

# K-480 Israel in the Purpose of God

by Art Katz

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*Israel is a means to a much larger end, the revelation of God to the nations, and its existence is central to the nations.*

**Duration:** 48:58

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1, Deuteronomy 32:8, Psalm 24:1, Romans 8:17

**Topics:** "Israel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the mystery of Israel and the church's role in understanding and embracing it. He emphasizes the need for the church to be mindful of God's glory rather than being self-focused. The speaker highlights the cosmic struggle between light and darkness and the significance of the nations in this drama. He references Deuteronomy 32:8 to explain how God divided the nations and set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. The sermon concludes with a parable about the church's attitude towards the return of the prodigal son, urging believers to share the Father's heart and rejoice rather than feeling neglected.

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## Transcript

You see how the subject of Israel brings you into a whole apostolic and prophetic mindset. You're going to see how frequently these words come up, not only out of my own mouth, but out of authors that we will be quoting. So, such is the nature of exile as final extremity and ultimate catastrophe.

In it are raised the issues of theodicy, judgment, the word of God, prophetic ministry, and the interpretation of Scripture itself. It's as if we had God down this list. Theodicy is a fancy word that means, how do you justify God or understand God in catastrophe? Where was God in the Holocaust? It's the issue of theodicy.

Theo is God. So, that's a very great question. And once you get into that, it opens up whole dimensions of the faith.

And the interpretation of Scripture itself in an ultimate way that searches the inquirer even as he inquires. We're searching, but we're being searched. As you'll see increasingly, how much of this is personal.

And raises questions about where you yourself are, and where you are in your own inner man. Even as we're talking about general questions. Now, I've got a statement up on the board that deserves some

examination.

Out of this book, Commentary on Zechariah, I'm going to be introducing you to some outstanding writers. And I can't tell you how blessed I am by this commentary by David Barron. Who was a Hebrew Christian giant in England in the late 19th century.

One of the treats for me is not only the sharpness and the ruthless logic and analytical power that he brings to the word. But the use of language in his own writing. His writing, his pen is like a sword.

I mean, there's no flap. It's such a use of the English language that you just admire that expression. And the depth of things that he touches, as we will see here and in other places as we go on.

So here's a book that I would greatly recommend. It's an older book. The publisher is Kregel, K-R-E-G-L, G-E-L.

In Grand Rapids, Michigan. So the Commentary on Zechariah is very rich and very deep. And I've been very blessed.

Now, here's a statement that he makes in page 94 of his book. And I made a little footnote in the book of this statement. A concise summary of the whole mystery of Israel in this one paragraph.

And I want to take this paragraph apart with you. To show you how that contains in itself a summation of the whole mystery of the subject of Israel. Expressed in just a few statements.

And then in the examination of that statement, learning something about how to read in an analytical and critical way. I was sharing with a brother the other day. My last stop in Germany was with some precious saints who had become dear.

And they invited a few house guests that final night and they were all of the same quality. Precious, of whom the world is not worthy. And I said the next morning before I left to this woman, I said, What's your relationship with these people? Oh, she said, We were all raised up in the faith by the same teacher.

I said, Oh? And she was a woman without any intellectual or worldly distinction. Very simple woman. She groomed us in the faith.

I said, Well, what made her teaching distinctive? She said, This ought. She would hesitate and brood over every word in the scripture. Like, for example, God so loved the world.

God. So loved. What does it mean, so loved? The world.

The world? Does it mean the nation? She would just come in and would not allow a word or a syllable to escape the deepest scrutiny and examination. It's a mindset. It's a way of examining.

And I'll tell you that if you can cultivate that, it not only opens up the scriptures, but any of the printed word, and will affect your own way of speaking and writing, which is our distinctive, prophetically and as human beings. So let's look at this. And having known and foreknown them, yea, with all their many sins and backslidings, and purposed in his heart to exhibit in and through them, not only his holy severity, but even in a more wonderful way, his infinite grace and goodness, and all the attributes of his character, for the blessing of all the nations of the earth.

That is a mouthful. In one statement, I don't know that David Dahn, Hebrew Christian writer by the way, was even conscious of how much he was saying, but he is summing up the whole mystery of God's choice of Israel as the revelation of himself. You shall be witnesses unto me is our calling, but Israel was his first witness nation.

If you don't understand that, you're missing the great deal. Israel is not the thing in itself. It is a means to a much larger end, the revelation of God to the nations.

I'll just take a shot at something. What is the glory of God? This is not going to be an exhaustive definition, but I suspect that the glory of God is only the glory when it is exhibited through another vessel other than God himself. In other words, God's glory is his glory when it is shown through the church, through earthen vessels.

Or else it doesn't have a framework, it doesn't have a context in which it can be exhibited. It's his glory when it comes out of an earthen vessel, when you see the radiance of his glory. Or out of a temple, which is the same thing.

It requires a contrivance, which is itself holy and in keeping with the character of that glory. Whether it's a temple, a church, an individual, or a nation. God intended that his glory would be revealed through Israel.

For example, the Sabbath. What is the Sabbath if it's not demonstrated through the conduct of the people? It's only an abstract principle. What is love? What is the church if it is not the actual outworking of relationships through a corporate body? He's got to have a framework, a vessel, as his witness.

Or else it's just the abstract voice coming out of heaven to men on earth, which is not God's vehicle for revealing himself. And he reveals himself through things that we would think that he would not have chosen. The least of things.

He says of Israel, I didn't choose you because you were the greatest. I chose you because you were the least. But here's the point.

One thing we can learn already, that the definition of God requires us to understand that he's a God who chooses. I chose you. That out of his own sovereignty, out of his own will, out of what he is in himself, he chooses.

He elects. He makes choices. He will be who he will be.

He will do what he will do. And that is God. And if we don't understand that as God, we don't understand God.

He makes specific choices, and he makes them contrary to what we think he ought to choose. He chooses the least. He takes the beggars off the dung heap, and he makes them to sit with princes.

He takes the high school dropouts. He takes the dumb ones. He takes the refugees, the rejects, the off-scouring of the earth, and he makes them to be the vessels of his glory.

He takes a murderer and makes him the chief apostle. That's God. So to know that he both chooses in the expression of his sovereignty, and what he chooses, is to begin to understand God.

See what I mean? And that he chose Israel is perfectly in keeping with what he is as God. All the more that he not only knows them perfectly through and through, but he foreknew them. And still made them the object of his love and of his choosing.

Because he purposed in his heart to exhibit in and through them, not only his severity, notice the language here, holy severity. See the way that woman brooded over every word. Would you ever thought that severity is holy? Give me a synonym for severity.

What would be an expression or an example, biblically, of severity in God? One word begins with a J. Judgment. Is judgment holy? Blessing is holy. But is judgment holy? If it comes from God, whether it's severe or grace, it's holy.

And until it's holy for us, we have not surrendered to God as judge. And it's the omission of God as judge that leaves us with a warped, inadequate, and distorted view of God. He's a seamless garment.

He's indivisible. I can't presume upon you guys that you follow me in every word. That means he cannot be divided.

We like to put in categories. And we like this category like that. He's indivisible.

He cannot be divided. If you exclude his judgment, you no longer have God. You've got a warped distortion, a projection of your own imagining.

You're deceived. His judgments are holy. And unless you understand that, you'll not appreciate his holy mercy.

It issues out of the same great heart. So, no matter that he knew them, and all their many sins, and they are grievous. My God, you shudder when you read the roll call of Israel's sins.

Apostasy, abominations in the house of God and in the temple of God. Sacrifices to false gods in the very holy courts. Performed by priests and false prophets.

You would think, away with this people. Murmuring from the very beginning of their coming out of Egypt. They were stiff-necked, rebellious.

Like your fathers were, so are you also, from the beginning. Nevertheless, he has not cast them off. Though he knew that, and though he foreknew that, he still put this in his heart to exhibit him unto them.

Remember what I said before? All the more are they the witness of God. Not because of their success, but because of their failure. What more shows the mercy of God? Some people that he pats on the back because they're successful? Or some people that he restores, not because of their virtue or their accomplishment, but in the absence of it, because he is God.

Because he's merciful. And we're going to see that. We're starting with exile, but we're going to end with restoration.

We're going to see that in the restoration of Israel, it has not a cotton-picking thing to do with any virtue of Israel. He forgives their sins in a day. He restores them, independent even of their repentance.

Their repentance follows their restoration, does not precede it. He expects nothing from them. A new covenant I will make with you.

Not like the one that you broke, but I'll write my law in your inward parts and I'll put it in your heart. You cannot help but obey it, because I'm going to give you that capacity. It'll be an everlasting covenant because your memory didn't break it, because it has nothing to do with your ability to keep it.

I'll keep it through you. I'll give you that kind of a heart. I'll give you a new heart and a new spirit.

I mean, we don't even know what mercy is, what His goodness is, until we shall see it explicated and demonstrated in a nation, and done so before the face of all nations. This is God's final statement that concludes human history. And any nation that does not surrender to that testimony and that revelation, invites the judgment of God.

What more can we do? So Israel is chosen. You know what Jews even say, who asked for it? What has it meant for us has been nothing but suras, trouble, and that's true, severity, because He's a holy God and their sins and their backslidings cannot go unacknowledged and undealt with. They must be requited, they must be met in judgment.

So He's not a soft touch. Even then He shows His character. We want to know what fatherhood is and how desperate we are for that model.

So not only is holy severity, but even in a more wonderful way, is infinite grace and goodness. What synonym would you put for infinite? Unending. Endless.

Cannot be exhausted. No matter how great their sins and backslidings, His grace is infinitely greater. And when God says to us, you shall be holy as your father in heaven is holy, what are you talking about? That our graciousness and goodness should be like His.

And what a short fuse we have with each other. One wrong look, one wrong word, the relationship is over. We're injured.

We take our toys and go home. Where is our infinite grace and goodness, if we're to be like Him? And how would we know what the model is, except that it was set before our eyes by the demonstration of it, with an entire nation totally undeserving of any expression of it. Got the picture? And all the attributes of His character, not just His goodness and grace, but all the attributes.

Israel is so vexing and so all-demanding, that it calls out and calls for every attribute of the divine nature. It saves us from speculation. We see the actual demonstration of it in His dealings with His people, and especially in crisis and severity.

The last days' dealings of God with Israel, in expulsion and exile, and restoration and return, will reveal all of His character, all of the attributes of His character, to one end, for the blessing of all the nations of the earth. If this is true, and the Church is ignorant or indifferent to this mystery, how is it the Church? I don't give a rap how good its services are, its progress. If this is absent from the consideration of that Church, if they do not understand this as being central to God's last days' demonstration of Himself, how is it the Church? All the more, when the demonstration of His attributes and His infinite grace is not to come abstractly out of the air, but through the Church itself in its own conduct toward Israel.

And we're going to be talking about that. The demonstration of Himself will come through the Church that shares His character and nature in last days' extremity, and that they can perform this without even being aware that they're performing that function. Israel has no cognizance whatsoever of its destiny, its call, and that it's serving these purposes, and yet it is.

How much more will we serve them out of an awareness and a yieldedness to the purposes of God? That we are privileged people, that we can be conscious of God's purpose and give ourselves to it in a surrender. They are performing it in their ignorance. A critical verse in Deuteronomy 32, let's look at it.

We have to be nation-conscious, kingdom-conscious, millennium-conscious. It has everything to do with the nations. The whole issue of the nations and Israel as a nation is at the heart of the whole matter.

And that's why the powers of darkness rail against Israel coming through, because the destiny of nations are at stake, which have been their playground. The rulers of this world, the kings and the rulers, the kings are the visible earthly authority, but the rulers are the invisible spectral spirit entities that rule over those nations and influence and perform their will through the earthly kings. We'll come into this.

I don't want to flood you out on the first day. The cosmic context of this drama. Mamma mia.

This is a cosmic struggle between the powers of light and of darkness, between value systems, between kingdoms, over the issue of the nations. Deuteronomy 32, verse 8. When the Most High divided for the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion of his people, Jacob is the Lord of his inheritance.

I have never heard those verses explicated or executed or spoken in a sermon. And there's something there for the saints. Brood over that.

There's something that you want to go word for word. And brood over that statement, word for word. Because it shows a stratagem of God from the very inception of his creation that makes the existence of Israel central to the nations.

Makes even the number of the nations related to the number of the sons of Israel. There's something about Israel and the nations that we must simply understand in the economy of God. That the very number of them, in God's genius, is related somehow to Israel.

And indeed, when his kingdom comes through a restored Israel, the government of God comes out of that restored nation to the nations. And what is Israel's first call? That God says, it is the gift and calling of Israel that is without repentance or irrevocable. What is Israel's essential call? A nation of priests and a light unto the world.

I want to plant a stake, I want to sink a stake. And we're not just playing around with tiddlywinks. This is why all hell shall be ventilated against Israel in the last days and already hated by all nations.

In Zechariah, it says in chapter 12, all nations will come against Jerusalem to destroy it. And who's clever enough here at the table to understand what would be the underlying motivation of the hatred of all nations for destruction? Why should they be so resentful of a pitiful little nothing on the map, a beep nine miles wide? You can walk from one end to the other in a day. Why should the great massive powers of the earth send their armies to obliterate that little thing? They cannot stand its existence.

Why? They don't like Jews? They hate God. They hate God, but what is the animus, what is the vexation for the hatred? It has to do with rule. Rule and government that issues from this nation to all the nations according to Deuteronomy 32 and other places in Scripture.

When the restoration of Israel comes, the law of the Lord shall go forth out of Geneva, New York, UN headquarters, out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. Now, how do we know that that's not a metaphor or a figure of speech or a spiritualized statement? Because God gets specific. He says when the nations hear it, they'll beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into plinthecks and will study war no more.

In the last issue of Newsweek magazine, the United States is the leading trader in armaments in the world. Fifty-five billion dollars a year. The world economy is almost predicated on weaponry.

Can you imagine casting that aside? What a crisis for any economy, for world economy. But nations will beat their swords into plowshares, they will study war no more, make no preparation for it. It will no longer be a factor in their economy.

Their whole mentality, their whole, I mean, the most radical change. Of all the things that God cites, that when the law goes forth out of Zion, the word of our Jerusalem, this is cited. They'll study war no more.

It has a practical, consequential effect on their economy, their social life, their conduct, their constituency as nations. When? When the law goes forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. Which is located where? In Israel.

Do you understand that? That's why all the nations come against Jerusalem, to destroy it. Because this is a throw-away generation. If you want to remove the vexation, you divorce it.

You throw it away, or you abort it. You get it out of your sight and out of your consideration until it is no more. And that mentality, which is the wisdom of darkness, shall be ventilated against Israel, because God has chosen them.

Are these nations puppets to these principalities? Absolutely. And what happens when Israel is restored and the King comes and has a sanctuary with them, where it says in Zechariah, for I have chosen Jerusalem. It's the end of the principalities of Zion.

They're finished. Another kingdom has come, and all authority is subjected under his feet. This is the drama.

This is the governmental context of the last days, and we know from our own experience, try and get a politician out of office. These congressmen who have been in for 30, 40 years, who have million-dollar villas and retirement funds and every benefit that they have accrued from their political role, try and get them out. My God, there'll be a kicking, a screaming, and a shrieking like nothing you've ever heard.

Once you're in power and enjoy the benefits of power, have you ever heard anyone voluntarily give it up? How much more the powers of darkness, who have had undiminished sway since the fall. And though disarmed by Jesus at the cross, they have not been nullified. Their final extinction comes in the drama of the last days of Israel and the church.

And though he has disarmed them, he has not removed them as an entity. They're still effectual. And just to raise the most elementary question, when in recent history has the demonstration of that power been so visibly set forth before our view in actually taking over the entire apparatus of state in order to ventilate and to express the demonic wisdom? Nazi Germany.

You cannot understand Nazi Germany without taking into consideration the principalities and policies of the era. Not content merely to influence, they took full possession of a nation that yielded itself up to a complete dominance of those powers because they had forfeited the faith through an innocuous Lutheranism and left the vacuum that those powers exploited and possessed. This is no small thing.

And Israel is hated and despised. And its whole history of mere extermination can only be understood by the nations wanting to remove Israel as a factor because they intuit the threat to themselves of the church of Nazi Germany. We have got to bring the whole subject into the context that God himself gives it, which is governmental, the issue of kingdoms, the issue of nations, the issue of rule.

And then we're no longer talking about court religiousness, but vital interests of men for which they will kill and destroy and justify themselves in doing so. And we, when we see this and come into the reality of this, how shall we be regarded by the principalities and powers of darkness? We will begin to experience a degree of opposition that will be totally new for us because now we constitute threat. And it doesn't matter where you are.

You don't have to be in the great center of world power. You can be in Minnesota or La Porte. But they know whom to fear and whom to regard.

They're not at all impressed with the big showcases of modern Christendom and the flashing that they know where the earnest issues are and who's alert to them and who is considered the threat. And that's why I say merely to have a sentimental interest in Israel and want to see her succeed, she's got it coming, is to miss the issue altogether. And you'll not understand the hatred that will be poured out against Israel and might yourself be taken in by it, unless you understand what is going on with that hatred.

John asked me about any special assignments. Well, maybe as we go along I'll think of some. But right now, if anybody wants to take this up as a challenge and exegete that statement in Deuteronomy, verse 8, by the exegete means draw out the meaning, ponder that, and bring us like a one-page report.

The shorter you can make your statement, the more concise, the greater the development of your own skill and ability by the Holy Ghost. But just to read that word for word, when the Most High divided the nations, the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, and the nations, and them that call their entity. Nationhood is a divine projection from heaven.

It's not the autonomous, arbitrary will of men. They may think so, but it's God who's established it all. Someone has said that when the millennium comes, that we have now over 200 or 300 nations in the world, there will only be 70.

God only intended 70, and we'll be restored to God's original intention, because that's in keeping with the sense. It's interesting that when Jesus sent out his disciples, he sent out 70. Something about that number that shows us again that this whole kingdom thing is the issue of nations.

I would say we loved him because he first loved us. Is it in gratitude for that love, or because in loving us, he imparts himself, and that ability that enables us to love him by the same power? Here's an interesting

little question. How much would you be willing to suffer the reproach and the accusation of lovelessness until this love comes? Of course, this can be substituted for.

There is a human love that is less than and other than that, but which has certain impressive aspects. Romantic. In fact, I would say that even that love is a grace from God.

I'm not one to consider a world in which there's an eradication or an absence of even doing that, because it makes the world go round, so to speak. It saves it from being more barbarous than it otherwise would. But from the point of view of believers, called to ultimate things, for which human love would not be sufficient, how many of us would be willing to go through a no-man's land of the absence of any love that we could ourselves have humanly provided in order to wait for this perfect thing? It's ironic that how not only can the human love be a substitute for the divine, but actually an impediment to the coming of the divine.

If we want to hold the lesser thing, God will not force the perfect thing upon us. How many souls are there that would be willing even to give up to the lesser thing in order to receive the greater, and go through that period of death in which God does not immediately provide that, in which you have to even taste lovelessness, and be accused of it and suffer the reproach of it? I think that God's question to Peter is going to be God's question to the church over the last days. Like when we're faced with Israel in extremity.

Because I'm literally expecting that the day will come, it will be the night of Israel's severest crisis, where if God did not shorten it, no flesh could have survived. But broken screens of Jewish humanity coming through this property, and other properties like it, completely disheveled, unkempt, disordered, disoriented, the suddenness of devastation has come upon them, they don't know what's hit them, and they come in, in that next condition, and need to be accommodated. I mean, Jews in that condition, you can imagine, that unless they're met by an unconditional love, we're going to miss the test.

We're going to express our own irritation, our own exasperation, we'll be too trying. And so this is no small thing, that not the least of the purposes of God is to bring a church to the place of His love in the last days. But if you can love Israel in her sin, and backsliding, then what can nations also hope for but the same? What do you think of a God who will go so far as to bring Israel through the most severe conditions in order to reveal His attributes, that they might bless all the nations? Do you think you call that love? Israel wasn't even asked that they're going to be the vehicle of the demonstration of Himself.

Do you call that a loving God? Is that fair? And how much would we suffer the Lord to use us in that way, where He doesn't explain it, in order that some aspect of His attribute and character might be demonstrated? And isn't it interesting that what consummates the end of the age and the coming of the millennium is that the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. Not what we thought Him to be, which is so much the projection of our own subjectivity and desire, our own humanity, which makes Him less than what He is, but the knowledge of God as He is in Himself. That's the whole point and purpose of everything.

That's what will bless the nations. And the revelation has got to come through the severity and grace of God, this infinite grace, through this one nation. What a drama.

That's the drama of the last days. The dealings of God in the last days and the suddenness with which many of these things will come and break. Israel's growing crisis, the inability to solve it, the necessity to make some kind of a negotiated peace with a world figure who can guarantee that peace, who will then

demand their worship in a restored temple in which they would walk, and then that releases the Antichrist persecution of Israel that drives the woman into the wilderness to escape that persecution where a place has been prepared for her where she might be fed for three and a half years.

The whole drama. We're at the verge of having that whole thing break, out of which and by which, both in the crisis and in the return. I will bring them back one by one, the lame, the halt, and I will restore them, give them a name, and they will be my ministers, and there will be a crown and a diadem in my hand, this honored nation that is blaspheming this name.

All of this in the span of the very few last concluding years and culminating with the Lord's return is the whole drama of the last days. And Israel is at the heart of it. The greatest revelation of himself, both in the severity and in the mercy.

And what are saints going through now? Feelings and trials and upsets and people who had their view all nicely worked out having their whole apple cart turned over and unanticipated things happening. God is tightening the screws. Dealing with the saints, breaking into their categories, not content with shallow understandings, bringing them into dimensions of experience through trial and suffering, but in order to establish the knowledge of himself.

It's quite an hour. I mean, I've been around for 30 years and I said to someone yesterday, I've never seen God more earnest than I'm seeing him now. Willing to go as far as he's willing to go with saints.

And if he's willing to bring Israel, out again from the nation in which they thought they had finally obtained their security, and to cast them again into the nations as exiles and without hope, in terrible devastation and defeat and ruin, in order to bring them back in the expression of his mercy, how far will he go with us? How many Christians are there who would give him leave to take us even a portion of death row unless they understand that the final issue is his glory. Forever. That's how Paul ends Romans 11.

For of him and through him are all things to whom be glory forever. And that is the apostolic distinctive. The church that is not jealous of the glory of God forever will fail at this.

They'll lose heart, they'll lose interest, they'll lose ability. They will not be willing to be sifted and prepared by God for their participation. Only those whose foremost motive is his glory will be able to bear it.

And how to communicate that, and to engender that, I don't know. But maybe that's the prophetic task. To call the church out of its own concern for itself, to be jealous for God's glory, where they're not mindful of themselves and for themselves, is maybe the prophetic task.

And when the gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed to all nations, then shall the end come. The church is still locked in its own concern for itself. It's still the object of its own attention.

Someone sent me a videotape. They're wanting to move from where they are to the location of their churches. What did I think of the tape and the message? Well, it was a church celebrating itself.

You know, like, ain't we got fun? And what an enjoyment to be in the church and the body of Christ, which is true. But that's not the end of it. That's the means toward an end that's much greater than the church.

And the church that does not see that end and give itself to that end is not the church, however much it celebrates itself, and however much it has principles of truth about the body of Christ. It's a terrible

egocentrism. And what saves us from it? Israel and the issue of his kingdom and his coming.

You see, what a... And Paul says in Romans 11, Have they stumbled, they shall fall, God forbid. But through their false salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy. He gives at the very statement of the purpose for our salvation, something beyond ourselves and beyond ourselves and other than ourselves to move someone else to jealousy.

That our salvation is not for ourselves, it's a means to some other end, to communicate something for someone else who have been the historic enemies of the gospel till now. That's a saving grace for us. Or even in the church we would bring again the same egocentrism that we had in the world.

Now no longer over carnality, but now over spirituality. Can you see that you can become just as egotistical over being spiritual as you were over being carnal? It's the subject of Israel that saves us from being locked down and tied into ourselves. Well, Israel will take care of itself.

It's not even a fact that she's out of it. She will be acted upon, she will not be an actor. But the church is the agent.

The church is the conscious instrument of God that can oppose these views or yield and lend themselves to it for another, for a nation that is despised. And will the church come through in that way? And to Him be glory in the church is really the question. I sometimes say that the church has got to be willing to play second fiddle.

That your destiny is altogether related to being something for someone else. And only in half do you come to the realization for yourself. It's the giving up and the losing of your life and your identity.

You are not the thing in yourself. You are a means to some other end. God's restoration of Israel through you.

Are you willing to play second fiddle? Well, look at the story of the prodigal son and how the elder brother resented the return and didn't want to enter into that joy and into that celebration. You never did this for me. How come? And you wasted all of your substance.

That's a powerful... What's the word? No, what's the story? Parable. It's a powerful parable for the last days. And the question is, will the church exhibit the older son's attitude? Or will they share the father's heart and rejoice for the return of that son? And not feel like they've been neglected and he's getting all the attention.

Because what does the father say to the older son? But everything I've had has always been yours. Didn't you know it? And the fact is that most of us don't. We have inferior feelings and inadequate feelings and we're not conscious that we're accepted in the beloved and therefore it shows in our lack of grace toward them.

Why should they? We're not rooted and established in the love of God who has given us all things. And it's on that basis that Jesus was able to wash the feet of his disciples. Knowing he had come from the father, he was going to the father, and that the father had given him all things.

He could take off his robe. He could gird himself with a towel. He could wash their feet.

Because he was released for that humility knowing that he knew that he knew his place in the father. So the whole issue of Israel requires us to understand whether we are in that place or not. And most of us are not in that place.

And to come to that place and then we can welcome the return of the prodigal son with joy. But not to end on a note that we're playing second fiddle. We also have the greater reward.

Israel is a restored nation on the earth which is a great honor and a distinction. They will be priests unto God from the earthly level. But what is our reward? Heavenly, eternal, glorified bodies ruling and reigning with Christ ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

We eclipse the glory that is even bestowed upon Israel. So we're not going to come out on this short end. Who can answer this final question of the morning? To what would we attribute the absence of this kind of understanding in the church today? And what would be required to restore it? Whose function is that? If the church is lacking the views that we have discussed this morning and I believe that's true that essentially it does how come? Why is this absent from the church's consideration? And what will it take to restore it? Whose responsibility of all of the callings in God which calling is appointed for the restoration of these views? The prophetic.

The prophetic. That's why we call this little thing the School of the Prophets. Maybe we're not all called per se but we're called in one way or the other either to pray for that restoration to encourage that restoration or as churchmen to recognize how central that is to God's whole program and to welcome that restoration as I was discussing with a pastor locally the other day my general experience over the years is a fear and a defensiveness against the coming of a prophetic man into the church.

They're fearful and intimidated and threatened and yet it is God's life-saving propensity to restore what has been so lost and with what kind of sensitivity then must the message be overcome? Knowing this kind of historic fear even among in the church itself and the fact that there's been a historic parenthesis in which prophets have been absent and that the word prophetic even conjures up a sense of something bizarre and fluky and there's some character who's going to rock the joint you see how there's that sensitive profound problem so we need like God not only to have the message but also the character that will enable that message to be brought to those who are reluctant and unwilling even to hear it in fear that will rock the established church situation. And so part of our task is how do we minister to the fearful, to the anxious to the undiscerning in a way in which they can hear and receive such a word. That's a real task and the emphasis is on our character especially if we are resisted or rejected.

How do we respond to rejection? Well if that's the way you're going to be then tough on you, you had your chance It's going to take something but it's critical and that's why God's dealings with prophets is so severe. They've got to be winnowed and sifted and divested of any kind of defensiveness, subjectivity, hurt feeling where they would react in a defensiveness for themselves a kind of selflessness and maybe that's why, what does it say that the testimony of Jesus was such a conjunction between the prophetic call and the nature of the Lord himself. That's why we'll not obtain it in three weeks here but it's a lifetime of shaping that we can yield ourselves and welcome it when we see what's at stake.

Hallelujah. Lord, thank you for a productive morning my God for parting the waters, allowing us to get our feet in and almost in an encyclopedic way Lord, you've spread such a canvas before us such a multitude of things, the richness of the issues that are involved and what is required and the shortness of the time in which it's to be obtained in these last days and crisis already at the door, Israel's expulsion waiting just

momentarily for your release and a church totally unprepared for these eventualities and so Lord we're asking grace for our understanding and for the character that must accompany that understanding if it's to be communicated to your people that they might receive it. Lord we need your blessing even to proceed from here to enter into these things and to be affected and shaped by them.

Receive our gratitude this morning, be with us in our thoughts through the day, the night hours in our prayers seeing my God how momentous a thing we're about. This is not just a summer diversion for a few weeks, we're on tremendous ground here, the stakes are enormous Lord and what are we but frail pieces of humanity and so we ask your blessing and even the spirit of prayer to draw out of your heart my God, your burden in these days that this might be historic and have an implication a consequence far beyond us. Thank you, put a seal on this much Lord and sift it and sift us through it we pray receiving our gratitude in Jesus name.

Amen.

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