

K-509 the Children of Promise (2 of 2)

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the distinction between physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham, emphasizing God's sovereignty and the transformative journey from Jacob to Israel.

Duration: 28:31

Scripture: Romans 9:12-13, Romans 9:20-21, Romans 9:25-26, Romans 9:30, Romans 9:32-33

Topics: "Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a transformative encounter with God. He describes a final showdown where a conniving individual comes to the end of himself and has a powerful interaction with God, resulting in his transformation. The preacher also highlights the contrast between the world's mentality and human wisdom, which is based on works and merit, and God's principle of choosing according to His will. The sermon references the story of Jacob as an example of God's dealings with humanity and the chosen people of Israel as witnesses to His sovereignty. The preacher concludes by acknowledging God's righteousness and calling for complete surrender to His will.

Transcript

tremendous impasse that has come through the rejection of Christ for which he is heart-stricken. So verse 6, But it is not as though the word of God had failed, for they are not Israel who are descended from Israel, neither are they all children, because they are Abraham's descendants, but through Isaac your descendants will be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

For this is the word of promise, at this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son. First thing I would say is, and you ought to be spotting this without my having to say it, that the same apostolic man whose heart is grieved over Israel and its lost condition, willing to exchange his own salvation in their behalf, is equally as grieved over the question of God's honor and the verity of his word. Has God's word failed? The same jealousy for the glory of God, his name and his honor and his faithfulness to his word, is the same heart that is concerned also for the people.

This is the apostolic heart, it's jealous for the glory of God, and in fact his cry for Israel is not because they are his people and it's sad and his identification, it's because it's the issue of God's glory. Israel is not the thing in itself. The great grief is that its failure is a demerit against God.

It's a scandal against God, it's a reproach against him, it's a blasphemy against his name. The people who were appointed and called sons and given the privileges of adoption and the covenants and promises and the glory and the ministry of the temple, it's tragic for the reflection that it brings upon God. That was the heart of Moses' cry.

I'm not for this people, but your name, what will the heathen think, that you brought them out, you couldn't bring them in? So, we've got to recognize what is the heart, the apostolic heart? The jealousy for the glory of God, his name, his honor, especially as it is reflected in his word. If his word fails, he fails, because he's the God of the word, and the God of the word of covenant, and the God of the word of promise. And if he can't keep the word that he himself gave, then that's the end of God as God.

So, this is the great enigma. How could God's word have failed? Can God fail? Can God's word fail? That's a question that must have been raised by the early church, and now he begins to answer it. How does he answer it? By showing that the failure is not with God's word.

God's word will succeed, but the failure is not understanding that it's not going to be fulfilled in every Israelite. Just because they're physical descendants of Abraham does not make them candidates for glory. And the fact that they have rejected Christ shows that they were not among the elect.

That it's only the children who are the descendants through Isaac, the son of promise, that is called. And it is not in verse 8, the children of the flesh who are the children of God. That's not only a statement then, it's a statement now.

When we need to ask the question, Paul is raising who's a true son of Israel, we would need to ask who's a true Christian. If they're in the flesh, they're not the children of promise, they're not descendants of Isaac. The children of the flesh are not the children of God.

What a remarkable statement. And when we think of the origin of the word Israel, that it came to Jacob after climactic confrontation with the son of God, the pre-epiphany, the pre-incarnate revelation of Christ, that the name was given when he saw him face to face and wrestled with him, and was touched and received the blessing, was made lame, that you have, what's the word, you have overcome, you have persevered, prevailed, both with God and with man. Something that the name was given after a final, ultimate kind of confrontation between a man who lived in his Jacob energy and strength of mind and determination, so much so that he virtually stole the inheritance from a willing Esau, whom God hated because he so readily gave it up.

But even though he had the well-meaning intention, he was a man who by his own artifice and wheeling and dealing and conniving, the word Jacob means conniver. And no conniver is going to bless all the families of the earth. Something's got to happen to the conniver in a final showdown when he comes to the end of himself and has such an intense interaction with God in a wrestling of ultimate combat that he becomes transfigured.

He's another man, a lame man. He's made lame and whole. He can no longer depend on his own sap and original strength.

He's dependent now on the God who has allowed himself to conquer him. Of course, the Jacob people have bugged the families of the earth. Look what's happening now in Israel.

It's called Israel, but really it would better be called Jacob. And it's vexing its neighbors and threatening, God knows, the Middle East and beyond in its own self-defense of its Jacob's strength in life, trusting in the confidence of its own arm. That Jacob must become Israel.

And in fact, it's not exaggerated to say that this last day's time of Jacob's trouble, isn't it well-named? It's the final end of Jacob. Passing through the last searing demons of God until he wrestles himself out and he cannot survive it or come through it except as the Israel of God in a transformed condition because he has met him face to face. The whole last day's thing is a reenactment of the struggle of the original Jacob with the Lord in order to become the Israel of God.

And only in that condition can they bless the families of the earth. So long as they remain in their superior disdain and contempt for the goyim, which I've heard my mother and other Jews spit out with venom, the goyim, like a dirty word, unless that attitude is transformed through a transformed life, they can't bless. So to see in the face of Israel God's face is a remarkable result and that's yet future for the nation that survives.

Okay. So Paul comes deeper and deeper into an unfolding of the genius of God in all of this that what seems to be a disappointment and a failure really becomes the revelation of God's glory and the depth of his genius and the working out of his whole redemptive thing which has been suggested historically earlier through the choosing of Jacob and the rejection of Esau, the choosing of Isaac and the rejection of Ishmael. There always seems to be like two tracks.

The true, the authentic, the chosen, the called, and that which appears to be and is not, and is rejected of God. And in fact the thing that is rejected seems often to have all the credentials. It's actually the firstborn, but it's not the chosen of God.

And that's more than accidental. What is God showing from the whole heilsgeschichte, that's the German word that we don't have in English, the whole salvation history from the beginning. I will choose whom I will choose.

I will. I. I. Not your democratic notions of what you think is fair. But it's not fair.

It's the French mentality. Liberty, fraternity, equality. Right? That's right.

And what is the most pagan nation in Europe? France. Equality. There's no place for God in that because he's not as man.

And the whole intention through Israel is to show mankind that God is good. Can you imagine that mankind is so stubborn and self-willed in its own categories that nothing less than what God will demonstrate historically and at the end through choosing and sifting the Israel of God will reveal even to the nominally Christian nations how much God is God. And that when God said to Moses in answer to the question, who shall I tell the people ascending me at the burning bush? Tell them this.

I'm the God of their fathers. I'm the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. I'm the God of Israel.

But moreover, this shall be my name throughout all your generations. I am that I am or who I am. Which I understand also interprets, I will be who I will be.

Which is to say, I will do what I will do. Because I am God. Spit your heart out.

Spit your guts out. Go blue in the face. Full with the mouth.

I am God. And I will choose what I will choose. And I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy.

You don't think that they deserve it? That's all the more reason why I've chosen them. Because your thinking shows your crummy heart. Good thing you're not God.

Because it shows that your mercy would have been proportionate to those you think are deserving, especially yourself. You know what God is waiting for? A church that has fallen before God. In complete surrender to his sovereignty.

And says, yes Lord. Without a quibble. The moment we raise the question, but why am I married to him? It really is a sigh of relief.

That it's not, what's the word? It's not fluky. It's not, what's the word? Happenstance. There's another precious word that I like.

Coincidence. Vagary. Arbitrary.

There's a divine purpose working. And it includes even the details of our own lives. Call to this final consummation.

What we thought accidental or circumstantial is God showing that I am who I am. And I will be who I will be. And we need to surrender to that.

And now he spells it out. In verse 10, not only this, but there was Rebekah also. There's not only Isaac, but later on Rebekah.

When she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac. The very next generation. By the way, having been barren a long time until that time.

For though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad. In order that God's purpose according to his choice might stand. Not because of works, but because of him who calls.

Oh dear saints. I do not have a word to say what this means. This is a laser beam aimed at the heart of the whole mentality of the world.

And of human wisdom contrary to God. Predicated upon works, merit, performance of what we think we deserve because of what we do. God says, baloney.

Everything is predicated on one principle only. I am God. And I will choose what I will choose.

What puts the premium on our praying not in some kind of religious way of what we think would be good or right. But in accordance with his will. Which means there's a requirement to be in a certain relationship with him.

And sensitivity to his spirit. And as this brother says, an intelligent understanding of his purposes and will that we might pray rightly. No greater question is raised when I preach on Ezekiel 37.

And the necessary death and resurrection of Israel. And people crying out who thought themselves intercessors for Israel. What then should we pray? We've been praying against Arafat.

We've been praying against the PLO. And you're saying that these might be the very instrumentalities of God to bring Israel to its death. So we're praying then effectually against God's purposes.

I said yes. They say, well how then should we pray? They were praying out of their minds. And out of their intelligence of what they thought was serving God's purposes.

It puts a new premium on really understanding the heart of God. And praying his will. Corporately.

And if you want the statement on that, there's only one classic book. And it's the book on intercessor. Reese Howell's Intercessor.

On how this little band of souls in Wales in World War II. Finding the mind of the Lord and praying the mind and the will of God. Turned Hitler from against England at a time when England was hanging on the ropes.

And could have easily done it in. There would have been no base then for the invasion of Europe that finally ended the war. But instead in a way to this day that the military historians cannot fathom.

Hitler chose to go against Russia. The Russia that defeated Napoleon. He was now, maybe out of his egotism, was going to defeat when it made no sense.

And finally it was the beginning of the end for Hitler. Because that's what they prayed. How did they intercede on that? How did they know to groan and to pray for that? And to see it actually effected.

Because they were in a place of union. And identification with the Lord together. And they had a history together as a people.

Because prayer cannot exceed the quality of the relationships of the people who are praying. That's right. If they themselves are disjointed and isolated individual entities.

Who have not a significant and authentic reality and relationship among themselves. Do they think that they're going to be in that relationship with him? See there's a cross. There's a horizontal member.

There's a vertical member. And they both must be authentic. And we delude ourselves to think that we can have a vertical member to God.

There's some kind of solo beatific. I'm so lost in God. And despise our neighbor? No way.

So it requires something more than Sunday services. The church has got to become a community. And in fact if it exceeds the numbers by which community is feasible.

It cannot attain to this reality. So it's very interesting that Reese Howells in Wales at a Bible school, Bible college. Had a small band of souls praying together with him.

Because they were on the same ground. It could not have been affected by a congregation of 300, 500, 1000. Which is the great incentive today.

To have a big church. Mega church. How big is your church brother? Oh, but mine is only 1000.

That's all? Everything is numbers. Can we see already? How the issue of Israel is the issue of the church. It's the issue of prayer.

Prayer is the issue of relationship with God. The issue of relationship with God is the issue of relationship with each other. And so every issue is interwoven.

But what brought us to the place where the thing begins to open. That we begin to see the issues and the relationships. It's Israel.

Isn't that remarkable? So to avoid that and to remove that. Is to lose the possibility of the understanding of all the other aspects that constitute the faith. And that's exactly my experience.

I was a believer of over 20 years duration. I had a marvelous grab bag of goodies. Of apostolic and prophetic insights and truths.

Were rich in messages. But when God introduced Israel. And opened my understanding.

Took the veil from my understanding. All the pieces came together. The church.

Faith. Place of the Holy Spirit. Relationship.

The Word of God. And a new coherence that was not there before. Israel is the key.

Okay. Let's dote on the tremendous statements of verse 11. Because it contains the whole antagonism between the world and God.

It contains the whole antagonism between Judaism and Christianity. The whole issue of man versus God. It's summed up in that one statement.

That God explicated and demonstrated historically through the history of Israel. And the children of Israel. Even the sons of Rebekah.

Isn't that remarkable? God just doesn't give us abstract principles. They are exemplified and written in the flesh and blood of men. And therefore to turn you back on the history of Israel.

Or to have a faith that has voided or lost. The Hebraic content is not to have the faith. That's why the American Indians are suffering.

They need to know this. This is their history, so to speak. And it reveals God in his deepest principles and mind.

That though there were two sons born. In order that God's purpose according to his choice might stand. Not because of works.

How come? Because they were born. The decision was made in their being born. They had no opportunity to do anything.

And that's what the heart of the world is doing. And when the heavenly dove came down over Jesus in his baptism. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

A remarkable statement was made at the same time. By a Jesus who had not yet done anything so as to please God. God is not pleased because we do something.

If we do something it's out of a love and relationship that has been obtained on another basis. Namely, our acceptance in the beloved. Because of the cross, the suffering and the death of his son and his blood.

You can't obtain that by doing. But having obtained it by grace, we had better do. Because then the doing becomes the measure of our eternal reward.

But God is so deaf against the principle of works. As the justification for a relationship with himself or our own self-esteem. Before they could do anything, having just been born, a choice was expressed which is God's.

According to his choice, that his choice might stand not because of works but because of him who calls. It was said to her, the older will serve the younger. God is controverting not just conventional Jewish wisdom but his own ordinance.

The firstborn is rightly the inheritor. Here he controverts even his own principle. Just as it is written, Jacob I love that Esau I have hated.

What shall we say then? Is there no injustice with God? Is there? May it never be. Now here's the way I read the scriptures. In verse 11 I have underlined the last statement because of him who calls.

Calling is a vocal, it's a statement that issues from God. It was said to her, I've underlined the word said. The older will serve the younger.

How come? He said so. That's all we need to know. Because what is Paul defending here in verse 6? The issue of whether the word of God has failed.

God said the older shall serve the younger. Of him who calls, it was said to her, verse 13, just as it is written, Jacob I have loved that Esau I have hated. What shall we say then? See what he's doing? What God has said, what we say.

God has said, let every mouth be stopped. Let every man be a liar. God has said.

God has spoken. God has called. God has written.

God has chosen. God, God, God, God, God. That's the issue.

That's the issue. And it's from the very inception of Israel's history and the bringing forth of a Jacob who as however intense he was in wanting the spiritual inheritance of blessing could not obtain it by his cunning. He obtained it only by the forfeiture of his strength.

When he wrestled and lost it and was made lame. Then he's an Israel of God. The lame shall take the prey.

Not man in his works. Not man in his sap and in his humanity. God working through the weakness of man whose strength is made perfect in his weakness.

Can you imagine people relegating the Old Testament away? The great principles of the faith that are described in the New Testament are already explicated in the Old. The same God. So the issue of Israel is the issue of God.

As nothing else is calculated to reveal him. Both in its history, its dealings, its judgments. We spent weeks on the Holocaust and the issue of judgment as revealing God as nothing else reveals him.

And in his final expression of his mercy. Not because of the qualification. And not because of the deserving.

But because of his choosing. What does it say? Not by the will of man nor of flesh or blood but of God. Not because of the man who runs or the man who wills.

But because of God. You know what we have to say? That everything is so calculated against the revelation of God. And man is so triumphant in his flesh and egoism.

That the only way that God could have made his point is through the demonstration of himself. In his dealings with such a people who exemplify man in the flesh. Jacob is the quintessence of man, the man of flesh.

Even in his spiritual aspiration. And therefore requires all of that strenuous dealing. That in the end, that for all eternity, that all creation will know that God is God.

And Israel is chosen to reveal him. They are his witness people. Not in their success but in their failure.

For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. And I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then, it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs.

If he's black, white, yellow, red or any color. God is against man and man's presumption. But on God who has mercy.

And that lesson is so eternally necessary for all mankind. That God does not think it too elaborate to make Israel the illustration. Right throughout its whole painful history.

Right until its end where it is saved by the mercy of God through a church of this kind. That's the mystery. We're getting into the mystery.

And it would not have been a question if Israel had accepted its Messiah. If everything had fallen into place religiously. It's only by Israel's rejection.

It's shameful and inexplicable rejection that the questions are opened that reveal the deeper mystery. And that's true for all of us. It's in the failure.

The disappointment. It's the thing that defies what we had hoped for, even spiritually. That the greater thing is opened.

And that's what Jonathan was speaking last night. And many of us have experienced or will experience for God's glory. So Lord, we bless you precious God.

Your past finding out. The only way we can understand it is so great is the disparity between heaven and earth. Man and God.

Our way and your way. That it takes this much to make it clear. And Lord, if you search our hearts and find any last withholding.

Any reservation where we have not fallen before your sovereignty. Before yourself as a God who will be who he will be and choose what he will choose. We ask your forgiveness and invite you to bring down that last stronghold of self-will and rebellion as man.

Paul said, can God be wrong? Can he be unjust? Lord, you're perfect and you're righteous. And we just fall before you in complete confidence. And thank you precious God that you are what you are.

Bless us in this and have a people who say yea and amen with a rejoicing. And all that you choose, we give you the praise, the glory and the honor in Yeshua's holy name.

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