

Russ-01

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the essential role of the Jewish people in God's plan and the need for the church to embrace its apostolic identity for true maturity and purpose.

Duration: 1:08:06

Scripture: Ephesians 3:9

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for believers to seek something more and something other than what the modern church offers. This 'something' is a transcendent experience of God's glory, which should be sought for His sake and not for personal power. The speaker highlights the importance of contending for and maintaining God's glory in the church. The sermon also touches on the significance of Israel in the context of preaching the word of God and calls for a radical apostolic proclamation that goes beyond mere formulas and reaches the heart of the Jewish people.

Transcript

I usually say, good evening kinder, good evening children. I'm old enough to qualify for that. But I also have a fatherly heart for the church.

After all, we Jews were in this much sooner than you, much earlier. And though we are temporarily set aside, at the conclusion of the age, we will be prominent again. Oh, praise the Lord.

You will probably think that I'm speaking about the subject of the Jew and Israel because I'm Jewish. That's not the case. I'm speaking about the centrality of the Jew because of my call to the church.

And the way that I hope I can make you understand, the church cannot come to its full formation and maturity independent of the issue of the Jew. That's not my wisdom, that's God's. But it's a profound wisdom.

And it's a wisdom that contradicts the wisdom of this world. And it's in this context that I want to set before you this mystery. God forbid that we should make it something less.

Our sentimental feeling for Israel. Our affinity for Jews. Or some sense of obligation that we have as Christians.

These are all inadequate motives. So I want us to see the issue of Israel in its apostolic context. For that is the key to our own apostolic character.

And the church that's not apostolic is not the church. That was true at the beginning of the age and also especially true at its conclusion. Of course, the key question is, what does this word apostolic mean? That's a great question.

And one that we should hold in our hearts with great respect. I have spoken about the meaning of this word for five days in Switzerland at Youth with a Mission. And examined it from different perspectives.

What is the apostolic distinctive? What is the apostolic perspective? What is the apostolic mindset? Is there such a thing as apostolic character? Apostolic proclamation. You can be assured that there is. And if we don't obtain it as the church, we condemn ourselves to something less than God's intention.

And must fail in our historic mandate to the Jew. You didn't know that we had one. I want to say that we do.

And that God has appointed the church for its fulfillment. But the church of what kind? Charismatic? Of the American style? Very impressive. But it falls short of the glory of God.

This is something ultimate. And we cannot obtain it independent of our call to the Jew. Only the issue of Israel calls us to this higher ground.

And I wish I had many days to develop this with you. But you have to listen intently to the short time that we do have. And pray for the Russian translation and addition of a book on apostolic reality.

Which we plan to produce in English and in French. It should be a classic foundational book for the church. And the issue of Israel is central to all of these things.

That's why to contemplate Israel or the Jew from a sentimental or a soulish plane is to miss the question entirely. For example, in Romans chapter 10, Paul is speaking of his own people. He says, how shall they call upon him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear except one preach? And how shall one preach except he be sent? For faith comes by hearing.

And hearing by the word of the Lord. This is much more than a little glib formula on how to witness the Jews. This is the ultimate and radical apostolic requirement.

It's not a formula that Jews need to hear. It's the word of the Lord. The creative and life-giving word.

It's a special kind of preaching. It's apostolic proclamation. How shall one preach except he be sent? What is the root of the Greek word apostolos? Let's look at the root of the Greek word apostolos.

A sent one. There's a lot of going on in these days. Out of well-meaning attention.

And it brings a certain value and blessing. But it is not yet the ultimate thing. The apostolic thing.

That cannot originate with men. It cannot originate with men. It must originate with God.

And so be sent from the throne of God. But not in some mystical and insubstantial way. But also out of the earth from a sending body.

As the first apostolic church was. Not so much at Jerusalem as in Antioch. This is a critical question.

The first mention of apostolic sending is Acts chapter 13. When the Holy Ghost spoke into the congregation of believers. Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work unto which I have called them.

God does not even say what the work is. It doesn't matter. That's how separated these men are.

Even from their own religious ambitions. And their own necessity to do something for the Lord. They are men who have come to a priestly detachment.

And ultimate separation. Even from themselves. In their best well-meaning intention.

And only in that condition can they be sent. How does one come to that condition? It's a painful sanctifying process. That only can take place in an apostolic body.

Of people who have come to a certain intensity and character of relationship. Despite their diversity and differences. That's why the apostolic church does not begin at Jerusalem.

It begins at Antioch. And how does chapter 13 begin? There was in the church of Antioch certain prophets and teachers. Men of diverse calling in the body of Christ.

But also equally of diverse racial and ethnic origin. There were Jews and Gentiles. There were Africans and white.

How do we know that? Because the Holy Spirit took the pain to identify these men by their name and from their location. One is called Niger. The ancient classic word for Africa.

So God gives us a picture of a cosmopolitan church. And that's why God gives us a picture of a cosmopolitan church. Of remarkable ethnic, racial and national diversity.

Why is that important? Because they had broken through into a heavenly place of relationship. In and through their differences. You don't know the depths of your own heart.

I gave an informal, quick and unscheduled testimony at Minsk. And they loved it. They were so colorful and quaint, a Jew getting saved.

But the moment I pressed the issue of the Jew for the church. I began to see, particularly in the older Christians, a change of face and attitude. How deep are these things? Very deep.

It has to do with our insecurity. Our sense of identity in God. It has to do with historic enmities.

And strife between peoples. That we have taken in with our mother's milk. And the very air that we have breathed.

I speak out of my personal experience as a Jewish Christian. When God required a number of Jewish believers, together with me, to experience a deliverance. Of things of which we were not even consciously aware.

Anti-Gentile feelings. Subtle Jewish superiority. Feelings against the church.

And I was already a minister in the church. And God had to break the power of these things. They are historic.

And transmitted through the generations. But we're in the course of our services that we have time and disposition for this. This is not going to take place in a large celebration.

It takes place in the intimate and intensive relationship between believers in community. And only there. Ten thousand Sunday services will never give us the opportunity.

But going from house to house daily will. We are all very private in our inner lives. There's a certain distance that we maintain.

And certain things we don't share. And all of that is coated over with hallelujahs and amens. And the powers of the air that brewed over Minsk.

And over Kiev. Do you believe that they exist? And affect men and nations. They are the effectual rulers of this world.

The gods of this world. Who look down on us. And are only required or obliged to respect one thing only.

Apostolic authenticity. Are you following me? This is church. And it's often painful before it becomes glorious.

Paul says the church is the ground and the pillar of the truth. And what is the nature of truth? It's the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Or it's not the truth.

These powers can look down and say Jesus we know and Paul we know. These powers of the air can look down and say Jesus we know and Paul we know. But the church at Kiev who? This is my newest book.

It needs a Ukrainian accent. And Russian translation and edition. Anyone who has that gift and wants to volunteer you can see me afterwards.

It's foundational for the church. So who are you cats? Are you a saint one? Or just a man doing his thing? That's a critical question. And the truth of it will be demonstrated in these days.

I'll tell you how insanely jealous we are over this time. I will tell you how insanely jealous we are over this time. I will tell you how insanely jealous we are over this time.

We will be witnesses to how God lays real foundations. We will be witnesses to how God lays real foundations. Foundations that cannot be moved.

No matter what the uncertainty and the demands of the last days are. I am jealous for an apostolic reality in Kiev, in Ukraine, and except that it comes, my Jewish kinsmen who are here do not have a chance. For unbeknownst to them, they are waiting for a certain word.

A word that is more than the information about the gospel. It's the word of event, of the kind that I trust that I myself am speaking to you. But even when the mind does not totally take in all that is being said, the word is still creating something.

For you, foundations. For the Jew, the faith to believe. Faith comes by hearing.

And hearing by the word of God. The preached word. The foolishness of preaching.

By them that are sent from ascending body that has itself come to an apostolic constituency. This is work. This is sacrifice.

This is suffering in the church before it becomes a glory. I'm smiling because I'm thinking of my 20-year history in community. I can tell you that I would much rather suffer the abuse of outraged rabbis than some of the things that I've had to bear from the church itself.

In our own community in northern Minnesota. In the depth of the issues that arise out of the intensity of the life together. I'm sure that you have been occupied with your ministry.

And how to do it. And what kinds of methods can we learn from Americans. But I'm calling you to something altogether other than that tonight.

Let's begin. All of this was introduction. Let's begin with Ephesians chapter 3. Verses 9 I think through 11.

Paul speaks of himself as being the least of all men. The least of all saints in verse 8. To whom a grace is given. To make known the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Now listen intently to these next three verses. They are your foundation. If apostolic reality is ever to come to Kiev.

This is the foundation for it. Yet Paul calls it a mystery. Before we read it.

What is a mystery? Is it a detective story? Something strange and exotic? Okay you Bible students. What is a mystery? Paul was a steward of the mysteries of God. Though he was the least of all saints in his own sight.

And whatever a mystery is. Will it be revealed to us. Except that we also are the least of all saints.

In our own sight. Spiritual egotism. Self-exalting Christianity.

Closes the door to mystery. And shuts off all opportunity for apostolic reality. You are doomed to being charismatic only.

Which is quite enjoyable. And has a certain efficacy, a certain effect. Only one thing is wrong.

And that one thing is everything. It falls short of the glory of God. Have you ever taken that thought seriously? I plead with you.

I will go down on my hands and knees. For this one thing only. That despite every other question.

Of your ministry and its success. Of the needs of the nation. And even of the world.

This one question only. At the center of everything. Or you have no center.

The glory of God forever. This is what makes apostolic, apostolic. And will make you insane.

Make you strange. Even with other Christians. Because you have a divine jealousy.

A divine dissatisfaction. For something more and something other. Something transcendent.

That when it is obtained it expresses itself in power. But we cannot seek it for power. We can only seek it for Him.

His glory. Will have you to act in such ways as men will not understand. And this search for the glory of God will make you behave in such a way that even other people will not expect from you.

Maybe you will even disappoint your congregation. Maybe you will even be strange for yourself. Because of this jealousy.

For the glory of God. Which is absent from the modern church in the world today. And needs to be contended for and sought.

And obtained and jealously maintained. Now let's look at these verses. Why don't you read that 9 through 11.

How much time shall we give to explicating or developing these verses, the understanding? We have after all another half hour. Let's be elaborate. Maybe we'll take a half hour tomorrow as well.

Oh, what that says about us. Oh, what that says about us. American to American.

Ukrainian to Ukrainian. We share the same mentality. It's practical and expedient.

Yes, maybe we'll give this a whole hour. Because after all there are other important things. That we need to do.

I would say we should spend a month on these three verses. And not count that extravagant. We learn right away in verse 9 what a mystery is.

Which of course you already knew. Something which is hidden in God. Until it is time to be revealed.

No amount of intelligence can obtain it. Scholars and theologians will miss it. A mystery is something hidden by God.

Until a time appointed. I remember my disappointment in reading Karl Barth's great classic, The Epistle to the Romans. How many here have never heard of Karl Barth? Raise your hand.

Do you want to see a grown man cry? Not in Russian. See, all the more reason for you to learn English. The best Christian literature is available only in English.

It is the international language. And even the spiritual language. In terms of the wealth that's available for us.

In that language. So if I can interrupt myself. And not exhaust my interpreter.

Karl Barth is one of the giants of the 20th century. Who is linked or seen as having the same value as Luther or Calvin or St. Augustine in their own generations. His first book in 1918 erupted like a bomb over the theological landscape.

His commentary on the Book of Romans. With a return to the Word of God. And a Christological center.

By a German theology that had become completely liberal. And into whose vacuum Nazism was to come. When God began to open to me the mystery of Israel.

I had already been Jewish for over 50 years. And a believer for over 20 years. But I did not know the mystery of Nazism.

And I did not have that mystery by virtue of being either Jewish or a Christian that long. There came a moment when that which was hidden was revealed. Out of a personal season of suffering and death.

And I immediately rushed to my theological hero. What will Karl Barth say about chapters 9 through 11 of the Book of Romans. And I was astonished.

He had nothing to say. He spiritualized everything away. In every reference to Israel he saw the church.

It was full of precious insight. About the church. But it missed the issue of Israel entirely.

It was hid from his sight. It was not yet time. But the set time to favor Zion has now come.

And that's why we're speaking what we're speaking. Listen to this. That this mystery whatever it is.

Is hidden God through Christ. Who created all things to the intent that now. Under the principalities and powers and heavenly places.

Might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. Let this sink in to the depths of your Slavic minds. It's staggering.

It's staggering. It's shocking. That God has created all things.

The whole of the cosmos. All of creation. Nations and races.

For one thing. Something that has to do with the church. To the intent that now through the church.

That he did not think it too extravagant to create everything. That there would be a foundation in the earth for a church. That can make this demonstration.

For which reason he has created all things. The manifold wisdom of God. What do you think of that? Mamma mia.

This is extraordinary. And we don't even know what that wisdom is. But one thing we do know.

It can only be revealed through the church. But a church of what kind? An ultimate kind. An apostolic kind.

The very same kind that moves the Jews to jealousy. Through the church. Nothing less.

Now understand this children. If we make our purpose to move Jews to jealousy. We will fail.

Otherwise we simply will not be able to exist. But if we seek the glory of God. And his satisfaction.

In that which is important to him. A demonstration that can only come from the church. In its full corporate character.

As the ground and pillar of truth. Then Jews will be made jealous. And nations shaken.

And the purposes of God completed. In the earth and in the nations. When we have not made the work.

The purpose for our being. But the fulfillment of this mystery. Which has nothing to do with us practically.

But everything to do with him. It's important for him. It's important for God.

Because it is something that has to do with his eternal glory. And that is the wisdom of God. Listen carefully.

When a people on the earth. Will take as their foremost and central reason for being. The satisfaction of God.

That has no practical relevance for themselves. That itself is another purpose. That is the wisdom.

Radically different from the wisdom of this world. And the powers of this world. Which operate in the religious realm as well.

Self-interest. My ministry. What I am going to do for God.

What my church is going to do. What my denomination is going to do. Is the spirit of the wisdom of this world.

And when the principalities and the powers look down on such churches. They yawn. They are completely bored.

Utterly indifferent. They don't care how loud and how boisterous your worship is. They know that you are not to be feared by them.

For you are still operating on the basis of their wisdom. You are still operating on the basis of their wisdom. Are you following me? Is this being taped tonight? Yes.

So you can hear it again and again. You will need to hear it several times. Until this breaks through and into your consciousness.

Because it has to be made conscious. It has to come into your consciousness. Now let's go back to the other mystery.

There is only two mysteries at the end of the age. Only two. This one that we have just looked at briefly.

And the mystery of Israel and the Church. Where is that spoken in Scripture? Romans chapters 9 through 11. And in chapter 11.

Paul says, brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery. I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery. He calls this issue of the Church and the Jew a mystery.

Not an evangelistic methodology. And he says, I would not have you to be ignorant of it. Lest you become wise in your own conceit.

Lest you become wise in your own conceit. There is a penalty for missing this mystery. You become conceited.

Conceited, haughty. Like the kingdom now. Or the Church is the kingdom.

Or the Church is Israel. These are all popular movements in my country. But they are not apostolic.

They have missed the mystery. Why is the subject of the Jew a mystery for the Church? Why is the subject of the Jew a mystery for the Church? The Gentile Church. Because it gives to the Church a purpose for itself.

Contrary to its own self-interest. Contrary to its own self-interest. Why should a Gentile be occupied with the Jew? Especially seeing what has been true in history.

Suspicion and irritation. Jealousy. Misunderstanding.

Friction. They are different than us. We feel uncomfortable with them.

We are secretly envious of them. Look how they succeed in business. And in school.

Getting all the good grades. And the Nobel Prizes. Far out of proportion to their numbers in the population.

They are a people of remarkable accomplishment. And we are just Gentiles. Struggling to get ahead.

There is everything in this to invite resentment. And history has shown how that has been expressed in blood. And you are immune to this? You are not susceptible to such feelings? Then you must be extraordinary Gentiles.

Exactly. This is what makes you extraordinary. You can't come to this out of a sense of obligation.

I guess we owe so much to the Jews. After all, they gave us the apostles and the prophets. We should show them kindness.

This will never do. It will never fulfill the mystery. We've got to move them to jealousy.

And if I had time to tell you that we are coming to an hour when Jews are going to be in flight for their lives in every nation. And most will not survive it. Except a remnant that are taken in by Christians.

A remnant, a small portion, but taken in by Christians. Who, like in the Nazi time, will do so at the risk of their own lives. Oh brother, such a time will never come again.

We have learned from the past. Such an anti-Semitic spirit could not prosper in our country. You are naive children.

Because the scriptures already speak of such a time coming. And it will test us. As the Jew has always been the test of the church.

Which test the church has historically failed. Luther failed. Chrysostom was the golden orator of the early church.

And a notorious anti-Semite. But he was known as the most fervent anti-Semite. And we are just moving towards the conclusion that this is always a test, a test for the church.

That there will always be a very vivid demonstration of the church for the Jews. And at the same time this is what will win and what will be shown through the church to the authorities and superiors of the underworld. Because if you, or rather when you spread the gospel regardless of the risks to your own life

you are demonstrating another wisdom.

The wisdom exhibited by Jesus at the cross. The spirit of self-sacrifice. That strikes at the heart of the world's wisdom.

Now manifest in Kiev on every street. I've never seen more Mercedes-Benzes in Russia, in Ukraine of men who are making fortunes. Getting rich.

Seizing opportunity. To take care of number one. The unspoken wisdom of the world.

Self-interest. But God has created all things in order that now through the church might be demonstrated to the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. I'm just about to finish.

I pray my interpreter's energy will not fail. And your ability to contain this. I have set the Jew in the context of the cosmic conflict.

The mystery of two wisdoms. Seeking to prevail over the entire creation. And everything resting in the last analysis upon a church.

That has at its very heart the jealousy for God's glory. That can only come by the fulfillment of this mystery. As it comes to us practically through the Jew.

At the end of the age. At which end we are. So I want to pray for you.

You ministers of such a church. With such foundations. Such seeing.

Such an apostolic mentality. It will mark you. To say yes to this vision will mark you.

And invite the retaliation of the powers of the air. Now they fear you. Because you have such an intention.

Are you willing? It's entirely voluntary. To say yes to this. I said yes to this some years ago.

And it changed everything. And opened the door to sufferings. Of an exquisite kind.

Even persecutions. Under one's own roof. And in one's own church.

Where there is a suffering that precedes the glory. Let's pray. Thank you Lord.

I bless these children. Such words as I have expressed to them. Could not have been created by man.

You gave me no opportunity to prepare for such words. But it's a moment whose time has come. For these children.

These appointed ones. In this last hour. I bless them in Jesus' holy name.

And I pray that your word would find lodging in their hearts. It would be the foundation of their very being. And open them for every sacrifice.

By which the church becomes the church. The ground and pillar of truth. In the midst of a corrupt church.

In the midst of a filthy lying world. That when Jews encounter it. They will see the light of God.

And be moved to jealousy. And to salvation. Do these things.

Seal this word. Perform it. We receive it with gratitude.

Let it be an event for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

If I were you. I wouldn't let the moment pass without myself saying something to God. This is not another teaching.

This is a holy call. And it's not for everyone. It's totally voluntary.

You don't have to be a candidate for apostolic suffering. Except you choose to. And have respect for the eternal reward.

Should we take just a few minutes? Say something to the Lord. Right out of your seat. No eloquent statement.

But a statement. I choose this. What has been described to me tonight.

I receive as my call. Whatever it requires. You say that to the Lord.

And something will be transacted. For which the powers of darkness over Kiev tremble right now. You speak.

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