

K-487 Covenant Keeping (3 of 3)

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes the importance of covenant keeping and the prophetic role in understanding God's judgment and restoration for Israel and the church.

Duration: 1:02:40

Scripture: Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 32:22-28, Matthew 23:37-39, Matthew 24:2, Luke 19:41-44

Topics: "Covenant Keeping"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God, especially during times of judgment and hardship. The speaker highlights the significance of recognizing God in both his righteous judgment and his abundant mercy. The sermon also discusses the consequences of disregarding the covenant and the law, leading to the judgment and devastation experienced by the nation. The speaker draws parallels between the suffering of the Jewish people during the Holocaust and the biblical account of the Israelites' punishment for their disobedience. The sermon concludes by urging listeners to remember the truth of the covenant and to reject individualistic mindsets.

Transcript

Once you have invested yourself as being an oracle of judgment, and then have to, on the heels of that, be the oracle of restoration, is like a contradiction. How do you go from the one to the other? And, you see, here we have to have a prophetic sense of things. You have to intuit this.

And a corresponding text would be Ezekiel 37, with a prophet whose word of judgment has been fulfilled to bring Israel to the Valley of Dry Bones, that they are without hope, we are cut off, we are as dry bones, is now the same prophet who's got to prophesy to the nation to raise it from the dead, which is the death that has come by his own speaking. You see what I mean? And maybe that's why he had to be brought out by the hands of the Lord and down by the Spirit into the Valley of Dry Bones. What God was saying to him is, I'm going to require you now to contradict yourself.

You've said one thing, now I'm going to require you to say the other. You've got to say it with the same conviction and authority as you spoke the first, even though now it's another message altogether. So, it's not only the nation that's brought into the place of death, the prophet himself.

So, more than any other, the prophet cannot be allowed to be fixed in his own categories, however correct they are, the Lord must be Lord, even to the place where he seems to contradict himself. It's something

like Paul saying, let God be true in every man alive. However much you can't fathom these contradictions, God is God, and you are the vehicle and the mouthpiece for that God.

And you need to come into an agreement with him, even when it contradicts your own categories, just like Jonah. So, what kind of a man is that? And if we're saying that it's not only a prophetic name we're talking about, but a prophetic church, that the church of the last days is prophetic in its very constituency, yieldedness to the Lord. And it's something like Moses turning aside to see the burning bush.

And would the rabbi say that what God's so honored is that when he saw him turn aside, then he called him by name out of the bush. Because once you turn aside, and you know it's remarkable how much people have an investment in what they believe and what they understand, and do not want it contradicted, even by God, because it's their security. What would be an historical example of this, where a people have been called to contradict their own understanding, their own expectation of things, and even slew him, who was the one who presented the view of God to their own detriment.

It's Israel with Jesus. He was not in the form of their anticipation. They had wandered from the scripture.

They were under the influence of rabbinical expectation. Here's God coming with fresh revelation, and so fresh that even the disciples did not understand it. Even to his death.

When they saw him on the cross, we thought it had been he who had restored the glory to Israel, but as he spoke with them on the way, their hearts burned as he opened to them the scriptures of the things that pertain to himself. Out of Christology, the study of the understanding of the significance of the atonement through Christ is a post-resurrection phenomenon. The church itself did not understand it, was deluded.

But the unfolding came after his death, and through the apostle Paul and so on, did the church begin to formulate its own understanding. Jesus himself was God's hermeneutical key. He was the principle of interpretation of the messianic prophecies by his own peculiar fulfillment of them, contrary to Israel's own expectation.

And when Israel was faced with a choice of cleaving to their mosaic view and expectation, as against the revelation that had now come in this historic and costly choice, because their view was so dear to them, and their identity was so rooted in that view, that they rejected the revelation and God himself who bore it. So don't think that believers are not susceptible. Hard-line fundamentalists, baptistic people resisting the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or Pentecostal groups resisting the phenomenon of the prophetic.

They have no place for it in their view. Or pre-tribulation rapturists resisting the view of the rapture, that is post-tribulational. We have an investment and a security in our views, and the ironic thing is, that so far as we understand it, the view has come from God.

It's as we think God is saying. So, let God be God, and every man a liar. The prophet of all men has got to be available to be contradicted, or it's like Abraham, take thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and make him a liar.

It contradicted everything that Abraham could conceivably have understood about God. Even to this day, Jewish commentators are offended that God would be thought to be asking the life of a son, because God does not perform human sacrifice. And as it prefigures, the sacrifice to come.

But what's more important, our view, or the God of our view? And the last identification and union with God that makes us His instrument, is this union, where we're even willing to put aside what we know. When God called Moses up to the mount, before he could come into his presence on the seventh day, remember, the forty days of neither eating nor drinking, he was six days in the cloud of smoke, which was not marshy, it was a devastating smoke of the fire of His glory, that completely obliterates every human orientation. I always tell about the fire that we had down at the camp, in the Judah house, which I said was no sweat, just a few feet in from the doorway, sure thing.

I went in on my hands and knees, the house was filled with smoke, and I got in through the door, and not only could I not find the kitchen counter, I couldn't find the door through which I had just entered. It was a paralyzing, fearful moment of a complete absence of orientation. Imagine six days, why six? Six is the number of men, who got to be completely emptied, even of the things that are correct.

And given once upon a time by God, to come into actual union and presence with Him, where then we receive the tablets, come unto Him. So any man who resists that, is disqualified prophet. Maybe another definition of what a false prophet is, is one who goes so far, that you can bring him this far, but I've never changed that.

Or like Peter saying, Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean. And a vision had to come down of a veil, of a screen, with an, take and eat, but Lord, I've never. I don't care what you've never.

And even though you've never done it, because of the law of Moses, I'm telling you now, that what I have called clean, let no man call unclean. God has got to be God. And what a tragic price we have paid, as a Jewish people, for putting our opinions, over the God who gave us all.

So God forbid that the church, should repeat that error. If we will reject, the revelation of God by His word, we'll have to obtain it. And I'm sure that many will gasp, in that wilderness time of extremity, what He bore.

That in the experience of our rejection, and our persecution, to what degree are we identified with Israel? Are we going to look, from a superior place, poor souls, they're going through that suffering, or are we, in their afflictions, are we afflicted? And maybe in our identification, which is actual, and not just theoretical, the willingness to bear, their suffering and their reproach, and death in their behalf, as we harbour and take them in, will be a demonstration for them, again, also of something, by the way, the unbelieving nations will see, but at the end, He wipes the heels of every hurt. They're going to say, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, mourning and suffering, to the whole, the whole, finally consummated, actually aided and abetted, through the redeemed, and returned to their King, the King of the Jews, and for His glory to go out over all nations and bring them. So, we want to examine something of the judgment that leads to the tribulation of the last days, and that the understanding of judgment, as we have said, is through the prophetic recognition that it is relative to the sins of Israel.

It's not God being arbitrary, it's not God taking a malicious delight, it's their punishment and their judgment is in exact proportion to their sins, the sins of their fathers and their own, and even Jeremiah is saying that your sins are worse than your fathers, and the basic sin, and this introduces us now to an important aspect of the whole study, is the failure to keep covenant, the rejection of covenant failure, and I'm raising this question, is covenant obligation still a requirement of God for this people, even when they dis-know or do not acknowledge the covenant or their obligation to keep it? Are they still under the requirements of the covenant, even in their ignorance of it? And if so, and the covenant condition for failure is judgment by expulsion, is in fact the very grounds by which we can expect a last day's expulsion, again, out of Israel

and into the nations, for the same reasons that former judgments of expulsion have taken place, namely, the failure to keep, the fact that men do not acknowledge it or recognize it does not invalidate it, nor its terms. It's blessing for keeping and curse for failure, and the curse is to be expelled from the land. And I've never heard anyone articulate this, that this might be the very ground for which we can rightly expect another expulsion of Israel out of the land and into the nations for the failure to keep covenant.

The truth of the matter is, there's very little covenant in modern Jewry at all today, even in Israel. But remember when the covenant was made at Sinai? And they transacted with God and not only do I transact this with you this day, but those who will subsequently issue from you for all posterity, that you're standing now in alignment with me for all generations. We Jews are obligated now for the covenant commitment made by our fathers 4,000 years ago.

And that the God who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and who does not change, is not at all impressed with the passage of time. The truth of the covenant and made oath is still valid today. And if I'm barking up the wrong tree, I welcome correction.

And I write here that this view is lost to contemporary Jews and even to ourselves, locked as we are in the covenant with Israel. And we have become so individualistic in the civilization that we have been birthed that we have lost this consciousness of covenant relationship between us. And therefore, it's out of our consciousness as well as out of theirs to obey and to keep the things to which their fathers served.

And this opens up a whole spectrum of national or corporate covenant as against individual responsibility. There's a phrase that the theologians use called solidarity in sin. By which past and future generations are joined in collective account.

This is a concept totally lost to modern man. But it's not a concept where men will be judged. It's not by virtue of their view.

And part of our prophetic task is to bring modern men into alignment with God. God is the giver and the keeper of covenant. Covenant is a heavenly concept.

It came down to men from above. And God is very serious about it. He's a covenant keeping God.

He gave us a new covenant. But everything is covenantal. And it brings in the whole dimension of things corporate which is lost to us.

And in that way only can we understand how God can judge an entire nation and even a present generation of that nation even for the sins of their forebears. Because there is a solidarity in sin. There's an unbroken continuum of sin until a present generation acknowledges the sins of their fathers as their own and that the judgments which have been required that acknowledgment has never historic.

I mentioned yesterday attending a lecture in Phoenix by a rabbi on the prophetic of Israel. And he showed the indictment against Israel coming. And I raised the question when in our national history have we ever acknowledged that indictment? Let alone the question answers itself.

And near indifference to the question the silence about it makes us culpable in the guilt of it. The only thing that breaks that connection is repentance of sin. Therefore present Israel is subject to any moment's retribution and judgment which still hangs over them seeing that there's been no national or a review of and a return to covenant.

And he thought that the new covenant was not some innovation but exactly the fulfillment of the covenant but now with the acknowledgement that Israel itself cannot. It has taken all this time all these millennia to show the utter bankruptcy of the nation. Not because they're Jews but because they're men.

Because men cannot in himself perform the righteous requirements of God. And so in the new covenant I will write my law in the Hebrew parts. And they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them.

And they'll obey my ordinances and my commandments. I'll give them the very enablements. That's what makes it new.

Because look what your history has demonstrated. Not only a failure to keep it but an indifference. And that's why this will be an everlasting covenant.

There need not be any one after that because it will never be broken. It shall be perpetually kept in the power of God who gives it to a people who complete it in power. That's the whole underlying of this drama of the last days.

We Jews are so self-sufficient. So confident in our own ability. Even to perform things religiously.

Until there's got to be the most thorough emptying out. Until when the power of the people shall be broken. Then God comes in to be their savior, their deliverer, to bring them back out of bondage, out of captivity, to restore them to the land, to rebuild the cities that have been laid waste and made desolate, to set up his sanctuary, his temple.

And I will be your God and you will be my people. And in the power of my life being resurrected you'll be able to fulfill what was your call from the beginning. A nation of priests and of all these millennia to perform this.

To demonstrate to all mankind for all the nations of the earth that what God has done for Israel is a very great drama. I don't have a word for it. I'm quoting now from a German theologian.

I told you that the Germans have the corner on theology. God bless them. About this principle of collection.

And he writes in the theology of the Old Testament. The prophets bring not only their own contemporaries before God's judgment and denounce them for their rebellion, but also see them linked with all previous generations in a unitary entity by which the sins of the fathers are also the sins of those now alive and will be required of them. Maybe we ought to turn to Leviticus 26.

This is Walter Eichrot E-I-C-H-R-O-D-T in a classic study called The Theology of the Old Testament Volume 2, page 40. And it's kind of a little bit of an irony that German theologians have a better grip of the mystery of God for Israel. And had Israel heeded the German theologians in the knowledge about God that would have come from them, they might have been able to save what came from them, what came to them from the Germans.

Look at Leviticus 26. Remember what the famous Holocaust writer, A. Lee Wiesel, said to me when I said, to what degree are you willing to consider that the calamities of Israel, even the Holocaust, and all of our historic suffering has been the fulfillment Let's take a look at what he was refusing to consider. These are

the curses of the covenant.

Chapter 26, verse 17 I will set my face against you, you shall be slain before your enemies. They that hate you shall reign over you, you shall flee. And if you will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more and I will break the pride of your power.

That's exactly what Israel... I will make your heaven as iron. Verse 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children and destroy your cattle. I think that could be literal.

I will again ventilate their hatred. Verse 24 I will also walk contrary unto you and will punish you yet seven times. Little wonder that so many of us have fulfilled that.

And I will bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the quill of my covenant. This suggests the failure of keeping it when you are gathered together within your cities. I will send the pestilence among you, you shall be delivered.

Verse 28 I will walk contrary unto you also that in all not one Jewish spokesman and I have to say also very few if any Christian spokesmen have made clear to Israel that the suffering of the testimony of God over this point is prolific. I can show it to you again and again and again that for your sins am I doing this. That this is in proportion to your sins.

Everything is relative to the sins of Israel. But seven times more because of the brilliance. I will make your cities waste in verse 31.

Bring your sanctuaries unto desolation. I will not smell the savor of your sweet motives. I will bring the land which dwell therein shall be astonished but it will also have and I will scatter you among the heathen and will draw out a sword after you and your land shall be desolate.

And you may have heard me say that before the Lord gave me illumination when I would read. But I know now without Tiberius there faded the fulfillment of these judgments. So one must decide until there is a repentance and a break.

Considering the future because they see this only everything that is described here was fulfilled in the battle. And let's come now to the prompt that those that survive a remnant shall be. Those that are left to do.

An origin two or three millennia before still is part of the present. My sins and my failure is being visited upon them and they are struggling with things that have nothing to do with their own failure but mine. And some people say well how can God judge the innocent? What about the million and a half children in the holocaust that surely could not have been even capable? That's what makes judgment judgment.

When the innocent are necessary victims of the sins of their fathers. And if we knew that we would do everything to walk in such a way before God as to avoid sin and its consequence not only for ourselves but also for our children. If we'll not do it for ourselves will we do it for them? So here's God's requirement.

You can almost preface the word but at the beginning of verse 40. But and God is still waiting for this but if they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers with their trespass which they trespassed against me and that also they have walked contrary unto me and that I have also walked contrary unto them and have brought them into the land of their enemies if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled

and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity that is to say it was just and right. Can you say that after seeing the Schindler's List to encourage the viewer to understand that the whole of then that film would have been worthwhile.

Instead what does it do? It portrays us as victims seeking the sympathy of others in such a way as that the calamity would not again be repeated because it does not see it coming from the hand of God but from men. So the word of God is clear. I will I will bring the sword against you I will to attribute the judgments of God to being the work of men so he employs men or to say that it is an aberration in history that madman Hitler if only he did not live if he did not live God would have created ten like him or worse in order to affect his judgments.

One of the great perplexities of military historians is why Germany in the last stages of the war the final extremity stripped of manpower stripped of resources nevertheless never let the oven cease. They kept cremating Jews till the day that the allied forces walked into Auschwitz and into Dachau and all those places. They were in a fever of extermination even when it was contrary to their own self interest when they should have been depleting their own protection defense they still invested monumental amounts of money and material and manpower in the elimination of European Jewry and the question was why did the allies bomb the train tracks bringing the victims to the ovens and they never did it.

I don't know what reasons they gave they could not do it because God's judgments are inexorable and to attribute them to men is to miss the point of the God who works in history and if we will not see God in history working his judgment can we believe for God in history to work his judgment? See what we do? We forfeit not only an understanding of our past and misuse the past to enlist a kind of mortal and sympathy for ourselves as victims that will guarantee that we will be victims again but it robs us of any real hope for the future because the God whose word said we will be judged is the God who says we will be restored comfort me comfort you my people and tell them they have suffered double for their sins but now I'm going to return them how shall they believe that if they have not believed at first?

See how everything hinges on the word of God and our failure to examine the meaning of our calamity in the light of the word has been because the rejection of the word of God is the word and how have we suffered for the failure to consider it? If we had all kinds of time you could do this yourself Deuteronomy 32 is called the song of Moses but it's not a charismatic ditty it's a solemn warning of last days terror that will come upon Israel for their apostasy where it says that you will die in the chambers and that the how does it say the suckling with the old man and then the young men and the women together and when they open the doors of the ovens that's exactly the composition of the layers on the bottom were the old men and the infants to gasp the last air that remained and on the top were the most virile and the youngest they died in the exact layers and proportions as the song of Moses and why was it given as a song that it should be recited to your children that you should learn this I don't know one Jew in a hundred thousand that has ever read Deuteronomy 32 and can even find it in the Bible we are a non biblical people and the rejection of the Bible is the rejection of God and the rejection of God and of his covenant is the reason for which we have suffered the only thing that saves it eternally is purely out of his grace his infinite grace without any deserving out part our history before him has been a scandal he says you have blasphemed my name in all nations for I have restored a remnant at the end and bring them again into the fold and give them a new name and so bestow them with the knowledge of himself and the fullness of his spirit that will make Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement look like kids stuff there we will have the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that remnant to fit them and they will be a glory and a diadem the great mercies of God after the great and that not only will you know that I am the Lord you may know but the heathen round so

the whole prophetic task is to restore this biblical mindset to secular Bible rejecting what a task I have not succeeded what a task and it's not going to be a welcome task you're coming out of the woodwork and you're crazy and how can you say that and we're nice people and we've never hurt anybody and I've never murdered anyone it's remarkable how alien the concept of sin is to ourselves as a people we celebrate ourselves we think we're hot stuff and look what we've done and the Nobel and all the surprises and things that we want but if A.V.

Rizal himself is any example who indeed is a Pulitzer Prize winner and a celebrated writer and humanist whose own family has been obliterated in Auschwitz who says I refuse to consider this what a statement of what sin in fact is the elevation of the over and against the word of God is the very anatomy spoken and expressed by the best of Jewry not the worst what then is the position of the worst and if God who judged the nation for that condition before will he not judge it for that and there is no to believe the word of God which they have known in their experience if only they will see it not as the aberration of the Hitler or the failure of western nations to take them in or to bomb the railroad tracks that led to the death see it as the fulfillment of God's word I will bring the sword I will bring the fire so to want to see God in past intervention in judgment is to believe him for future intervention and God intervenes through unbelieving men they want man to do it if the desert if the bloom is a rose it will be through an irrigation project or a dam that is built it is not going to be through the miraculous power of God if you haven't heard this experience of mine very early in my believing life when I was in New York City being trained Jewish mission work that however long deferred will in its time be given and grant us my God that however much previous generations of prophets have been rejected and scorned and derided and expelled and stoned that you will give us a power and an authority to bring my God your perspective to a people even a remnant of them which if they will receive it will save them from the calamity to come grant us that ability Lord we pray thank you Jesus for these this historic time this is more than a class this is more than a school life and death hang in the balance my God and for this we have to say who is sufficient we are frail beings my God but for their sake and for your sake and your sake form us and so shape us and so use us my God that there might be an eternal rejoicing despite the hollers that are yet to come we bless you and ask you to seal this for us and speak to us through the day and in the night hours and establish your truth in our heart in Jesus amen amen

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