

# K-552 Judgment & Mercy

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz's sermon explores the critical balance of judgment and mercy, emphasizing the need for discernment and obedience to God's voice in our lives.*

**Duration:** 55:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21, Matthew 22:37, Matthew 25:21, Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Mercy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of ending our Christian lives in a faithful and triumphant manner. He highlights the ultimate goal of hearing the commendation from the Lord, 'well done, good and faithful servant.' The speaker urges believers to be diligent and zealous in whatever tasks or responsibilities they have, even if they are temporary or seemingly insignificant. He also emphasizes the need to listen to the Holy Spirit and not be ruled by burdens or distractions. The sermon concludes with a prayer for forgiveness and cleansing, asking God to help believers hear His voice clearly and recognize His sent messengers.

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## Transcript

I don't think there was anything in the content to be faulted, but you were invited up to compliment something already spoken by the brother giving the report. I said, do you have something that bears on that? Oh, yeah. But what you actually brought was a four-page dissertation, and taking the liberty to give it to us in detail with scriptures to be read, which is far in excess of what you were being invited to speak.

That's the point. Don't miss the point. And our zeal will carry us to such places.

You know, with something so alive in our spirits, truth that deserves to be expressed, yes. But if we are condescending to the wisdom of the powers of darkness and the bringing of that truth through taking liberties that are not of a kingdom kind, then the truth itself is nullified, and the powers there have won an advantage even in the use of truth. So that's how careful we have to be.

And the Lord has used all of these things for our instruction this morning. Okay, let's thank the Lord for such love that will not let us go. I said to our dear sister who has just spoken, if you were in any kind of an assembly other than the Assemblies of God, the correction that I brought would not have to wait for me to bring it.

It should have come long before if you were in a kind of congregation and formation of saints by which correction could be expressed and received. But seeing that you are only in a kind of an institutional corollary where it did not come, it had to wait for this context, but better late than never. So may we not have to wait to come to conference and to receive what we should have all along received with those with whom we are dearly related, in righteousness and in truth.

But we have very few shepherds who will bring correction and choose themselves to look the other way because they don't want to have themselves examined. And in our courts today is the greatest levity and ease of penalty. There's never been such a time when judges have been more condescending to criminals and even more opposing the victims than the victimizer.

And I think the root of it is that they cannot bring judgment because they are not willing to receive judgment for themselves. They are also taking liberties, they are also stretching the moral definitions of their own life, and how can they bring an exacting requirement of judgment on another that they are unwilling to receive for themselves. And that's why judgment is falling in the streets.

We're moving toward a Sodom and Gomorrah, and the lack of discernment is also a moral question. Being jealous over the truth in a consistent way, and not swallowing down those things that come to us by the still small voice of God, the faintest presentiment of his spirit, which we disallow, because unless the Lord barks, we don't hear, and that hardens us. And so how can we discern if we have not discerned his voice? And in many instances he allows us to make that judgment, whether to interpret what we are hearing and sensing as coming from God, or something that has to do with indigestion, or some other vagary that we can afford to dismiss.

And so as a rule of thumb, if what you're hearing requires your humiliation, it's more likely to be God than indigestion. And even if it's not, and you will obey it, God will be pleased and honored by it, and your discernment will grow by that obedience. So discernment is not magic.

Discernment is the cumulative moments of saying yes to God in the course of the walk, in the process of time over the years. It can become dense, hard of hearing, undiscerning, because you have missed it at an earlier time. Until you go back to the place where you've missed it, you're not likely to receive a fresh sensing of the Lord, in that you have refused the past sensings.

So if you're hardened, ask him at what point you have stiffened yourself when you chose not to hear him because it would have made a requirement that would have resulted in your embarrassment, your humiliation, something like that. So Lord, we thank you for the walk in the Spirit. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

And your leading, my guy, can oftentimes bring us into a painful confrontation, a painful recognition of something about ourselves or something that needs to be expressed and that we choose not to hear because it's expensive. And I remember, Lord, that first message as a young believer when a pastor came and shared, he said, in my earlier Christian life I was waiting for the commandments of God to do them. But as I have gone on and grown with the Lord, I no longer wait for his commandments.

I wait and respond to the very disposition of his Spirit, the very intimation of his heart. When I heard that, I went right under the table. I dissolved in tears.

I was a young squirt who thought, if you obey the commandments of God, that's it. Here's a man opening a whole new realm of understanding of relationship with God. The commandments are kid stuff.

Who will say no once a commandment is given? What are you, a rebel? Anyone will obey when it's commanded, but to discern and intuit the very disposition of God's heart and Spirit that does not require commandment but is intimated by those who live toward him. When that man spoke that, I didn't know that such a kind of relationship was possible. But it spoiled me and it ruined me for everything, anything else.

Even the coming here 30 years ago, the Lord, I said, spoke at the head of the road, but he didn't bark. It was the faintest intimation. End-time teaching, community refuge.

Well, I don't know, was it God? It could be me. I've been praying about community. I'm imaginative.

I'm fanciful in my imaginations. The Lord allows you to take something as to be from him and obey it. And if I had refused and said, well, it's more likely me, I would not have been faulted.

I only would have been walking subsequently in another place, at another level, less than the glory that is now mine. See what I mean? I chose to obey it as the will of God. So, I believe, and I've said this many times, the last days' leadings of the Lord are not going to be loud commandments.

They are going to be the faintest intimation of his Spirit, which he will allow you either to obey or to ignore. And if you choose to ignore it, he will not fault you. He'll allow you to go on in what you're already doing, but you will have missed and fallen short of the glory of God.

So, the issue of communion, intimacy, the sense of the Lord, the inner ear attuned to the disposition of his heart and spirit, which I believe we enjoyed this morning. The Lulent didn't command me. He didn't say, no, go there this morning and let them have it.

Faint disposition, that when I opened my mouth, there it was. So, precious God on high, you know, we're all guilty, Lord, of falling short of the glory. We are, every one of us, dense, hard of hearing, especially to hear things that require our humiliation or threat of loss.

We want to hear those things that confirm us. And so, my God, we ask your forgiveness that we have been so coarse, so crude, so insensitive, and thinking that we're doing you service when your commandments are so evident that to fail to obey them would be outright rebellion. But we've not hearkened to the still, small voice of God.

We're still living from the manna. We've not come into the land and eating from the land. And so, forgive us, Lord, that we're past due.

We've all been around long enough and have had opportunity enough to sense, and not only to hear the still, small voice of God, but even those things that you do not so much as articulate in words, but give us only a disposition, an affinity, that needs to be sensed, intuitive, so long as we have no will or purpose of our own to serve for ourselves. Because the moment that we do, we cannot pick up that information. So, Lord, we say with one voice this morning, we have no other purpose to serve than you.

We are born physically and spiritually for you. And we thank you for the privilege of bringing us to birth, bringing us, my God, to be participants in the conclusion of the age in these last days. As we have already said, we are as privileged as those that commence the Church as those as we'll conclude it.

And so we thank you, my God. And that of being led by the Spirit is the alternative of being required to follow the dictates of the law. And when my rabbi says to me, have you obeyed the law? I say, well, not in the sense that you understand it, but I believe that I am law obedient and I do not need the stipulations and the requirements of an overt and external kind because I'm being led by the Spirit.

Oh, he says, that's cop-out. Well, it is for many Christians, and he has seen that. But it yet is the truth of God and the privilege for us in God.

So, Lord, we're asking first your forgiveness and the cleansing of any debris that has come from failing to heed the still small voice, the disposition of your Spirit. Cleanse us and purge us by your blood even now and make us virginal as if we're healing you for a first time. And not the least of the test is to hear you through art.

Is that his opinion? Is that his subjectivity? Or through that Brooklyn accent of his, is that you speaking? Because when the test came to the pastor, apostle in Brooklyn, New York, to receive the word as a sent word from a sent messenger, he was unable to make that identification and discarded it as just a moment in passing through the novelty of a Jewish believer who happens to live in the neighborhood and missed the genius of it as a sent word from the throne of heaven to a sent man. And if he could not recognize the sentness of that phenomenon that has come to his church, how then can he himself be an apostle? Well, apostolos means sent one. So, my God, it's wanting to hear your voice in a mystical way, uniquely to ourselves from heaven, that perhaps the greatest test is to hear it when you speak it through a human vessel and whose accents are familiar to us and whose life is plain before us, maybe even our own husband, and to hear in that the voice of God, particularly when it's contrary to our will.

So, thank you, Lord. Grow us up in this, precious God. Have an obedient people who are ever-leaning and stretching themselves to pick up the faintest accent of your voice, the faintest disposition of your spirit, so as to do it.

And we thank you and give you praise that we don't have to have our blouse tucked from behind and saying you're taking more time than you should. We would have known it. We would not even have taken it to begin with, even though the burden itself may have been valid.

We're not ruled by burdens. We're ruled by the Holy Spirit. We're not ruled at all.

Thank you for that, Lord. It's worth the instruction. We're all instructed because every one of us are capable of that very error.

And we unite with our sister in it and see ourselves revealed. And in her apologies, our apologies. We're in something together and we're growing up together.

And we thank you for that, in Jesus' name. Amen. In this final session, I'm as jealous for the conclusion as I was for the beginning.

How the Lord ends, how we end, is the whole point of our Christian life. How will we end? Will we end in triumphant glory and faithfulness to hear the remarkable commendation, well done, good and faithful servant? And that one commendation is more reward than anything that the world could ever have heaped on us. And we live and wait for that.

And we're jealous for that. And don't want in any way to traffic and to be less than we ought. That will in any way diminish that remarkable commendation.

Well done. Were your reports well done yesterday, good and faithful servants? Or were they slack? Did you get by with a little polish and a little personal testimony and fill the time? Or were they the best that you could do? One young brother, David, is taking some courses in school. He's not so sure it's the biology, but his father wants him to take that.

And I said, whatever the Lord's ultimate intention for you might be, to be a perfect student in biology will not in any way be adverse against that ultimate end. Whatsoever comes in your hand to do, do it with zeal as unto the Lord. Even if it's a temporary thing, it's only something en route to the larger thing of God.

But make it the present thing of God and the best that you're able by his grace to perform. That you can hear the commendation not only in the last day, but in the present day. Well done, good and faithful servants.

On behalf of the prophetic department, I would like to suggest not only is there a prophetic apprehension of the past, but a prophetic apprehension of the future beyond time itself. That is to say, into eternity. And one Jewish theologian said of the Holocaust, the nature of the Holocaust requires the introduction or the consideration of eternity itself or it cannot be comprehended.

That is to say, unless there's an eternal fire that cannot be quenched, the Holocaust makes no sense except that it is God's provision to bring a Jewish awareness to the issue of hell and of eternal separation and the anguish of a fire that cannot be quenched. For that reason, there's a fire in time called the Holocaust. In order to open up a perspective of that which is eternal, which we Jews have not been willing to consider.

Your task is to communicate eternity by your very presence, not as a subject on your lips, but as a dimension in which you personally move and live and have your being. That's prophetic. The very sight of you indicates that you're not living for this present hour or this age, but that which is to come.

These all died not having received the promise, and yet they were thankful and received a good report. Why? Because they saw from the distance that thing which will be their reward in the life to come. We are not sufficiently oriented to that anticipation.

We ourselves are too much in the world and in the present and are not communicating that dimension of reality that explains the past, that explains the calamities, that explains the suffering. Paul, seeing the invisible weight of glory counted his present affliction as fleeting and minor. What do you mean, Paul saw the eternal weight? Yes, he saw it.

He disdained, he turned away from the things that are visible, which are always compelling and voluptuous and want to ensnare us as if they represent the abiding reality. No, they are ephemeral and passing. He saw that which is eternal and invisible, but he saw it in such a way as to appropriate it in such a way that made his present sufferings both light and passing.

That is prophetic apostolic seeing where it will affect even the issues of what you have to bear in this age because you're so fused with the vision of the eternal weight of glory. This is, we have dismissed this as some kind of Pauline rhetoric, a nice little flow on words. No, it's the abiding reality of the apostolic life.

But how much are we wincing now if we are shot down or reproved or reprimanded? How much are we wounded? How much are we slighted? Showing where, in fact, we are. We're living in this present life, this world, how we're affected. We're not sufficiently caught up in the things that are eternal.

And the remarkable thing is that did not negate Paul's usefulness or practicality. Because he was so heavenly minded, because he had his citizenship in heaven, did not negate his usefulness on the earth. All the more paradoxically was he the remarkable hands-on man for the church.

How to take communion, how to do this, how to deal with a sinner, how to, how to, how to, how to. He was full of practicality, but his practicality issued out of his eternity. And this component needs to be restored to the church.

Not only that we can speak of it, but that we exhibit it. Then these Jews might be, hey, there's something beyond this life. Why are Jews so successful in this life? Why did they amass fortunes? Why did they obtain Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes out of proportion to their numbers? Why are they such a people of accomplishment? Because all their energy and industry is this life oriented.

There is no life beyond this life. Once you're dead, you're dead. Whether you're full, you believe in resurrection, something like that.

So that in order to redeem your life in significance, you've got to achieve and obtain and then leave your fortune or your art collection or your reputation because that's the end of it. There's no sense of anything that lies beyond this life and we have not persuaded them otherwise for we are as equally fixed in this present life and in this world. Heaven or heaven, eternity or eternity, will be the real issue of true witness to the Jew.

To those who are in that dimension and not merely acknowledge it as a biblical category. Those that took this stripping with joy, knowing within themselves that they had a greater recompense in heaven. When will they receive it? Not in this life, but in the life to come.

But so assured of it now in this life, that it converts stripping from anguish and resentment and bitterness to joy. When you can exhibit that joy that cannot be explained in terms of this life because of your confidence in the recompense that comes in heaven, those Jews are stupefied. And that will be the witness after heaven.

These all died not having received the reward but it did not in one wit diminish their faithfulness in this life. They did not need to receive the reward in this life. But our society, our civilization is a now generation.

You're motivated by the carrot that is dangled before you that you obtain now. But can we live for a deferred gratification? Do we have to receive the payoff now? Can we be just as faithful without receiving it in this life, so confident that we will enjoy it in the life to come and it shall not diminish nor rust nor corrupt away? Are we that heavenly minded that we can be motivated by a deferred reward when the whole generation around us is the now generation? Right now we want it. See what I mean? We are another people.

We're marching to another beat, another civilization, another mentality, another kingdom. If in fact we can die without receiving the promise confident that we shall enjoy it in the life to come, which is the true life. This is passing.

This is preparatory. This is being fitted for the eternal kingdom. This is not the thing in itself.

And the basic lie of the palace of darkness is to impress this generation, employing Jews especially, that this is the life. This is the reward. This is the now generation.

Who coins those phrases? Who markets those products with that mentality but our own Jewish kinsmen? For they themselves are persuaded in the now and have no sense of what lies beyond. And they would dismiss it as old wives' tales, as hopeful wishing by Gentiles who don't have the grit to live in this life and face the reality that there's nothing beyond this life but the grave. And so they construct some fanciful old wives' tales that is rewarded in the life to come.

And they disparage and dismiss that until they shall see people living in that reality. They do not need the present day world. Okay.

And I'm just thinking for the first time I'll throw it out. You guys can just drop it or take it up. When Jesus gave up the ghost, the veil was rent from top to bottom.

God rent it. But it needed the yielding up of his ghost, of his spirit. He says no man takes my life, I lay it down.

He gave up his spirit which was his essential being, the essence of what he is in himself. And when will we give up our spirit? When will we give up our essential identity? Because the last thing that we will clutch and be unwilling to relinquish even if they take our goods and strip us of our goods, but don't strip us of our spirituality. Don't dare.

I want to clutch my spirituality. I want my spiritual identification. I want to be seen and known as this, that, or the other.

Have you given up that ghost? Have you come to a death, an obedience unto that death? Of even the last vestige of your identity spiritually? Which Jesus had to give up when my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Death is a totality and if we clutch anything we're likely to clutch our spiritual identification. We'll give up souliness, we'll give up craving, physical desire, we'll give up carnality, but we'll not give up spirituality. Because that's our distinction.

So, have you given up the ghost? And when we will the veil will be rent over their eyes and over their nations. The Nobel Peace Prize winner and sole survivor of an Orthodox family out of Auschwitz is the honorific voice of the Holocaust. Well, I had the privilege of hearing him years ago in New Jersey, he gave a public address, he's very eloquent and there was a question answer time, the Lord bid me be silent, and then as he was leaving I came up to him and I said to him excuse me sir, but you said that in your message you are studying the scriptures twice weekly with a rabbi.

To what degree then are you willing to acknowledge that the Holocaust, like all previous calamity, is the fulfillment of God's prophetic word of judgment spoken in Leviticus, Deuteronomy of the Prophets and elsewhere. It's as if someone splashed into the bucket of ice water, the man froze, choked, spluttered and looked at me with a steely eye and said, I refuse to consider that. And in my book I say, if there is no other reason for the Holocaust, that one statement is sufficient reason alone.

He is speaking for the inarticulate Jewish masses, but he's expressing the Jewish mindset which is, I refuse to consider that. It's not whether it's in the scriptures, not even whether it's true. It's just that I don't

want to consider it.

It's not, it's outside my range of consideration and I exalt myself above God and the word and I will determine from the word what I'm willing to accept and consider and what I set aside and reject. If that is not the quintessence of human presumption, pride and sin, especially in a Jew that invites judgment from the God of the scripture who gave us the solemn words of warning of judgment that would befall us in the latter days, I don't know what is. Interestingly, that that book was my master's thesis at Lutheran Seminary and I didn't complete my studies except the condition that they would receive the book as the written work and when it came to the final week before graduation and I had to be interrogated by two professors, they blocked and would not receive the book as being a fulfillment of that requirement, though they had promised earlier that they would, because it was not written under their oversight, because it wasn't sufficiently scholarly with footnotes, etc, etc and I had to fight and contend for the acceptance of that book in order to finally graduate and I wanted to know why that issue of graduation was so important to me but when I attended they wanted me to come up on the platform and receive a piece of paper that was blank, instead of a diploma of completion, I said nothing doing I'm not bringing my wife all the way down from northern Minnesota to St. Paul for me to receive a blank piece of paper and so they finally condescended and I graduated but when I attended the graduation and saw the professors and staff with their professorial robes on, their doctoral robes that each had the colors of the university where they obtained their PhDs and their hats walking loftily down the middle aisle exhibiting their superiority and that sitting in a certain section when I saw the president on the platform and the man who opposed me who was my interrogator the sense of power of prestige, of religion the woman who gave the oration was a leading lesbian from the east coast, a woman theologian spoke the message of honor.

When I saw the configuration of all that constituted religion I realized then what I had been opposing for two years and why I came out from school day after day bloodied and bruised and battered by the powers of the air that were resident in that institution so he's right, there is a remarkable symmetry between quote Christianity of that kind and Judaism they love to pat each other's back and have their symposia and their conferences on interfaith dialogue that asks nothing and accomplishes nothing and spurns a one statement that could be an incisive opening of the great issue of the meaning of the holocaust it says the fire burned them but they did not know it no awareness of what the holocaust meant, because it was dismissed as a historical accident or that man Hitler if you don't see the hand of God and receive it as its redemptive intention you might equally not have passed through it what will distinguish the future holocaust from the past holocaust what will distinguish the future exile from previous exiles as one sister said to me they've had previous judgements were expelled into the nations they were brought back and then they committed sin again and faced yet another expulsion what makes this exile the final one what a great question and as I pondered it I came in part with this answer in this exile they will be met in the exile in the wilderness with those who will not only succor them physically, but give them prophetic understanding of the predicament through which they are passing.

Jews have never before ever received that benefit so instead of placating them you have to say let me clean you up yes those nasty anti-semites the bad guys that's what they want to hear that's placating, that's condescending that's giving sentimental explanation, but to give them prophetic explanation is to say what you're suffering is the sins of your fathers as your own the judgements that were promised in scripture are now being fulfilled and God's judgements are his mercy to keep you from a greater judgement that is eternal in which the fires will not be quenched have you the gumption, the prophetic courage to speak that straight into the face of a suffering Jew and instead of placating and making nice

which every iota of your corporeal being will want to make nice can you speak the hard prophetic word in love and give them the explanation and the freedom and deliverance from the bondage of their minds that waits on your word prophetically delivered and not sentimentally tendered got the idea? you precious women, I know you I know you'll want to make nice I know you'll want to placate I know that you'll not want to bring up harsh questions of judgement to a people who are battered before your very sight but what is the dominant impulse of your life and being?

Is it your natural earthly carnal nature wanting to placate because you yourself want to be placated or can you speak the eternal word of God in prophetic what's the word? prophetic incisiveness being willing to be cruel in order to be kind at a time when they need comfort you're bringing a profound discomfort the issue of sin and judgement and yet that is ultimate comfort if you have the courage to bring it. What you are to them in that moment is everything that's why the little episodes of today with our own group the word of admonition and correction is judgement but redemptive and if we walk at this if this is too much for us if we would wish that we could have avoided that how then shall we be to them what we are willing ourselves to receive now at a much lesser level that's why we are receiving this now that when the time comes we will be able to be to them what God is to us now and see it not as castor oil that has to be taken with while you pinch your nose but as very mercy God's judgements are his mercies his chastisements are very love and someone has said no one we know God when we will love his judgements not just acknowledge them like the castor oil that we have to take because we can't avoid it but see it as the most celebrated aspect of his deity for his judgements are righteousness for when his judgements will be in the earth the world will know righteousness we cannot conceive as Jews that we are guilty of a sin that would warrant such a judgement we see ourselves as superior, we see ourselves as lofty, ethical, moral we are the moral conscience of the world we write the books, we make the movies so how can we be the ones how can we be guilty of a sin that would justify a judgement that disproportion if it's of any interest the two responses that we have received from Israel about the holocaust book from at the eminent level of Israeli intellectual society one is the head of the Israeli bible league or whatever they call it society, I don't know how he got the book but he writes me a letter, I still have it somewhere in my files, it's the most scathing denunciation I have ever received, I mean he just from one side to the other, he just shredded me how dare you, so I usually get garbage like this, it goes right into the into the bin, but yours was so reprehensible, so vile so unbelievably scandalous that I had to take the pains to write you and condemn you haven't you ever heard of the Spanish inquisition don't you know about the crusades and went on as if I'm some boob who's never heard of those things, when those things are the very judgements that I'm describing as being the fulfillment of prophetic scripture and the statement of our sin, so it was a scandalous, he says this is trash, then I was sharing with Hans, some months went by and I spotted the name Bakon, I remembered it because the name Bacon for a Jew is an unusual name, Dr.

Bakon there was a Bacon or Bakon listed with the Hebrew University and Hans knows of this man on the faculty and I wrote a little note, I said are you the Dr. Bacon or Bakon who has sent me such a scathing letter of denunciation over my Holocaust book, and he writes me back, he said no, he said that was my uncle but your book came into my hand, he said and it is unbelievable trash that's a statement of the Jewish intellect grappling with the significance of the unanswerable dilemma of the Holocaust and seeing some attempt to convey the thought that it has to do with a biblical fulfillment of prophecy for sin not only our sins but the sins of our fathers never acknowledged and to denounce the entire thing as being beneath any kind of serious consideration and the only thing that it's good for is to waste it now am I complaining am I I'm concerned for that condition, what a statement of arrogance and presumption not willing to consider a thesis which has life saving prospect and even includes in the book a prayer to call upon the

name of the Lord so as to be saved and to disassociate yourself from the sins of your fathers and your contemporaries by acknowledging our historic sin and failure in the crucifixion of Jesus which was the summation of all of our sins and that book is considered trash, such is the mentality that you will have to encounter.

Let's take a break at this point so this is an article by David Blumenthal the professor at Emory University who could not have received our invitation for this year but I would love to see him come next year we're breaking new ground, that would be the first time in our history that we would invite an unsaved Jewish professor to be the principal speaker at our convocation addressing the Christian audience so much do I believe we need to hear from them directly, and he's no small thing, make a note of his name, he's written several books and you can begin to read up on him he asks, he raises the question, in the post-holocaust world how adequate is the concept of mercy then he goes through the history of the word and how it's been understood Judaically total dependency upon God's mercy is one of the most difficult aspects of religion for some modern people to accept to beg for mercy offends against the modern sense of self-determination of personal liberty to beg for mercy is the furthest humans can get from the delicate web of secure human relations that define the world this is the quintessential Jewish mind defining the word mercy and saying it's the most difficult concept for us moderns to contemplate because to beg for mercy offends against the modern sense of self-determination we have no need of God let alone to come to the status of a beggar and beg for mercy to beg for mercy is the furthest humans can get from that delicate web of secure human relations that defines their world. To come onto the ground of mercy means that your world as you have understood it is no more and who wants to give up the security of the world as we have understood it and be so reduced by circumstance not only to acknowledge the benefit of mercy but to beg for it. That is being reduced to death so even he sees that it is the lowest rung on the ladder of self-respect perhaps it is worse than death itself I'm willing to die but let me retain my essential dignity in myself without having to be reduced to such a place that I have to beg for the mercy of God you see that the stubborn facticity of human pride.

By the way why are Jews the appointed subject because they are the personification of man the issue of the Jew is the issue of man. The issue of Jewish rebellion is the issue of human rebellion the issue of Jewish autonomy, self-will, self-reliance is the issue of independent self-will of man God is using Israel as a statement for all mankind that's why he has to be larger than life. It's not only the disciplining of a nation it's a statement being made to all nations and if God will go that far to reduce this people to the status of beggars for mercy, how great is the issue that they represent because in the eyes of the world they are the epitome of human self-reliance, self-sufficiency self that's why mercy is the antithesis of man.

Mercy is something that issues out of God's own nature having nothing whatever to do with any deserving on man's part. It is simply a given not because it's deserved but because of what God is in himself and when he will reveal himself in his mercy he will reveal himself in what he is Israel gives God the opportunity to show himself as God and in Romans 11 we read that he has contained both in disobedience that he might show his mercy to all. It's not the acknowledgement of mercy as a category, it's the showing of his mercy.

How? Graphically, by bringing them back from the farthest places of the earth into which their judgments will have sent them and in places of such confinement that were not humanly obtainable only by supernatural and divine intervention coming into dungeons and chains and places of absolute lostness of the most remote places in the earth will he bring them back and I will plant them in the land and will not again be plucked up. His mercy that will be bestowed in the last days will be a visible mercy that will be

shown. Where the mercy of God is shown and revealed, in that people who least deserve it, God is showing himself.

So in John Murray's commentary on the epistle to the Romans, a great American theologian of a Calvinistic covenant kind it is the mercy shown to the Gentiles not by their disobedience or defection that Israel's conversion is realized. It is only in the context of disobedience that mercy has relevance and meaning. Mercy is only mercy where it comes totally undeserved.

Mercy is of such a character that disobedience is its necessary presupposition. He has bound them, both the church and the Jew, in disobedience that he might have mercy upon all. And only as exercise to the disobedient does it exist and operate.

It is this truth that comes to expression in verse 32 of Romans 11 of the providential action of God in showing mercy. He has shut up all unto disobedience. It is ordered in the judgments of God that all are effectively enclosed in the fold of the disobedient shut up, hemmed in, to disobedience that there is no possibility of escape from this servitude except as the mercy of God gives release.

There is no possibility of toning down the severity of the action here stated. It is however the severity that exhibits the glory. That's why Paul says in Romans 11 consider both the severity and the mercy of God.

We have not adequately considered the mercy of God until we have adequately considered his severity. And where are we given to consider it? In the history of God with Israel and in the judgments that are imminent and soon to come to pass in the time of Jacob's trouble. We will see the severity of God in order to more correctly assess and appreciate the mercies of God.

So understand this is the matrix, this is the whole setting for the final display of God as God in the earth for once it's over, history is ended. There's no other demonstration but it's this demonstration so sufficient that Paul says it's the glory of God forever. And you're the agent of that mercy only to the degree that you have mercy to extend.

If mercy for you is only another category of your faith and only another doctrine on your list it's not a doctrine that our Jewish people are going to need. They're going to need palpable realized mercy as it is extended only by those who have it to give. When have you middle class saints needed mercy last? We need to develop a mercy awareness and receive as mercy things that we would otherwise take for granted.

And so by the accumulation of conscious known and received mercies we will have a mercy to extend and we will need a mercy. So Paul after he finishes the colossal statement of the mystery of Israel in the church, Romans 9-11, what's the first verse of chapter 12? Brethren I plead that you might make of your bodies a living sacrifice by the mercies of God not by some religious self-will or determination but by the mercies of God be to that people what you must in the light of this man God. Take mercy to fulfill it.

Okay let me just finish this. So it's the shutting up the disobedience without any lessening of the severity which is itself a mercy. That God doesn't ease off because he's a nice guy.

He gives the full measure of severity that he might give the full measure of his mercy and that he might have mercy upon all without distinction emphasizing that Gentile and Jews without any difference are shut up to disobedience. There's a little Talmudic commentary that I gleaned, I don't know from this or some other source a midrash that says a commentary that points out that man's very existence proves God's

constant mercy. Because as a Rabbi Yerucham Leverwitz explained God did not create the precept of charity because he saw that there were poor people in the world rather God created poor people in order that there would be opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of charity.

A world devoid of opportunity to show kindness or mercy to others is inconceivable for compassion is the very purpose of this world. If that's what a man can say who's yet unsaved what will he say when he receives the full light of God? The return of such one will be nothing less but the life of the dead. Here's how your books ought to be marked.

If your Bible is unmarked it's a scandal. Whenever I'm interpreted in a foreign country and my interpreter has an unmarked Bible my heart sinks. He's not wrestled with the text.

You've got to mark and then find a place in margins for comments of this kind. So the Talmud goes on to say when is the world properly settled in the eyes of God? When the rich are kind and prepare ample provisions for the poor thus preserving the world. The whole purpose of the world is the showing of mitzvah, the showing of kindness, the showing of mercy.

The poor are not an inadvertent accident that face us with a problem. God created the poor he's saying in order that we would have opportunity to show mercy for the showing of mercy is the whole purpose of the world. Well we need to hear from men like that.

So the issue of Israel then rightly understood as the issue of God has nothing else as calculated to reveal him. So critical is that true knowledge that he did not hesitate to employ an entire nation representative of all mankind in disobedience and apostasy so that they should be in the end the object on which he can show his mercy. Rachmanis, chesed, tender kindness.

Rachmanis is a motherly, brotherly feeling in the suffering of another. It's the pity. It's not a clinical acknowledgement that someone is a victim.

It's an identification that touches your feet. And when does the set time come to favor Zion? When my servants shall have pity Rachmanis upon her stones and compassion upon her dust. Do those hard Gentiles who would say, they've got it coming they deserve this.

They gave the world a crisis and threatened our oil supply and it erupts a world another world war through which their intransigence in the Middle East unwilling to make concessions. They've got it coming. They deserve it.

But there'll be a people on the earth whose attitude will be entirely other. It will be an attitude of mercy. Rachmanis, pity, compassion, identification, even to the point of not only standing with the Jew in his judgment, but identifying with him in his judgment.

In the same way that Jesus went into the Jordan and John the Baptist said, I have more need to be baptized of you. Jesus said, let it be that all righteousness will be fulfilled. I have got as the Messiah of Israel to stand not on the banks in a distance from my kinsmen in acknowledgement yes, that you need to be baptized and repent for your sins for the kingdom of heaven and of man, but to enter the waters of judgment.

To enter that I'm identified with my people in their sin or I cannot be their deliverer. If that was necessary for the Son of God, what will be necessary for us? Can we identify with their sin? Because anything that

brings to us a benefit from what issues from us is no longer priestly. It has got to be disembodied.

It has got to be separated from any benefit that will be done to ourselves by expressing it. Will such a person need mercy if his righteousness is obtained by his own works? Never. You only need mercy when you're at the bottom.

When nothing that you can perform can extricate you. When nothing has any value that issues from yourself. And unless God stretches forth his hand, you're finished.

Where you beg for mercy and in begging all of your alignment with the world predicated on pride is dissolved. And that's why they will have to be so reduced. And the mercy will be so great that it will take eons of time and generation after generation relating children, fathers to children and their children, the great deeds that God has done for us.

How he saved us out of death in the last days when there was no alternative but the mercy that he extended us. Is it possible before that time to say yes to God now for a requirement that will come later? That we're willing to be daughters of prevail and intercession and bear the pains of Israel's new birth, not at the moment that it will be historically required of us, but in this moment. To say yes to God now as willing candidates for a pain that can only be sustained by the mercies of God.

I think that that kind of transaction can be made and in fact ought to be made. And it perhaps may be one for which God waits. For if I know anything I know this.

The travail of the church will not be compulsory. It will be that church that free willingly and voluntarily takes upon itself that pain as Jesus himself did as the great son of Shem for our atonement. And so we match him and express him in the same voluntary willingness to bear the pain of suffering for another.

We've come full circle. Has this anything to do with the fullness of the Gentiles come in as being a numeric consideration that there are actual positions in the heavenlies that are governmental that must be replaced? And so the same one who has prevailed for Israel's birth will be graduated to that occupancy in the eternal kingdom of God by the same grace and the same commitment and consecration by which they prevailed. What a reward! Isn't that remarkable? All of the mysteries being fulfilled in that great consummation.

So what does God have now? He has a restored nation in the earth. The physical locus of his kingdom. The throne of David out of Zion out of which proceeds the law and the will of God.

But what does he have for the first time? He has in the heavenlies a people who are in agreement with that Israel that is in the earth. And an agreement between heaven and earth so that the kingdom in its fullness might be mediated to all nations. That's called the Millennium.

And it's an unspeakable glory because of the harmony for the first time between heaven and earth. A rebellious Israel broken, brought into priestly submission and now the locus of God's earthly kingdom mediating it and having the nations come up to it on the Feast of Tabernacles. And overhead in glorified bodies ascending and descending upon the Son of Man the greater thing that Jesus spoke to the one who is without guile I'll show you a greater thing angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

That's the greater thing which is our destiny. And we graduate to it in the final voluntary suffering that we take upon ourselves by which Israel was birthed into her kingdom place and we graduate into our own

resplendent place in the heavenlies in conjunction with them. That's why Paul was overcome.

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God who has been his counselor, who has given and shall be given again for of him and to him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. Paul saw something of such magnitude. He saw not only Israel's restoration he saw the church's transfiguration.

He saw the church coming into its own reward in the eternities to come in the service that it rendered in its final episode on earth like unto his own a bride adorned for the bridegroom. And what shall it be but the fulfillment of Noah's prophecy that at long last now and eternally a tent of Shem a restored Israel is the tent of Shem to which all the Japheth nations shall repair and grow which saves them from being the Japheth nations and mediates the harshness of their own enlarged character and the fulfillment of God's great majestic purpose of the conjunction between Shem

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