

K-500 a Jewish Response to the Holocaust (2 of 2)

by Art Katz

The rejection of the divine image has led to monstrous consequences, including the Holocaust, and highlights the need for a return to the truth.

Duration: 39:15

Scripture: Acts 3:1

Topics: "Holocaust"

Description

The sermon transcript is discussing a video of a man named George Steiner who gave a speech at the University of Vermont in 1991. The speaker emphasizes the importance of praying for George Steiner and his letter to reach him, hoping it will have a positive impact on his life. The sermon highlights the conviction and uncompromising persistence of the speaker in addressing the truth of the word of God, which seemed to have a profound effect on the audience. The sermon also touches on the concept of eternal judgment and the consequences of rejecting heaven.

Transcript

that this class of religious men went on to continue with their temple practices by one expediency, namely, sewing up the rent veil. Can you imagine that Jews came into the temple and there was the evidence of the veil sewn together with the rent for 40 years. And why 40 years before Jerusalem was destroyed? Because 40 is the number of testing and of trial.

They had 40 years to repent and change their mind in which they had the testimony of the apostolic church itself. More powerful in many ways than that which was the testimony of Jesus in his own singular body. In the most anointed and awesome demonstration of power and miracles, the shadow of Peter falling on the sick, the quality of the church's truth that men were afraid to join themselves to it for the evident power and holiness of that phenomenon called the church, the transformation of these lives, the fearlessness of those men, the miracles at the gate beautiful with John and Peter, and a 40-year testimony of not only rejecting that testimony but persecuting it, then the judgment of God came.

They had the prophetic testimony of Jesus that not one stone will be left standing on the other. You know what they, I mean I don't care how full of doubt you are, when that temple was finally destroyed, I'm sure that the Jewish believers then still in Jerusalem reminded those who were witnessing this demonstration

to say, we told you that the Messiah who is also the prophet that you awaited, that prophet, prophesied that not one stone will be left standing in heaven. And here 40 years to the day is the fulfillment.

Now will you surrender to this belief? You know what happened in a generation after the destruction of Jerusalem? That the Pharisaical leaders met in a city called Yavna and devised today's rabbinical Judaism and the whole mechanism of synagogue worship, where they themselves would be the ruling authoritative class, and they had to answer this question, how can Jewish identity continue in the face of the destruction of the temple, the dispersal of the priesthood, the end of temple sacrifice, and the people themselves flung captive into nations? And the answer was the advent of the synagogue administered by rabbis as the class now replacing the priesthood. And this has become normative Judaism to this day and opposes to this day men like myself and the testimony of the church that seeks yet to bring the claims of Christ to a Jewish community. It's not only tragic for Israel and Jews, it's tragic for the world.

He says in the face of God's supreme act of love and self-giving for their election, they have chosen to refuse, leaving time itself in abeyance. The promised heritage of Abraham is that of worldwide Christianity. There is a spiritual heritage which Christians can live on only if they acknowledge its source in the tree of Jesse, an unbroken validation of the message and meaning of Jesus, forthcoming from the election of Abraham and of his people.

He has a better grasp of the faith and its roots in Abraham and the patriarchs than most Christians are. This was 1991. Almost opportunely, the very slow conversion of Jews to Christianity in this position, and it does after all occur, and the stubbornness of the as yet dissenting minority demonstrates the fact that Christ's ministry is not yet accomplished, that there is further love on offer.

More critical is a third valuation, that of a scandalous schism in the house of the one God. You know, there's only one other writer that I know who has felt the scandalous schism in the house of the one God. That's Karl Barth.

Karl Barth says that there should be the synagogue alongside the church is a scandal that the church should never have tolerated as if it makes valid two alternatives to God when there's only one God in one way. That the church should never have condescended to the presence of the synagogue as being somehow another faith that has a validity of its own. He calls it a scandalous schism, s-c-h-i-s-m, a split in the house of the one God.

So, the mission of Christianity is one of ecumenical and global propagation. The Messiah awaited by the Jews is the same Messiah whose reappearance is awaited by Christians. Talks about the crux of the cross, explicit in historical and contemporary Christianity, and subconsciously present in the condition of Judaism.

I don't know what he means by that. The Jews know to Christ is poignant and pregnant with catastrophe. I've tried to argue the Judaic initiation of monotheism, whether by virtue of divine revelation or by virtue of anthropomorphic invention, has exercised an intolerable psychic pressure on Western consciousness.

Instead of lauding monotheism as somehow a benevolent view, it exerts a psychic pressure on Western consciousness. I wish that he had developed that, that unless God is seen in the way in which he constitutes himself, in his plurality, in his triunity, he's not seen. You may call him God, but you're not dealing with the God who is a God of three persons, and he must be understood and received, and the reality of what he is in experience, or you're dealing with another God no matter what you label him.

And as I said in one of my earlier messages, that we've actually encouraged another deviant sect that is monotheistic by our example in rejecting the triune God, and that is Islam. And so that in our generation, that thing has grown up with a bloodthirsty determination of our destruction, so we gave birth by our example to a sect that now, in the present time, threatens our very existence. Because had we accepted the revelation of God in his three persons, as was most remarkably demonstrated at the cross, there would have been no ground for the birth of Islam.

It only had its opportunity out of a defunct and deformed Judaism that had rejected the revelation of God as he in fact is. The third and principal notion of a spirit whereby Judaism visits on our civilization the blackmail of utopia is that of the diverse shades of messianic socialism and Marxism. Marxism is in essence Judaism grown impatient.

Here's a man spelling out the implications of what this rejection has meant. In other words, if you reject God's messianism and the program level for the redemption of mankind, then you invent your own. And that's what Marxism in fact is.

It's in essence Judaism grown impatient. And I would give an A for the day if you could think of another ism that has been born out of the rejection of Jesus that also is the statement of Jewish impatience and hastens to bring Israel to its end. Zionism and Marxism are twins.

As a matter of fact, Zionism is almost always socialistic in its mentality and ideology. And that's what they had hoped to do in Israel was to establish a kind of junior Soviet socialist republic, a messianic secular scheme. And it's that very thing that has antagonized Palestinians and is hastening Israel's downfall.

The kingdom of justice must be established by man himself on this earth here and now. It needs hardly be said that the current crisis, the inconceivable collapse of Marxist messianic eminence will reach deep into the affairs and future of Judaism. Or let's say the fate of Jews.

You know that Jews were principal instigators and ideological leaders in the Russian revolution. And they were internationalists and opposed to narrow nationalism and wanted to see a universal brotherhood of mankind in idealistic terms socialistically and were opposed to ethnic and national movements of the religious kind like the Russian Orthodox Church. And now the root of anti-Semitic hatred for the Jew in the new Russia, CIS, the, what do they call it, of individual states, the confederation, is the awareness that Jews were principal factor in the oppression against the Russian Orthodox Church, which is not so much celebrated because it's godly as it is because it's national.

There's something in Jewish internationalism, the international working class. I used to sing this when I was a Marxist. The international working class shall save the human race.

Instead what it has done is instigated people who have deep-seated national ethnic bondings and now look upon Jews as being the ones who have made them to suffer a 70 and 80 year hiatus so long as communism prevailed. And now that we're back in power they'll pay for it. It's man himself establishing justice on the earth so-called here and now.

So it need hardly be said that the current crisis, much greater now in 1995 than in 1991, of the inconceivable collapse of the Marxist messianic eminence, I don't know that the will reach deep into the affairs and future of Judaism. Three times therefore the Jew has been the summoner to individual and to social perfection, the night watchman who does not ensure repose, but on the contrary wakes man from

the sleep of common comforts and self-regard. Sigmund Freud even woke him from the innocence of his dreams, which I believe has bred in the western psyche deep-lying detestations.

It is not the God-killer whom Christianity has hounded to the rim of destruction in Europe since the Middle Ages, it is the God-maker. What a statement. For all of the Christ, historically a Christ-killer, what he's saying, the real antagonism of the world against Jews is not that they're the God-killer, they're the God-makers through Freud, through Karl Marx, and every kind of scheme that Jews are so prone to conceive.

Is there anyone we hate more than he or she who asks of us a sacrifice of self-denial, a compassion of disinterested love which we feel ourselves incapable of providing, but whose validity we nevertheless acknowledge and experience in our inmost? Is there anyone we would rather annihilate from our presence than the one who insists on holding up to us the unrealizable potentialities of what we ourselves could become? This is what he's saying Jews have done in the world, but really it's a more accurate statement of what Jesus has done, and why men had to annihilate from their presence the one who insisted in holding up an unrealizable potentiality of what we should become. Eradicate the Jew and you will have eradicated from within the Christian West an unendurable remembrance of its moral and social failure. Well here I think there's something worth considering, because I think I made the remark once or twice.

If the nations will not succeed in moving the Jews to envy or to jealousy so that they might submit to the gospel, they must end up by annihilating their failure. That is to say either the nations are going to win Jews to the faith, or they're going to remove them from their existence. And if we have not succeeded in the one, we somehow are compelled to move toward the other.

So there's something there that he's touching. For it is Judaism or the Jew that has been the obsessive maddening remembrance which has called upon Christianity itself to remember the ideals from which it has sprung. Once they had renewed their original refusal of Christ by rejecting the reformation, by rejecting its ardent and certainly at the beginning sincere offer of a new Zion built according to the demands of the Old Testament and made a rebirth for man, again we refused.

How many of you know that Luther was a great friend of the Jews until the advent of the reformation and maybe even in the earliest stages, but when the Jewish community refused to acknowledge in the reformation the reality or the fulfillment of messianic and biblical faith in what had been now established outside of Catholicism, his anger and disappointment against them obsessed him. So again, this refusal, there was another historic opportunity for a re-examination of the faith. So let's say from the time of Constantine in the third century, the Jews missed it with the testimony of the Apostolic Church.

They missed it first with Jesus, then the Apostolic Church, and now Constantine and then Christianity as the state religion in a perverse, stunted form, the introduction of pagan celebrations, Easter is Ishtar and all of the things that would make Jews turn, but with the reformation and the coming again of the pristine apostolic faith freed from Catholic forms, Judaism had an opportunity to consider again the claims of Christ presented now through the reformation and what he says again, we refused. Where religious imaginings and their kindred perversions touch on the pulse of the subconscious, the monstrous is not far off. Yeah, I have to say it again and I'm not quite sure I'm understanding him, but I think I do understand him and I'll give you my explanation in a moment.

Where religious imaginings or let's say religious stubbornness, the refusal to surrender to the truth becomes a continued pattern, their kindred perversions touch on the pulse of the subconscious and the

monstrous is not far off. Whereas when you allow a history of calculated and continuing and stubborn refusal, you open the door to something that is monstrous. And I saw this, you know why I understand this? I saw this with my mother in my last visit to her in Florida, where we were sitting in the parlor of her friend after she insisted I go out to dinner with them, three or four Jewish women, and I'm sitting like a quiet little guy, not saying boo, knowing my mother's all tensed up, waiting for me to seize the opportunity, and the women themselves began to discuss spiritual films.

And I'm biting my lips not to say a word, finally they turn to me, and are, what do you think? And so I began to share, and they were loving it. And then I eased off, and finally at the end of the evening I said, well, would you mind if I concluded this evening in prayer? Oh, we would love it. And when I prayed, and without thinking, I ended in the name of Jesus, and my mother erupted in such a fury of frothing at the mouth, and outlandish statements, and shocking things, that these women turned and looked to see what was this phenomenon? Like she's ordinarily a rational woman, now she's beside herself.

She was accusing me, and you bring your friends, and they bring their crosses, and every friend that has ever come to visit my mother has been the most patient, kind, condescending, they bring their cross, I mean she just went on like that. She was beside herself. What was spilling out was such an invective of anti-Christ spirit, that these women said, Esther, we don't understand you.

We love the way your son speaks about God. We're so blessed to hear him. Do you realize what a gift you have in your son, and you're talking to him as if he's an enemy.

And she went on even yet worse. And I took her back to her apartment. I couldn't bear to be in the same room with her.

I left her sitting in the chair, and I could see her face. She was like, what happened? That was not me. What was coming out of me was something beyond me.

And when I got home I wrote on her, I said, Mom, you need to know that what was coming out of you was an anti-Christ spirit. I could say with the words of George Stein that it was something monstrous, and that you have made room for it by the repeated refusals to submit to the truth that has been put before you consistently over the past 30 years. Finally now, it has reached and is reaching monstrous proportions.

The monstrous is not far off. So he talks about the Holocaust as being that monstrous thing, a quantum junk, the long chronicles of inhumanity, of planned mass slaughter, planned elimination, were explicitly designed as the dehumanization of the victim. He was to be recognized as a being less than human.

Torture and fear were to reduce him to a subhuman status. In the fantastifications of Nazism, these starved, beaten, gassed to extinction were not men and women. They were not children, but vermin, members of a species other than men.

That's true. Now I ask you to observe the symbolic symmetry. In the eye of the believer, God has, through the incarnation of Christ, through the descent of the divine into human form, affirmed and attested to the literal godliness of man.

Man had in Christ been of the nature of God. This modulation had been scorned by the Jew. Was it not inevitable, therefore, that the Jew who had refused transcendence for man should bear the final logical consequence, which is to be made less than man? This is what I call examining the Holocaust.

This is probing. In other words, we rejected the opportunity to be through him, God-man, to be transcendent and beyond man. And because of that rejection, we came to such an abnormality of bestiality of those who treated us as vermin that we were conducted and held as being less than man.

And isn't that in fact the testimony we see of people who consistently refuse the salvation of God to become less than man? Animals, perverse, grotesque, they're twisted. And to go into an old age home is a bizarre experience. It's like a descent into hell.

The show of the death camps have lowered the fragile threshold of humanness. If the victims were unmanned in the full sense of that red word, so were the butchers, whose intent and acts diminished them to bestiality. It's not only the Jews who have reduced to vermin, but their oppressors and persecutors were reduced also to being inhuman.

The Jew on his way to the gas chamber was more than a scapegoat. He was in a sickness unto death of a logic of reciprocity, the occasion of his persecutor's descent into animality. He brought his own persecutor down into the place of being less than man.

It is both his agony and in the sadistic beastliness which brought on that agony, the two being rigorously inseparable. The Jew who put in question the belief that our kind, that homo sapiens, had in some manner been created in God's image. Without the Jew there could not have been the cancellation of man.

That is Auschwitz. A cancellation so symmetrical with that in mind of Judaism's rejection of the claims of the divine in Jesus. Erasure for erasure.

The eclipse of light over Golgotha and the black hole in the Temple of Yeshua. Darkness calling to darkness and the Jew centrally implicated in both. Talk about cause and effect.

Talk about whatsoever man sows that he shall reap. But what a reaping. What an ability to see an event 2,000 years ago and its present fulfillment.

That in the rejection of the sublime and transcendent thing to have been greater and higher than man, we finally were reduced to something lower than man and we brought others with us into that reduction. Darkness calling to darkness. The cancellation so symmetrical with that embodied in Judaism's rejection of the claims of the divine in Jesus.

You reject the claims of the divine and you end up with the loss of the human. You cannot retain even your own humanity. It's an ultimate irony.

These are my notes. The final outworking of that crucial rejection reiterated throughout all generations and experienced as the denial of humanity itself. Truly whatsoever man sows that he shall reap.

However deferred in its final statement. Is this not the truth of eternal judgment itself? Historically previewed to yet show forth that irremediable horror to as many as will. It's a little glimpse of hell.

If you reject heaven you get hell. If you reject the divine image you get something less than other than man. To have holocaust museums predicated on the principle that somehow education can avert a future disaster.

The last disaster was the result of ignorance and the prejudice of men if only they understood better. It shows how pitiful yet is the understanding and how courageous this man was. To take this occasion to

make statements of this kind.

The church would lose its reason for being. The church would fall because the future of the church lies in the salvation of all Israel. In other words, not only would it be a disaster for Israel, it would be a disaster for the church.

Because the church cannot be the church independent of an Israel that survives. But we shouldn't pass this point that there's no way that we can ever expect the church to bring a testimony like this to the Jews of its own locality. That so great is the mercy of God.

God seizing an academic occasion honoring a holocaust scholar brings a man like this and gives him this kind of insight. He's either a secret believer or he's a sympathizer like what was his name again? Jesus like Nicodemus. And bring statements like this.

I read you the roll call of the men who were there that night. I'll tell you, if I was invited to speak, I would have been terrified. I'm in there talking about big leagues.

These are men, Yehuda Bauer, he's the head of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Holocaust Museum Director in America, professors of philosophy and history, great scholars, Jewish and Gentile, and you're going to bring statements like this? And I'll tell you, I saw the video. This man was not mincing words. He was not, you know, his lips were not, they were raised, they were clear, ringing statements of conviction.

They were stunned when they told me that they had made a transcript. I said, oh, praise God, I want to study this. When I watched that video, I just was aghast.

We need to pray for this George Steiner. Precisely to the extent that Jews remain Jews, these denials must stand and must, by the existential fact of continued Jewish life in history, be constant and reaffirmed. I guess what he's saying is that Jews are fixed in this rejection, and they're hopelessly unable in themselves to break out of it, which is really very true.

So what is there, forgive me if I ask in bewilderment, what is there really to talk about between us if we take really to be of the essence? And I speak as an outsider. One conjectures that Christianity itself is sick at heart, that it is lamed, possibly terminally, by the paradox of revelation and of doctrine, which generated not only the Shoah, but the millennia of anti-Jewish violence, humiliation, and quarantine, which are obvious by now. Here, again, he makes statements that disparage Christianity, or he sees it as one thing, and cannot distinguish between evangelical faith and, for example, Catholicism, although a lot of it is true.

It stands or should stand the cold by its own image, by its fundamental failings, both by omission and commission, in the season of barbarism, increasingly conscious of the fact that the death camps were modeled on the long habituation of Christian Europe to blueprints of hell, a concept antithetical to Judaism. So what he's saying is that even the view, the ability for Christian Europe to conceive and to execute a holocaust as a hell came out of the Christian view of hell, which is straining as something. But I would say this, that it's redemptive in the sense that Jews who have no sense of hell could at least glimpse, temporally, what could be an eternal condition, and for that reason repent of it.

Anything with fire. In fact, it's only that view that makes those fires justifiable. Those temporal fires that would obliterate 6 million, that if men had refused every other testimony, that the last warning, the last way of saving them out of an eternal holocaust is by this temporal holocaust of 1933 to 1945.

How can there be authentic truth and salvation outside Christ? How can the Jews' veto, be it that of an impotent, despised minority of a fossilized vestige, and the image of the fossilized vestige is perennial in Christian apologetics and polemics, how can that be accepted, let alone be made concordant with the Christian creed in the life of the churches? In other words, how can the church tolerate this veto, this Jewish veto of their Christ? And how can it accept this image of Jewry as a fossilized thing, and let alone that it should be made agreeable with a Christian creed in the life of the churches? And the answer is, it cannot. And it should not. It should not be tolerated.

It's an intolerable assumption that Jews should be allowed to remain in that condition. The death camps and the world's indifference to them mark the failure of a crucial experiment, man's attempt to become fully human. I'm sure that explains why Germans themselves come into the judgment, who were so exultant of their own humanity, their own technology, their own political system and their own culture, in an attempt to be fully human without God.

In a word, it takes God to be a man. You cannot be fully human, independent of God. And that's the genius of the incarnate God in the flesh, the God-man Jesus himself.

And it's in the humanity of Jesus that the divinity of God is revealed. And it's in the divinity of God that's in us that our humanity is revealed. Or else we're not really human or humane.

It takes God to be a man. And any attempt to be a man without God is always going to end in some perverse expression. So Jewish orthodoxy continues in its often barren and insipid formalism, in its feverish atrophy of ritualistic minutia.

In Israel, it has fueled state. Who would dare speak like that about exalted Judaism to say that it's an atrophy of ritualistic minutia? Now listen to this. In Israel, having taken care of Judaism as a religion, now he turns to the secular expression of Israel, which is the other idolatry.

In Israel, it has fueled state savagery and corruption. For let us never forget that each time a Jew humiliates, tortures, or makes homeless another human being, this is a posthumous victory for Hitler. In liberal Judaism and in Judaism at large, the winds of spiritual development blow very faint.

Where now is there a guide for the perplexed? He's playing on the title of Maimonides' classic book, A Guide for the Perplexed. Where is the guide? A voice out of the register which produced a Spinoza. Do you know who Spinoza is? He's a Dutch Jew of Spanish extraction, forced to flee Spain in the expulsion, and Holland was a liberal place of the receiving of Jews, and he was a philosopher and an iconoclast who was actually divorced, cast out from the Jewish community because he was so radical in his views.

I don't personally admire him, but he's saying, where is there a voice of that kind, a voice as radical? With the breakdown of messianic radicalism throughout the Marxist domain, the fertile stress of critical questioning of utopian eminence withers away. How Jewish was Paul when he spoke in bitter contempt of those who blow neither hot nor cold? There cannot, I suggest, be any advance inward in Judaism's sense of its purpose, in its grasp of the mystery of its survival, and of the obligations with which this mystery entails unless the Jew grapples with the origination from the heart of Judaism of Christianity. How about that? We must try to gain insight not only into the logic, into the psychological and historical validity of this origin of the Christian out of the Jew, we must also see clarity in regard to the tragic, destructive bonds which since have tied Jew to Christian, Christian to Jew, or to put it nakedly, victim to butcher.

Jews are compelled to envisage and not allow for not to rationalize the hideous paradox of their innocence of guilt. Does the unexamined axiom of national survival justify the necessary policies of the State of Israel at its borders and what is far greater inside them? To what end the unquenchable constancy of Jew hatred? To what end Auschwitz and the everlasting brand that is put on Jewish memory? And any responsible use by a Jew of the past tense of any verb? All too plainly these issues defy the ordering of common sense. They seem to lie just on the other side of reason.

They are extraterritorial to analytic debate. They take substance from the question of God only. I dare to be only.

That is to say, unless you bring God into this discussion, you are nowhere. The only way to understand Jewish tragedy is to understand that somewhere we have critically missed that God from the question of his existence. One is almost tempted to hope for a moratorium on future discourse.

Let's shut it down. We Jews have said no to the claims made for and in certain moments by the man Jesus. He remains for us a spurious messiah.

The true one has not come in his stead. Today, who but a fundamentalist handful awaits his coming in any but a formulaic and allegoric sense, a sense bitterly irrelevant to the continuing desolation and cruelty of the human situation. Where we are able to do so, we ought to apprehend our own location in a brief history as that of a prologue to a coming into a being of a more humane humanity.

There is abundant hope, Franz Kafka said, a Jewish existentialist writer, but there is none for us. What we may do is to attempt to hear from within this abdication from the messianic. But I guess his conclusive statement is, there is abundant hope, but there is none for us.

Unless we correct this abdication, this revulsion, and this negation, there will be no prologue of a coming into a being of a more humane humanity. Who but a fundamentalist handful awaits his coming in any but a formulaic, technical, allegoric sense, a sense bitterly irrelevant to the continuing, and I wrote, increasing desolation and cruelty of the human situation. We just have to hope that Jews who are sensitive, historically, to the condition of mankind, we just have to recognize there is a gestuary, there is a losing of the image of God in man, that the world is collapsing morally and in every way.

Just the last editions of Time and Newsweek about the state of pornography and the computer, where children have access to the most lurid, unbelievably vile, perverse things. It's a commonplace, and there's no safety because we're bound by our own tradition of freedom of speech, that forbids us to censor. And so we're caught in a kind of an ambivalent thing, that if we do the one, we lose our freedom, if we do the other, we lose our souls.

And there's no hope, unless there's this hope. So, let's pray for George Steiner, pray for my letter to him, that it will reach him, that if it pleases the Lord, there will be actual contact, and something will move forward for God's purposes in this man, and whatever he will have. And that even for this word that went out in 1991, that it will not fall to the ground.

It was a moment of truth. And if you could have seen that video of the outrage when they got up to ask their questions, and the man was cool as a cucumber. He just fielded every question with convictions, with uncompromising insistence on the word of truth, and it must have been a demonstration to them of something altogether outside their Jewish experience, and even their intellectual experience, in an

academic setting, at the University of Lebanon.

Hallelujah.

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