect of attaining their own righteousness and living on the basis of their own virtue.

That's the whole issue between Judaism and the faith. And that's why Jesus was killed. That's why the apostles were persecuted.

That's why the early church was harassed. They cannot stand the evidence of another basis for life by which it's not the issue of your merit or your work that your eternal destiny or acceptance from God is obtained but on the basis of what is given as gift freely by grace. Therefore Paul says, I live yet not I, but it's Christ who lives in me.

If we compliment Paul for being Paul, we have missed the issue and we don't understand what he represents. Paul is the man of the resurrection. For him to live is Christ.

We have to understand the glory of the cross as more than the provision for our sin, how unspeakably great that is. But in the death came a resurrection and an ascension to the throne and what was poured

out from the throne is the resurrected, the newness of life brought to its royal fullness at the throne of God and poured down for the governmental purpose and to the earth that men might live and move and have their being in that power that authority, that righteousness that grace, that sweetness. I'm continually asking the Lord for the expression of the sweetness of his life because that's not one of my natural attributes.

I need that sweetness as much as I need his wisdom and his utterance, his understanding his compassion his devotion to the glory of the father. Everything is inherent in the life and we have not sufficiently cherished the life and believed for that life in us. We have this treasure in our earthen vessels believe us now this? Well what's it there for? That our stomach should protrude? It's there that we should live out of that treasure and at any moment when you choose to exercise your own humanity, your own energy your own intelligence, the Lord draws back.

He's a delicate spirit, he's a dove. You want to assert humanity? He'll draw back. You'll die to your humanity that's available to you and believe for his life? He'll come forward because you're dead and hid with Christ and God until his life is revealed and when it's revealed it's revealed unto glory.

So we're called to continual deaths continual deaths that his life might be expressed for his life is a Lord righteous precious holy, pure undefiled. That's the fullness God is waiting for, that fullness and that fullness will prevail for Israel for it's his groaning that fullness will wish ourselves accursed for our brethren's sake. It will even enable us to see Jews as our brethren because in Matthew 25 those that are consigned to the fire reserved for the devil and his angels as an eternal judgment is for those who did not recognize in the last days Jewish plight the least of these his brethren.

It's a spiritual identification more difficult to make when Jews are down and out than when they are successful. Who would not want to identify with Jews as brethren now as they occupy executive suites and are CEO of great financial concerns and are impressive authors and writers and artists and musicians and composers and all the rest but when they shall be the least of his brethren, literally stinking, unwashed in rags and in patters bruised and bloodied and bowed and the off scouring of the world that cast away the outcast of Israel and the dispersed of Judah who will want them to identify with them and call them brothers and be to them what we ought to be to those who are our brothers that is to say give them the last cup of flour and the last cup of oil even to the detriment of our own families because we cannot consider that they should go naked, thirsty and hungry while we have yet a measure of anything. If it means our destitution they will come before us that's beyond religion saints and in that one thing God will eternally determine those that are his and those that are not and what does he say to those who give them clothing, visit them attend to them ascend to the kingdom that has been reserved for you righteous they're called righteous not because they have found it in that moment but because they are it in all moments because they live in his life which alone is right.

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