

K-463 Death and Resurrection of Israel (1 of 2)

by Art Katz

The sermon explores the death and resurrection of Israel as a fulfillment of God's promises, emphasizing the significance of Christ's resurrection and the church's prophetic role in this restoration.

Duration: 1:10:34

Scripture: Romans 11:25

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of authentic unity and obedience to God's word. They highlight the power of God to perform miracles and deliverance when His people are in agreement and obedience. The speaker also emphasizes the need for consistent obedience in order to be prepared for ultimate prophetic obedience. They caution against relying on contrived ecumenical arrangements and instead emphasize the importance of genuine unity rooted in a shared commitment to God's word. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to discipline themselves in studying and applying the word of God, even when they don't feel like it.

Transcript

Granted to a restored nation, and that's part of the whole statement. Verse 22, I will make them one nation, in the land and upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all. All of this is yet future.

Verse 23, I will save them, in the last portion of that verse, out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them. So shall they be my people, I will be their God. 24, and David my servant shall be king over them.

They shall have one shepherd, they shall also walk in my judgments, absorb my statutes, and do them. They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt. They shall dwell therein, even they and their children, their children's children, forever.

Here's that crowning word that shows that this is the final, permanent, enduring, millennial blessedness, and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Here's God honoring and fulfilling His covenant promise to Israel, that someone who is a descendant of David, and who would be seated upon the throne of David, would rule over Israel forever. Maybe we need to be reminded that that promise was stated in the very advent of Jesus' coming and birth.

In Luke chapter 1, the pronouncement made to Mary bears an echo of that same promise now fulfilled at the end of Ezekiel 37, where the angel came unto her in verse 28 and said, Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and tells her about the child that shall be born in her, that his name shall be called Jesus. In verse 32, he shall be great, he shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. So the very first angelic pronouncements about the advent of Jesus has to do with His theocratic purpose, the reason for His coming, the prince that would rule over the house of Jacob forever, but upon the throne of David.

So that goes back to that this is the kingdom of God promised Israel, in keeping with the covenant promises of God, literal genealogy, a literal throne, a literal place, but once it is established, it's established forever, and for that reason the fury of the powers of darkness is all the greater. Their loss is without remedy. Once they lose their false and usurping place, it's never again altered.

And so their last fury will be the greatest. And so that these verses now come at the end of Ezekiel 37 shows, again, the same pattern of all the prophets, time of severe tribulation, devastation, desolation, ruin, out of it a restoration of a remnant, the return to the land, the putting of His spirit within them, the forgiving of their sins, their coming to the awareness themselves with great remorse and recognition of their sins and the sins of their fathers, and then the theocratic rule coming to them and through them to the nations. Verse 26, I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them.

I will place them and multiply them and set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them. Yea, I will be their God, they shall be my people, and the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore.

Not only the seat of government, but the actual residence of the resurrected and ascended King, out of a place in the earth that the world despises. Isn't that remarkable? That the center of His world rule is not the United Nations or Geneva or New York City, but the holy hill of Zion. It is another calculated offense against the sensibilities of men that would have submitted other locations as having been superior.

It's because it's a hill that God has chosen it. It's because it's despised that He prefers it. Because that's the kind of God that He is, lowly and meek.

And so just to understand it, the whole of 37, the death and resurrection is couched in this whole theocratic glory that comes with the resurrection of that people. And God's placement, His actual litter of physical locus, His sanctuary, His tabernacle and dwelling place is with His people in that city. It's just so easy to dismiss that or to spiritualize that, but it's literal.

Resurrection is the thing that men most stagger at. There's something about resurrection that is a calculated offense to human sensibilities. We can believe anything, but not that God can raise from the dead.

And even when we believe, we don't believe. And there's just a way in which we dismiss it. And yet it's the nub of the faith.

Christ and Him crucified implies Christ crucified and risen. And that was the great apocalyptic event that has already come into time. And by it, all of this is set in motion.

The power that raises Israel through the word of the remnant church that is prophetic, whose word is creative, is that power. None of this could take place if there had not first been the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That is the great signal event in all time and history.

And if we make of that a commonplace and allow that to become trivialized, we will have lost the faith. And we're dangerously close to that historically right now. And I spoke about yesterday Easter bunnies and chocolate things and all the kinds of things that turn holy days into holidays.

It's a calculated offense by the enemy to rob the church and the world of the most stunning event that has ever taken place in human history, namely the intervention of God in time and place and the demonstration of the power of God against every force of darkness calculated for the death of His Son to raise Him from that death and bring Him to a place of ascension and glory and honor at the very throne of God. And that's what Stephen saw. I see the heavens opened and Jesus at the right hand of power.

And that statement just drove men on the earth to a fury because it signaled to them that their tenure was finished. Something had been set in motion. Something had been established as very fact that was only a matter of time before the logic and the unfolding of it would finally undo all earthly kingdoms and bring to pass supernaturally from the throne of heaven the theocratic rule of God.

I'll be using that phrase liberally, assuming that everybody knows what that means. Theophilus is the lover of God. Theology, the study of God.

Theocracy, the government of God. And we need to cultivate this. The word government has fallen into such low repute.

I, I, I, I, what's the word I, my chafe at the word government. I despise it. I was a, I was a history teacher and in our American schools we call that social studies and I was required at times to teach government and I despised it.

I don't like the mechanics of governments and something that when it's operated by men so lends itself to corruption. But we must not allow the human concept of government to impinge upon divine government. It is something else altogether.

It is the wisdom, the benevolence, the kindness, the goodness of God manifested and demonstrated and proclaimed and set forth before the nations that there might live in sanity, righteousness and peace. In the millennial age, you know, if your juices are not flowing, you've not yet understood it. And I think for most of us we're dry mouthed.

We know the phrase, but we cannot conjure up an image of what this glory is and the internality of it. It goes on forever. What a rejoicing, the trees clap their hands, the hills skip as lands.

Nature itself rejoices and is groaning and traveling until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, which is to say the conditions that will eventuate in this millennial blessedness. We're living such a sub-normal life, only we've lived it so long that it seems normal. We're living beneath the glory of God.

It's pathetic. And it takes its toll. But its toll is so familiar to us that we expect it.

We expect the mental institutions to be prodded up. We expect our prisons to be bulging at the walls. We expect to be formed, crippled, marred, psychologically beaten pieces of humanity.

You can't walk in New York City and stop at a corner waiting for the light to change and hear people talking to themselves. There are deranged people billowing out all over the earth. Psychologically warped, mentally broken, emotionally disturbed.

They're freaked out because God has made it physiologically to live righteously in sanity and truth and love. And when those conditions are not provided and somehow we have to adjust our organisms to some substandard mode of life, it's tremendous, the tenacity of the human frame, how much abuse it can endure. But God never intended for that.

So we just need to understand that... Shame on us that dumb and inanimate nature is crying out and groaning and travailing in sensate nature, senses more acutely what we who have minds and hearts and spirits and the Word of God do not yet understand nor long for. It's only those who long for His appearing. It's not the appearing as a doctrinal matter of fact that we have to accept.

There's a longing. And if you're not longing, something's amiss. And we need to seek the Lord about that.

And Lord, do something for me that I would anticipate and look for and seek. And maybe the problem is this. Unlike righteous Job, we are not chafed by the evil that is about us.

His righteous soul was vexed. He couldn't stand Sodom and Gomorrah. It was painful.

He got there by consequence of his own greed. He looked down on the valley and it was lush. He chose the kinds of places that would inevitably lead him into a Sodom and Gomorrah.

But once he was there and saw the evil of it, his righteous soul was vexed. And when your soul is vexed, you say, Come, Lord Jesus. If it's not vexed and you've learned to live with it and get by, and maybe this is yet the best of all worlds, and there's no longing.

The longing for the coming of the Lord is personal. We want to see Him. We desire that communion and fellowship.

But it's also desiring His vindication. He's been blasphemed. They've made stupid theatrical pieces about Him.

What are they called? Jesus Christ Superstar and other kinds of mocking things. He's blasphemed everywhere. I'm scared from it.

I don't have to go out in the world and punch a time card and listen to men's jokes talking about GD this and GD that. I don't hear that language, but I know it's frequent on every carnal man's lips. And GD is a continuous stream of abuse, profanity, and blasphemy that goes up out of the earth that GD has made.

There are men who do not even acknowledge Him. So His coming as King is a great vindication, particularly in the city where He was mocked, cruelly treated, and lampooned as King. That sign over His head in three languages, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, was not meant to be edifying.

It was meant to be humiliating. That robe, that crown of thorns, these were all men taunting, mocking, and jeering at this itinerant preacher that He would have any profession to be King. He's going to come back in the exact city where He suffered this humiliation and be glorified there forever.

What a vindication if you love Him. How much do you desire to see that and can hardly wait for that justification. And those of us who are suffering for His name's sake, catching the abuse that is directed toward His people, right at the end when all of the anti-Christ tirade that will be poured out and hanging in and barely surviving, also wait for His coming.

For our vindication and our release are the things that will requite our patient suffering when He who comes, comes and brings His reward with Him. So, if we don't have a sense of this, and an anticipation for this, everything else is academic. And that's my big fear.

Maybe somebody can help me and help us how we can communicate and cultivate, nurture apostolic anticipation and make that so central to all of our being, like a focal point. We're moving toward something. Everything is seen in the light of that.

It's the great centerpiece. Or else our life is just an accumulation of grace. Okay.

I want to read this paper that I'm going to send to this magazine, this journal in England. But at the same time, it stands as a survey of what we were discussing last night. So, I'll try and go slow.

Stop at certain points. If it's not clear, that's exactly what I need to find out. Make corrections even now that will go into the final draft that I'll send these people.

So, Ezekiel 37, The Necessary Death and Resurrection of Israel. A prophetic scenario for the last days. As with the prophetic Son of Man of this dread and glorious chapter, so also are we, the prophetic people of God, pressed to be set down in the midst of a valley full of dry bones.

In such a place, one is required to dismiss all wishful thinking of things as we would like them to be and to consider them as they in fact are, which is to say, as God himself sees them, indeed as they must be seen, or later forfeit any prophetic use by which these bones can be brought to life again. Everybody understands the connection with seeing and speaking. If we do not see as God sees, we cannot speak as God would speak.

For to prophesy, that is to be as God's mouth, to speak the creative life-giving word requires first an identification with God that is total over and against any reluctance to face the grim fact of Israel's death. From the opening first verses of this text, one suspects that the object of God's intention is not Israel alone, however glorious her restoration, but also that of the Son of Man. Who is this figure but the suggestion of the remnant church of the end times brought to its full prophetic constituency and stature? What is more, compared to that condition by the very crisis of urgency that Israel in her hapless death requires, an action from outside herself by an ultimate prophetic faith and obedience of the other.

Is this getting too fancy? If you were reading this, would it make sense? And if the reader did not have our advantage in having reviewed together this text last night, would they be able to follow this? Who is this talking now about the Son of Man, that God's object is not only Israel's restoration, but he has another object in mind, namely the Son of Man? And who is this figure but the suggestion of the remnant church of the end times? I'm not saying this is that. I'm making a suggestion, because the Scriptures do not say what the Son of Man is. It's evidently some symbolic figure representing something, and I'm prophetically suggesting that what it represents is the church of the last days brought to its full prophetic constituency and maturity.

What is more, it is compared to come to that condition by the very crisis of urgency that Israel in her hapless death requires. In other words, it's a state to which the church would not have come. There would have been no incentive for it, except that there's a requirement given it, and it alone, the restoration of Israel from the dead, that compels the church to find that prophetic ground where its word constitutes event.

This is the whole genius of the mystery of Israel and the church. And people might contend about this, that the church doesn't need this. It'll come to this perfection anyway.

It'll come to this sanctification anyway. But I feel like that this is something out of the genius of God, because Israel requires in that death an action from outside herself that can only be performed in an ultimate prophetic faith and obedience of the other. There's not this theme of the reciprocal relationship between Israel and the church by which the one is not made complete without the other at the very heart of Paul's discourse in Romans 11.

How did this thought occur to me in Ezekiel 37? Because I'm already familiar with Romans 11. And Romans 11 shows the reciprocal relationship between Israel and the church. One locked in with the other, that one without the other, cannot attain to God's millennial blessedness.

And so, no accident that Ezekiel 37 should suggest the very same thing, seeing that it's the very same God. And where was Paul's inspiration for Romans 11? Very likely Ezekiel 37 and other of the prophetic scriptures that we were considering. This mystery is at the heart of Paul's discourse in Romans 11 and alone explains the ecstatic praise with which the chapter concludes, O the depths of the riches.

For the mystery which Paul speaks is not only Israel's restoration, but the transfiguration also of the last day's remnant church obtained in being the very agent of that restoration. This would require that the church be constituted then not as it is in its present fragmentation and divisiveness, but as the whole people of God in that authentic unity that is the key to speaking with one voice. We didn't say much about this last night.

But when we speak, it's got to be as one voice, which means a statement of our agreement. The church in all of its diversity, in all of the things that make it up, coming to such an agreement of mind and heart and soul and spirit, that it speaks with one voice as God. Can you think of any place in the scripture where such a speaking was critical to a life and death situation for Israel, and if they had not attained to the unity that made that speaking with one voice, they might likely have perished.

Where would that have been? We don't know. How about bringing down the walls of Jericho with a shout? A shout. Not many shouts, a shout.

And that shout had to be emitted when the priests blew their horn. They had to walk around that city for seven days in lockstep, in perfect divine order and arrangement. Can you imagine every temptation to the fresh, to have the sand of the guy's finger kicked in your teeth? And we don't like the way he walks, and he's a little out of pace, and you should be in front of him rather than he in front of you.

Every kind of thing that is human and, what's the word, divisive. Look at us this morning. My Lord, could we have found more things? How did I escape your scrutiny that you were offended by this and that, that you could not find equally something in me? There's something about us being men that finds fault, that makes comparisons, that doesn't like, that's invidious and exalts itself at the expense of another.

that is going to be affected by the waving of a wand.

It's going to come out of a disciplined people who can be commanded by the Lord even when they don't feel like it. So this morning is more than just a talk, it's a discipline. Yeah.

It's girding up your loins when you don't feel like it and applying yourself and giving yourself to the Word of God. So this speaking with one voice, critical, it requires the authentic unity that is its key and this can never be the product of contrived ecumenical arrangements. I'm getting my dig in.

I'm just giving a little jab to all of this charismatic renewal pretense, this whole religious political muck that's going on by which supposed unity of the body of Christ is being affected between denominations as institutions. The unity of the body of Christ can never be an institutional matter. It has ever and always to be an organic matter exactly of the kind that we experienced this morning.

If we're going to be a body that's of one mind and one heart and one soul, it's going to take what we did this morning. Humiliation, confession, humbling, direct relationship, calling someone by name, I need to ask your forgiveness and we're only taking first baby steps. You see, this is going to be over in another week or ten days, but what if it was forever? What if this is it? Did I hear someone groaning? I just collapsed.

You're not getting out of this place. This is it. This is God's fixed community and we didn't choose each other.

He chose us. We've got to make it with each other and not just some kind of get-by thing, but a really an authentic union of agreement of heart and soul and mind and spirit for God has given us prophetic tasks for the last days that can only be performed out of that unity. What is it going to take? My God, the depths of things that were even beginning to be sounded.

Insecurity, difficulty with the opposite sex that probably has a history that goes back to an entire lifetime, maybe to infancy, who knows. These are the kinds of things that God is fingering and requiring the redemptive depth in order to bring the people to true unity. How about a marriage? My God.

I've just turned the corner with Enots about 30 years, but we're still in kindergarten. We're still in some very basic elementary place with some accommodation, but my God, what it has required. But are we at the place that our marriage is a glory? Far from it.

What will it take? Much more. That will require time, intensive attention, application, learning and stumbling and all of the rest of the kinds of things that make us cleave to God for grace. If we want something for our marriage, it's more than just a token compromise and getting by.

Getting by is the really effectual axiom of this nation and probably the whole Western world. Get by. Probably many memory remains with me from my high school teaching days.

It's the kids who invariably came to the teacher's desk at the beginning of the first day of class to say, Mr. Katz, what's the minimum amount that we need to do to get by? This is a get-by nation. But if you take the glory of God seriously, the requirement eclipses getting by. And are we taking the issue of unity seriously? Or are we getting by? That is to say, we're free from any overt and evident rupture or tensions.

It's sufficient for us to operate and to enjoy the benefit of being together in the classroom. But is it the unity that they might be one as we are one? You know when the glory of God is revealed? When the condition of relationship between God's people is exactly akin to the condition of relationship between the persons of the Godhead themselves. And the Lord showed me that on this last trip overseas in England, sitting in in a charismatic conference where they were talking about the unity of the body of Christ in the ecumenical way.

And the brother digged me with his head and said, do you agree with this? He said, do you think that this is unity? He said, what do you think is unity? I came and I said, unity is when we will have attained on earth between ourselves the exact quality of relationship that God endures in his tri-unity in three persons. That the world might know that the Father has sent me. And we shall be one as we are one.

Think of that we've got to work through. Just the sex thing alone. Male and female.

He made them male and female. There's nothing like a baby. Nothing.

The thing that makes men climb walls and ceilings. Don't they understand? Can't they be logical? But I did say I forgave you. Isn't that enough? But you don't understand.

You didn't say it in a way that I really felt that you received me for myself as a person. Oh. You know what I mean? We're just scratching at the surface.

But I'll tell you, we better start scratching now. Because Israel is already moving toward its death. But are we moving toward our unity? People say, why are you preaching this message now? Because it's going to take that long to get us fitted to be what we need to be while God is already fitting them to be where they need to be.

Their death is already at the door. But we are far from the prophetic union that would make our word an event. And I have a feeling that if the Lord gives grace, and I know that he will, in this very season of abstaining from ministry and giving myself to my own son-family relationships, that out of that is going to come a more powerful and effectual word.

I know that. I know the Lord has used me. He's blessed.

But you ain't seen nothing yet. There's going to be a power and an authority and an anointing that's going to blister the walls. We're going to see men fall before the word.

They'll not be able to gain say nor to resist it. We'll see God performing works in one night, in one message. He'll turn men completely around.

He'll break through deception and fraud. He'll reveal the things of darkness. He'll free and He'll deliver.

He'll work His works. His word will become a work in the earth. Because though I'm the sole one speaking at the point of delivery, I am reflecting and coming out of a matrix of real and authentic agreement with my wife, with my children, with the community, with those with whom I am joined.

That's the name of the game. Much easier just to be a pro and go out and do your individual professional thing. But you are so joined with those with whom God has knit you and the quality of that relationship and the truth of it is reflected in the nuance and the rate of everything that resonates from your mouth.

We're in this together. Really in this together. Now it's going to take a lot of dying to come to the kind of agreement that will make that word in Minsk, in Odessa, in Moscow, or Geneva, Switzerland, or wherever it is, to be like a sword that cuts asunder the soul and the spirit.

Because it's only one shot. You have a minister's conference, you're not going to have it again. Once and for all.

And eternity is at stake. And so that word has got to be effectual and powerful and will reflect the whole matrix of relationship out of which it issues. Why do you think that in Acts 13, when Paul said, Set thee unto me, Paul and Barnabas, for the work unto I have called them, that after they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them, so they, how does it say, having been prayed for, had their hands laid upon, were sent forth by the Holy Ghost.

God equating the laying on of the hands of the body with the actual sending of the Holy Spirit. That's how God sees it. And what is the laying on of hands? Is that some kind of a chithy? Is that some kind of an ecclesiastical flourish? Or is that some kind of deep statement of identification and union that very much totally affects what happens with those who are sent.

And those who have sent them and have laid hands on them have identified and stated to the powers of darkness as well as to God, will join with those men and our travail and intercession for them will be effectual and therefore we shall equally share in the reward of their labors. My great cry and concern for the Ben Israel people is that they will suffer by loss by their failure to participate in the work through their prayer thousands of miles away here in Minnesota for what I am performing elsewhere in other nations. Their indifference, their thinking that let George do it, arts are professional, I don't have to bestow myself, robs them of their share in the eternal reward for those labors.

For God comes and rewards each man according to his works and intercession in behalf of the ministries of God is a significant work and labor. So this speaking with one voice through many voices as one voice is a critical key that can never be the product of contrived ecumenical arrangements but that statement of apostolic authenticity itself. Such a church would likely at first comprise such extremes as those who are indifferent toward Israel if not hostile with scant appreciation for her future let alone for her destiny as against those whose celebration is extravagant to the point of near idolatry.

You see the extremes of the reaction of the church toward Israel? Some don't give a rap. Some even feel that Israel is finished and others anything that Israel does is right somehow and they're just aglow and suffuse with such a fascination for the things that are Jewish. Neither one of these positions is right and both need to be addressed at the cross to bring either him who rejects or him who idolizes to a place of true spiritual appreciation for that nation.

Both will require appropriate depths of dealings from God that will constitute virtually a death from those unplumbed sufferings of heart that can only be met at the cross. Why is the Ezekiel 37 message resisted and unpopular? Because if you've got half a mind you realize that something is required by it that sounds strangely like the cross of Christ Jesus. Uh-oh.

It's not only Israel being called to death but me also. So intruding and dreading that death it is little wonder that so many of us till now have been quick to affirm and congratulate present Israel despite her declining condition. Has she in fact not been the projection more than we could have understood of our own self-satisfaction and acceptance as the church? As we have projected upon present Israel very much the

same kind of benign approval as we give to ourselves.

I mean if we're doing okay and we're not on resurrection ground why do they have to be? See what I mean? And I'm not saying this is conscious but more than you can know the way that you view Israel is very much a reflection of how you view yourself. You're looking through your own eyes. There's a subjectivity by the same way by which you see yourself as the church.

And if you're satisfied with yourself as the church you're not going to be quick to find fault with present Israel. It's only when we've been made jealous for the glory of God and by His seeing that we see that both Israel and we have fallen short of the glory of God. Can Israel fulfill its covenantal destiny to bless all the families of the earth except as a nation transformed through resurrection? Can we consider that what we may be prematurely celebrating as the final prophetic fulfillment is rather its necessary preliminary? Imagine the shock of someone reading that in this British journal who thinks that present Israel is already the prophetic fulfillment and I'm raising questions that have never been sounded, never been expressed.

Everyone has automatically assumed that God was in this since the beginning and there's a truth in the sense that He has. Even though it has been the work of man, a Zionist, political, secular, atheistic venture, it still could not have succeeded lest God had given an assist. But does that mean that that is the final statement of God's prophetic intention? And if it's not, why would God assist it? He raised it up that He might bring it down.

That's why. To assist and allow a political entity called Israel to exist now for well over 40 years knowing that it is not the final statement, it's not in a condition to reveal His glory, why even permit it at all from the first? And do you have a corollary of this in your own life? Where He's allowed something to come up only to bring it down? And you were satisfied with that something and if you could have preserved it you would have. What was served then in God allowing a first then Israel to take it away to give a second? So can we consider that what we may be prematurely celebrating as the final, I've got that in italics, prophetic fulfillment, is rather, it's necessary preliminary that the spiritual is not first but the natural, then the spiritual.

Where is that found in the Scriptures? 1 Corinthians 15, which is Paul's whole statement of the genius of resurrection. That, quote, what is raised in glory must first be sown in dishonor, unquote. Also Paul, 1 Corinthians 15.

Here one would be safe from the predicament of defending or justifying Israel's increasingly desperate measures if they are seen as the very stratagem of God in bringing the nation to an end of its false hope in itself. It had to experience first the natural. It had to have a shot at it.

It had to learn that it cannot by its own virtue and strength and prowess establish an Israel that glorifies God. I mean, what it did is commendable. What it did is enormously impressive.

Can you tell me another nation in the world that in 40 years raised itself up from its own bootstraps and took an abandoned piece of landscape and planted an entire civilization in 40 years and became the world's third greatest military power with a high-tech civilization, culture, takes a dead liturgical language and makes it a flourishing secular language, has its own literature and culture that is not Jewish in the way that we have known a Jewish culture before the advent of Israel? A whole nationhood, personality, mode of living, a significance. Israel is small, but what a weight it has among the nations. What an effect it has had in only 40 years.

From humanly speaking, it is an enormously impressive accomplishment. Divinely speaking, it stinks. It falls short of the glory of God.

And if there were just an ordinary people, God maybe could have looked the other way and winked. But God has a promise to fulfill that he spoke to Abraham that out of your loins and out of your seed will come a people who will bless all the families of the earth, not impress, and for that difference Israel has got to go through the grinder that God gave the charismatic movement, not as being the end in itself or a final statement, but even to foreshadow something that would replace it that would be totally authentic and glorious and that would need to be replaced. But what's been the whole history of religious movements in the world? What first comes as revival and then becomes established and institutional then resists the next wave to extend or to replace it.

It's the whole history of the church. And therefore it resists being replaced and wants to become permanently established as the thing in itself. Keeps so desperately what is.

If only God would charge it a bit, give it a little luster where we don't want it to go and let it be replaced. And I did want to say this yesterday, I'll say it now, when I talked about only a love of God, an unconditional love of God joined with faith, the faith that works by love will bring that word that raises the bed. And the thing that stands in the way of the impediment is our lesser love, our affection, our sentimental regard for Israel that needs to die, needs to be put away.

They're good. And I'll tell you what, we don't go automatically from the one to the other. You know what you experience? A season of nothing.

You've let go of the one, but the other hasn't come in with one fell swoop, and you're in no man's land. You're neither loving nor unloving, you can't do this, and you're groping like a jerk in the dark, and you can even hope and rush back if you can still capture back again what you had before. You can be happy for the charismatic woman if you can find it, but you're in a no man's land.

God really testing the depth of your sincerity about being so jealous for that which is perfect that you're willing to relinquish that which is nearly good. You know how it feels to be loveless? Have your face sticking out without credentials, without ability? God will test the truth of this resurrection, of this willingness for an authentic death, and it's not comfortable. I wanted to say that last, and I'm glad I'm having now an opportunity to go back and dot the I's and cross the T's.

If we think we're talking about a theoretical death, forget it. A theoretical death is not going to eventuate in an authentic resurrection. The death must be as authentic as the resurrection that follows, or there'll be no authentic resurrection.

We'll still be fixed at the verbal plateau, talking about something, but not having the reality thereof. And the test of it is whether our word will raise the dead. Don't you love a situation where it's put up or shut up? Not enough to be theoretical or even to be correct, but to be so authentic that the reality will testify that the word that has come forth has actually raised the dead.

How would you like Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus saying, come forth, but he's only saying it theoretically? A man who is now dead unto stinking. Something had to come forth and had to come forth in a given moment, now, by a word spoken by an obedient son. And that coming forth of Lazarus set in motion the things that eventuated in the very death of Jesus, because when they saw that, it's necessary that one

man die for the nation.

This has gone too far now, this guy raising the dead. So what made his word effectual? Is there a question that should really occupy us? There's only one moment that comes, and when it comes, it's got to be met authentically, and everything to that moment is preparation. How would you like to look at your life like that? Everything till now is preparation.

I think that's a healthy and sane way to look at it. You guys realize that essentially our present-day Christianity, even at its best forms, is largely phraseological? That somehow we naively think that if we can say it, we have it? That if we can verbalize it and formulate it as a credo, that somehow we have it? And there are millions of people every Sunday morning reciting the Apostles' Creed, that wouldn't know an apostle if they stumbled over one? This is where the authentic thing of God degenerates into religion. And unless you're jealous over it, and watchful, it will happen even with the best of us.

The most sacred things can become transfused into mere religion. And I need to be watched over myself. I get scared when I hear myself, and it sounds like an echo of our caste, like I've even come to a place where I'm imitating myself unconsciously.

I'm losing my authenticity, and I'm just a bearer of words and messages, you know, you've got to fight for your integrity and to maintain your authenticity. And I want to say this, and I'll say it when we talk about prophets, you cannot do this prophetically except in relationship with others. If you're a solo prophet, doing your own thing and going from one holiday into the other, and there's no man speaking to you and finding you out and addressing you and correcting you, if you're not subject to the review and critique of an entire community, you're in a dangerous place.

But I want to tell you that to be in the place of review and critique and examination is not comfortable, but it's life-saving. And how many pastors would we have saved from falling? And how many, quote, spiritual women out of our congregations that have fallen into the most derelict whoredoms if we had sensed from the beginning the first erosions of character, if we had begun to sense some fluctuation in their personality, or in the pastor's speaking where his tone now has become professional, and that his speaking is no longer natural but effective and religious, and had the courage to tell him so. And I'll tell you, deception is having a field day.

Isn't that right? I mean, the world is in a lie, and the church, my God. I had to have some run-in with Mormons lately, and then on the very same trip go to Salt Lake City, where I'd not been for a hundred years, and come into the Mormon tabernacle and see the Mormon, what do you call it, with the angel Moroni on top, to realize, my God, what a religious Disneyland. What a hoax.

And yet what an investment of untold millions and billions to have perpetrated it, and it misses as good as a mile. Have you ever used that expression? When we were kids growing up in Brooklyn and playing ball in the streets, you know, you can swing the bat lustily, but if you miss it by just a fraction, it just drops to the ground or it's a foul pop-up. But to make a connection means bye-bye baby, that ball is over the fence, a home run.

A miss is as good as a mile. And though we subscribe to many orthodox elements of the faith, there's just a little deviance here, a little deviance there. The end thereof is deception of the profoundest kind.

And it made me to reflect, why would Satan go that far to present an angelic visitation to a man by the name of Joseph Smith, and even present perhaps golden plates and then later subsequent visitations to build up a whole religious system that has occupied the attention of millions and has the most tenacious missionaries going out all over the earth simply to keep mankind from the truth? How far will the enemy go to deceive? It really struck me, and here's another thing that struck me, having begun to contemplate that, I finally had the thought, you don't have to be deceived by false doctrine. You can come to a place of deception and be perfectly orthodox in your doctrine and have turned the true thing into a lie. And that is the cruelest and most devious of all deceptions because you think that you're eminently in the truth, because you're saying and subscribing to, quote, the correct things, but you're living as effectually in a lie and as much deceived as any Mormon, any Jehovah's Witness, or any other cult or sect.

That the truth itself can be turned into a lie. And I think that when the Scriptures speak about homing the truth in unrighteousness, there's something of the suggestion of this. Don't think that you're correct because you're correct.

Don't think because you say the right thing that you're right. Deception is so powerful, my God, you can't believe the depths of it. We really would be fools to misjudge the power of deception and therefore need rightly to understand the provision of God to be saved from it.

Namely, each other walking in the light and doing to each other what we must, however painful. Speaking the truth in love and exhorting one another daily while it's yet today, for next Sunday is already too late. The leaven is in the lump.

If we still think that we can yet do what we want when it comes to the real things like leaving town, taking another job, taking this vacation when we want, doing with our money what we want, and that we submit the other and lesser questions but reserve for ourselves single unilateral ability to determine if we're playing a religious game. And that's in fact what so much has been. This shepherding and, what do they call it, shepherding and the system of discipleship that was rampant in this country for about a decade was a game, and a cruel game, and a devastating game.

God is not calling us to a game. He's calling us to something so authentic that the whole issue of His coming and His kingdom is at stake. Because if we don't come to this unity, this agreement through such a process, there'll be no prophetic reality or speaking.

I'm happy for all that's been generated out of this discussion, this paper. You know, and I love this. I'd rather do it this way than we have a class on unity, or a class on this, or a class, you know.

This comes organically out of the flow of the issues that God is putting before us. And who would take an A for the day to identify the genius of God in this? Can you see that the mind of the Lord is not lineal, it's not compartmental? When I visit a Bible school and I see the kids going from class to class, the bell rings and you go from Old Testament survey to hermeneutics and the bell rings again and you go to missions and then you go to evangelism. My God, that'll rattle your brains.

But give me this. Give me something unstructured. Give something open to God and let Him begin where He will and let Him open something that if you look intensively into any issue of the faith, you'll be looking into all the issues of the faith, which is virtually what's happening to us today and in these days.

Okay. There's not a word about the relationship between Daniel and the other two children of Israel. But they must have had a quality of relationship.

We know that they prayed together. We know that they defied the Babylonian authorities together. They stood together as one.

And I wonder if that relationship was magical or that they did not experience the same thing, secret envy. Who's this Daniel that thinks he's somehow better than me? And that stuff inheres in the flesh. It's got to come.

It's got to be surfaced. It's got to be dealt with. It's got to be passed through.

Nothing magical. It's the cross. And though the scriptures are not explicit to speak of it, you can be assured that they went through every kind of thing that we ourselves are going in order to come to the place where they could defy Nebuchadnezzar and those mandates to worship idols with an agreement and a unity for which they would give their life.

Okay. But Moses in the burning bush. And where was God to be found? And except you find him there, there's no sending? In the midst of a bush that had prickly, what do you call it? A thorn bush.

There he was as the burning, consuming God. And only there. And that bush is lowly, ordinary, commonplace, prickly.

The kind of thing that we want to avoid. But it's with us. It's what our life is made of.

And if we'll find him in the midst of that, in the reality and the grit of the everyday and the ordinary, we will really have found him. So there's a lot of romantic fantasizing about God, and we're missing him. Here he is, in the midst all the while, if we'll turn our sight to see and look into our relationships, look into the grit of what we are as the church and as God's people.

Don't you love an environment in which we can do that? Without being shot down and that you can risk something, and even if it doesn't come out altogether right, you're not going to be penalized for it? I'm so clumsy myself that, you know, somehow when I'm saying something relationally, it doesn't come out the way I wanted it to, and it opens up the possibility of misunderstanding and engendering worse resentment than seeking to bring something correct than if I'd left the thing alone. Yet, God is a redemptive God, and we'll honor that, and we'll even employ what doesn't come out right in the wash to bring about his perfect end. Okay.

That's love, by the way, speaking the truth in love. So, I'm talking about first the natural, then the spiritual, what is sown in dishonor is later raised in glory. And to understand that, and to understand that that's what the Israel of 1948 means saves us from the predicament of having to defend or justify Israel's increasingly desperate measures if they are seen as the very standard hymn of God in bringing the nation to an end of its false hope in itself.

Otherwise, what alternative but to reject her or to join the chorus of those who censure her for the very failings she must experience in being brought to that necessary end? You know, we're forced to a certain response to Israel. Her conduct is becoming increasingly indefensible, and those who love her feel an obligation to somehow stand for her and with her and justify her, but you can't do that easily and still love truth. You have to acknowledge that they're taking actions now that are at the very least questionable and

at the most serious moral transgressions.

You don't dispossess 50,000 to 150,000 people and destroy their villages and kill a couple of hundred civilians and wound 500 in a military campaign to strengthen your northernmost boundaries. You don't invade another nation and do that. That's historically unprecedented.

That would be called aggression, and that's what Israel has just done in order to preserve itself physically. So how do we justify? How do we defend? It's increasingly difficult, and what I'm saying is if we understand that what Israel is doing flows out of an untenable place in which God has put her. She's required to act as she is, and it's that very thing which is God's strategy to bring her finally to an end of herself, and I'll get into that a little bit more in a moment.

This paradox is revealed in the harsh suppression and necessary denial of the Palestinians their political autonomy that her own democratic suppositions would logically have conceded. Israel is supposed to be a democracy, and yet ironically she cannot accede to the Palestinians having a democratic right, a political autonomy of their own. One person, one vote.

They cannot have it because demographically it would threaten Israel's whole structure, and there's a greater increase of progeny with Arabs than there is with Jews. Israel leads the world in the rate of abortion, and the Palestinians lead the world in the natural increase, and so if left to itself, the very demographic thing, we change Israel from being a Jewish state. They're in such a quandary.

So are these contradictions not in fact what she must experience in bringing her to an end of that hope in herself as a distinctively moral and morally superior nation? You need to know that Jews have always felt that they are morally and ethically superior. It's a luxury that you can enjoy when you're living in a ghetto. You can think all kinds of thoughts about yourself because you're powerless, but put that same powerless people into the place of power, and alack and alas what happens? You find yourself acting like other nations.

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, and Israel has been required to learn what God all along has said is so. There's not one man good, no, not one, and a God with a mark iniquity, who can stand? Israel has never surrendered to God's statement on the human condition and thinks that its Jewish condition is somehow superior to the Gentile condition, and that's why God cannot allow Israel to succeed on the basis of its own virtue. It must fail.

It's calculated to fail, and not only to fail as a place of political refuge, but as a country that sought to demonstrate its superiority to other nations being Jewish. It must fail where it thinks it's superior, namely in its moral and ethical aspect. I would have to say it was something like that that led me to the Lord.

My collapse in that area, my presumption that I was some kind of superior individual in a moral and ethical way, who really loved values, you know, I could fornicate, but there was a way in which that, for me it was poetry, for someone else it was just sleaze, but for me, you know, it's love. What man does not justify himself exactly like that until God takes the blindness from his eyes and says, hey, however you've justified it, that's sin. You're a cheap, sensual, carnal man seeking his own pleasure and leaving behind the scrap heap and the refuse of discarded souls who have served your purpose for the moment.

I could never have seen it, and I could not see it until my own conduct eventuated in it, and Israel is moving very much to that same conclusion. Pray that her eyes be opened, and what can we be to Israel if

our condition as the Church is not essentially much better? What one thing would have saved Israel from this terrible and cruel dilemma of having to act as we're now describing and we're now seeing? What one thing alone, and only that one thing, could have saved Israel from acting as she's acting? The knowledge of God, and the trust and the faith in God to protect and to preserve her. That one thing alone would save her from the expedencies to which she, in the arm of flesh, has had to go when there's not a belief in God who saves.

If there's no belief in God, then you have to be your own defense, and to be that means, in the last analysis, you become a murderer. Isn't that remarkable? I remember my first visit in 1964, which is when I was saved in Jerusalem and traveled around the country. There was, at that time still, an idealistic, cooperative spirit.

The people in the kibbutz scene were pioneers. The youth had an ideal to follow. It was kind of like something of an early stage of our own life where God allows us to be idealistic, principled.

And somehow he gives you a season by which that serves for a season, but he cannot allow it to remain because really it is a false basis. It's a confidence in man, particularly your own humanity, your own ability to be right and to do right. And so then the Lord has, since 1964, intensified the conditions of Israel's situation such and such to the point where idealism, humanism, is out the window.

The country is becoming more and more cynical, more and more expedient, more and more cast upon the use of power and force for its preservation. And they even are embarrassed to speak of how they were in times past and the kind of lofty idealism that characterized Israel in its early kibbutz-formative days. And now the kibbutz is a dying phenomenon.

Young people don't want to go there. They want to go to the cities where the discos are. And where there's a hope for success in a car and abroad and all that kind of stuff can take place.

So there's been a vast shift in the whole mentality, which I think must finally come to any humanist, any idealist, finally in the end must come to the realization of the bankruptcy of a position that is word of God. It's a disillusionment. And that disillusionment is very grace because disillusion means to be freed from illusions.

And illusions are a lie that conceal the necessity for God. And if we're not come to that out of purest love of truth, God will bring it to us out of our circumstances. If we will not hear the prophets, if we will not consult his word, he'll bring it to us in our experience.

And if we're still not here, he'll then yet make the experience more devastating. What Israel might have been had the nation interpreted the Holocaust differently is only something that we can speculate. Maybe the devastations that we anticipate would not need to have come if there would have been a broken recognition of transgression and offense to God that made the Holocaust necessary.

But seeing that it was not interpreted that way, but seen as an aberration of history through some mad dog named Hitler and those Germans, and not seeing it as the consequence of their own separation from God, how the Holocaust must then follow. Preliminary judgments are given to save us from ultimate judgments. But if the preliminary judgment does not serve its purpose, God will bring the ultimate.

And some of you may have heard on a tape or heard me say that at one time at a minister's conference in Japan, in Osaka, just spontaneously I said, if you think that Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the atom bombing of

those cities, are to be attributed to men operating from either a political or military position, you have missed it completely. They are the preliminary judgments of God on a nation that does not even have a word for sin in its vocabulary, and whose whole religious posture is only a cultural prop to reinforce the privileged social classes and to see that men behave in a way that would make society coherent. But there's no love of God, no acknowledgement of truth, and no seeking of Him, and you've devastated the missionaries that were sent into your midst earlier in your history.

I was presenting the atom bombing of Japan's two great cities as being the hand of God. And a minister leaped to his feet, I thought he was ready to punch me out, and he cries out, God, he said, make me a prophet for my nation. He got the point.

And indeed, unless God raises up prophets for that nation who will rightly interpret the meaning of its history, that they will repent for it and turn to a God whom they have forsaken and have never been willing to know and have been satisfied with a religious cultural alternative and have not a word for sin in their vocabulary, their greater judgments will follow. The fires and the burnings precede the fire that shall not be quenched. And we ourselves need to see it as the church, or we cannot sound a warning.

So maybe this is a good point to take.

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