

Span-10 Apostolic & Prophetic Foundations 7 of 8

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, faith, and mercy in the context of Israel's restoration and the church's role as a prophetic entity.

Duration: 53:02

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14, Ezekiel 37:26-28, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Prophetic Foundations"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity and community within the church. He challenges the audience to truly listen and engage with the message, as there will be a test at the end. The test consists of 17 thought-provoking questions that require the participants to compose statements and discuss their answers as a group. The speaker encourages the audience to embrace this opportunity for growth and transformation, both individually and corporately.

Transcript

Alpha and the Omega that you are. Ever and always again. The God of the beginning and the end.

You gave us a beginning four days ago. Give us now an end. You alone know the end from the beginning.

And we ask for that end which was appointed from the beginning. An end that will become a beginning for many of us. A new beginning.

A beginning of new days. Because you have brought us to an end. An end of all things.

That you might bring us to the new. And to everlasting. So be the Lord over us.

In every word that proceeds from this pulpit. Every syllable. The tone and the accent of it.

In your speaking. Spoil us completely. Ruin us for anything less.

Thank you for being such a God. Break our hearts for the knowledge of it. That we cannot contain it.

We thank you. Oh precious God. For this day that you have made.

Once and for all. Shall not be given again. It has come from God.

In all creative power and wonder. We receive it. As a very gift.

That has come down to us from heaven. And we thank you with all our hearts for it. In Jesus' name.

Speak Lord. Your servants are hearing. Amen.

I would like you to turn to Ezekiel chapter 37. We have referred to it from time to time. But on our last occasion together today.

We need to look more directly into it. Which is not to say that we can exhaust it. I don't know of any single chapter in the books of prophecy.

That are more comprehensive than this chapter. This one chapter is a summation. Of the whole prophetic intention and wisdom of God for Israel.

Through the church. It's there. Though the word church is never once mentioned.

So it's full of rich symbolisms. That we are called to interpret and understand. And the chapter ends with Israel's theocratic glory.

Not only Israel's restoration to the land. From among the nations where it has been driven. But the culmination of everything.

The Lord's own coming as a prince over them. Jerusalem as the eternal dwelling place of God. And the people have become the people of God.

And he has become their God. The chapter begins in death. And it ends in life evermore.

One chapter. Only God could have conceived it. So let's look at it now.

The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the spirit of the Lord. And set me down in the midst of the valley. It was full of bones.

And he caused me to pass by them all around. And behold there were very many in the open valley. And indeed they were very dry.

And he said to me, son of man. Can these bones live? So I answered. Oh Lord.

You know. And again he said to me, prophesy to these bones. Say to them, oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones. Surely I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live. I will put tendons upon you and bring flesh upon you and cover you with skin.

And put breath in you. And you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied there was a noise. And suddenly a rattling.

And the bones came together. Bone to bone. Indeed as I looked the tendons and the flesh came upon them.

And the skin covered them over. But there was no breath in them. And he said to me, prophesy to the breath.

Prophesy son of man. And say to the breath. Thus says the Lord God.

Come from the four winds, oh breath. And breathe on these flame that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me.

And breath came into them. And they lived and stood upon their feet. An exceedingly great army.

Then he said to me, son of man. These bones are the whole house of this world. And they indeed say.

Our bones are dry. Our hope is lost. And we ourselves are cut off.

Therefore prophesy and say to them. Thus says the Lord God. Behold all my people.

I will open your graves. And cause you to come up from your graves. And bring you into the land of Israel.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord. When I have opened your graves. All my people.

And brought you up from your graves. I will put my spirit in you. And you shall live.

And I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know. That I the Lord have spoken.

And performed it says the Lord. Well just briefly to look at the conclusion of the text. The word of the Lord again came to the prophet.

Speaks to him about taking two sticks. Identifies the sticks with different names. Ephraim and Judah.

Make them one stick. And then in verse twenty. Twenty one rather.

Thus says the Lord God. Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations. Wherever they have gone.

And will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land. On the mountains of Israel.

And a king over them. They shall no longer be two nations. Nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols. Nor with their detestable things. Nor with any of their transgressions.

But I will deliver them. From all their dwelling places in which they have sinned. And will cleanse them.

Then shall they shall be my people. And I will be their God. David my servant shall be king over them.

They shall all have one shepherd. They shall all walk in my statutes. And my judgments.

And they shall observe my statutes and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land. For I have given to Jacob my servant where your fathers dwelt.

And they shall dwell there. They and their children and their children's children. Forever.

And my servant David shall be their prince. Forever. Moreover.

I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be a everlasting covenant with them. I will establish them and multiply them.

And I will set my sanctuary in their midst. Forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them.

Indeed I will be their God. They shall be my people. And the nations also will know.

That I the Lord sanctify Israel. When my sanctuary is in their midst. Forevermore.

Amen. Juicy text. Rich.

Comprehensive. Detailed. Full.

What would you say about it? What struck your attention? What statements were especially repeated? Well, we know that God is against vain repetitions. He says something more than once. Hey, three times.

That deserves our attention. Do you know how to read? How to study and ponder them? How to search them? Who is this son of man? What a mysterious character. Why is he necessary at all? Couldn't God himself directly prophesy to the bones? After all, in the beginning of the book of Genesis.

Who broods over their chaos? And speaks. Let there be. And there is.

And it's good. Why doesn't he do it again? Directly. So his nation Israel will always know that he was directly their run.

Who has recreated them out of death. And they would be eternally grateful. Why does he need a son of man? Who is that son of man? Who is commanded and commanded and is obedient each time.

So that the issue of Israel's restoration is the issue of his obedience. What a frail thread. Depending on one man? Son of man? His obedience is Israel's restoration? Well, what's the big deal? So what if he failed? Because we're not always that obedient.

We're not always capable of rendering an immediate obedience. Particularly of an ultimate kind. So his word fails.

If his obedience is weak. If his orthodoxy is already shallow. If his faith is inadequate.

Because unless it's a real faith, how shall it be a real word that raises the dead? We can't afford to be religious here. Just say the right things. Bones, I command you to come together.

If it's only wishful thinking. If it's only just mere verbiage. I could have believed it if God had spoken it.

But can I believe it if I speak it? Son of man who sweats, urinates and defecates, a bundle of weakness, who didn't even sleep last night, that's going to work through me? I have faith to believe it for God. But can I believe it through me? But if I have not that faith, which is an ultimate faith, the faith of incarnation of Christ and God in me, that we have this treasure and this earth and that soul and that treasure is speaking with our voice and our accent, those bones remain in the grave. You know what? I admire the faith of God in the son of man.

He's put all his eggs in one basket. Did you say that in Spanish? It's an American, Western saying. You put all your eggs in one basket.

You have limited yourself to the one thing and you have no backup alternatives. You have no plan B if plan A doesn't work. It's an insane single insistence on one thing only.

And if it doesn't work for that one thing, it doesn't work. I admire the faith of God in the son of man. You would almost think from this chapter that not only is God concerned for the restoration of Israel, which is the key to his own coming, as we read, I will place my king over you, even David, forevermore.

I will dwell with you and make it my sanctuary, my tabernacle. Look at what is at stake here. We're not just talking about a nation being restored.

Great though that is, more great than we can express, but the restoration of Israel is the key to the Lord's own coming. Who else is the David that shall rule over them forever? If it is not the root and the offspring of David himself, the greater David shall rule over them forever. And if he rules over them, all nations.

The stakes are unspeakably great. And everything rests on obedience. Faith in a prophetic entity called the Son of Man.

Okay. Wow. What manner of God is this? All the more if the Son of Man is not some heroic personality, all kinds of 100-odd cats rolled up into one, but yourself.

The church, the ordinary church, the church of the last days, in its corporateness, in what it is in itself, as a prophetic entity formed at the hand of God from obedience to obedience and brought now to the final obedience that will consummate the age. That's something to whistle over. We are the Son of Man.

And if we have not prophetic faith, if we cannot render immediate obedience, Israel is finished. Why is God doing that? Because He wants Israel to be eternally grateful that the key to their restoration was a Gentile church whom they had historically despised, looked upon with disdain and contempt, that this frail thing, this church, is the very instrument of God the salvific agency for Israel's restoration to the eternal gratitude of the nation. You might even be one of the two sticks in the hand of the prophet that will never again be separated but be forever joined together Jew and Gentile, the church in Israel to the eternal praise of His glory.

I don't think you're impressed. I think you think that this is the subject matter for today. That you need to listen so you can pass the test.

Wait till you see what the test is. That I composed somewhere in the late night hours seventeen questions. None of this true and false stuff or fill in the empty blank.

No, you're going to have to compose statements and limited and confined statements to a single paragraph in the answer for each question. You can choose seven out of the seventeen. They are all blockbusters.

It's not calculated to measure your knowledge but to transform you in the taking. It's your final learning experience and I've even had this thought I'll give you a choice.

You can take it individually or you can take it corporately where we will divide the class into several committees each committee will recognize a head or a president and the secretary to take the notes and

the committee itself will answer the seven questions that they choose you will have to agree on your answers together and discuss together what you think ought to be said you might realize then you don't know as you ought to know you might be impressed at the insight that one other brother or sister has you might be impressed at the insight that one other brother or sister has that brings it together for you in an unusual way this is your experience as church as a corporate entity submitting one statement that is the sum total of your collaboration and understanding over these

ponderous statements or questions and whatever grade your paper gets you'll share together if it's poor barely passing you'll suffer the shame of it together if it's excellent you'll be exalted together you'll rise or fall together would you like to try that? you won't be quick to invite me another time and then there's one compulsory question it's not informational it's this of all that has been said in these days what for you personally has been the most significant why? how will it affect your future? no cheap answers here no little glib getting away with it your answer is your answers are going to be scrutinized deeply by Jose and the other overseers I will be away vacationing in Texas in five cities in three weeks day and night vacationing but I'll get the result if it's poor I will

pursue you wherever you are so we better start being students now real students have you noticed in all Christendom who has greater opportunity to understand and to experience church as community than a Bible school and you haven't even noticed you are still an aggregate of individualities community is a conscious choice nothing has changed externally same number of students same number of students but your attitude to them and what you recognize represented in them is all the difference between school and community understand? take advantage of being integral and related with one another and don't just be ships passing in the night who are required to be together for the benefit of instruction that you might receive your certificate for your personal ministry and have missed entirely the

opportunity to experience church as church and its corporateness that will so spoil you you cannot go back to the church as pews you insist on turning the furniture around that you can behold each other face to face and in that beholding move from glory to glory beholding the face of God so that the Lord is already plotting to trap you by taking the test together and then every name that is in the committee will be listed at the end in the order of their participation in order of their participation so if your name is the last name given you were the least of the participants you see why you need to have Jews in the body of Christ because you have been getting away with murder too long and no one has really required of you ok gets the same grade then all the names will be on one line but

don't cheat we're not talking about being democratic the kingdom of God in truth and everyone will agree my name is listed where it belongs to be because I was slack and I hung back I was too lazy or shy or fearful and I didn't want to give my opinion and you came to the cross when? oh dear children the church is the ground and pillar of truth and if the church becomes a lie a lie what shall we hope for in the world so we talk about coming to the cross Lord I have laid down my life it's yours from this day forward I'm as a dead man and if there is no resurrection I of all people am most to be pitied and then you come to the committee to take the test and find that you're strangely alive to your fear and your timidity and your self-consciousness so what have we made of the cross paper

mache counterfeit you can hit it with your finger and it's a dull fact and Israel is not moved to jealousy there is not a day that is before us that does not contain issues of this kind if only you could see it they are continually before us we are continually choosing for or against God in behalf of our self-interest or in behalf of his glory where does God find the son of man who can command the bones there is a history of

obedience from obedience to obedience and faith to faith that when the ultimate requirement comes he shall not fail that's the way to perceive your life we're aiming toward a final moment unbelievably critical but it's not a moment which we're going to suck air and take a deep breath and rise to meet the occasion if we have not consistently been meeting all occasions

by faith and in integrity and by the spirit all before the final moment is the summation of all of our moments that's why I'm jealous over you for this moment and I can read your faces and I know how you're perceiving it that's why I interrupted myself because I saw some of you falling into a certain posture as if this were only a class and another subject no, no okay are we students? are we going to immerse ourselves into this text? are we going to wrestle with it? draw out its meaning? or just superficially pass through it? and be no different at the end of it than we were at the beginning if I can remind you this is the word of God it's not gone with the wind and we need to ponder it every word divinely intended a crafted statement out of the divine wisdom of intense comprehensive

meaning compacted in one chapter that speaks of the whole eschatological future the destiny of Israel and how it is that the appointed nation brought to death by its own sin is yet restored to the place of primacy before all nations and that as a result of this process through the church the Son of Man God can say to it then when I have brought you up out of your grave and I will bring you into the land not you yourself you took a shot at it and it became a mess it must necessarily be a mess when you in your own Jewish prowess and ability and Zionist ambition is different from when I will return you I will bring you back just make a study of how many times in this one chapter how many times in this one chapter these two words are repeated I will I will I will bring you out of your grave I

will bring you to the land I will cleanse you from your sins I will, I will, I will, I will then you shall know that I am the Lord who has spoken and performed that is said three times in one chapter then you shall know the nations shall know as if knowing is supremely important to God doesn't Israel know now? of course not they don't know from beans even the religious even the orthodox minority does not know God as God as He deserves to be known as the God who raises the dead by His word if you don't know that you don't know God for that's what He ultimately is for that's what He ultimately is the God who raises the dead by a word you don't know it either as you ought to know and as you will know you know what I thought as I sat here this morning? that scripture came back to me by your

mercy they shall obtain mercy which is found where? what book? what chapter?

Romans 9? 11 what mercy have you got to give that they can obtain God's not talking about the concept of mercy the idea of mercy the doctrine of mercy He's talking about palpable and substantial mercy that by your mercy by the mercy that was extended to you they might obtain mercy but what if you have not mercy to give how are you fixed for it? when's the last time you've received it when's the last time you needed it you nicely dressed kids well provided for when have you needed mercy last where if the mercy of God did not come you were finished because you allowed God to bring you to such a place such a circumstance such a predicament of faith in your reckless desire to serve Him so it was well over your head and ability that if His mercy did not come in an authentic and palpable way

you would have died a thousand deaths but when His mercy came astonishingly it's a revelation of God of His faith His power, His ability have you got mercy to give or is the word only a technicality a critical question God says by your mercy they will obtain mercy well if you haven't needed mercy before you're going to need it now not just the examination that's coming you'll need it there but for the crisis that is

coming the crisis of Israel will make such a requirement on you that you'll not be able to meet on the basis of any ordinary ability unless the mercy of God comes to you you cannot fulfill it how many of you recognize that I'm speaking this morning by the mercy of God I'm trying to understand why my entire night last night was sleepless I could turn this way or that way I

could go to the bathroom again and again I could punch my pillows and get them right I could read something and hope to fall asleep nothing worked an entire sleepless night to bring the conclusion of these days that I should come wilted can't remember my name walking into walls only to demonstrate something that if there's anything that comes through me today it is nothing other nor less than the mercy of God how would you like to be a people who live by His mercies how would you like to live from your tithes and give the 90% to the kingdom how would you like to live a lifestyle not according to what you are financially able but to a willfully chosen poverty an apostolic and prophetic poverty not according to your means which no one will fault they are all living according to their means

but according to a mode and a lifestyle that is less and puts you in a place of trembling dependency upon the mercy of God Lord, mercy we pray you know why? after this morning we're not going to have another shot at this this is our last time together and if we miss it well, it's lost so we don't want to miss it I'm hearing myself already say insane things voluntary poverty that was not in today's agenda not in my notes it's in the Lord's heart we're moving by mercy, by mercy because I'm always asking God foolish man that I am Lord, not just to proclaim the word but to demonstrate and to set forth before your students the thing in itself that's why I think I had the sleepless night and I'd be willing to suffer much more for your sake if we could bring home the truth of what God is wanting

in the church or Israel will never be raised the apostle and the prophet are not performers they're not biblical technicians they are the thing in itself through and through the reality of God, what in man what does God say that the church is built upon the foundations of the apostles and the prophets because of their remarkable insight their command of the knowledge of God's way yes, but more that they bring to the church its foundation the sense of God as he is in himself they come to us from the holiest place and out of his presence to bring the reality of God himself which is so easy to lose so difficult to obtain needs to be so consciously sought unless you're satisfied with the measure you have there's nothing more under attack everything in the world conspires against it the sense

of God who raises the dead about his word how can we be that for Israel if God has not first been that for ourselves how can we speak a resurrection word to them if a resurrection word has not come to us by the mercy of God to bring us out of our death which we have voluntarily chosen again and again by participating in the committee taking the test willing to appear foolish trying to express yourself saying you might fail and look terribly weak or reveal your ignorance or your lack of true spirituality why take the risk it's a painful thing but it's safe stay reserved don't say too much just enough to get by the issues are before us continually if we can but see them and respond rightly from faith to faith yes, to know and realize we're weak inadequate but we will not withhold ourselves

we will trust God even through us to speak into that committee as it forms its corporate passage for our identity and our grade will be the result of it we're in something together or you'd rather have a true and false question you can almost guess your way through that it's convenient

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