

K-526 Tv Show Part 10 a Jew Inwardly

by Art Katz

Art Katz shares his personal journey of accepting Jesus as Messiah and the consequences of knowing God, emphasizing the importance of witnessing to the Jewish people and demonstrating reality in one's own life.

Duration: 28:28

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 5:15, Mark 16:15, John 12:32, John 13:20, 2 Corinthians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal journey of coming to know God. He explains that he was initially self-assured and opinionated, but eventually recognized the futility of his life. During a year of traveling, he encountered people who knew God and their testimonies opened his understanding. Ultimately, he had a revelation of God in Jerusalem and joined a congregation of Jewish believers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having a transformed life and the light of God shining through one's own actions and words in order to effectively witness to others. He also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in this process.

Transcript

Ben Israel with Art Katz and Paul Gordon. Welcome to Ben Israel. My name is Art Katz.

And I'm Paul Gordon. I'm delighted to have you with us again today and we've been receiving quite a bit of mail for which we've been delighted and we've been promising to discuss some of these letters with you. The responses have been very interesting and they've raised many questions which we've overlooked in discussing previously.

So we want to devote the entire program today to reviewing some of our correspondence with you and hope that will be a blessing for you. Shall we begin, Brother Paul, with a word of prayer? The Lord will really touch our discussion and reveal things to it that will really be edifying for those who are with us today. Let's just agree in prayer.

So precious God, we just thank you for this opportunity now. Yes. Thank you, Lord, for the responses of the people.

And we ask that you be made unto us wisdom as we answer their questions and attempt to show forth, Lord God, the light and the truth and the hope that is within us. Yes, Lord. Speak out of your word and by

your spirit make this really an exceptionally blessed program.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you and praise you for this time now. The wonderful name of the Messiah Jesus.

Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Praise God. Paul, do you want to take the first letter and share it with the audience? Okay, fine. This is a letter from a person in Durham, North Carolina, and it's a woman who tells us that among others she's been thrilled at our wonderful program and she has some questions that she wants to bring to our attention.

The first question that she asked, in fact, she said that there are many questions which come to the mind of your listeners and which would sustain interest if you would answer these, which is a good point here. In fact, you might call for questions from your viewers. Some which occurred to me are, and then she goes on to list them.

And at this point, let me mention that we would be happy and thrilled for all of the questions that you would care to send in. We'll take a look at every one of them and we will attempt to answer them on the program as we go along. She said, Art, that your personal acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, what triggered it, and how has it affected your relationship with your family, your career, and your Jewish friends? How many hours do we have for that one question? I think that in one of our first telecasts, Paul, we spoke about the factors that led to our coming to the knowledge of the Lord.

Right. What triggered it, I would say basically just as a review, perhaps for those who have not seen that program, was that, as is the case in the lives of most men, I came to God out of a deep personal distress and need. Having been a self-assured and opinionated modern man, I came to a place finally where I recognized the futility of my life.

And in the course of a year's leave of absence from the teaching profession, traveling over the course of Western Europe and the Middle East and Israel, God put people in my path who really knew him and began to open my understanding by the things which they spoke and demonstrated out of their own faces and lives. And God terminated the entire process in Jerusalem where he brought me to a congregation of Jewish believers who were on my fourth night with them by the revelation of God. He showed me who Jesus was finally and brought me to a place of commitment and belief.

I want to mention at this point, this is the book Ben Israel, which Art wrote concerning his spiritual odyssey when he was in the search of reality. And this book can be obtained by writing P.O. Box 1107, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Now, at the end of the program when the credits come across the screen, you'll get not only the P.O. Box number and the town, but also the zip code.

So remember, Box 1107, Chapel Hill. What was the second part of that question, Paul, about me? Okay, she wondered what effect your receiving Christ as Messiah had on your career. Well, I returned to California to the same school system which I had left, but I came back as a new man, a new creature in Christ Jesus, and it became evident to me very soon that I was also a new kind of teacher.

As a matter of fact, that very first night of my return to California, we had a gathering of friends and colleagues in that intellectual fraternity, and the Lord directed me that night in the giving of some expression of the new faith to which I'd been brought, the result of which was the losing of every friend I had, and the reaction was amazing. Some just left with mild contempt and disdain, and some with

irritation, and some with anger, and some really raging. The one person who chose to remain, who thought that this too shall pass and was humoring me, himself came to a place of belief a few years later.

So the first effect of my new commitment to the Lord was the loss of those who were really close to me, and then of course my teaching career changed. I had a new view. God used me in different ways in the classroom, and it was a remarkable new kind of experience.

Yeah, this is kind of a normal situation, isn't it? The old friends leaving and being affronted by your... I really feel that we ought to raise that question for the audience. What has been the consequence of the knowledge of God for your life? Because being as polite as we can, we want to suggest that if you've not experienced some consequences, you really ought to seriously weigh whether it has really been the true loving invasion of God in your life as he desires it. Because the Scripture is really clear that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things pass away, and all things are made new. We may not initially see the totality of all these new things, but very definitely we've left the world. We've been severed from the things which have been made familiar and dear in which the world applauds, and we're citizens of a new kingdom.

And even those who don't understand the phenomenon sense something that has radically taken place. I remember one of my colleagues, Paul, a Jewish colleague, a teacher, a woman for whom I was very fond, and I was speaking to her daily about the Lord and what had happened to me, and the kind of fervor that young believers have that makes them very times irritating to others. But one day the Lord had just stopped my mouth, and I was just very quiet, and we were having lunch together in the school cafeteria, and she turned and she looked at me, and she said, you know, Archie, even when you're silent, you're a living accusation.

Something had evidently been worked in my life that was being communicated to this woman that suggested to her that I was no longer in her fraternity, no longer shared her values, her worldview, her attitude, and I had been brought into a radically different walk. And of course our belief is that this is God's intention for every creature. You know, it's interesting, most people really feel comfortable with the status quo, and I think it's just the fact that any time a person sees something in our life that's changed, it makes them feel uncomfortable.

Most people don't really welcome change. You know, we talk about being seekers after truth, and we talk about being people who are truly interested in finding out what's real and what isn't, but when it's really presented to us, when we're really confronted with it, we shrink back, most people. I think this is also what happened with a number of these colleagues of yours.

I know it must sound fanatical to those who have not come into the same experience in God, which is life transforming, but the words are so clear in the Scripture that the love of the world, that those who love the world are at enmity with the Father, that the world is at enmity itself with God. We don't mean the world of nature, which he himself has created, but we mean the world of men's values, their attitudes, the things which they applaud, the things which they exalt, the things in which they've really invested their true trust, the things upon which they count and rely are really opposed to the things which are of God, which are in fact a substitute for the reliance and trust which is in him, and therefore there really is a radical separation. It's interesting that the word Hebrew, I believe, means one who has crossed over.

Abraham became a real Jew when in hearing the voice of God that called to radical commitment, he came out of Mesopotamia, out of that civilization which exalted the things of men, worshipped stars, found the fortune by the entrails of animals, astrology, occultism, which believed in many gods. When he crossed that river, Euphrates, and moved toward the land of promise, he was on his way to becoming a true Jew. So there really is a marked place of separation, and we appreciate the question that this lady asks.

You know, that's the whole point. I really love that because before Abraham could cross over, he had the first go out from, right? And when your colleagues told you that you were a living accusation, what they were really saying was that you are posing to us a requirement, a responsibility, to take a look smack at this thing straight on, and if it's real, then we have to do the same thing. That's what's frightening.

Let me ask you a question, and I know that we both experience this so often. Supposing somebody says, well, what you're saying is true for you, that's nice for you, and it may have been beneficial for you, but it's just a subjective thing. You've just grasped at a convenient straw that floats.

How would you answer such a statement as that? I know how I would answer it. If something isn't real, how could it supernaturally change my life? If something is just a figment of my imagination, how could it really make a real change in me, a lasting change in me? I think that before something can change my whole way of thinking, my speech, my actions, it has to be an absolute reality. I don't think that I can just conjure up being different.

I'm reminded of the time when Jesus set free the demoniac who was bound in chains and was a man naked and roaring and well-known to all the people round about as one who was beside himself, and Jesus made him whole, and he was clothed and dressed and in his right mind, and he would have followed Jesus, but Jesus sent him back instead to the people and said, go show what great things God has done for you. And you know, I'm thinking also the scripture that says, go ye into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature. Those that receive you receive me, and those that receive me receive him who sent me.

There's something very valid about the claim of God which is pressed upon other men when they consider those whose testimonies speak of him who has made them everywit free and whole. So there is something very important in what is represented to men by those who believe. Absolutely.

What else does our friend ask, Paul? Okay, she also asked, do most cities in the U.S. today have groups from your Hebrew culture who meet together to share your Christian faith? Can you estimate how many Jews today believe as you do? And then she asked, in the United States, in Israel, and in the world. That's a tremendous question, and I think that it really touches on what we've just spoken, that if this is really some subjective fancy, if we just happen to be two kind of freaky guys who have stumbled upon something strange but it's only true for us, how do we explain this phenomenon which is really sweeping not only the United States but many places in the world? At first, I think it began essentially with young Jewish people, but now I think Jewish people of just about every age are coming to the knowledge of the Lord, and there are many fellowships. They call themselves Messianic Jews, Jews for Jesus, Jewish believers, Hebrew Christians, but whatever the name, we have the same experience in common.

And I spoke to one who would be knowledgeable, and I asked him how he would estimate the number of Jews who are now believing in the United States, and he thought as many as a hundred thousand, which I don't think is an extreme figure. And of course, you and I have been in Israel on several occasions, and we know that there are hundreds of Jewish believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the country, and in fact,

it's not only well known to us, it's well known also to Israeli authorities who are becoming concerned now for this phenomenon of Jews who believe, and of course, being believers cannot remain silent about it, but in their enthusiasm and moved by the Spirit of God, are constrained to share their knowledge and the love of God with other Jews who have not yet suspected that the Messiah has come and he's available to all men. It's interesting that the same question comes up again.

A Jew can be an atheist, a Jew can believe in some form of transcendental meditation, he can follow Eastern religions, Hinduism, or whatever, and he's still accepted as a Jew by the Israeli government and the Jewish community at large. Why then, excuse me, if a Jew receives Jesus, or believes that Jesus is the Messiah, is he no longer considered a Jew? That's really a remarkable question, because I think one of the aspects of our Jewish life which has been characteristic through the ages, and one which men today are stressing again, is our belief in pluralism, that plurality which not just merely tolerates, but actually enjoys the diversities of views to which men will give themselves, and yet sees them as if not valid for themselves, at least deserving of their respect and their attention. And yet, as you say, a Jew can believe anything, as I myself was an atheist, and a Marxist communist, and yet no one ever once challenged my Jewishness.

It was evident. But coming to a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and giving evidence of transformed life, now I'm abruptly told that I'm no longer Jewish. It really is a very strange response, and suggests perhaps that if we had believed in Santa Claus, people would have only humorously disregarded us.

But there's something about this conviction which really troubles the hearts of men, and rightfully so, and brings them to an unusual kind of reaction. Or Easter bunnies, or some such. Anything more on that letter? I've got a little frog here in my throat, I've got to get up.

Okay, the next question she asks is, what can Gentile Christians do to show Christian brotherhood and further witness to the Jewish people? I think that's a tremendous question. Perhaps more than any other question that we've thus far discussed, it has a very special place in the hearts of the believing people who are watching us. How do you share this faith, this real knowledge, with loved Jewish people who will initially be offended and think that we're attempting to persuade them to embrace some alien faith, and not realize that this indeed is the living faith of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? It's really no simple question, and we can spend much time in the discussing of it, and we will, from time to time as we go on, address ourselves to this question.

But I can't help but recall that, how was it done for me? I was intensely opposed to Christianity. I did look upon it as something very alien, as indeed it was, as a Gentile phenomenon. And as a history teacher, and just even as an ordinary Jew, I knew only too well the history of the Holocaust, the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms, the forced attempts at converting Jews so-called to Christianity.

How was such a Jew to be reached? Well, in my own experience, it was by people who demonstrated, and not merely spoke, revealed the reality of a God whom I did not know. I saw something in their faces. There was a light that broke forth from their eyes, and they were not merely patronizing to me, but there was an evident quality of love which came forth in their words and in their lives.

They were willing to be inconvenienced by me. They were willing to run the risk of my reproach. And I tell you, it's a fearful thing to suffer the scathing criticism and rebuke of an antagonistic man who looks upon your suggestion as something very offensive to him.

It's only love that will bridge such things as that. And that's what I experienced out of Gentile people. And when they spoke, something that was imbued in their words by the Holy Spirit had a power that was able to penetrate my every defense and my every resistance and to find a place of lodging in my heart.

See, I think what you're saying is so vitally important. That before a person can truly show Jesus as the Messiah to a Jewish person, he has to be able to show reality in his own life. And I think that it's ludicrous for people to attempt to push some kind of an idea or talk about a concept when their very being, their very life suggests that they don't have the slightest idea of the reality in their own lives.

We've got to make something manifest that's first real with us. And I would suggest that perhaps the first thing is to examine our own motives. Are we seeking to put a spiritual notch in our belt? Do we want to rack up points with God which will really act as a kind of a compensation for a want of true holiness and righteousness and loving relationship in our own lives, of our own wives, children, family? Exactly.

Let's get that straight first, and let's come to a relationship with the Jewish people whom we're seeking to win and bring to the knowledge of the Lord. Let's really invite them into our homes. Let's bring them to a place where they trust us and realize that we're not just seeking to rack up some spiritual points, and that we've come to a place where we want to share with them something very real and very rich and deep to us.

Let me just read one thing here. It won't take but about two minutes. It's concerning a completely different subject, but as you were speaking, I could see where it applied exactly to what you were just talking about.

This is in 1 Timothy, third chapter, and it's talking about the man who desires the office of bishop or elder. He desires a good work. It talks about some of the qualifications that he must have, and then it says, "...one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

For if a man know not how to rule in his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" Now let me apply it to this. I could paraphrase this and suggest that it's pertinent to what we're talking about by saying, if one does not have a transformed life with the light of God as reality in his own life, how could he possibly hope to transmit this to another person? I think this probably explains more than any single thing else the failure of evangelical attempts and methods and programs and devices in modern times really to effectively touch the world, let alone the Jewish people. A device and a program and literature or whatever cannot compensate for the light of God, which breaks forth out of the faces of truly redeemed lives established in God.

You know, Jesus said that, "...if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." You know, there's a wonderful correlation in the obligation that we have to witness. God has given us a great commission to go into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature, but he's not called us to be mere technicians or mere purveyors of words, but to show forth a redeemed quality of life. Let your light shine, and I'll tell you that from my own life, Paul, that if I had not this obligation, I would be a far more slipshod believer than I now am.

I'm constrained because of my obligation to reveal the light of God to the world through my own body and life, even as it was revealed 19 centuries ago through the body of Jesus of Nazareth, to see to it that my own life is better ordered in God, to be watchful, to be careful about the own quality of my own spiritual life. There's a relationship there which is very important and which must be regarded. So I think we can say by summing it up that if we're going to attempt to approach our Jewish friends and neighbors with Jesus as

the Messiah, then we have an obligation to really know God, to be committed to God, and to assure that our lives shine forth the glory of God in our own lives before we attempt this.

Now there's another point that comes to my mind, and that's the role of the Holy Spirit. I don't believe that there's ever been an hour where there's been a greater premium upon the role of the Holy Spirit for the life of a believer as it is now since the time of the book of Acts. The world is in such a condition of peril.

Lives are so devastated and so overwrought that no mere cleverness or human well-meaning intention will do it. But something that has its origin only by the Spirit and goes forth by the power of the Spirit has the capacity alone to penetrate 19 centuries of misunderstanding, of confusion, of prejudice, of bitterness and resentment. And I'm remembering, Paul, that young girl that God gave me occasion to meet nine years ago in that European city who was to me a symbol of everything I despised in American life, a Gentile of the Gentiles, a Christian, Protestant, lily-white middle class who wanted to be kind to me, was willing to spend time with me.

And all through the afternoon as I was probing her motives, answered every question about the reason for her doing this, well, she said, it's the love of God, the love of God, the love of God. And finally I reached such a place of exasperation, I asked her that famous question which no Christian had been able to answer for me technically, how do you know that God is, I asked. And I expected a long, painful, embarrassed silence, and I was just going to roll over this girl and crush her with my arrogance, my contempt, and my cynicism, and she looked up and she spoke only one line, but that line was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It was impregnated with the power of the Holy Spirit. It had an unction, and I've never recovered from the speaking of that one line. She tilted up a face to me, brimming with the light of God, and said, Archie said, I know that God lives.

He lives in me. But the speaking of that one line, something exploded in my heart, and I was the one who was stunned to a silence. I could not speak.

I was choked. I was pierced through because the Holy Spirit addressed me to the life of an ordinary Gentile believer. And when you looked at her face, you knew it was true.

The evidence was there. Yeah, praise God. People, we need the Holy Spirit, and we need him more than as a doctrine.

We need to know him in reality and in truth. The Scriptures tell us that when he, the Comforter, shall come, he shall lead you into all truth. Well, Paul, isn't it true that every believer has the Holy Spirit in this measure? Well, it's true to the extent that we cannot call on the name of Jesus unless we be drawn by the Holy Spirit.

And when we open up our lives to the Lord and allow him to take possession, that the Holy Spirit also abides with us. But what many people are experiencing today is maybe a second experience with the Holy Spirit of being just immersed, having the Holy Spirit fall on us, empowering us to be more effective and bolder witnesses. I think that's the key right there, the word power.

Jesus said to his disciples, and they were full of well-meaning, impetuous Jewish zeal, but that was not enough. Tarry ye in Jerusalem, were his last words, until you be endued with power from on high, that you may be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and unto Judea and to Samaria, the uttermost corners of the

earth. People, that requirement has never changed.

There's no point, and there may be many of you who are hearing us today, have experienced the frustration of well-meaning intentions that have bounced back into our teeth, words however technically correct, that have fallen off the lives of people like so much water off the back of the proverbial duck, because we have not tarried to be endued with power from on high by the Holy Spirit. I pray that your heart is touched today to recognize that we're under obligation both to speak the word of God to all that are near, but to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, and that the mere technical speaking alone will not suffice. But it's got to be a word that goes forth by the power of the Holy Spirit, and attested and witnessed to by a life that has been deeply touched, redeemed and transformed of God, ordered in God, and showing forth His joy, His life, and His reality.

We just thank this lady for this wonderful letter that has provoked these good questions. And we just encourage all of our listeners to write in, give us your comments, give us your questions, we'd love to hear from you, and I believe on the next program, and subsequent programs, we'll be reading more of these letters and commenting on the questions. Let's end this, Paul, as we've begun with prayer, praying that the words which God has spoken in this half hour will really touch the hearts of people, that they might seek God in all His fullness, and witness to Him, to the Jew first.

Let's do that. Lord Jesus, Father, we thank you and we pray your name this morning, Lord. Hallelujah.

And we just ask you, Lord, that as we go forth into our various neighborhoods and talk to our friends and our neighbors, that the life of God will shine forth from us. We give you all honor and glory this morning, and in your precious name we pray, amen.

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