

K-531 Endtime Adversities

by Art Katz

Art Katz addresses the urgent realities of end time adversities and the necessity of faith amidst crises.

Duration: 53:07

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:15, Psalm 46:1, Proverbs 29:18, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, James 1:17, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Endtime"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses their feelings of inadequacy and the burden they have for the end times. They reference the book of Joel in the Bible, specifically chapter 2, which speaks about the day of the Lord and the darkness and gloominess that will come. The speaker acknowledges their inability to fully understand or explain the extent of what God's people will face in the end times, but they emphasize the importance of preparation and sounding the alarm. They also mention that there will be crisis and adversity, but God's children will not be exempt and will have His presence with them.

Transcript

I'm sitting here on the couch in a modern television studio. Well fed, comfortable, the atmosphere is perfect, calm, regulated. My face has been powdered and untampered, and yet I want to speak to you about things so earnest and solemn that the whole situation seems completely out of kilter.

Thing that's on my heart are the concerns for the end times. And I have my Bible open to Joel, the second chapter. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain.

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble. For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness. As the morning spread upon the mountains, a great people and a strong.

There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. I tell you that I have great sympathy for Joel and for the prophets of God who have ever been the instrument of his proclamation. Men who have had a sense of burden and urgency in their hearts far in advance of the conditions which they saw by the eye of the spirit, and had to proclaim to a people sitting in comfort, sitting in padded sofas, sitting with pampered bodies and powdered faces that the day of the Lord is at hand and that the end times are here.

I appreciate your sympathy and as we attempt to express this burden through our discussion today.

I just want to take up some definitions which I hope will be helpful for you because as I thought the Lord recently at some meetings for his message, it did not come in the time that I expected and we had days of fasting and prayer and yet the heavens were as the proverbial brass, but one day sitting at the very beginning of these sessions was another speaker what was proclaiming the burden of her heart in an instant the Lord just dropped something upon my consciousness and in my spirit and I saw as it were lit up in great letters end time messages and it was not as if the Lord had given me some new messages to speak which I had not proclaimed before but I saw that these were not new they had ever and always been the burden of my heart the concerns for discipleship the fascination with

the character of the prophet Elijah as a type of an Elijah band that God would be shaping in the end time but I saw them all anew in a more urgent focus and it's that urgency with which I wish to express to you today so let's just follow this and as I use this blackboard end time messages and I suppose that the uh the first phrase that we that we ought to define is the is the meaning of the word end times itself and the definitions that I'm going to give are not necessarily perfect renderings or the most exact but the things which the Lord impressed upon my heart on that occasion and which serves the purpose in the thing which I want to express this morning out of these texts that I'll use so what about the aspect of the end times one thing that shall characterize it is adversity or

crisis maybe it's more correct to say crises because these shall come in great magnitude and great complexity and I think almost all of us have a sense that the world has come to such a place already so wholly interdependent so caught up in one another's fortunes that something as distant as a war in the middle east affects to the degree of comfort in fact our very security in the winter months that are upon us there's not a thing that happens anywhere in the world that is not registered under our own roof in our kitchen table and in our relationships with those with whom we're most dear and that gives indication of what these end times shall be that when these crises deepen in their magnitude we shall visibly be shaken in a series of circumstances of adversities of trying crises that we

have not known before well what is an end time crisis or adversity they are crises and adversities of ultimate proportion how often have we heard it said when we discuss with unsafe friends the things which ring so ominously in our own hearts and cause us to tremble and to fear for safety and for the future of of the human race they say we've had things like that in the past there have been wars there have been rumors of wars there have been social breakdowns there have been cataclysmic events but and we stumble with frustration and we choke and we splutter and we can't begin to express to them that what is coming although the world has tasted of it in some form before we have never seen it and so universal a form so totally eclipsing the whole of modern civilization and life and in such

ultimate proportion and what can we say then about the nature of crises the nature of crisis and adversity there's something about crisis that reveals our condition ever been caught in an elevator between floors ever been in a ship in which the alarm has gone off for a fire there we were poised just a moment before expressing ourselves in the most polite ways and showing ourselves forth as civil as educated as cultured and very very very paragons of virtue but in another moment there's that sickening alarm or accurate smell of smoke or caught between the floors and plunged in the darkness and another face is revealed entirely and i just want to suggest you that the face that's revealed in crisis is the true face oh it's one thing to sit on the couch and to proclaim out of the word of god

or to sit in our congregations and to praise god with our hands raised and have a wonderful time of fellowship together but what will be our condition in a time of ultimate crisis because that will reveal what

our real spiritual condition is crisis revealed and ultimate crisis revealed ultimately or wholly or fully revealing our true condition and the condition of the world the world is going to be seen for what it really is the masquerade will be over and all of its pretension to culture and civility and decorum will just vanish like a and its savage naked brutal character itself seeking selfish root at the wellspring of our existence in our civilization that this is satan's domain ruled over by him and activated and dominated by the principles of lust and ambition and force that shall

be nakedly revealed and every pretense gone in a moment and as the world shall be revealed in its full darkness so shall our life be more brilliantly revealed by that contrast i suppose many of us were led to believe that we would not be here when these end times came and i don't want to labor much on that i don't feel that i'm really qualified to speak about when it is that god is going to remove the body of christ from the conditions which are coming upon the world but i have a sense in all my heart and the activities to which the lord is leading us in discipling others and especially jewish believers that somehow at least a portion of this experience shall indeed come upon us and be used of god by the light which shall be shining through us in that darkness to bring people to him even

in that extremity and so for us there shall be trial and what's my my definition of a trial a crushing stress by whatever means where it be an economic problem or a psychological circumstance or something in our family and our relationship stress of the of inordinate kind of great pressure crushing to what degree beyond our natural ability or capacity to relieve or overcome many of us speak about the word faith and it's become a kind of an unctuous thing and i guess in the minds of many people it's equated with a kind of a feeling or a talent or disposition that some people might have as a virtue in greater proportion than others it's just a happy accident like a talent for painting or for music but not so faith is something tested in the crucible faith is some kind of deep commitment and

the kind of things that's forged in exactly the background of what is being laid here in principle so i want to just speak a word of faith a definition and i suppose there are many definitions for the word faith but one that will serve our purposes today is total dependency upon god's word or we can say god promises unto and you fill in the last word what do you suppose that that last word is and i tell you except to be the last word that i have in my heart and mind i don't think it requires faith at all we don't need faith for things that we can easily out of our own natural strength and capacity solve but we need that whole dependency upon the foolishness of god's word god's promises independent of the things which are seen and understood that are natural in situations and crises which

are unto death and if you've been brought at the hand of god to a place of increasing maturity spiritually usefulness in his kingdom it's been by it by exactly this expediency you have allowed yourself to be brought by the lord to places of testing and trial where you had no alternative but to utterly cast yourself upon him and his word and accept that he is true and it was he who called you out of that photo security familiarity into what was a seeming death that you might walk upon the water you would have perished and many of us shall learn that cry yea though you slay me yet will i trust you i'm trusting the lord now that i not be slain by embarrassment or mortification that as i stand before these cameras and before these men in the studio and before you in your living room that i've

made some kind of a blithering idiot or become tongue-tied or grow all of a sudden silence and have nothing to say and show myself forth foolishly and i tell you people that the fear of that death is far more real for us and far more significant than that death which has only to do with the cessation of consciousness many of us are far more ready for that death just to flip the switch and be taken out of the

scene groovy we we we much more run to that than to face the death to which god really calls us the death of suffering the death of self-denial the death of embarrassment the death of mortification the death of commitment in a world that shall grow increasingly hostile to the way of god and to the word of god when we shall stand upon it in the end times in times of increasing

adversity and crisis when men's hearts shall fail them for fear what shall they say to us when we shall stand as foolish instruments and say christ is the answer where will they just look upon us with disdain and ill humor or when they look upon us i believe in another way as a dangerous menace and as a real obstacle to the progress and to the solution of human ills and i believe that in that season that we shall know a degree of persecution that believers have not known in 2 000 years and we shall see the fulfillment of the scriptures that men shall slay us and claim that they're doing god or perhaps humanity a service we shall be a real obstruction with our foolishness our foolish solution our trying to turn the attention of a world in desperate crisis to the to the remedy of god by his

word seek first the kingdom of god and his righteousness and all these things shall be evident to you how shall that register in the years of the world when men's hearts are failing for fear when they cannot breathe their air nor drink their water when their government shall be collapsing in anarchy and chaos and there's no authority and then shall be running and looting and pillaging and raping in the streets like so many savages shall they be looking to a christ and to a god to enter his word well shall they be looking to their legislation to their armaments to their state troopers and to all the kinds of devices which men turn in times of crisis oh i tell you how shall we stand then and what kind of faith shall we sport then perhaps it's no accident that god says that when he returns

shall he find faith in the earth shall he find actual commitment actual trust in the foolishness of his words when men will seek to strike us and smite us and extinguish us and stop their ears because what we have to suggest to them is not just mere idle foolishness but a dangerous divergency what seems to them the most apparent necessity for wisdom and solution a very grave problem faith is no life matter nor shall a believer be a life thing in the end times and so it is that god speaks to us in advance of the events themselves and i suppose to what degree that i'm fulfilling a prophetic function of crying out and being used of god to express something yet not seen i understand and the experience something of the frustration of people who look at you and say how do you speak of these

things now in the comfort of this security or coming forth out of our colored television sets and the beauty of our home surrounded with every amenity and convenience and luxury and there's not a sign anywhere that our life or our situation is to be troubled or imperiled i pray that the spirit of god will give witness to the thing which he has led me to share today let's turn to the scriptures and see if we can find a text that illumines the thing that that that we want to express and i think that it especially delights me as a jewish believer to find such a text in the old testament scriptures in the book of second chronicles and i don't suppose that this is going to be something new and in fact i'm pleased that it's not i don't want to be an instrument to titillate the ears of uh of

god's people or speak something cunning or something ingenious i think that much greater these i see in my own life is not to hear things that are new but to hear the things which are old the things which are true the things which are deep the essential principles and way and pattern of god that we might know his way and the infinite with his voice and with his expression that when these circumstances come we shall not be stunned and be caught unsuspecting and so in second chronicles in the 20th chapter we read about a an episode an incident in the life of the jewish people judah and it says it came to pass after this also that the

children of moab and the children of amon and with them other beside the ammonites came against jehoshaphat the battle and there came some that told

jehoshaphat saying they come with a great multitude against thee from behind the sea of this side of syria and behold they be in hatha panthama which is angeti isn't it interesting how in just two verses god can set the stage an enormous spectacle is being described here a crisis of ultimate proportions great armies the uncircumcised standing on the very threshold the frontiers the borders of the land of the people of god ready to inundate them and crush the very life out of them ancestral ages old enemies the ammonites the moabites those people descendants from from from loss and that progeny which came by the illicit relationship with his own daughters oh i tell you there's something ominous in that that i don't know quite how to express that somehow the enemies are those who are

distantly related to us and they even seem to have some a seeming relationship or appearance like us as there's some kind of a kinship and yet are they utterly different conceived in another context something hostile to the holy spirit of god and they've always been opposed to us always been as enmity with us and now the opportunity is full and they're going to seek to do us in of whom can these scriptures possibly speak if we try to see them in the light of end time conditions uh i could suggest i don't know how valid this is it might be the nominal world church distantly related to us and yet a kind of a bastard expression if i may use that that kind of a phrase and and inimical to god and to god's people hostile and seeking to do a sin of whom is it that is that it speaks that they

shall slay us and and think that they're doing god a service that they shall employ a vocabulary of religion and of god i i just leave that for your consideration but at least we can say this the enemy is great the forces are overwhelming and that the circumstances are such they're beyond our own natural strength or our ability to resolve or or to to make right a great multitude against thee and what's the next verse jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the lord and proclaim they fast throughout all judah i tell you that such words are are like music in my soul jehoshaphat feared i know that fear is an unmanly thing and and uh but it's not that fear that god is speaking of here where we're so fearful and so uh rattled that that were made ineffective and incapable of action no this

is a sober and right manly regard for the magnitude of the enemy and the forces which are pitted against us this is not unmanly at all and it's not unbecoming it's right far better than we should be foolish children and think that we're jousting with some kind of window and that if we rub an abracadabra vase that some genie will come out in a formula in the name of jesus and the evil spirits will flee we've not seen them flee because it's been only an incantation an empty phrase and we've not yet come to the earnest place to which jehoshaphat had come he feared and you know how earnest he was he set himself to seek the lord i confess my own personal inadequacy to comment on such a phrase as that and i can only think of a few instances where god had brought me personally to such an

extremity that i set myself to seek the lord i'm not schooled to set myself my first 35 years were spent in coasting there was little in this world that required the totality of all that i am in mind and body and soul and spirit so to be sealed and be gathered together in my loins that i would be fitted for combat i coasted i coasted in the service i coasted as a kid i got by with my personality i got by with my cleverness i got by subsequently in my university experience very little was required from me that was total this has been a rather soft generation it's an affluent generation not a generation that has required the totality of what we of what we are that that we should meet uh conditions that would bring us uh to a sharp edge of availability we hardly know what it means even as

believers to set ourselves but i remember one occasion when god brought me to jerusalem as a speaker in a conference to which the saints and the missionaries and the workers in that great land where many of the great end time things are to be fulfilled were called and who was i to speak to them and what is it i should speak out of my own cunning and my own wisdom or my own well-meaning intentions i was a desperate hopeless man before god stretched out before him and remember we had one night before the beginning of those meetings a time of prayer in the garden tomb with the choicest saints of god and i sat there like a mute stark thing and they prayed and i heard the prayer going about the room and i could not so much as open my mouth and something was beginning to well over me i was

beginning to plumb and to probe and to reach depths that had not before been touched because i had not before been in a crisis of this magnitude and something finally erupted out of my mouth i was startled in the hearings i had never heard myself pray so profoundly i had never heard such an urgent cry rise up out of the depth of my own soul as i heard that day and i went to god that i could say that that these times have been frequent but they have been they have not been and people our god is ever and always a deep calling unto a deep why is it that the lord allowed these circumstances to come upon his people they said it came to pass after this also that the amoebites the moabites and the ammonites came against them after what not a time of apostasy a time of resurgence a time of

restoration very much like what is happening even now we're on the sense this is a time of the of being returned to the pattern of god this is the restoration of spiritual things where we're where we're getting earnest in our souls we're coming together as a body this is a wonderful hour and yet in that same hour god allows a crisis of unspeakable proportion to come against judah and so also shall it come against us in the end times because although god is a deep calling unto deep we have not answered out of the deep we've answered out of the surface out of the very surface of our lives superficially with with catchwords with with evangelistic devices with promotions with uh carnivals of christian entertainment we have not stretched ourselves out before god we've not set ourselves to seek

him there's not been that urgency and you know what the evidence was that jehoshaphat proclaimed they fast throughout all judah praise god that among the things that are being restored is the necessity for fasting and there are many of us who are believers who have yet to experience a thing so elementary in god's sight that the lord jesus himself spoke of fasting with with the same uh kind of phrase as he as he spoke of prayer when you pray he said he used the very same phrase for fasting when you fast when you do this most necessary and expected thing and we've lost sight and we've not challenged the control of the flesh over our spiritual lives but i'll tell you you proclaim a fact in your land and you'll hear subterranean murmurings and cries and shrieks that you've not before

experienced there's a god who's calling us a deep unto a deep that we might be a people prepared for an eternal relationship with him for our faith that they allow the moabites and the ammonites to stand on our borders and imperil us that we might set our faces before him and proclaim a fast throughout all judah i ask you to prepare your heart for the continuation of this message in the next segment of this telecast that shall come and look with me earnestly that god might speak to us the fullness of his heart that we might be a people prepared for him in these end times i think it's rather symbolic that i'm standing in front of this impressive array of books along with my own heart and life moved by such things as this and i thought at one time that it would be impossible to lay hold of

the collective wisdom of mankind and what a frustrating venture to try by the encompassing of all of this wisdom to find a course for conduct and for life i have just the strangest impression as we stand before the

symbolic bookcase that in the hour to which the lord is bringing an unsuspecting world what shall all their wisdom and all their encyclopedias mean will be just so much dust so much drops and shall be alike consummated by flame and turned to the dust which it is to what then shall men look for wisdom in an age of increasing crisis and complexity for end times the wisdom of god expressed in his word the very god himself and to be led by the spirit and by the word and that's been the burden of our hearts through the things which we've been sharing in these teaching situations and

we spoke on the last occasion of how the lord flashed at a meeting a certain phrase in our heart as we sat waiting upon him end time messages and i just have to confess my inadequacy to be any kind of a spokesman to tell you in clear terms to what degree god's people are going to be submitted to end time conditions or to be freed or relieved of them but all that's in my heart seems to speak the word preparation to blow the trumpet in zion and speak of an increasing darkness and a gloom which is gathering and we suggested in the last telecast certain definitions which will be important for us to consider in the light of what it is that god has placed upon our heart to express that the things that shall characterize the end time certain nature of crisis and adversity that shall come upon

the world and in which god's children shall not wholly be exempt that there'll be a furnace of affliction but there'll be a fourth man in that furnace with them that there'll be a wilderness and of solitariness and a rejection but one with them even in that persecution crises of ultimate proportion and the nature of these crises is to reveal ultimately not only the naked condition of the world long at hostile and at enmity with god but also to reveal our own condition and pray god that when the revelation comes we not we shall not be found wanting carnal selfish insensitive that we ourselves shall collapse because of the pressures that shall come upon us so habituated were we to luxury and to affluence that that when it came to a time of self-denial we simply cracked and could not stand

and what shall be the nature of these trials crushing stress beyond our natural capacity to relieve or to overcome i almost feel like saying dump the dump them hey is that an accident or is the lord using exactly this expedient to bring us beyond our own natural strength and beyond our own natural wisdom to bring us to a place of death in relationship to god and to each other and with ourselves that we have not before known and to which we would have shrunk because it's not an easy place to come and in that extremity and in that crisis the means by which we shall be saved and be an instrument of god's salvation to others is that whole and total dependency upon the foolish promises and word of god even unto death and in fact that except that it be a matter unto death it hardly requires any

faith worth speaking of at all and to to bring these abstract definitions into a kind of a meaningful context we began to speak last time about a certain episode that came upon god's jewish people i suppose that as a jewish man myself i can't read these descriptions with any kind of equanimity and poise and look upon them as just academic instruction after all this is a record of what my jewish people suffered of what they experienced through their own sweat and tears and blood and death that these things are written for our admonition upon whom the end of the age has come we spoke about the fearful calamity last time of what is described in the book of second chronicles in the 20th chapter great armies uncircumcised enemies of israel standing on its very borders ancestral enemies at

enmity with god and with god's people and now so overbearing in their great might that they threaten to crush the very existence of the people of judah but praise god for a jehoshaphat god raising up a man a man that god uses not fashioned in a moment nor a day and allowing such circumstances to come not when israel is apostate or being led by some backslidden king but in a moment of return in a moment of

restoration very much like our own period right now and so when these things happened jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the lord and began to speak of that last time what it means to set oneself and how little this is known in our own actual experience and yet how becoming it is for the man that god uses to know how to set himself to seek the lord and how my how only by the

grace of god when i myself am compelled and required to do this because i'm pushed beyond my own natural strength do i find god in a new way in a new depth and a new intensity and there's a cord struck in my soul of deep calling entities to which god has long sought us and wanting to save us out of a world that is eminently superficial and trivial and surface and i tell you people except that we'd be saved from it and be brought to that depth now i have a feeling that at whatever point we are in the moment that this natural life shall be ended i think that we might well be fixated at that particular place of superficial superficiality or depth to be free to enjoy or to lose the enjoyment of the unspeakable riches which god has laid up for those who love him it behooves us to come to a

place of death spiritually now that we might be heir to all the things which god has laid up for us in our eternal reward and so jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the lord and that wasn't just an unctuous phrase the evidence of it was this that he proclaimed a fast about old judah just like the fast that that esther called for when the very life of the jewish people was again at stake and just like the fashion to which god is again returning us as an aspect of our normal christian life so important yet so little known in the lives of most believers and i'll tell you when we'll undertake it for the first time we'll begin to understand why it is we've so long shrunk from it it's nothing less than dying oh we're absolutely persuaded we're not going to make it we walk into furniture

we see spots before our eyes and such hostile growls and sounds emanating from subterranean places that we as which we had not thought to exist and so long as we had not challenged the flesh we could have gone on playing at our sunday school exercises and gone on sunday to our churches and potluck suppers and our other nice christian activity and we would have not in any way been hampered but i'll tell you when you would earnestly begin to contend in that eternal confrontation between flesh and the spirit you're in another kind of ball game and it behooves us well to begin to understand that confrontation now that when the enemies are found standing on our boundaries we're not called to an experience with which we have no familiarity jehoshaphat proclaimed the faster on old judah and

judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the lord even out of all the cities of judah they came to seek the lord praise god aren't those words music in your ears as they are in mine and isn't a great scandal of christianity been our notorious divisiveness and haven't used long murmured to us what are you trying to commend to me with your methodist church and baptist church and episcopalian church and all of your various denominations separate one from another and a kind of a subtle competition one with another i'll tell you that one of god's end time purposes as we well know is to bring a unity to the body of christ and if we'll not come to it eagerly and willingly perhaps in the last analysis we'll be it will be compelled to come to it out of a mutual necessity to find ourselves

arrayed against a common enemy judah gathered themselves together and i know my jewish people well individualistic my goodness they say that if you have two jews you'll have three arguments and one of the great miracles of israel far beyond our own jewish capacity has been the establishment of the kibbutz scene where men have lived together ordering their lives in common a pattern more in keeping with the book of acts than few realize because it was a necessary method of establishing their life judah gathered themselves together despite the individualism despite their differences to ask help of the lord i'll tell you

except that we be in that one spirit of one accord shall he hear us in that extremity even out of all the cities of judah they came to seek the lord praise god that this

shall soon be part of the experience of god's body as we move into these end times and jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of judah and jerusalem in the house of the lord and before the new court and said oh lord god of our father are not thou god in heaven and rule us not thou over all the kingdom of the heathen and in thy hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand thee art not thou our god who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people israel and gave it to the seed of abraham thy friend forever and they dwelt there in azupiah sanctuary there in for thy name i'll tell you maybe it's only extremity that brings us to a place of remembrance of just what it is that god has wrought in our lives maybe it's just circumstances like this alone that

will bring us to recapitulate that long trek out of the bondage of egypt and through a wilderness and to the land of promise for the purpose of establishing god's temple in his holy hill maybe we need to be reminded of what the whole purpose of god has been in his long history with us and maybe nothing less than such extremity as this will free us from the daily round of our small activities and christian play acting and evangelistic devices to see the eternal focus of god and what his supreme and ultimate purposes have been from the beginning we need to report again to see the entire perspective of god for without a vision the people perish and so the joseph that reminds god according to his own word that when we stood at this temple and called upon you and said that if evil comes upon

us as the sword or judgment or pestilence or famine and we stand before this house and in thy presence for thy name is in this house and cry unto thee in our affliction then wilt thou hear and help oh i tell you people that there's almost something criminal in reading such a verse as that and moving on with but a moment commentary it deserves surely an hour in itself i just pick out the familiar words when evil comes upon us sword judgment pestilence famine why if my memory serves me correctly are those the very things that are cited in the book of revelation in the activity of the four apocalyptic horsemen that shall be visited upon this earth in the end times the sword judgment pestilence and famine is it any accident that these things are also cited in the book of chronicles they are

the constituent element of the of the judgment of god coming upon the earth and the very thing which shall drive men either to their ultimate needs before god that have long rejected him or to their last defiance shall also serve some purpose in us because it says that it elicited from them when we shall cry unto thee in our affliction when have we cried last i suppose another one of our scandal is the fact that we've been too long dry-eyed we jews have an expression out of the kishkes out of the gut out of the inmost depth of our life is the real reality the real uh center of existence when have we been there last and i tell you that it will not come there for love of truth if everything about us conspires against us if the whole spirit of the world militates against death and towards

superficiality maybe it'll only be when the four apocalyptic horsemen make their appearance that will come that out of our depths will come such a cry as came out of the heart of judah in their affliction for then will thou hear and help and now behold the children of amon and moab and mount there whom thou would not let israel invade when they came out of the land of egypt and but turned from them and destroyed them not behold i say how they reward us to come to cast us out of my possession which thou has given us to inherit oh our god which will not judge them for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us neither know we what to do but our eyes are upon thee praise god can you see his great wisdom in so ordering circumstances of this kind how long have we been

assured in our own devices and thought that all we need do is to invite a flashy evangelist or to pound pulpit or distribute circulars or clever promotion or advertising and fill uh buildings or arenas and somehow of the great and deep purposes of godless men would be affected i tell you the lord has got to bring us to a place that we recognize again as we've never before understood that in him is our salvation we have no might against this great company that comes against us neither know we what to do and maybe there's something poignant coming out of my own spirit and life because the lord has allowed me to be in places in universities and other such places of encounter faced by hostile audiences or angry rabbis or yeshiva students well out of it exhausted and spent feeling not very

clever at all my voice a weak and pathetic thing my speech most unbecoming and hearing these clever men with their angry resource and not knowing how to answer and there's a cry that has to go out of the heart of god's service in such a time lord i don't know what to speak i don't know what to do but my eyes are set upon thee oh precious people can you see that in these crises that god is working one purpose in the life of those in the world who have rejected him and yet another purpose in those who have called upon his name but not in that depth and not in that truth and not by that urgent and real spirit with which we ought he's bringing us to a place where we learn that we're beyond our own devices and beyond our own means when we have no might against this great company that comes

against us neither know we what to do but our eyes are upon thee when all judas stood before the lord with their little ones their wives and their children praise god that he gives us that little afterthought i tell you that my own spiritual life would have been far different if i had just been fending for myself through these years i tell you would have been far different if i had not the responsibility of being god's minister and servant i would have been far more nonchalant far less disposed to the sufferings and the denials of fastings and other such exertions before god i would have been far more casual a believer far more carnal but because the stakes were great because other lives were involved because i stood with my face hanging out not just because of my own threadbare life but

all judah with their little ones and their wives and their children that we were most earnestly dependent upon god oh i tell you the lord knows how to bring us to our knees and our little ones shall not be exempt and all you need do is to turn to the literature uh of the maccabees in that time when greeks and the greek spirit was running right and our temple was desecrated and those jews who stood against that spirit saw their own children taken from them and their very skin played from their bodies cut up in pieces and hacked before our sight but we did not give in we did not relent we stood doggedly and determinedly before the opponents of god as a testimony that we would not allow the temple to be profaned but though it cost us the lives of our little ones i tell you people accept that

the cost is total except that it's urgently a matter of life unto death not just for ourselves but all that is due to us we shall not be before god what he would have us to be then it says upon jehoshiel the son of zechariah a levite of the sons of a star came the spirit of the lord in the midst of the congregation i love it when a verse begins with the word then because it seems to suggest to me that certain necessary conditions have been fulfilled there's a god who is just waiting to express by his spirit to us wisdom needed for life into the congregation by his gift and through his ministers when the conditions are fulfilled when he shall see us earnestly together with our eyes set upon him then shall again come as it did then the spirit of the lord into the midst of the congregation

through the priest how does his spirit speak and he said he owes you to and your inhabitants of jerusalem and thou king jehoshaphat thus saith the lord unto you he's not afraid nor dismayed by the reason of this

great multitude for the battle is not yours but god what a relief to know why that changes everything that removes from us that debilitating anxiety the lord has it all in hand that his battle is his struggle if not ours and we're not expected to undertake it in our puny might say but wait a minute maybe that was a device of the enemy maybe that was something to distract us that we would be unprepared and to give us a false sense of security say how about that priest to whom that message came was that really uh in the spirit i have always wondered about that guy i tell you if we

miss it then there are great stakes involved the gifts of the spirit are not some little panoply of god some little device to make our meetings more exciting and more electric i tell you that in the end time they shall be the difference between life and death and that we have the perfect expression of god without any distraction of the flesh shall be a question of great moments shall we wait then to perfect uh such offices and the operation such gifts or is god speaking to us now and asking us and summoning and beckoning us to so be moved by the spirit and so perfect and be used of god that when that moment shall come his voice shall come forth flawlessly how is it to be done in our great congregations now where our hearts pound when the spirit begins to move upon us and we're afraid to

make a mistake before god and before men herein lies the beauty of what god is working in home fellowships in small groups of god's people meeting face to face in the operation of the gifts of the spirit over the kitchen table where we can well afford a mist as well as a hit where we can well afford occasionally a lapse into the flesh as well as a lapse into the spirit that by such testings and by such exercising of the spirit we can come to that perfect expression that when all judah shall wait on the perfect wisdom of god when it's light of life or death we shall have the perfect expression of god and he shall again remind us that the battle is not ours but his and it changes the faith of everything thus saith the lord unto you be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great

multitude for the battle is not yours but god and how does he continue tomorrow go ye down against them and behold they come up by the cliff of ziz and you shall find them at the end of the before the wilderness of jeruel you shall not need to fight in this battle set yourselves and stand ye still and see the salvation of the lord with you oh judah and jerusalem fear not nor be dismayed tomorrow go out against them for the lord will be with you say what kind of god is this what what does he mean by this why does he give us such a word of this in advance of the great confrontation tomorrow i'll tell you that if i suspect the intent of the lord of rights isn't this a real test of our faith and our commitment tomorrow go out against them the battle is not yours but mine oh we're so fired up

to hear these great words our hearts palpitate and swell with excitement and with conviction we have heard the word of the lord and he shall do it but tomorrow is yet another thing and how often have we experienced that in our fellowships on sunday we hear the word of the lord proclaimed and they give to the spirit exercise and the lord gives us assurance tomorrow go ye out against them and then comes that cold gray dawn that monday following the speaking of god and we wonder was it really the word of the lord that we heard will it really work we're no longer in that same environment in that same setting now we're alone on the job or facing an unbelieving husband or desperately striving with rebellious children or their own conflict between the flesh and the spirit or in our relationships

of the demands to which god brings us can we believe his word then tomorrow go ye down against them fear not nor be dismayed why does god add that little flourish nor be dismayed because we may have rid ourselves of our fears but what do our faces reveal but that sickly kind of dismay and for that reason we look no more different than the world who sport the same kind of apprehensive face stand still and see the

salvation of the lord what is more difficult for men than to stand still the whole tenor of our life is activity doing going having spending and i'll tell you that the lord gave me recently a moment of such unspeakable joy as i was a guest at a growing new testament fellowship and there god's minister kicked out of his own denomination because of his fidelity to god and his coming

into the gifts of the spirit in the in the school where their meetings were being conducted in a growing young fellowship spontaneous and alive before god in every meeting different this precious godly man who had grown up in the denomination which subtly and overtly and covertly promotes activity and doing and reputation leaned over the pulpit and said let us wait on the lord and i blinked my eyes and i thought oh yes what a wonderful rhetorical flourish but my god he meant it and he actually waited and i tell you there was a silence the silences of which we're so afraid oh what if somebody is coming to see our fellowship and they've heard so many wonderful things about it and they'll be disappointed they'll think it's a foolish people sitting in silence like imbeciles he waited on the

lord stand ye still and see the salvation of god stop spinning your wheels stop stop clobbering your unsaved husband with scriptures stop your foolish devices and your evangelistic techniques and your methods stand still and see the salvation of the lord have the courage to wait upon him that except that his word be true and the battle is truly his we shall surely perish faith do we have it faith for the end times faith for extremity faith for crisis even unto seeming death let's bow our heads and ask god oh lord help us shape us to be such a people as this that we might go forth tomorrow confident that what you've spoken will be true

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