

K-468 a Wandering Jew Comes Home

by Art Katz

The speaker shares his personal journey of conversion from prejudice to faith, and his realization of his own failure as a teacher, highlighting the importance of education and the need to teach others about God.

Duration: 55:01

Scripture: Isaiah 53:2, Micah 5:2, Matthew 6:33, John 5:46, John 14:6, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the state of the world and the individual's search for meaning and fulfillment. They highlight the failure of material wealth and the shallow culture that surrounds us. The speaker shares their personal experience as a high school teacher, realizing the emptiness of humanist slogans and the true nature of human beings. They then describe a transformative encounter with a young person who radiated the light, love, and life of God, leading them to recognize their own darkness. The sermon emphasizes the need for a genuine, heart-transforming relationship with God, rather than relying on intellectual or theological pursuits.

Transcript

So, Lord, forgive us if we've spoken anything that's been out of our will. We're so crammed full of you and your reality and what you're doing in these days, Lord, that we can speak for hours. But we want you to shape it to single out the things that bless your heart and that are out of your heart.

And we ask you just to possess this body and come in and take it over and put us on and wear us and take our minds upon yourself, our soul, our brain, our energy, our mouth, our heart, our emotion, and Lord, let them see Jesus. You speak to them as a living God who woos and wounds and draws to himself. Precious God, let not one who is here tonight have any doubt whatever that they've heard from the Almighty God and that their hearts are deeply stirred and that you've ministered to them whatever they need, as I perfectly.

We Jews are so conscious of being prejudiced against, and it's true. But I want to acknowledge that, at least for me, I was quite capable of my own prejudices. I had quite a thing going against the goyim all my life.

And I wondered what I could ever have to do with those people who are light-complected and sandy-haired and have freckles and come from the Midwest. You know, the gap was so enormous, I could

never see any basis for bridging the gap. And I said, on top of that, I was in a very intense anger and hatred as a result of the war.

And I said, isn't life ironic that a man of this nature would, during the Korean War, be sent to Germany to live in the bosom of the people that he would despise? And then I wanted to describe the experience I had there. Well, after being there for some months, I came to see the tremendous similarities between German life and Jewish life. The Germans are so much like our Yiddish, and they like good food and drink and talk, and that's so Jewish, they call that *gemütlichkeit*.

And I loved the medieval towns and cities and the sense of antiquity that's centuries old. It really touched my heart. It was America where I always felt like a man without a country.

And the more I came to be drawn to these people, the more I could not understand how they could have done what they did. The fact of the Holocaust of six million Jews being turned to ashes and to soap in the 20th century was, for me, the single greatest brute fact of our age. It transcends any other consideration.

It's so stupefying that this was done in our age of enlightenment and progress, not by some barbaric people, but by the most eminently civilized people on earth. And I never had an answer for that. I was like a pot on a stove, boiling, seething, frothing over.

There was a canker in my heart. And it came a Jewish holiday. You notice how we call the holy days holidays? How the devil has pulled out from under us the two most sacred events of the year, the two most Jewish events of the year, Christmas and Easter, and he's made of them holidays and shopping sprees and orgies of paper and plastic and ribbon and tinsel and junk.

I tell you, I dread the Christmas season that's coming. It makes my soul to weep. We have a God who is holy.

And excuse me if I'm going to ramble back and forth, but God's just dropping things into my heart. When we lived in Kansas City just a few months ago, I picked up a girl at a home for unwed mothers who was going to be our babysitter that night. And it was the Christmas singing season and I was humming a Christmas carol, Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem.

And this Jewish girl said to me, I didn't know she was Jewish. She said, please, Mr. King, she said, I wish you wouldn't sing those songs. She said, it makes me feel so nostalgic.

She said, I'm a Jewish girl who has always been very strangely drawn to these Christmas songs and it bothers me. I turned to this kid, I said, if you really understood, Christmas is the most Jewish event of the year. Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem.

Had we known that in Micah, our prophet, in the fifth chapter, in the second verse, that God had said to us, But out of thee, Bethlehem of Phrada, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet shall he come forth unto thee, who is to be the ruler of all Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. But we didn't know. We didn't know what the prophets wrote.

And that's why Jesus said, if you knew Moses and you knew the prophets, you would know me for they spoke of me. But that Jewish girl's problem was mine. We never read the prophets.

We never opened the scriptures. Karl Marx I read. And Sigmund Freud I read.

And Eric Fromm I read. And every modern commentator I read. And every writer of seductive literature I read.

But the book of the living God, that I never opened. Beneath my contempt, an offense to my intellect. So, I was an atheist.

You know, atheism is the only intelligent position if you've never been exposed to the reality of the living God. If you've just had a bland church or synagogue exposure, I believe that atheism is a logical consequence. I never sought any evidence for God.

Whatever. Seven years at a Hebrew school and widely exposed in traditional Jewish life. No, I don't remember anyone ever speaking about God.

It was kind of the unspoken thing. You know, it's an embarrassing subject. You don't talk about that.

And I was desperately in search of meaning and truth. And by the time I was a 15-year-old kid in Brooklyn, I was already assured that the answers for my life were needed to be found in Jewish religion or Gentile religion. And I wondered why people were even getting excited about religions and denominations when there's no God.

If there's no foundation, why are you bothering about a superstructure? Religion is just a ceremonial thing. It just provides a place where you get married or baptized or confirmed or bar mitzvahed. What does that have to do with life? I was seeking life and I wanted it more abundantly.

And there are a lot of people in that condition today who have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. They've had a little inoculation in churches. They've heard some doctrine, some theology and they've not seen life and they've concluded that there's no God.

So here I was in Germany in Yom Kippur, a high holy day, the highest, the Day of Atonement. And I wasn't going to go to a synagogue, but I went to a concentration camp. I thought it was far more fitting.

And I visited this place called Dachau which is preserved as a museum. And I didn't expect that I was going to find anything new that I didn't know before. I was already very informed, very alive with my indignation, anger against the Germans.

And I had an experience that day that turned my life completely around. You know that we think we know, but we don't know what we want to know. There's no substitute for reality.

There's no substitute for direct experience. You can be informed intellectually and theologically and started like an expert, but when you have that first-hand contact with the real thing, remember what happened to that prophet Isaiah. He wasn't just a rank-and-file Jewish man.

He wasn't just one of God's choice instruments. He was the prince of the prophets, the great oracle of God to whom was entrusted the most sacred revelations of the Messiah to come. But in the sixth chapter of his book, he had a little experience.

He saw God high and lifted up and his train filled the temple. And he saw God in his glory, in his magnitude, in his totality, attended by seraphs and angelic creatures whose one function throughout the whole of eternity was to cry just one word, Holy, Holy, Holy. And the Shekinah glory of God was so great in that presence that the very doors lurched out of their jams and the place rocked on its foundation.

And Isaiah didn't say anything glib like, Hi Lord, me, your number one servant. He said, Oy vey. You know what that means? You just had the King James.

He says, woe is me. Oy vey is almost untranslatable. It's a cry of pain, schmett.

It's something where your heart is pierced through. Oy vey, woe is me, I'm undone. For I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live amidst a people of unclean lips.

Oh, if I could pray for anything, I would pray for a vision of God and his holiness to come upon this earth, and even upon God's people, that we might be conscious of the taint on our lips. We might be conscious of our easy talk and our glib and unctuous phrases and our religious motions and our easy catechisms and all the rest, and fall on our faces before him and cry out, Oy vey, I'm undone. And then we would have a remedy.

He would take the taint and the iniquity from us by the coal from his altar. I had an experience, the first of its kind, in my concentration camp. I actually went into the barracks.

Everything was preserved as it had been through those years. And I ran my hand over the wood bunks, and I could picture these gone skeletons that had been herded together there like sardines once upon a time. And I walked down the company streets, the whipping posts were in their place, the commandant's office with the exhibition tables, and you could look through and see the photographs of mounds of hair and fillings from teeth and eyeglasses and tattered uniforms, implements of torches.

There was a museum of horror. And then I went into the dance room, and the jets were still there, and the sign in German, the bell with the bolt, informing these prisoners that they would receive a shower and to undress, and then right adjoining that was the factory of extermination with the ashes still in place in the ovens and conveyor belts. And I went outside, I put my hand on a smokestack, and I was undone.

I was a slick hotshot in New York full of brittle little information. But I didn't know as I got to know. The tragedy was so overwhelming.

The reality of seeing the bones and the ashes still in place and picking the smokestack that used to belch 24 hours a day just did me in. My brain shorted. My nerves, my heart, my emotions.

I stumbled and staggered out of that place like a drunk man. And I found myself on a train. I didn't even know where I was being taken.

I didn't care. I was numb with pain. I had my face pressed to the window when I was being whisked back to Munich, one of the glorious cities of Germany.

Seminaries, concert halls, opera houses, museums, libraries, churches, all the paraphernalia of civilization, and right in the shadow of that civilization this most unspeakable death. And I had my face pressed to the glass looking at the Bavarian countryside whipping by, and the beauty of it just pierces your heart. It's not like New Jersey.

You've got to see it. I mean, these Germans, they must go with a vacuum cleaner in their forest. There's not such a thing as a crumpled cigarette pack or a piece of wrapping from chewing gum.

It's glorious. And I thought of all of the genius that this beauty had inspired, the Mozart's and Beethoven's and Sixtus' and Hegel's and Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's and Goethe's and Schiller's. There's no end

to the composers and the poets and the artists and the philosophers that this same Germany had produced.

And I couldn't for the life reconcile how a nation that could produce this genius could also produce this horror. But I tell you people that that is the lesson of the 20th century. God is trying to tell us something.

Our civilization has failed. And we're more cruel than animals when we're forced in desperation with our backs to the wall. And those of us who used to cluck our tongues at the Germans and say, well, that was a German crime.

Those Germans, World War I, World War II, were a little surprised when after World War II we learned about the French in Algeria hanging men from their thumbs and pumping water into men to force confessions. Why, French, they're the ones who originated the exquisite culture. And then we learned about our own boys and our own massacres.

You know that there's no man good, no not one. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And when we stand before him that day, we're not going to be saved because of our convenience or because the circumstances of our life were such that we were never forced to a place to demonstrate the horror and the death which was already in our hearts.

But our hearts will condemn us. And you know that I was in that little train compartment. It's not like the American train.

It's little cubicles where you slide the glass door shut. And I sensed that there was another man in that compartment with me. And I turned for a quick second and did a very quick double take because I saw a blur of a blonde head and blue eyes.

And when I saw that symbol of the master race, the Aryan, my enemy, after what I'd just seen that day, I felt the hatred well up in me. I was consumed with hatred. I was ready to turn to that man and rend him limb from limb.

And when I turned to focus on him, I saw that I didn't have to do it. It had already been done. He was a man without arms and legs, just a half man with artificial hooks and limbs, half a body left behind on a battlefield.

And that poor sucker was writhing in pain, trying to adjust his limbs with his hooks and his hooks were slipping. And I had my arms folded over my chest, wearing the uniform of Uncle Sam, the army of the victor, looking on the vanquished and the defeated, the Jew and the Gentile, and watching that man squirm and writhe in his feet in pain. And I was saying to myself, suffer you dog.

Whatever pain you are experiencing now is only a minute portion of what your people inflicted upon mine. And you know, as I watched this guy squirm, there was such a war raging in my own heart between pity and vengeance. And finally in disgust, I just got out of my seat.

I didn't say a word. I went right over to him and I put my hands right on his limb to adjust it. And the moment I touched it, I could taste the nausea in my mouth.

This man beckoned to me what I should do when I turn this thing till we achieve this peace. And then he had me to sit down alongside him and he offered me a cigarette. And we tried to carry on some kind of a

conversation.

It was the most pathetic and pitiful moment of my life. We were trying to be brothers. And I knew that given the right circumstances again, we would be reddening each other.

And you know, I was studying that man's faith because I believed that the man's character is written in his features. And I was looking for all the palpable signs of barbarism and cruelty. You see, because the same thing is going on now.

Great rage. Great hatred. Blacks are calling us white devils and blue-eyed devils.

And they were capable of all kinds of horror. You know, that Satan can develop such a mentality in a people that there'll come a time when they're able to throw each other into ovens without batting an eyelash and claiming that they're doing God a service. You know, I didn't see anything like that in that man's faith.

All I saw was just a very ordinary Gentile faith. And my heart broke. And you know, in that moment I heard an inner voice that said, Our dearest, for the grace of God, go you.

It's only an accident that you were born in Brooklyn. It's only a caprice that you were born Jewish. You might just as easily have been born in Germany.

And then you would have been the one stoking the bodies into the oven. Whew. You know, I didn't cry out when that thought came to me.

Oh no, not me. I'm a progressive. I'm concerned for mankind.

I'm against exploitation of the impure if I belong to left-wing organizations. My head just slumped on my chest. And I received what was the evident truth.

Oh, I had never committed murder. But I knew I was quite capable of atrocity. Because I had given looks that could kill.

And I had spoken words that could kill. And I had raged and murdered in my heart. Imagine what was going to happen years later when I picked up the New Testament for the first time and I read from the lips of Jesus, He who is angry with his brother is a murderer already.

And that man who looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery with her in his heart already. Something in my heart went click! Truth. It completely confirmed my experience.

How do they have that depth of understanding was my question. But that was years to come. And on the basis of that experience that day in entering that journey I resolved to become a teacher.

It was the wildest thing because I was a high school dropout. I was such a cut-up in New York my poor mother wasn't at the principal's office. I was a clown because the real questions that I was dying to have answered were never even asked.

They were playing with geometry with algebra and other nonsense and I was a dying man seeking for life. It never occurred to me that I should be a teacher. But when that thing clicked in my head in that train I thought well catch you found yourself at last.

Because from 16 on I'd been a merchant seaman I'd worked in the streets installing pipes I'd broken concrete I'd been a hitchhiker I'd lived in California six different times. I had been through every kind of vocation in odd craft and jewelry trade and relationships and philosophy and cause I'd been the route. I really believed that education was the answer.

I don't care what men say about faith but everyone has it of one kind or another. You can't live without a faith of one kind or another. My faith was in human intelligence.

My faith was that education was the answer. My faith was that untainted and uncorrupted young people if they had the proper kind of education if they were really inspired that together we could create a brave new world. I wasn't going to become a teacher just to give kids information they could take tests and get grades.

I was going to be a revolutionary and create a world in the classroom. We have a very patient God waiting waiting for us to come to the end of ourselves. How long? And isn't that what's happened in our world history? We're coming to the end of ourselves.

All we've battled and struggled and we've striven to obtain material welfare and security and isn't it fantastic that the very time that we've arrived and succeeded is when we're beginning to see that we've really failed. Our civilization is falling apart. Our shallow culture is not enough.

Demonic forces are loosed and strange currents are in the air and we're lurched out of orbit and we're dying. That's what happened to me as a man individually and that's what happened to the world collectively because we don't know him. To know him is life and the absence of him is death.

I labored like a fool for four years as a high school teacher in California. My Jewish mother had been waiting so many years for nachos. Do you know what that means? She lived.

Satisfaction. You know, their lives are so frustrated. They have so much misfortune.

They struggle to save and to crimp them to get their kids into schools and stuff like that and my mother was waiting especially for me to black sheet the family that she should finally have nachos and now she can say my son the professor. I allow her her little exaggeration you know and she could throw out her chest with pride. She didn't know what I taught or why I taught but she could say my son the professional and just when I gave every appearance of succeeding finally at the age of 34 when you would expect a man to do it and I was being congratulated by my students and by my colleagues I finally came to the realization that I was an utter and dismal failure because nothing fails like success.

It was when I finally arrived and achieved my goals that I realized that I was nowhere and I began to suspect that these kids are not innocent and untainted and uncorrupted. Fantastic what human nature is whether it's seeking power whether it's seeking performance whether it's seeking grace how it will reveal itself. And I began to see how hollow how cheap how inadequate how human its slogans are about human brotherhood about our belief in human perfectibility when I was getting a glimpse of nature as it really is.

Oh my kids could cry. They could get excited about Biafra and they could get a tear in their eye about some underprivileged people but I showed them where they really lived. I knew them when they really trembled and the great crisis was not Biafra the great crisis was being flat chested.

That was the real situation in a person's life. That was where they trembled to live or a pimple on a nose or the failure of a boy to pick him up for a date or inadequate horsepower for their car or their immediate future. You know we adults need to look down contemptuously on those kids because we're not one width better.

How do we look when we go to the new car showroom and open those doors those Buick's and those Buick's and Pontiac's and none of that upholstery and chrome and we have such an ecstatic look on our face. Where your heart is there are your treasures also. As God looks down upon us we're all children every one of us.

Misspending our lives seeking for the things that do not profit. I became so disillusioned when I began to see these realities and the final crusher was this. I who was so artful in speaking all of the slogans of the world and whose heart was not palpitated for all of the oppressed and the exploited and who could point his finger with self-righteous indignation at the imperialists.

I was beginning to see I was doing a pretty good job myself of being an imperialist and an exploiter. The whole thing is in the human heart. What is imperialism but what we carry on in our beds with our wives with our children with our colleagues is human dominance is possessiveness is the desire to assert ourselves and I was beginning to see that my classroom was not just a classroom it was a miniature universe and the same forces that raged outside were raging inside and I had no answer and I came to the end of myself and I stopped teaching.

I had nothing to offer my students but the sense of grief that I had for a world that was teeter-tottering on the brink of annihilation and we had no answer. And I took a year's leave of absence and I remember talking to my best friend and I said there's a reason for my taking this trip I can't even understand. I feel a tremendous inner compulsion to break every connection that I have and just thrust myself out on a live stream and see what will happen.

And I didn't travel first or second or third class. New teachers weren't that well paid. I traveled for 14 months as a hitchhiking from standing by the side of the road doing this and what an education I got in the drizzle and the rain as I watched those cars drive by and I saw those blank masks and those slash lines for miles whose consciences I had pricked because I was standing there but they didn't have the courage to stop.

And just before they got to me I'm sure they were telling themselves about human brotherhood. It's not what we speak it's not our glibunctious phrases it's the reality. But you know the strange people stopped for me? I'll never forget a man who stopped for me in Switzerland in a brand new car and he didn't just wait behind a wheel and do this hurry up I'm doing you a favor.

He got out of the car and he grew to me at the side of those beams from ear to ear. You can imagine what my first suspicion was. And this man took my filthy looks at I was living out of a knapsack for 14 months and the fantastic thing was I didn't use half the things that were in it.

I was learning to live on one meal a day and I was never healthier and I caught a glimpse of just how cluttered and crowded and jammed our life is with goods and things and we have every kind of excuse why we have to work and our wives have to work and we have to keep up with this and that and we have no time. I would to God that you would know every Jewish person that I spoke to I don't have time to inquire of the things that you're representing to me. Busy, busy, busy.

This man took that filthy rucksack and threw it in the backseat of his car and I winced when it hit the new upholstery and I looked at his face he hadn't even noticed. I thought to myself what manner of man is this? Everybody I know that gets a scratch on their bumper or a fender their pants stricken and this guy while he was driving his car he hit the motor transmission and he had me on a front seat and off we drove and he made me feel like the exalted Jesus. You can't make a man to feel like that unless you're something very authentic and this man turned to me and looked at me and you can see I wasn't a high school kid out on a walk it was past the tourist season he said why are you traveling like this in German and I said well as I could I tried to explain I was a modern man whose life was broken at its foundation I was seeking for the deepest answers to life and for some strange reason it just came right out of my mouth I told this man I was Jewish that's something I didn't ordinarily share with Gentiles and I saw the most amazing reaction where this guy began to glow like a neon tube as if being Jewish was somehow something special and the other Gentile just grunted or grunted or nodded or went silent or worse this man insisted that we stop the refreshments and we had a conversation one day but I'll never forget if you're wondering how do I speak the things of God and Christ to my Jewish neighbor friend are you really loving is the love of God palpating in your heart or are you afraid to bring offense sometimes the loving thing is to be willing to run the risk this man was willing to take the risk with me he loved me so much although I was a stranger to him and it didn't begin by him giving me all kinds of brittle answers and the four spiritual laws or taking me by the lapel or showing me John 3 16 or asking me if I've been watching the Brother Lamb I would have been immediately turned off it began by me doing all the talking he was the most wonderful listener I'd ever met no he wasn't just hearing me he was actually receiving my love and he was receiving he was receiving me people of the world bent, washing the feet of the lowly and the despised.

And to my amazement, it wasn't just the bourgeoisie of the middle class, or the wasps, or the Caucasians, or the Gentiles, but the odd Catholics of the world were down there. They were the arrogant and the contentious, strident voices filled with self-righteous indignation. And something cried out of my heart, Eureka! Can't this be it? Overnight, bloodlessly, by a spirit of humility and love, the world can be transformed.

And the saliva began to run in my mouth, and this meant that I had to tell them about the gospel of Jesus Christ in German. I was 34 years old, I had lived an entire life in a so-called Christian country, and I was hearing the gospel for the first time. No one had ever put a piece of literature in my hand.

No one had ever spoken to me. And I wasn't just some insulated Jew living in a ghetto in Brooklyn. I was widely traveled.

I had lived in California on six different occasions. I had all kinds of Gentile friends and colleagues. No one had ever spoken to me.

And the moment that he began to tell me the gospel, I knew I was hearing the words of truth. And at the same time, it had to do with his name, Jesus, which shocked me. And I ran on that day like I may have been bludgeoned over the head, staggering under the impact of that encounter.

And it wasn't long after, I was having other encounters just like that, with lady-born-again children of God. I am impatient, can I tell you one more? Because I had a girl who was a Gentile, who was a Gentile. I

should have had a thing to do with this kid.

I was twice her age to begin with, and she was obviously a wasp, and I found out in good order that she was from Kansas, and she was a Protestant, and she was everything that was a symbol to me of the world that I despised. But you know she had the same quality in her as that Swiss man? There was something about her that was magnetic. There was something so warm that drew me.

And her friend had left her for the day, she was an American kid on vacation, and we went hand-in-hand and walked the woods around this European city. And I was holding this kid's notice, and I said, look, how come you didn't come to me? How did you get afraid of me? I'm a stranger. And this kid was just answering his questions in the most simple way as you would expect a fine Christian girl to do.

And the more she spoke about God, the more exasperated I was becoming. I don't like that kind of talk. And finally I thought to myself, okay kid, you've had it.

I stopped, and I hitched up my shoes, and I thought I'm going to give her my famous sixty-four dollar question. Because when I wanted to alleviate boredom, I would go out and find so-called Christians and engage them in debate and wipe them out. I had not yet found one who could really defend his convictions.

So what was this little kid to me? I'd roll over her like a steamroller. And I said my luck, and I got my engine all revved up. I said, you've been talking about God a lot, and I'm sick of it.

So let me ask you one question. How do you know what God is? And I said, folks, now you're going to watch this. Here comes a little brittle answer you learn in Sunday school.

I'll crush it. That kid didn't even hesitate for a moment. She looked up at me with that face.

And she said, aunt, she said, I know that God lives. He lives in me. You know what happened to aunt's steamroller? It stopped dead in its tracks.

And the same thing happened again. My heart exploded. I could feel the pieces flying around inside my chest.

I started to move. I went speechless again. I was undone.

And I was trying to think, what did she say? What was so powerful about that? What was so intellectual? What was so theological? And then it dawned on me what it was. It was simply true. God has called us to be a light unto the world.

And I saw the light and the life and the love beaming out of that simple Gentile kid. And my heart was pierced through. I was twice that kid's age, twice as educated, twice as traveled.

But I knew in that moment she was in the light. And I was in the darkness. You know, the God says in Romans that he's waiting for you to move my Jewish people to jealousy? Not by your fantastic churches and cathedrals and eloquent ministers.

But I tell you, with a low-ceilinged place just like this and a high-feeling voice just like his. And he knows it. This is the beautiful freedom that we have in Christ.

I know this is a church that speaks the truth. But I tell you that any Jewish person walking into this atmosphere tonight knows that this is not just religion. There's something here.

There's a warmth and a love and a presence. It's life. It's God.

And that's what I recognized in that girl. And you know, just a few weeks after that, I boarded the deck of a trans steamer. I was a deck passenger, the cheapest way to go.

I was on my way from Italy to Greece. I was more of a Greek than I was a Jew because I worshipped human intellect. I exalted man, which really means we're worshipping ourselves.

And guess what happened. I boarded the deck of that ship, stuck together with bums and homosexuals and drifters and lost men. You should have seen the scene.

They were nine foot on that deck. Three days and nights. And I met a Jewish man like myself who was a seeker of the truth.

And some little church had been giving out New Testaments on the waterfront when he bought a ship in New York and he got one. When I learned that he had it, I said, send me that Bible, please. You know, guys, I had never read the Bible in my life, as I told you.

And I was never interested in reading the Bible. I wouldn't even read a tract, I don't suppose. But for the first time, I was really curious to open this book only because of the lines that had been encountering mine and speaking to me about God and Christ.

And I found myself a place, but I booked it. I slipped to the deck. There was a porthole over my shoulder.

Inside, the well-paying passengers were living it up. And their laughter was coming out of the night, seeing how many bums were huddled together for warmth. And in that atmosphere, I read that book.

So he came as a physician to those who were sick. And I was a man who was sick in my soul. And at the moment I started reading that book, I knew this book was different from any book I'd previously read.

It had such a compelling authority. And I was so drawn to the personality of Jesus. I didn't know who he was, but I knew in my heart that everything that he represented was everything that the world desperately needed.

I understood immediately why he was in conflict, not that the broken and the lost, but those who were presumptuous and proud and religious, for whom he was a friend. And he had been making those fantastic claims. I never heard a Jew speak like that.

He allowed men to floor at his feet and worship him and call him Lord. And I didn't know a Jew would ever allow that. We won't even spell the word God.

We'll spell G-D. And he was allowing men to worship him. And he said, if you see me, you'll see the Father.

I and the Father are one. And he said he hadn't come to destroy the law. He'd come to fulfill the law.

I said, either this is the most unspeakable presumption, chutzpah, nerve that I've ever heard, or this man's a lunatic, or maybe he is who he claims to be. And I came to that episode where that woman was taking

the man to the gulf. Remember that? And she was flung at his feet.

And these self-righteous men were bristling with anger. And they had the opportunity to do him in. And the foam was swimming in their mouths.

Their eyes were ablaze. And they said, okay, wise guy, I can just sense their delight in having the opportunity to do him in. Jesus is infuriating, even to this day, to those who want to keep their little kingdoms intact.

All he makes is stand revealed and naked by his beautiful holiness, his impeccable character, that Nazarene. He's not the Jesus that's been represented on black velvet with sequins, that's turned us Jews off for generations with blond hair and a straight nose. He's a Jewish Jesus.

He's a suffering Jesus. He's a real Messiah who came to lay down his own life. We could believe that kind of Jesus.

And I didn't even know that Jesus was a Greek name and that his Hebrew name is Yeshua. From the name Joshua, God saves. Yeshua haMashiach, if I had only known that.

But nobody told me. I thought when Jews had our religion, we didn't have our own religion. We only had Jesus to be with me.

And I thought, well, I've got him now. He's getting comfortable through the law. And the law says death by stoning.

What could he say? I was afraid of him, you know, and I closed the book. My heart was racing and that sweat was oozing out of my ears. I was so scared for him because he was a new hero.

I felt something quivering in my heart. I didn't want to see him go. But what could he say? I thought, well, catch your breath.

What would you say? And did I rack my brain? I turned up every iota IQ that I had. And I don't know how long it took me. I leaned back finally exhausted.

I realized there's no human answer. And I really expected it to work. And I opened up that book and described Jesus bent over the earth, poking his fin in the dirt with his men struggling with their eyes ablaze and this woman weeping at his feet.

And he looked up and he spoke that one line. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone. That line came up off the page and penetrated my eyes and something started to go up into my brain and my body began to shake and to quake and fantastic thing, it didn't stop in my brain.

I thought my brain was everything. That's where I lived. But something began to turn down where I even lived.

Out of the heart preceded all the issues of life and something was turning and cutting and running like a knife's blade digging deep, deep, deep into that inmost being and it cut through every issue over which I had ever agonized all my life. What is truth? What is the crowd? What is justice? What is mercy? What is righteousness? And when that knife blade hit home, I knew in a single moment of time, I was an atheist just a moment before, there's a living God. No man could ever have conceived or spoken that.

That's a divine utterance. There's a living God and I'm reading from his word and Jesus is who he claims to be. Remember the word of God is quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword for they're cutting the center of the soul and the spirit and God clues me in two on the depth of that ship.

And I wish I could say to you that when I recognized that there's a living God and that Jesus is my Messiah that I cried hallelujah. But I didn't. I was embarrassed to death.

I was mortified. What am I going to do now? What do I tell my mother and what will I say to my intellectual friends? How embarrassing. The last statement that I had made at our faculty meeting in California, I rose to my feet with an angry statement and I said, we need a revolution.

And now I'm going to return to the same faculty and tell them that I believe in Jesus as the Messiah and that the Bible is the inspired word of God and that I'm one with his fundamentals. God was calling me to die and I didn't want to. I wanted to continue being Lord.

I claimed to be a seeker of the truth but I wanted truth which was convenient and fit into my philosophy and my system. But our God is not in that business. He is the truth and the way and the life and we had better fit into his system.

And I wrestled against God for another four or five months. Had a fantastic experience in Egypt with the Jewish community representing the museum when I went on to Israel. I was on one side of the land and the other living in a Tibetan city searching, searching and in Jerusalem I found a Jewish boy that had come to know nine months earlier.

We left the ship in New York together and in nine months he had become an Orthodox Jew and when I told him that Jesus was wooing me breathing down my neck he got scared. And he had me go stay at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and he gave me a bed and I went to the library every day put books in my hands I spoke to professors and the more I read and the more I spoke the more I was becoming convinced that this new testament the beauty of it and the truth of it was unspeakable. Now this is the same Jewish boy who has since become a rabbi and when I came from Kansas City to New York he said I'm responsible for the outreach of two and a half million Jews in New York I hope you can pray for us.

My first day in New York in front of Columbia University distributing tract who do I meet? The rabbi. No matter how our lives had gone in different directions in six and a half years he was the rabbi and I stayed with him that night we went to a synagogue we were up till four in the morning I stayed with him the next night and sharing the things of God how God had been using me to bring healing and deliverance and I had seen people heal from epilepsy from cancer from blood conditions people delivered from anxieties and fears and distresses and just the most fantastic miracles and I'm just an ordinary believer in the name of Jesus. And that next morning we had breakfast together and we were eating bagels and you know the whole thing and somebody was licking his lip and he took out his little prayer book Yes Amir? I said look how about if I just pray out of my heart do you think I'd be just as acceptable to God? He said yes.

So I prayed and the moment I started the spirit of God took hold of my prayer and I began to weep and I prayed for him and Jewish men like him that God would make them true rabbis of Israel true teachers of Israel that the light of God would come into their lives and when I finished praying this guy looked at me his eyes were like that he said here I am an orthodox rabbi and I can't say for certain that I believe that God even exists and he said you're a Jew in the tradition of Elijah you know that's the only way to be a Jew the only kind of Jew that God has ever contemplated one who is bold for the God of Abraham Isaac

and Jacob Elijah said if the Lord my God liveth before whom I stand it shall not rain but according to my word and I tell you what the word of apostasy is again upon us and God is looking for Elijah men who can be moved by the word of God who to be immediate to obey when he tells them that he can go feed them by ravens and who will confront the Ahab's of this world without the slightest trembling in fear because they know that the God before whom they stand lives so he put me in a bus one day six and a half years ago in Jerusalem with the same boy to visit a Hasidic Jewish community pious Jews I never got there they put me in a long bus I got lost and I was in a section of Jerusalem I didn't know I'd taken that bus many times to downtown Jerusalem I don't know how it happened even to this day it was pointless to go on I walked out of that bus and I walked into the first day I could find it and the woman made me a nap and I was just about to leave I noticed there was a bookstore and I took a look and basically at the time I stopped at my tracks it said New Testament Bibles and Christian commentaries I turned and looked at that woman's Jewish face I said what is this place?

She said we're a congregation of Hebrew Christians Jewish believers in the Messiah and this is our bookstore adjoining our chapel did you hear that? that's what I heard in my heart a light came to me and I heard a still small voice that said oh you're not to leave I like to obey that still small voice and I stayed for five days with these Jewish believers it was a Pentecostal congregation of Jews I didn't know what the word meant but I saw Jews praying with such power and with such authority as if they really knew God I saw the manifestation of the supernatural God in their midst and when I saw them worship with their hands above their heads I thought that's it that's the cleanser you can't learn that in Sunday school you can't do that if I wrote something has got to happen in here and

that's the result of the overflowing heart that truly knows God and they were giving me a Bible course for four days they were praying over me with me opening up the scriptures showing me the prophecies in the Old Testament and I went to sleep that fourth night agitated over my skull slipping into the front pew of their chapel trying by the palm of my intellect to put all the pieces in their place and it didn't work and in my sleep that night something happened something fell in my heart it was like click click click and I woke up the next morning with a wonderful sense of peace and calm the first time in thirty five agitated years and I came to that breakfast table and I said to that Jewish woman in spirit filled thanks of God Remus I believe I understand and when that woman heard me say

understand she fell out of the seat onto the floor knocked her chair over with her hands above her head and she was praising God and her tears were rolling down her face because her prayer that night had been Lord we've done everything with this stubborn man you make the fool understand you know what God showed me in my sleep that night he would take me by the hand as a child unless you come as a child you're not you can't enter the kingdom of God my intellect my presumption my pride my experience had nothing to do with it and he was literally step by step encounter by encounter it was him picking me up off the sidewalk he had put his book in my hand he had written to this crusher in Jerusalem and now it was put up or shut up receive or reject I could have made a lot of excuses I didn't

understand the virgin birth I didn't understand the trinity a lot of theological difficulties but I understood only too well who it was who was speaking to me out of the pages of this book he lives he's a living Messiah he speaks as no angel ever spoke he said out of his seeing you see the Father I am the Father one and aught no man ever comes to the Father except he come by me I bent my neck that day oh it was hard to get the words out of my mouth first prayer in 35 years I never bent my neck to anyone proud arrogant but I was bending it before the only one who deserves our complete loyalty our allegiance our heart our life the God of all this world the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and the Messiah Jesus and I said Lord have me

my heart and coagulated and become hard and developed as a rack between my heart and the heart of God. As he touched me, it collapsed.

For the first time in my life, my hands were above my head. I didn't care what I looked like. The water was running down my face, my nose, my ears.

I was sobbing, choking, and fluttering. I didn't care. I was praising God for the sense of freedom and exhilaration.

Whenever he even saw my crying, out came this filth and this granulated junk that was breaking up into pieces and flushed out of my mouth. Until I stood before God with my hands above my head, immaculate within. In that minute, something came in and rolled up within me and began to rise up.

I knew it was the Spirit of God. I knew it was love. And when it reached my head, my English language poverty, and out came the language of heavenly praise.

From that day to this, I've been God's fool. God took out of my heart by one touch resentment, anger, bitterness, all of the kinds of things that are sweeping over our earth today between the races, between generations, on our university campuses, in our cities, in the nations of the world. We need God.

We need the reality of a loving God. We need to be touched of Him. And you know how it works? I wondered why God saved me.

I knew that He had blessed me through the ministry of Gentile people who had taken me across the road, who had laid hands on me, who had brought me into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But one day in the church in California, I was giving a testimony, and when I finished, some people came over. And among them was a very cold Gentile woman, nothing anything special to look at.

She said, Mr. Kent, you don't need it, does it Kent? But you had my daughter when you first began teaching at the high school. And she used to come home from school every afternoon, weeping over you, knowing that you were a radical and an atheist. You know what kind of prayer touches God? The sexual, fervent prayer of righteous men and women.

It's not your pumped-up, freshly emotion, which soon enough subsides. It's the burden and the passion of God, which is manifest in the life of that person who is walking with Him righteously. Let's begin to praise Him, shall we? Don't we deserve our praise? Let's raise our hands and exalt the Lord.

Create the conditions. Fulfill His Word. God inhabits the praises of His people.

Did you know that Judah means praise? And that to be a Jew, spiritually, is to have that heart circumcised that enables us for the first time to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Shall we give Him praise? Hallelujah. Glory to thy wonderful name.

We praise and magnify the name of the living God. We thank you for the Messiah whom thou hast sent. We exalt the name of Jesus.

It's that name above every name where the man may be saved. Hallelujah. Gracious God, we worship you.

And we praise and we wait on you for the rest of our days. When every knee will bend and every mouth confess that Yeshua is Lord. I don't know any.

To the glory of God the Father.

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