

K-523 Tv Show Part 7 God Revealed

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the importance of understanding Jesus' true identity and the personal commitment required to follow Him.

Duration: 27:10

Scripture: Psalm 103:1, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 16:13-16, Matthew 22:37-38, Luke 24:25-27, John 14:6, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the common tendency of people to live by their feelings or wait for something to happen before considering God. He emphasizes that God is waiting for us and that drawing near to Him requires something from us - the exercise of our own wills. The speaker then references a question Jesus asked His disciples about His identity, highlighting the importance of understanding who Jesus is. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the candidness of God's word and the speaker's personal journey in seeking truth about Jesus.

Transcript

Ben Israel with Art Katz and Paul Gordon. Who do men say that I am? Jesus asked. What a tremendous question.

To understand who he is, his identity, is an enormous question for our hour. Welcome to Ben Israel. My name is Art Katz.

And I'm Paul Gordon. We want to discuss this important question with you today. We want to begin, though, by prayer and song.

We haven't sung, Paul, I think, in a time or two. How about if we loosen up? You mean our little theme song? With our theme song. Our theme song, friends, is found in the first verse of the 103rd Psalm.

It's a precious and wonderful thing to sing the Psalms, to raise our voices before God, to rejoice in Him, to delight in Him. We praise Him for the singer of Israel whose heart was so one with God that He gave us these precious verses by the inspiration of the Spirit. It's a real lifter up of the Spirit.

Amen. We invite you to join in. God doesn't care whether your voices are cracked or you're not a professional singer.

He delights in those who delight in Him. Let's just rejoice now. Okay.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

You know what I'm thinking, Paul? Bless the Lord, O my soul. It's the Spirit of a man addressing himself to his faculties. Now, listen, here you mind and personality, I don't care how you are slumbering and how loathe you are to praise Him.

I command you, my Spirit, which is the heart of my being and is the boss of my life because God's Spirit presides over it, commands you to open your mouth and to sing forth praises unto God. You know, there's a will there. Yeah, it kind of destroys the situation that, gee, I just don't feel like praising the Lord.

I feel kind of down, I'm tired, I'm dejected. Isn't that characteristic of the responses of so many people? They live by feelings or the want of feelings or they're waiting for something to happen to them. When God happens to them, then they might consider.

But you know, there's a God who's waiting for us. There's a God who says, draw nigh unto me and I will draw nigh unto you. Something is required from men, something in their own wills which they can freely exercise.

And I think that that's so much of the essence of what we'd like to discuss today. Jesus raised an enormous question with his disciples. In the 16th chapter of the book of Matthew, he said, whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Now, it's one thing what men say, but the real question is, what do you say? Who do you say that he is? And is it more than just an honorary title that you confer upon him? Do you really understand who Jesus is? You know that, who was the first to answer him there, Paul? Well, Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. You think it's unusual that it was Peter who answered first? Well, Peter always was the impetuous one. Peter was the one who jumped out of the boat, wanted to walk to the Lord on water.

If anything came to what had to be done, Peter was the first one to leap in and suggest getting away. But was his answer right? His answer was absolutely right. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

You're the Messiah. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Boy, that brings up an interesting... What an enormous verse.

What does that suggest? Well, number one, it suggests to me that when we truly recognize Jesus as the Son of God, there's a blessing in store for us. You know, we can't say enough about the word to be blessed. In fact, this is the foundation of all blessing.

This knowledge, this piece of knowledge, is the beginning of blessing. To know who Jesus is, to receive that knowledge, is to be blessed. Blessed art thou, Jesus said to Peter.

And then comes an enormously important aspect. For flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father. You know, people, there's not a way that you can know this.

I mean, really deeply know it, as we say, in the kishkas, in the gut, in your vitals. Accept that it be revealed by the Father. You may be sitting in a pew for countless numbers of years, even approving these things and giving nominal mental assent to such things, and yet not truly have been gripped by this knowledge that it might be a life-transforming thing.

You know, it again suggests this thing of the will. The Scriptures also say that no man can come unto God lest the Spirit draw him. And it suggests that since all men have not come unto God, there is some resisting even the drawing of the Spirit.

Well, what is the condition for receiving a revelation from God? Jesus said, the Father has revealed this to you. Something revealed. Something had to be revealed to us which astounded us, yet it came from God.

Why don't all men receive such revelations? What's required from us? We know that there's a God who's wanting to pour out such knowledge. You know what I think it is? What? I think it's just the willingness to really want to know Him. Wouldn't everybody want to know God? Well, you know, we talked to that fellow, you remember, in Israel? I don't remember his name, but the guy with the broken arm.

We were talking to him about, if God were real, and if one could have a personal relationship with God, wouldn't he want to know this? Remember his answer? He said, no, I wouldn't. Why is that? He said, I'm happy. I've got a good job.

My world is just right the way it is. And if somebody truly showed to me that God was who He says He is, then I'd have to change everything I'm doing. I think that that is really a significant admission.

I think our audience realizes that knowledge is expensive. Amen. You know, it's costly to obtain.

We labor for it. We've sweat hours in libraries and universities. Knowledge is expensive.

It's costly. It requires sacrifice, self-denial. And yet there's another kind of cost, because knowledge brings with it obligation, responsibility.

Scripture says, to whom much is given, much is required. If a man is a knowledgeable physician, much rests upon him, much weight of responsibility for the knowledge which he has obtained. And we get a sense of the scriptures that the knowledge of God is something which men shrink from and resist.

That there's almost a tendency of men to want to keep God at an arm's length. They're willing to have perhaps a superficial acquaintance, but they don't really want to know Him. That's what's happening today.

That's the reason why there are so many different descriptions of Jesus today. He's known as superstar. He's known as a clown.

He's known as a great teacher and prophet from times past. He's known as everything to a lot of people, but what He really is. Right.

To know who He is, and to answer this question is really, I believe, the key question for our age. To know Him. And you know, it's interesting that the Hebrew word meaning to know doesn't speak about any cerebral or mental acknowledgement, but it's the same word as, for example, that Adam knew Eve, or Abraham knew Sarah and she conceived.

It's the word that speaks of a relationship that comes together when two are joined as one in intimate union. To know God is something more than a piece of mental information. It's more than citing a catechism or a few doctrinal facts.

It's the coming into a personal relationship with an awesome entity in deep, intimate, personal union. Wow. I'm thinking now, back when I was a boy and I was preparing for my Bar Mitzvah, and going through the Hebrew scriptures and memorizing and learning the Baruchos and the portion of the Apatur that I would be reciting.

And in all of that time, I never once had a real glimpse of God. You know, I've had many conversations with our kinsmen about the Messiah Jesus. And I guess I'm learning with experience, but not every conversation is sincere.

A lot of people enjoy an argument or debate for its own sake. And I've come to the realization after a certain length of time, I begin to sense that the man wants to win an argument rather than to ascertain truth. And I'll say to them, I'll say, look, just a minute, let's take our time out here for a second.

Let me ask you this question. If what I'm suggesting is really true, and Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, who has the right to command your loyalty and love and service, are you willing to know that, that you might do it? And all of a sudden, dum-da-dum-dum, the whole thing changes. And many times I get a frank admission, as you did from that fellow in Israel, no, I really would not.

And then our conversation ceases. Because God's revelation, people, are not dispensed to those who are mere dilettantes, those who want to dandy about conversational things over coffee tables. God will reveal His mystery, the mystery of the Godhead, the mystery of His Son, the mystery of the Messiah, to those who will receive it, that they might live by it.

Now, I'm making an enormous statement, Paul. Where in the Scriptures can you give evidence for what I'm suggesting? In living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. True.

Where did Jesus say that if we would know whether the things which He says are true, that there's a certain test that we must perform? It's in the Gospel of John in the seventh chapter. Jesus said, my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man, any man, I want to underline that, will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.

So, I just want to ask you, dear viewer, how's your heart disposed today? Are you willing to do the Word of God? You know, God is not a groovy God. There's a groovy Jesus that's being bandied about in the world today, and everybody's seeming to get on the bandstand. And I'm a little bit suspicious, because I know that not many followed him 19 centuries ago, because his call was, come ye out, be separate, leave your boats and nets, follow me, take up your cross, deny yourself.

If any man would follow me, let him do these things, if you'd be my disciple. These aren't convenient things. And I believe that the authentic God of all this world has never called men to convenience.

His call is always a wrenching call. It's always a call to sacrifice, to self-denial, to come apart, to follow him, though he might be abused and misunderstood, as he himself was when he walked in his own body. Are you willing to know who Jesus is? Because it's going to be costly.

Something will be required of you. If you'll come to know who he is and will call him Lord, as Jews did 19 centuries ago, you'll be required to follow him as Lord. Jesus said, Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say? Can you imagine also for the people who adhered to the knowledge of Jesus as a Messiah after he was crucified? When the persecutions were going on, when people knew that just coming to a belief and a following of this sect, the people who were followers of Jesus would bring certain death, would bring persecution, houses being taken away, properties confiscated, and being thrown to lands, and this sort of thing.

This is real commitment. Well, I think it goes together with the revelation of who the Messiah is, because right after he approved of the recognition that Peter had made, then we read in the 20th verse, Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus, the Christ, or the Messiah, which is the meaning of the word Christ, which is the Greek derivation of Christos, the Hebrew word Mashiach. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day.

That's a tremendously solemn, frightening revelation of the kinds of musts that follows the Messianic call. And I think that the response of Peter is so richly indicative of what men are in their hearts. What did Peter say after this enormous revelation of who the Messiah is and what the Messiah must suffer? That Peter took him and began to rebuke him.

And he said, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. Talk about chutzpah and arrogance of a disciple rebuking the Master. A piece of flesh rebuking the Son of the living God and telling him, No, even though you've said that, no, this is not going to be true.

Be it far from you. Paul, what do you think brings a man to say something like that? Don't you think it's just a well-meaning thing? He really was concerned for his Master, didn't want his Master to suffer these things? No, I don't. I think that Peter glimpsed a vision of what this meant even to himself.

That following after Christ, if these things took place concerning the Master, they would also take place concerning the servant. That he could see himself in that role. What a revelation of the human heart.

Because it's true, I think, also in the Scripture that it says that if we're called by his name, we ought to walk also as he walked. If he suffered rejection, if he suffered persecution, so too likely shall we. It's not the kind of Messiah that we would like.

We like a Messiah who would come in pomp and glory and grandeur and bang, one, two, three, establish the glory of Israel again. But here's a Messiah who says, I must suffer and must die. And the disciple answers in a very human and natural way.

And it not only reveals a concern for his Master, but more deeply, a real concern for his own fleshly well-being. But you know, the response that Jesus made to that is very profound. People listen intently to what Jesus said.

But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me Satan. Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Do you think he meant by that, Paul, that Peter was actually Satan, the devil himself incarnate? Not actually, but he's laying out pretty clearly that there are only two ways, isn't he? He says that for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but

those that be of men.

Jesus is really saying that there are only two ways that we can do anything. And if we do the ways of men and not of God, then we're following a satanic plan and we're following the plans of Satan, the will of Satan. Go easy, brother.

Let's run that through again because this is something really to digest. It really is. You know, there are a lot of things that are exalted and honored and recognized in the world, though they're not biblical nor scriptural.

And men receive awards for them, and it passes for wisdom. And in fact, I would say that more things that are honored of men than are honored of God. And I think there are a lot of people who call themselves Christians or believers and religious Jewish men and women who see nothing at fault with this.

But the remark of Jesus really does thrust like a sword into our consciousness and into our understanding. Well, he's talking about savoring. Savoring, I've just seen this really for the first time.

Get thee behind me, Satan, for you savor of the things which are of men and not of God. Just the word savoring would mean totally desiring, just laying down the things of God in favor of everything that the world and man has to offer. Peter in this moment chose to express a human wisdom, a human sensibility, a human concern, human sentiment, rather than understand the divine purposes of God, that a Messiah must suffer and must die.

And because they were the things of men, Jesus equated them as being the same as the things of Satan. You know, most people have a distorted vision of Satan as they have a distorted vision of God. And it's an enormously important question that we have a correct knowledge of who God is.

And I think that that always comes with a knowledge for the first time of really who the adversary is. You and I both joke and bandied about Satan as a myth, equally alongside our ignorance of God. But you know that when God became real for us, so too did this adversary.

There's a very real Satan. And here's the thing that men don't understand. Don't they picture him with a pitchfork, forked tail, kind of a red union suit on, something like that? Coming out of his ears.

And they think that the things that are satanic or evil can be easily identified, that they have to do with very blatant evil and sin. But I think that Jesus is speaking an enormous truth here, that many things that pass for human wisdom, human sensibility, sentiment, something nice that are applauded by the world are equally as satanic as the most devious mischief that Satan ever engineered. It's the same thing with just what we would call evil.

The very overt things are easily identified. Adultery, murder, right? Fornication, lying, backbiting. But how about just those nice things that we do that we haven't given over to God? This is fantastic because the question begins with, who do men say that I am? And then it goes on for Jesus to make certain statements with an authority that no man ever spoke to bring us to a new kind of perception about reality in life and in the world.

So much hangs upon understanding who he is. Because if he be not who he claims to be, then we need not give his statements the consideration they deserve. But if he is the Son of Man, the Messiah, then despite every appearance to the contrary, despite whatever schooling we've received in the world, he has

spoken a word which devoutly demands our deepest attention and a turning away from the things which we've approved in times past to a new kind of perception and a new kind of walk to a new kind of doing.

How will men then look upon us? And I think it is that then we're going to begin to suffer the kinds of reproach that he himself suffered. This is radical. And no wonder it is that men don't really want to know who he is.

And how does he follow that last statement? Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Read on, Paul. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

That's the call to discipleship. And I don't think that these scriptures are thrown together in any haphazard way. There's a pattern that's being established here, an enormously profound question.

In fact, I believe the most significant question that can ever be put to men. Then a revelation of the things that are of God versus the things which are of men. And then a call to a commitment to discipleship of denying oneself and taking up a cross to follow him.

A losing of life to find life. It's a paradox that confounds men. And yet it's the way of God that has to do all together with the question, who do men say that I am? Let me just read one more scripture.

Please. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? You know, it helps us to understand so much better the conduct of the disciples themselves and the events that follow the crucifixion and death and even the resurrection of their Lord. One of the most beautiful things about the scripture is how candidly God speaks in his word.

He doesn't give us a saccharine, sugary depiction of these men. He reveals them in the flesh and blood men that they were and how after the death of their Lord, they locked their doors and they were afraid of persecution and they wept and they were full of dismay and consternation and they themselves did not believe the things which their master spoke about a resurrection. Yes, he must suffer, he must die, but he will be resurrected on the third day.

I can't think of a place in the scriptures enormously revealed the things we're speaking now than what's revealed at the end of the gospel of Luke and those two men, those two Jewish men who sadly returned to their home in Emmaus that day, completely downcast and dejected when Jesus came up to them and asked them why their confidences were so formed, they could not even recognize him. And it's enormous how Jesus began to open to them the scriptures and he accused them of being slow of heart, not to believe all that the scriptures or that the prophets had spoken. Ought not Christ who have suffered these things and to enter into his glory and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Ought not a Messiah to suffer? I suppose we can say in the same breath, should not his disciples, should not messianists, should not Mashiachim as we say in Hebrew or as they say in English, Christians, followers of the Christ, the Messiah, expect and anticipate that they too shall experience a measure of the rejection, the suffering and persecution and perhaps death which came to their own Lord and Master. But you know, there's something beautiful about the Jewish disposition of these two disciples. It says that when they drew nigh unto the village where they went, he, Jesus, made as though he would have gone further, but they constrained him saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.

And he went in to tarry with them. They constrained him. That reminds me of Jacob wrestling with the angel.

He would not let him go except that he blessed him. People, just how much do you really want to be, to have the knowledge that was raised in that enormous first question? Who do men say that I am? And who do you say that I am? How much are you willing to constrain God to have an answer? How much are you willing to follow him when you do? So much depends upon our own will, our own willingness to know. And isn't it interesting, Paul, that I believe in the book of Isaiah when God describes the messianic age which shall come, that one of the descriptive things that characterizes this enormous age of peace and human reconciliation of men becoming brothers is that the knowledge of God shall be as so extensive as the waters cover the earth, as the seas, the knowledge of God.

Men shall know, you know, that men can know now. If, like the two disciples, however dejected you've been, however you've misunderstood, you'd be willing to constrain him. There's a Messiah that had to suffer and had to die.

Who do you say that he is, is the question that God puts before men today, Jew and Gentile alike, for the knowledge of the Messiah is indeed the knowledge of him who sent him, the very knowledge of God, a knowledge which really constitutes life. The answer to that question also absolutely has eternal consequences. Who do men say that I am? This is life eternal, the scripture reads in John.

That they might know thee, the only true God, and Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Christ, whom thou hast sent. Do you know him? Who do men say that I am, Jesus asked. Who do you say that he is? Search the scriptures, Jesus, and join his Jewish kinsmen.

They are they which testify. Let's end with a prayer today, shall we, Paul? That hearts and minds might be opened in the searching of the scriptures, that they might know him who is life eternal. Why don't you lead us in a prayer? Father, we ask you now that the word that has gone forth will become attached to our very hearts, to our very souls, that we might indeed live from every word that's preceded from the mouth of God.

Lord, by your Holy Spirit, reveal to us the truth of who Jesus truly is.

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