

K-469 Israel - a Prophetic Glimpse

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the church's prophetic role in interpreting God's sovereignty and judgment, particularly concerning Israel's future and the necessity of extending mercy.

Duration: 28:03

Scripture: Genesis 50:20, Exodus 20:14, Psalm 81:1-7, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:31-46, John 8:1-11, John 14:9

Topics: "Prophetic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for believers to rely on God rather than human answers. He encourages the audience to spend time with the Lord, reading the Bible and praying early in the morning. The speaker references a psalm that praises God for his faithfulness to Jacob and then shifts to God speaking in the text. The sermon also touches on the importance of living a life filled with the wisdom and glory of God, and the need to recognize God's hand in both good and difficult events.

Transcript

Well, here's a little booklet on the nature of the prophetic call. I don't know if you even believe that there are prophets today. And if there is, what are they? How are they to be identified? And are there true prophets and also false prophets? And how are they to be distinguished? What is prophetic? It is more than a casual and academic question, because, get this, it's not only individual men like myself called to the prophetic calling.

The church at large is called to be a prophetic entity in the world. That means you are the ones who should have interpreted for the nation the meaning of the devastation of the trade towers and the Pentagon. You are the ones that should have called the nation to an awareness of what that meant in view of God's sovereignty.

Were you able to? Did you have the perspicacity, the understanding, of seeing in events and through them the hand of God? Or are you offended even to suggest that God might be in catastrophe and disaster? Or that he might be a God of judgment? Or that this might be a preliminary judgment to wake a nation from an eternal judgment for which it is sleeping? I commend this to you. Reality, the Hope of Glory, an early book that has blessed generations of believers, a message here given in Jerusalem on Elijah that's classic. Spirit of truth.

Do you love the truth or tolerate it? You're respectful but not too close. Unless there's a love of the truth, we are candidates for deception. And not just the truth in its mechanical dimensions, in its external agreement, but the spirit of truth.

What do you mean by that, Art? What I mean by that is that something can be ostensibly true and correct as, for example, preaching, biblically, and yet the spirit of the speaking could actually be a contradiction to the word being spoken. And that the truth is the whole truth, or nothing but the truth, or it's a lie. So that something that is overtly and technically true, if it is not true through and through, is in fact a lie.

Because the truth is the whole truth, or nothing but the truth. Not only about preaching, but, ready for this? Our own lives. Hey, are you the truth made flesh? Are you true in yourself? Is your voice, your eyes, your posture, your gait, consistent with what you believe and purport to believe? Or is there a disparity between your credo and your language of faith and the actuality of your life as it in fact is truly? See what it's going to take to move you to jealousy? Not just to espouse the truth, but to be the truth.

I want to tell you, dear saints, in this world, which lies in the wicked one, who's the father of lies in the beginning, will not attain to that without suffering. The cross. Anyone who reads this through seriously, from cover to cover, I assure you and guarantee you, or money back, that you'll be transformed.

And for those really courageous ones, a book on the Holocaust. Long overdue, but who would have the temerity to write it but a Jew? Someone said only a Jew could have written it, because it asks the question, where was God? What do you mean, Art, where was God? Yes, where was God? Six million Jews are being systematically annihilated, not in some archaic primeval time, but in modern history, not in some backwater nation, but the most elevated cultured civilization in the world, Germany, the land of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Kant, Wagner. Hey, where was God? Was he asleep? Was his back turned? Oh, well, he knew it, of course, Art, because he's omniscient, but he couldn't do anything about it because he was powerless.

What? An impotent God is not God. Come on, we've got to reconcile this conundrum, and if we seek to do so, it's going to open such a perspective of God that is long overdue for us as a church. But we have domesticated him and made him a patsy and a little Jesus errand boy to tidy up, of course, or to suit our convenience.

We don't know God is God. This will help you. Just on this trip to Holland, I'm sharing it with so many people, the precious mother of a Jewish believer who married an Israeli, lived in Israel for years, now back to Holland, she said, when I first heard you, Art, I was so deeply offended.

Your suggestion that Israel and Jews will get to face yet a future calamity after the Nazi Holocaust, I didn't want to hear that. I hoped for a happier ending and a resolution of Israel's present troubles, but I did my homework, and I began to hear and listen to what you're saying and read, and then she said, when the Holocaust book came into my hands, that was it. She said, not only have I come into an agreement with you, but you know what I've realized? The God that I was worshiping, and I called Jesus, was really Santa Claus.

He was the projection of my own fancy, a nice God, but this opened up a perspective of God in a fullness that included his judgment that I had excluded because I had no stomach to consider God as judge, forgetting that his garment is seamless, and you can't pick those attributes that you like to the exclusion of others. Well, what is God's mercy except in view of judgment? And in fact, the book says that judgment is

his mercy. Oh, you dear saints, oh, if you've got the courage to read this, it will profoundly affect your whole view of God and give you a view of the things pertaining to the end where not only does it attempt a biblical understanding of the Nazi Holocaust, but it speaks of a Holocaust yet to come, which Jesus alluded to in Matthew 24 as one of the signs of the end of his coming, of a time of trouble that will eclipse anything the nation has ever before known or will ever again know.

And if that time not be cut short, no question of the world, but for the elect's sake, that time will be cut short. We better take Jesus seriously as a prophet who said not one stone will be left standing upon the other to the astonishment of his disciples, and in A.D. 1970, down came the glorious temple of God, that God did not think it too much in the severity of his judgment even to bring down his own house. It was not sacrosanct.

It was not a violent. Judgment is devastating, and I'm saying that it's going to come again. And so I want to conclude, I haven't noticed when I began, with today's Psalm 81.

What do you mean today's Psalm? I mean it's my Psalm for the day. Don't you have a Psalm for the day? Don't you have a devotional time? Aren't you up at between 4 and 5 a.m. seeking the Lord and reading the Psalm for the day and having a time of prayer and communion with the Lord? I commend it to you, dear friend. This is my Psalm for today, and it's remarkable.

I won't read the whole thing. I want to get to the heart of it, where the psalmist cries out at the end of verse 5, I hear a voice I had not known, because he's reviewing God's great goodness to Jacob as the God of Jacob, calling for a song, the tambourine, the sweet lyre, the harp, the trumpet, at noon, full moon, for it is a statute of Israel in verse 4, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. He made a decree in Joseph when he went out against the land of Egypt, or over the land of Egypt.

Here he's giving a report calling Israel to worship and to exalt the God who has been its faithful savior, even out of slavery. And then all of a sudden the whole text shifts, and it's no longer the psalmist speaking, but he hears a voice. It's now God speaking.

God breaks in because something about what the psalmist is reviewing so provokes God that he's got to make his own direct statement. And he says in verse 6, I relieved your shoulder of the burden. Your hands were freed from the basket.

He means the basket where the Jews that were enslaved in Egypt were carrying mortar and bricks and doing all of that vain work for the Pharaoh. God says, I delivered you out of that. In distress you called, and I rescued you.

I answered you in the secret place of thunder. I tested you at the waters of Meribah, a reference to not only delivering from Egypt, but movement through the wilderness en route to the land of promise. And then out of this historical review, God is always calling Israel to be reminded of their deliverance out of Egypt.

It is the primal event of our national history. There's no knowledge of ourselves as the nation except in the remembrance of having been brought up out of Egypt by the supernatural power of God. This is the great event that marks us and established our nationhood out of bondage and at Sinai prior to the entry to the land.

And yet it says in Jeremiah, you will no longer remember me as the God who brought you out of Egypt. What? This being brought out of Egypt is the classic definitive event of our nationhood. How then will we remember you? You'll remember me as the God who brought you out of every nation wherein I have cast you and restored you and brought you back to the land.

That, dear saints, is future, which implies that there's an exodus for world Jewry that will eclipse even Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. That was only out of Egypt. God says, now I will bring you back from the nations wherein I have scattered you to the uttermost corners of the earth.

And you'll remember that because I'll bring you back out of such desperation, such hopelessness, so beyond any human ability to provide that you will know that you will know that I am the Lord who has spoken and done this. If that's true and we're at the threshold of both that expulsion and that return, what ought to be our posture, our attitude, our prayer, our involvement? This galvanizes the church. This calls the church radically to become the church, for if we will not extend mercy that they may obtain mercy in such a shifting through the nations and our nation, how shall they return at all? How shall the redeemed of the Lord return to Zion unless someone has first suckered them, taken them in, even at risk? Oh odd, I can't believe that something could take place in America of a kind where Jewish life would be threatened and Jews would be in flight from persecution, and either the government is in concert against them or help us to defend them from the Islamic presence that is even in our own nation.

That unless Christians will extend mercy, they'll not obtain mercy. Well, you need to read that and understand that in the context of Matthew 25, where the now seated Lord after Israel's restoration weighs and judges the Gentile nations one by one, separating sheep from goats and pronouncing either eternal judgment of being cast into a lake of fire with the devil and his angels, or calling the righteous to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. And what has distinguished the one group from the other, both of whom say, Lord, Lord, when do we see you hungry, thirsty, naked, and imprisoned? He said, as you did not do this for the least of these my brethren, you did not do it unto me.

Oh, you dear saints, I'm so grateful now for tonight. This is more than a little cherry on the cake. This is something that you need to hear of the kind that I had to speak outdoors last night in Raleigh at a Messianic congregation where I wanted to run away.

And I said to my brother, will I find the exit? I'm totally out of place. They're too happy. They're too rejoicing.

They're celebrating present Israel as if there's no tomorrow. They have no notion of the apocalyptic devastation that's to come. I don't want to spoil their fun.

He said, you've got to. If they don't hear it from you, they'll not hear it. And they heard it.

And remarkably, they received it. It changed the whole character of that night and that proceeding. The Spirit of God fell.

A depth came into that people. They did not lose their joy, but they gained a comprehension of truth and reality that will fit them to be participants in Israel's last day restoration. And I'm praying the same for you.

So listen to God's cry after he reviews what he has done for Israel. In verse 8, Hear, O my people, while I admonish you. O Israel, if you would only but listen to me.

You know what our great and famous prayer is that Jews recited as they went into the ovens of Auschwitz? Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord. When are you going to hear it? Really hear it. For who is this one who allowed Jews to fall at his feet and call him Adonai, my Lord and my God? And he said, blessed art thou who forgave men their sins, who acted with all the authority of God.

Hear, O Israel, because you're going to be encountered by a man who sweats and he'll have no distinction or a place to lay his head. He'll have no rabbinical credentials, but he'll forgive men their sins and speak with the authority of God and raise the dead and will be himself raised. Hear, O Israel.

But I want to say hear, O church. Can we hear, O church? Because there's already a famine for the hearing of the word of God in this land. Not for the want of its proclamation so much as the ability to hear it.

Why would we be disposed to hear the word of God? Because the word of God always brings requirements. The word of God always raises the cross. The word of God is ever and always an invitation to sacrifice and to suffering, and therefore we will not hear it.

It's a miracle that I'm before you tonight, only by the grace of God. Whatever the circumstances of how this was arranged, I don't know. But this is the love of God towards you, to put a specimen like me before you with such a word and such a perspective.

It's uncommon. I trust you'll be grateful and know that I'm not boasting in myself, but I know my call and I know my responsibility, whether in Raleigh or in Durham, to speak the word of God and the perspective that God has privileged to give me, in which my own Jewish brethren, while sending letters and calling German pastors not to have me speak, and that my meeting should be boycotted. And a brother whom I've known that lived in those for 30 years sends a five-page fax to the pastor in Innsbruck, Austria, that he should reconsider about having me, because God is going to inculcate anti-Semitism in German-speaking people in the way that he believes.

There's a cry, dear saints, that needs to open our own ears as the church. If Israel would but only listen to me, there shall be no strange God among you, you shall not bow down to a foreign God. I'm the Lord your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

Open your mouth wide, I will fill it. But my people did not listen to my voice. Israel would not submit to me.

You know what the prefix sub means? Submarine? Subordinate? Subliminal? Sub means going under. My people would not go under to me. They would not submit to my authority, to my way, to my call.

They're headstrong and heady and high-minded, and even now in the midst of the worst crisis that confronts the nation, there's not even a thought of turning to me. But increasing armaments or negotiations or allies or some way to extricate themselves humanly through the flesh of their arms, their own wisdom, but no thought of me. Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways.

Then I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. Look at the remarkable play. Submit, subdue.

You submit to me, I'll subdue your enemies. I'll bring your enemies under if you come under me, my authority and my call. Believe it, sound it.

Come on you modern Christians today. Do you believe that God can intervene in Israel today? Divinely? That he can turn around, that he can confound their enemies now as much as he did in 2 Chronicles 20 in the time of Jehoshaphat? Or has God changed? Or is he the same today, yesterday, forever? Or would you say you would be embarrassed if God would today intervene in the affairs of men? After all, Art, these are modern times. Sorry about that, but I have the naive faith to believe that God is able to intervene and show his power and turn their enemies against each other and save Israel from their predicament if only they would turn and submit to me.

I would turn my hand against their foes and those who hate the Lord would cringe before him and their doom would last forever. I would feed you with the finest of the wheat and with honey from the rock. I would satisfy you.

Oh, I'm not doing this justice. No man can. But can you hear the plaintive call of God? Can you hear the ache of his heart that he's there ready and able to show himself in the same power and authority that brought Israel out of Egypt and from the hand of the pharaoh and brought them to a wilderness and land of promise is the same God still? The Jewish unbelief, secular minds, confidence in the arm of the flesh, in armaments and negotiations and treaties.

We are the personification of modernity. We are modern, secular, and we are embarrassed to consider that this is anything more than poetry. Come on, Art.

This is a Jewish book. This is not God speaking actually. That's what I used to think until I picked up a Jewish book aboard the deck of a Trans-Sema 37 years ago.

First time I ever picked up that book called the New Testament. And I was a history teacher. I would commend to my students going directly to the primary source.

I never went to it myself. Only by inadvertent circumstance by a fellow Jewish passenger who was given a pocket New Testament as he boarded ship in New York did I have access to this book and wanted to read it for first time because I was intrigued and moved by the strange people who picked me up off the side of the road and were not afraid. And in the very first reading, I'll never forget, it's in Ben Israel.

As a deck passenger, the cheapest way to go, we weren't inside in a safe room. We were on the deck in a sleeping bag. And with the light coming out of the porthole while the well-paying passengers were living it up, I'm reading the New Testament.

I can't think of a more appropriate setting to read the book of God than was my experience in the Gospel of John. And something was being kindled in my spirit to say, this Jesus is different than the stuffed paper mache figure that had been represented to me, that's dangling on a cross like a ballet dancer against the background of velvet. This guy's real.

He's making preposterous claims. He's saying, if you see the Father, you'll see me. I ain't a father of one.

I didn't know there was a father until he said so, that he came from him and spoke by him. And then the woman taking the act of adultery, well, he's finished now. What is he going to say? He said he came to fulfill the law.

The law says death by stoning. And what heightened my predicament the more was I was an adult for myself. And I deserved that same judgment.

And I was trembling. Unless you've read the New Testament like that Saint, you've not read it. Until we begin to live in the kinds of conditions that the first church lived to receive the epistles of Paul as a life-saving provision in the crisis of the sharp edge of faith in a world that was hostile against them, the Bible is for us only Bible study.

And it will become for us again a crisis provision when we will be living again in crisis, in our last day's fidelity to the Lord, in a world that is still at enmity with God. And so when I saw the woman caught in the act of adultery, I thought, well, here my hero's finished. Karl Marx went down the drain, and Eric Fromm went down the drain, and Freud went down the drain.

Now another new Jewish hero down the drain. What is he going to say? Came to fulfill the law. The law says death by stoning.

Come on, Katz, you're clever. Keep your finger in the book and think of an answer that you could give. Well, I thought and thought, and all of the power of intellect with which I was then endowed, and I came to this conclusion.

There's no human answer whatsoever for the predicament that my new hero was in. And dear saints, that's where we need to be brought. There is no human answer for the predicament to which we have been brought.

So long as we have a human answer, we're not in a radical place of faith and dependency upon God. And that's why the Lord is going to bring my Jewish people to the bottom. They'll have no answer in themselves.

Steven Spielberg, the multi-billion dollar dream factory, will be staggering in the stink of his own sweat and one single shirt, for God knows through what wilderness that God will bring him, in order that he be stripped of all of the amenities of the world and of life that disguised for men the true issue of eternity. He'll hear this little small voice when the clatter of his own mouth has stopped, as mine was. And so, no human answer.

I opened the book. Sweat was oozing out of the palm of my hand. What can this man say? And he was looking down on the earth, poking his finger in the dirt, and these men with their eyes glazing around him, ready to do him in.

Not because they're Jewish, but because they're pharisaical. Not because they're Jewish, but because they're keeping their religious establishment intact. And this man is somehow a terrible threat, then and now.

And he looked up, and I read this one line. Let him who's without sin catch the first one. Oh, he said, Art, I've read that many times.

For me, they're saying it was the first time. I had never heard it before. The line came up off the page and into my eyes, and my head, and went down.

It didn't stop with my head. I thought everything was my head, the intellect, the idolatry of Jews. No, like a sword, light through.

I was cut through, trembling. And I knew that I knew that I knew in a moment of time, there's a living God. I'm reading his book.

I don't know how it came to be. How could he preserve its integrity? But as a revelation to the word of Jesus, an utter crisis of predicament for which there's no human answer. And I didn't shout hallelujah.

My first thought was, what's your mother going to say about this? And she said it. What about your intellectual colleagues? And they said it. Oh, Lord, you have fed me with the finest of the wheat since that time.

And honey from the rock. I'm a blessed man. I'm a privileged man.

What you give me an insight and understanding, the privilege of the proclamation of your word in the many places of the earth we great issues, ponderous waiting are being transacted. Filipino ministers and conferences and I don't know what. You've given me the wheat, the finest of the wheat, precious insight, revelation, understanding, the privilege of its proclamation.

Honey from the rock. 72 years old. And I'll challenge you to a race around the building.

I said to my brother, when we started out today, this is the last day of seven weeks of travel. After the seven weeks that preceded that and the seven weeks, and I feel as fresh today, then better than the day that I began. He not only gives the finest of the wheat, he gives the finest of himself.

To live through the son as the son had lived through the father. For he who has the son has life. And I'll tell you what, it's inexhaustible.

It's full of wisdom, full of glory. It's rich, full of mercy, a word in season on every occasion. I've yet to be left wanting for a word, not for my reputation, but for the life and death things that are before me.

The anointing, the oil of God, the holy anointing oil upon man's flesh that shall not be poured. I've not wanted for anything.

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