

The Cosmic Setting

by Art Katz

The church's role is to support Israel's restoration and ultimately obtain a more glorious eternal future, rather than seeking to save the nations or establish its own kingdom.

Duration: 1:21:46

Scripture: Joshua 6, Isaiah 1:18, Zechariah 12:10, Ephesians 3:1-6, Ephesians 3:9-10, Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and opposing the spirit power realm that seeks to manipulate and possess individuals and societies. The church is presented as the agency given by God to discern and confront this power. The speaker also highlights the need for unity and authentic prayer in order to break through in the spiritual realm. The sermon concludes with a call for believers to embrace the costliness of the real thing and to respond to opposition with grace and love, just as Stephen did in the Bible.

Transcript

Wow, not bad. Let it be, Lord. Let it be, not only for this servant, but the church that is called to be the exemplar of that prophetic reality in the earth.

So do we bless your great name, my God, for the privilege of this morning, of today, and ask from the first word to the last, you would be the alpha and the omega of this concluding time, as we believe you have, my God, from the beginning. So may we hear your voice, so may we catch, my God, the sense of your heart, the disposition of your spirit. Speak, my God, unerringly, right into the deeps, the foundation of the church, my God, this little microcosmic audience, sufficient to draw your heart out, but to record it and give it, my God, amplification and circulation beyond those whom you have assembled today.

We bless you, Lord. We love to hear you. We look, my God, for the precious truth that issues from your heart and throne.

Give us hearing ears, willing hearts. We thank and give you praise for the occasion, my God, that you have given in Jesus' name. Be delighted, be gratified.

In your great name we ask it. Amen. Well, I have so much.

I don't know where to begin. Already what I have surveyed from the earliest morning hours from Isaiah on the Shabbat of God would be a topic deserving in itself and looking at, who is it at Jericho? Moses' successor. Joshua at Jericho, crossing the Jordan, the whole entry into the land so fraught with significance for us who stand exactly at that threshold.

And then my subject for today, which is at least a day-long seminar in itself, the principalities and the powers of the air. And then on top of that, I found some notes that I had made for myself in Minneapolis, invited on April 28th to a conference called Wisdom 2001, where they invited some of the significant speakers of the charismatic generation to express now their review of that charismatic past and the wisdom to which they had been brought thereby and how they perceive the present and the future. And here's the prayer that I encouraged the congregation, mostly Catholic charismatic, to pray with me that is equally as appropriate here, I suppose in every place, that the foe would be discombobulated, that the cosmic alignment of powers over the city and the nations, and those especially that have God, have great sway in all the institutions that affect the life of men through falsehood, lying deception that corrupt their values, rob them of eternal reward and honor and glory of eternity itself.

And in the institutions, may you especially penetrate and set in disarray those powers that prevail by cunning and deceit in the most powerful of all institutions, religion itself. Through a word of event, out of your apostolic and high priestly heart that is appointed and on time, in the glory and the power that raised Jesus from the dead and enabled him to ascend on high for your eternal glory, praise and honor. In the holy name of Yeshua, I pray.

Amen. And then I went on, the great corrective that needs to come to the church, that in fact constitutes its very distinctive as the church, is not that which pertains to the needs of men, either in healing so much or even yet in their salvation, devoutly and rightly as desired as those things might be, but the glory of God realized in the coming of the king and his theocratic kingdom, the consummation of all the ages in these final and consummating last days. Not bad statements.

And that the crucial axis, the nub of that consummation, is the millennial reign of Christ in the establishment of his throne through a redeemed Israel, obtained through a final Davidic cataclysmic judgment and return, accomplished through a self-sacrificing church that demonstrates his very mercy and before the face of all nations so much as to acknowledge that the God of Israel, the God of Jacob, the creator of the heavens and the earth, is a lone God to the eternal praise of his glory. All of these are thematic statements that I had hoped to amplify in the one speaking given me in that conference. And to speak of the church of the 21st century, this is the kind of phraseology that other of the speakers were making, is to betray a complete loss of this eschatological and apocalyptic expectation because to speak of the church of the 21st century assumes that there's a continuation and that we go on endlessly and timelessly, the 21st century, the 22nd century, that there's no termination, there's no climax, there's no conclusion.

They lack an eschatology. They lack an apocalyptic expectation and they substitute a lesser excitement and leave undisturbed and still ruling and prevailing over men and nations, the kings and rulers who rage against God and against his anointed and seek to break their bands of sunder. Their final defeat and the release of the nations to that rule is the eternal purpose of the church, the forfeit of which constitutes apostasy, the great falling away, however much we may be occupied with the benevolent concerns of men.

Well, it goes on. In the unfathomable wisdom of God, I believe that the issue of Israel rightly and prophetically understood, it's God's very provision for an errant E-R-R-A-N-T church. For it alone produces the perspective by which the church itself is to be understood and understands itself.

That is to say, if the church only subscribes to Israel in a nominal or sentimental way, it loses all this value. The only way that Israel can be to the church what it must, that defines the church's own understanding of itself, is when the subject is rightly prophetically and apostolically understood, which is the complete contravention of the sentimental and present affinity that most charismatic and evangelicals have for Israel that omits the necessary judgment and suffering through which the present Israel must pass in order to prevail as that Israel of God that is the locus of his theocratic rule. So glad that this is being recorded, because there's no way, unless you have a gigantic IQ and spiritual perspicuity that exceeds Paul's, that you can fathom statements like this in the hearing.

But they have got to be spoken. They have got to be sounded. So the church's origin is derived from Israel, salvation being of the Jews.

Its continuation is by being grafted consciously and willfully, gratefully into a tree, which is the life of God that flows from her root. And the church's destiny is as God's salvific agency in moving Israel to jealousy, extending mercy, that they might become the Zion, that the church itself might become the Zion out of which Israel's deliverance comes. That deserves such explication as will require another weekend, but I commend Psalm 102, my brother wanted scriptural references, that what is the set time to favor Zion? It's when my servants have compassion on her stones and pity upon her dust.

When God sees that, the deliverer is released to come and to save Israel. It's something that does not issue from Israel, it issues from Zion. Zion in this case being a symbolic statement of the servant people of God, who contrary to all the world, who are gloating over Israel's disaster and the fall of present-day Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, and all of the other modern-day cities of Israel, does not join the chorus of the world's delight in Israel's disaster, but laments it and mourns and has compassion upon her stones and pity upon her dust.

And even that is not a statement of sentiment, but a statement of identification with Israel in her judgment. When God will find a church like that, the set time to favor Zion has come. For what God has been waiting for is not Israel's disaster, but the church's coming of age.

And it's measured by its ability to identify and relate with Israel, not in had her best but had her worst, in the same way that he related to us while we were yet in sin and transgression and rebellion. He loved us and died for us. When he'll find a church that will be like that to Israel, he will have obtained a bride for the bridegroom.

So the church is not the kingdom, but an interim provision for Israel's restoration. For it is time now to restore the kingdom to Israel on David's throne on the holy hill of Zion, or there is no kingdom at all. It is the tabernacle of David that must be restored, or there will be no theocratic rule for Edom and the nations, which the Lord our God shall call.

The church is a means and not the end in itself, but the being that obtains an end more glorious than the redeemed millennial nation itself. By the church being to Israel what it must as a means to Israel's restoration, it obtains an end for itself more glorious than that of redeemed Israel, namely the exaltation of having glorified bodies and ruling and reigning with Christ ascending and descending upon the Son of

Man. I'm Jewish and I resisted the revelation of the mystery of Israel and Israel's restoration because I was fearful that there would be some measure of loss for the glory for the church.

I was so imbued with the church and the glory of God in the church that I was a little bit concerned that Israel's restoration might take from the church anything of God's intent and glory, but I'm saying now that when the church will recognize itself not as the end of itself, but a means to an end greater than itself, Israel's restoration, and be willing to play, if you'll use my excuse my language, second fiddle to come under in a priestly way, in a supportive way, to bring this people back in restoration both to God and to the land in truth, that very process of being willing to play second fiddle and come under in a priestly way will exalt the church to a yet more glorious eternal future than that of Israel itself that has only millennial blessedness, where if a child dies at the age of 100 it's considered an anomaly. They will have prolonged existence and the reaper cannot keep up with the sower of the seed and they will, the fruit of Israel will flow out to the nations and yet I'm saying that the glory of the church will exceed that. Only if the church will serve the purpose of God which is to come down and under in support of the restoration of this people at the period of the greater shame and travesty when their sin will have required the kind of judgment that must fall.

To identify with someone in judgment is really to identify and that's why when Jesus entered the waters of baptism, the father was so pleased that the son was willing to lower himself and to come into the water of Israel's judgment that poor John was so perplexed that he would say, I have need that you be baptized of me, that I be baptized of you. What are you doing in these waters? You have no need, you're the impeccable son of God. It's needful for righteousness sake that I come into the water of Israel's repentance because I'm identifying myself with the nation in her sin or I have no prophetic relationship with her and no messianic prospect for her redemption through me.

I must come down and into that condition of sin and when he came up out of those waters the heavens opened and the father said, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased and he'll say it today when he'll see a church willing to go down and into the shame and depravity and increasing transgression and sin of present Israel which will grow worse until its sins will exceed that of its fathers but we will not be repelled by it for they must go down before they come up and our willingness to go down with them is the set time that favors Zion. So the church is not the kingdom, that's the chutzpah, the exaggerated sense of itself of which Paul warned that if you miss the mystery of Israel and the church you'll become wise in your own conceit. You'll think that you are the object of all things and that rather than the kingdom being Israel's, is it time now to restore the kingdom to Israel? Never offended Jesus.

It was a perfectly valid question. The kingdom is and must be Davidic. It must have its reign out of Zion.

There must be a son of David to occupy David's throne from that Holy Hill or there's no kingdom at all. Israel's mistake in its narrow nationalism was to think that the kingdom was for itself. It has its origin with you but it's not for you, it's for the nations and it is time to restore the kingdom to Israel and to restore Israel to the kingdom but not for the church to presume that it either is the kingdom or brings the kingdom in and of itself.

You see how the relationship with Israel is the very factor that affects the church's own right and proper identification of itself and its evangelistic and missions function. That when the fullness of the Gentiles come in so all Israel shall be saved as it is written. So the church is not to the nations to save the nations but a people for his name from all nations so that the fullness of the Gentiles may come in.

What is the fullness? The number. Some number from every nation for his name that I believe in my own prophetic and intuitive heart is the exact number of principalities and powers of the whole angelic realm in the usurping governmental role over the nations that will be dispossessed and cast out from those places and that those vacancies need to be filled by those who rule and reign with him from the heavenly places. The number exactly to fill the vacancies the fullness of the Gentiles being come in.

Oh I'm getting a little holy ghost chill at the grandeur of God's intention and the terrible distortion that has come to the church to think that it's going to save the nations. No a number elect number of Gentiles that must come in and the incentive for that salvation is that by it deliverance shall come out of Zion for Israel. Israel will be acted upon having no virtue in itself and no power in itself to establish its own redemption being the epitome of man in his own human self-sufficiency is the very thing that God is condemning before the world in the example of Israel.

Israel is acting out something for the world that they need to see for it is the epitome of human arrogance presumption and conceit almost succeeding in 50 years to afford to accomplish what no other people would dare even begin to aspire to attain to take a malarial wasteland and to convert it to a high-tech society in half a century and resuscitate a dead liturgical language and make it a modern Hebrew language and all of the other remarkable accomplishments of a remarkable accomplishing people but they cannot accomplish that which will bless all the families of the earth that's God's accomplishment and requires the death of their human excellency in order to obtain which is what we are about and should have known that's what the church ought to be the resurrection phenomenon that knows

that what God is waiting for is not the death of our defects but of our virtues the very thing that we cherish and least want to relinquish is our human ability our religious ability to think to accomplish and to perform and God is waiting for the willing death because we know that in man is no good thing at all that even his good is not good enough in fact as good as the very deterrent to the glory of God that only God is good Jesus would not allow himself to be complimented why call this on me good there's no man good but God and do you think I'm going to surrender to your temptation to enjoy your compliment because if I do so I reinforce all your categories and you need to know that all your categories are in error though you have followed the law impeccably from your childhood on

there's no man good but God Israel needs to learn that and they'll learn it painfully but they will learn it at least the surviving remnant will learn it and that's the great drama of the age of which the church is God's David God's salvific agent but only on that resurrection basis because if it comes to Israel and Israel's own ground of human excellency then it has accomplished nothing it has got to demonstrate Israel the very thing to which God itself calls Israel namely resurrection reality so the church is not the means not the end but the means to an end and the willingness to come under and play that second fiddle role obtains an end for the church that will glorify it forever and qualify it to reign from the heavenlies so in this in the final frenzy of the end which is now brewing

in their own self-opposing ignorance they may likely regard us as enemies and as a threat to their Jewishness in the anti-semitic Fuhrer of a last day's time of Jacob's trouble we may have to suffer this even as modest at their hands as Stephen did as a crucial or critical necessity of sacrifice to bring by it the revelation of the Lord that turned Saul from persecutor to Apostle remarkable statements I don't expect you to understand that it's being recorded that's the purpose you know what I'm saying martyrdom may well be our experience in fact that is the genius of what the church has ever and always been in every generation is a modern church but what we had not considered is that we might suffer the first pangs of

martyrdom not at the hands of the world but at the very Jewish people

whose salvation we desire and who cannot recognize the goodness of our intent and see us as a threat as Saul saw the early church as a threat to the interest of the God whom he did not know who art thou Lord and so we may have to bear their violence in the defense of their Jewishness which is now being threatened and they will see us quote as Christians constituting that threat and we bear it and I have a little preview of that speaking at universities and confrontations all over the world where Jewish students are in greater proportion than any other place where you can find them and I have to I say I'm like a pincushion and I have to absorb their anger their bitterness their confusion I represent the enemy it's like a white man in a black high school you represent white you represent

the establishment so your heart is something completely other what you are physically and overtly is what they see and identify and so for the Jewish students I'm a missionary paid flunky why else would an intelligent man speak this Goya shirt Greek and thing that is antithetical to all Jewishness unless there's some financial remunerative motive so he's a lowest scum betraying his own people for financial personal gain and putting himself in continuity with every injury that Jews have ever received in the name of Christ and they give it to you harshly and you just stand there and receive it like a pincushion you can't say hey hey no no no I don't represent that that's not really the church those Crusaders were not regenerate they don't even know what the word regenerate means to them

they were Christians and that's that's it for my mother Hitler was a Christian Germany was a Christian nation you can't argue with them at Columbia University City College of New York right on the spot and straighten them out you have to absorb their frenzy their anger their furor and after they have spit it out then maybe you'll get a word in edgewise all of that will be greatly heated in the last days and we may be on the receiving end a lot of a lot of their pained reaction opposing themselves in their own ignorance and how we receive that will be critical to their their salvation in the way that that Stephen received it Lord laid not the sin to their charge dying with such equanimity with such grace he fell asleep what a precious race he had fulfilled his purpose he bore the insult in

the injury speaking courageously giving them a whole survey of the history of Israel and its apostasy from the beginning that they and he saw the heaven open being full of the Spirit and Jesus standing at the right hand of the father and they could not bear to hear that that one whom they had crucified thinking to put him finally out of business as a threat to Israel was now in the holiest place of all in the very presence of God the Father and they put their fingers in their ears and ran and gnashed upon him with their teeth to extinguish the the reality that this great busboy was seeing I believe that that is a foretaste of the end a little preview of some some of us will have to play that Stephen role in order to turn the persecuting adversary from assault to appal nothing less will

bring that conversion because Israel has an apostolate to the nations and that's why Paul could say when you see me I'm a man out of time and joint I'm a representative of Israel's future and in my apostolic ministry to the Gentiles you catch a glimpse of God's intention for the whole nation Israel in its apostolate to the Gentile nations they will be to the nation's what I presently am to the church brooding over jealous mother father nurse that Christ be formed in them laboring day and night without reward with tears and from house to house in public places giving the whole counsel of God that when it was time for Paul to come to the end of his apostolic career and he called the elders of Ephesus they wept when they heard that they would see his face no more that kind of love for Paul

from Gentiles who knew that they had received something from this precious Jewish man that was not in any way tinged or tainted by Jewish pride or religious superiority or anything like that but who humbled himself he came under he was a priestly ministrator of the wisdom of God for the nation's will we will see exactly the same thing that the Jews who today are anathema feared despised resented will one day be clutched by the nation's to have one come into their midst to clutch the skirt of one who will take us to God for they know him that's Israel's destiny and to be to the nation's what Paul was to the Gentile church will of course take a conversion as profound for Israel as it was for Saul himself so our hour as the church coming under the purpose of God for Israel's redemption God's

firstborn son among the nation's is calculated for our humility we cannot expect their understanding nor gratitude sacrifice in their behalf like Christ dying for us while we were yet in transgression dead and sin we will die for them while they are yet in transgression and sin and that very process and the very willingness is that final sanctification that fits us as a bride for the bridegroom see the mystery of God all the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God well imagine speaking that in one hour again I felt like it was a flub as I have been feeling in these days but I'm told that it was an iraculous statement will turn to Ephesians chapter 3 and we'll consider the mystery of which our great Apostle Paul was the steward which has been lost to the church's

comprehension in modern times and therefore the church has lost the whole heart of its being and condemns itself to becoming an institution it has lost its apostolic identity to the degree that has lost its understanding of the mystery of which Paul was a steward which was granted him because he was the least of all saints and that he really believed that of himself it was not a feigned humility but the more he deepened in his apostolic call and the intensive knowledge of God the more he recognized the littleness that was himself the least of all saints murder and persecuted haunted him all of the days of his apostolic career not in some kind of psychic sickly way but in the healthiest recognition that a man needs to know there but for the grace of God go I murderer and persecutor not out

of some malevolent or vicious intent but out of my best well-meaning intentions to honor the God of my father's that's the point and that the best intentions of men will in the last analysis and in the very murder and persecution of God himself and when Israel will recognize that there'll be the deepest repentance that the world has ever seen so profound the repentance when we shall see him whom we have pierced that no man can even come to that repentance in the presence of his own wife and no family in the presence of another family every family apart every husband and wife apart for they will be bellowing and prevailing and such an anguish of soul of depth of recognition of what our historic sin has been that it's a repentance unto death and out of it out of the ashes of that will rise

another nation that will bless all the families of the earth so Paul describes himself in chapter 3 as a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles and then reminds them of the grace that was given him the mysteries were made known by revelation and this mystery in verse 5 was not made known to mankind as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit that word holy is not a little appellation that's what these men were and are who are in fact authentically prophets and apostles not that they go tripping on eggshells and have a superior spiritual out of spirituality that is ethereal there are men who can knock back a beer with a steak or a glass of wine within a piece of pizza and love jazz and are earthly and and or earthy not earthly earthy in many

ways and yet they're holy apostles and prophets because the cross has done its number on false spirituality that requires certain exterior semblances of what is construed to be spiritual and as false they

are authentic men through and through they don't have to wear camel hair garments to evidence the fact that they're prophets they can be worried three-piece suits but they have been formed and called processed at God's hand and to them can be entrusted the mysteries of God why because they'll never abuse that trust they'll never exploit it they'll never turn it to their own advantage they counted they cherish the precious mysteries that had been commended to them that they might make them known and not the least of the mysteries in verse 6 is that the Gentiles have become fellow heirs

and members of the same body what same body of the body that already exists of Jews who believe and receive the Messiah and continue in the precious holy faith now you who are far off and without hope in God have been brought nigh by that blood of their Messiah into that revelation that understanding and that body into the Commonwealth of Israel itself into the hopes and covenants of Israel oh you lucky stiff if it weren't for that God's grace to admit you into the salvation which is exclusively Israel's you'd be a bunch of dum-dums to this day you'd be drinking beer not out of cans but out of skulls and fornicating like jack rabbits and being given to every kind of vile idolatry but God in his mercy has hebraicized you brought you out of Gentile dumb dumbness and into that ethereal

transfiguring relationship with their God that is called salvation that's the grace that has come and Paul is a steward of that mystery through the gospel and then he speaks of another mystery that's the one that I want to discuss with you this morning that was according to the gift of God's grace given me by the working of his power in verse 8 on the very least of all the saints this is not self effacing humility of a salesman's kind this is Paul just telling it like it is or else this mystery would not have been given him the grace that was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things in order that stop don't read any further or you'll be transgressing

don't rush but hold your breath for we are about to hear from the chief of Apostles the purpose for all creation itself and if we have not some sense of that purpose we are floundering in darkness I don't care how adept our gifts or how much men honor us or what we bless if we have not a sense of the purposive God who has created out of nothing what is that Latin term ex nihilo out of nothing the glory of creation in order that we're now going to hear the reason the purpose why God has willed and performed this my god we need to stop breathing or else we will reduce this to a commonplace and read through the book of Ephesians as if we're reading gone with the wind or some cheap novel no wonder we are in the abysmal place that we are we don't even know how to read so let's not rush we're

about to hear something that God has given to the Apostle as revelation of mystery and given him a mandate to cherish and to make it known that all men might see this mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things in order that through the church stop number two stop breathing through the church that dinky nothing that institutional hodgepodge that cheap Sunday service oriented institution that the purpose of creation was that something in order that through the church Paul you're going too far you've only taken one aspect of civilization and culture which has a nice way of taking the edges off the harsh features of life and has Sunday schools and performs marriages and funerals and gives us a biblical message on Sunday come on don't get carried away that the principal purpose of

God in creation has something to do with the church or have we been laboring under some kind of dull misconception that the church is only one of institutions deserving some kind of recognition but is the principal purpose for creation itself just that one understanding is that the heart of apostolic comprehension that changes the whole way in which we regard that which we have seen only in a minimal

way and therefore cannot even serve it in the way for which God has created all things so that God has created in order through the church but this is getting thick the plot is thickening that the manifold wisdom of God and its rich variety might now be made known to the rules and authorities in the heavenly places much learning has made me mad this is the most of screws absurd irrelevant

kind of statement to ascribe to the church that the whole purpose is to make known some kind of wisdom to the principalities and powers of the air and it's only relevant tell us where the church is a value in the world how it will bless men how will affect institutions touch poverty sickness disease that's what we want to know that's the real thing what is this abstract abstruse reference to some wisdom to be made known to the principalities and powers of the air that's a figment of your imagination that's a hangover of your Judaic mysticism and what do they call that occultic Judaic origin that talks about some phantasmal realm of spirit life come on Paul grow up and that's why this has been grossly rejected by the most authoritative scholars and theologians of our generation that this

is a hangover this is a vestigial remnant of Paul's Judaic upbringing that has to do with some mystical and occultic realm of spirit until the Nazi time came then my call bought God bless him whom I love the Swiss German theologian who had disregarded this and counted it as a mere residue of Paul's rabbinical origins took a second look and said hey this is not some mere flight of fancy this is where the action in fact actually is for the principalities and powers of the air that we thought a figment of Paul's Judaic imagination have actually taken possession of the whole of the German state and nation and made it an engine for the destruction of the Jewish people and have succeeded by it in annihilating whole European Jewry one third of the Jewish race and and catapulting the world into a

cataclysmic conflict that has almost ended civilization where they wore skull and crossbones on their caps and burn books and burn men and exhibited another wisdom that was dark and demonic satanic that was not content merely to influence nations but to possess them that's why German Jews thought this too shall pass surely the nation of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nurti, Schopenhauer, Wagner, great giants of poetry, music, literature, science, philosophy are not going to succumb to this riffraff of gutter snipes and homosexuals and deviates who meet in in basement cellar beer pubs surely that's a passing phenomenon that they'll get out of their system and we'll get back to men like Bismarck and Chancellor so-and-so and men of nobility and class who can govern the state in view in

light of German culture and civilization this too shall pass it didn't and they went up like smoke what a graphic demonstration that Paul was not majoring in minors but majoring in majors this is where the action is you dear Saints and though we have not seen the Nazi phenomenon here don't think that it's so far removed from any possibility in good old USA apple pie mama and football it waits its opportunity it's already present it jerks and manipulates it usurps it influences but when the time comes it possesses Paul knew where the action is and the church is the only agency given of God to recognize discern and identify this spirit power realm and to oppose it and to bring it down and the church that does not see that as its task and its purpose for being is ipso facto not the church in

any apostolic sense of the world word it's only an institution that purveys services for men because the very next verse says verse 11 this was in accordance with the eternal purpose that we carried out in Christ Jesus Lord timeout stop breathing the eternal purpose only Paul could use language of that kind lavish language that he's not ashamed to employ as if this all is only an adornment to give a certain sense of importance to inflate something by the use of the word eternity or eternal no this is an apostle that's holy given a stewardship over a mystery that he recognizes in its context is eternal in the intention of God it

was ever and always the mind of God from eternity to eternity and needs to come into the comprehension of the church that is not even eternally minded but rooted

in time and culture lacks the apostolic perspective of eternity so how can it recognize that this mandate is in accordance with the eternal purpose of God and here's what I want to say dear saints and I say it wherever I have opportunity that church hear this you ministers who are getting this tape that church you and especially those ministers who purport to be apostolically and prophetically minded where are you today why aren't you here even to contradict me what to find faults or to confirm your suspicions that you should be in the same city where there's a conference or seminar being conducted that is called apostolic and prophetic foundations by a man who's the author of seven or eight books and has a global reputation and a history of 37 years and you are content to go to the golf

course or to stay home and not even to inquire as to what will be communicated under that great title and you profess to have a concern for what is apostolic and prophetic that leaves something to be questioned I wouldn't stay home I would break the door down in any place accessible to me where these this subject is purported to be discussed because it's the eternal purpose of God and that church which will not take to its heart as its foremost purpose for being the eternal purpose of God whatever it is dancing on I don't know what walking on our nose I don't care what it is how absurd if it's God's eternal purpose and we will not take it to heart as the first purpose for our being corporately then we are not the church if we have no regard for what is of eternal importance to him how are

we the church we're an institution that purveys services for men and employs scripture and other graces from God and miss the very reason for our being and that's why we lack any significance that's why the powers of the air can say Jesus we're no employment oh but who are you you haven't even begun to recognize what your purpose for being is and you constitute for us no threat at all but art that we become imbued with the eternal purpose of God then of course there will be irrelevant in time that's too airy that's too phantasmal just the opposite it is only because you have embraced the eternal as the first and foremost purpose we being that makes you relevant and Paul himself is the great demonstration as I think I mentioned yesterday who handled all of the practical questions of the

church and was told them how to wipe their bum bumps how to conduct communion not to come to the table out of gluttony how to wait for the others how how to deal with sin in the camp how to deal with correcting a brother how how how Paul was the nuts and bolts man that attended to the practical daily relevancies of the church because he was in the heavenly because he was heavenly minded because he was occupied with the eternal purpose of God was he all the more the man of relevance for the church in its present hour and the same thing will be true of us we have lacked this this requires therefore more than Sunday services this requires sacrifice this requires being a whole church together because the statement says that God has created little things that through the church the

manifold wisdom of God and switch variety might be made known to the rules and principles and powers of the air through the church not individual virtuosos a few odd catches will not do praise God for them but as this is the call of the church as the church or the demonstration the wisdom cannot be made known for it's not an articulation of the wisdom it is the demonstration of the wisdom and that demonstration must by definition be corporate it's another wisdom so what is the word wisdom here mean it's not what constitutes being wise it's a better word would be value the value system of God the mentality of God what he counts as dear what he counts as real in fact what is ultimately real what is worth pursuing what is worth investing your life about your energy and your time your

sacrifice that's what's at stake here because they're two contrary views one makes of man number one take care of yourself nobody else will see the own satisfaction your own gratification obtain possess exploit manipulate see to yourself be enriched be strengthened powered credentialized and have prestige see for yourself for this life is what counts and your marriage isn't going to well we'll get rid of the bum after all you still have your good looks and try try again after all you have only this life so you might as well enjoy and it's not this isn't working out try it again get rid of this guy after all pleasure gratification the redemption of your lifetime is really what counts for the effort is like there's nothing through the lie that is and how that ties in with the meteoric rise

of the divorce rate because people see only within the context of this limited lifetime and don't realize that there's an eternity beyond that will haunt us if we have failed to take God into our deepest consideration and to believe that because she's the covenant keeping God that however desperate our present marriages and seems gives no prospect of success that he's the third fold that will not allow it to be broken and will in time bring his redemptive answer so what if it's 25 years of suffering and denial and forced abstinence or whatever else needs to be born if the end of it is not marital compatibility but the glory of God for the marriage itself is the mystery of the Godhead as is the church also see what happens when you begin to take eternity into your consideration it affects

everything that is practical and relevant and down-to-earth but it must come through the church and not individual virtuosos the entire church per se as church must make this demonstration of another wisdom which is the wisdom of God the value system of God in opposition in every point in particular to that by which men presently live their lives in the world and consider to be self-evident truths as for example the pursuit of happiness the Declaration of Independence it's a self-evident truth that God has made all men created equal that they might pursue happiness is it so self-evident maybe the greater reason is to bear suffering because there's a redemptive drama that cannot be obtained without an intrinsic suffering that is contrary to the issue of happiness as being the purposeful

being that's a premise that needs at least to be questioned if not shot down and the function of the church is to question the unaccepted the unquestioned premises by which men till now have lived their lives in error and in complete disregard of that which is eternal show me a church like that mamma mia and I'll show you a church that will move Jews to jealousy show me a church that moves Jews to jealousy and I'll show you a church that it that infuriates and intimidates and threatens the powers of darkness one in the same they've come of age they've taken eternity into their consideration and they have recognized we're not going to attain this without sacrifice we can't attain this as the aggregate of individualities in there and our privatistic lifestyles and modes of being we're going

to have to become a community of believers we have to be integral related join we have to speak the truth and love we've got to come to a wisdom that we demonstrate by which fear intimidation threat power sex all those kinds of things have been done in and we're free from those influences and we exhibit that freedom that's the wisdom and will not come to that unless we come to it consciously and when I come to it consciously unless we come to it willfully and will not come to it willfully unless we come to the recognition that that's not going to be obtained without sacrifice and suffering why should we bear it because it has to do with his eternal purpose that's why because we love him because we want him to be honored and glorified and we want him to be satisfied that he's created all

things in order for this then by all means God whatever it takes we're going to do all we can by your grace that you should obtain this because your satisfaction and the fulfillment of your purposes is what we are all

about we have no other purpose but that purpose show me a church like I'm getting goose bumps show me a church like that that has made that resolution and I'll show you powers of the air that brood over that locality that are terrified by the presence of such a people however small however incongruous however poor however shabby their building is the powers of the air know them and fear them for they have an abandonment toward God that terrifies them because they are what Paul was and what Jesus was and they can't stand that demonstration they can't defy that

demonstration they can't intimidate people who are so sold out to God that their whole purpose of being is his satisfaction through the church to make known to the principalities and powers of the air to demonstrate what God is in himself what he demonstrated at the cross that defeated them then put them out of Commission then made an open spoil of them then and needs to be concluded by the very same demonstration that the church will exhibit as it suffers the slings and arrows of outrageous fortunes of the last days with the same magnanimity and grace and patience and forgiveness as the Lord himself and as Stephen himself show me a church even preparing for that show me a church that anticipates that because we have been fed exactly the opposite prosperity health well-being success you

if you if you have faith you're driving a Cadillac where is it where is there a church that talks about suffering as being intrinsic to the faith and the inevitable requirement at the conclusion of the age when the powers of the air will be released by the Lord and given the ability to overcome us revelation 13 7 that power was given to the beast to overcome the Saints what kind of God is that it's the God of the cross giving us opportunity who was himself overcome that we might in our being overcome overcome being overcome by the same grace that he exhibited in suffering and in death that some dumb Gentile centurion standing at the base of the cross who had seen numbers of men crucified saw something different with this man and said truly this is the Son of God I wait to hear that from

my Jewish people I'm waiting to hear that and I think it's going to take the same revelation in our suffering for them they're gonna have to say this this people that I have derided and and have been contemptuous of and disdainful about the church the Goyish Gentile truly this is the Son of God there's something revealed in their suffering that is very God himself because suffering reveals as nothing else will some of you know that so this is one of the chapters of the book on apostolic foundations which I wish were available now presently out of print pray for a new edition but what is the genius of this demonstration to the powers of the air why should God be occupied that they have to see something and what is this wisdom that needs to be shown well any church that will take as its

foremost purpose for its being some purpose in God other than its own that is of an eternal kind and has no practical pay off now or benefit to be derived now by that very act of choosing that purpose is exhibiting the wisdom because the wisdom of the world is self-interest the wisdom of the world is what's in it for me did you enjoy the service how'd you like the speaker how's the attendance what's the budget what's in it for me but a church that will make a sacrificial commitment to the purposes of God that are eternal that have no practical benefit for them at all it has only a benefit for God something that he wants and are willing to do it and make it not a purpose but the first and foremost purpose of their being in that very act of choosing are demonstrating another wisdom not only

will they not receive any benefit but the very act of choosing God's eternal purpose over their own makes them a candidate for suffering and opposition and persecution from the powers of the air and they're still going to choose God's eternal purpose that choice is the demonstration of another wisdom and the same mystery comes with the redemption of Israel at the end of the age were you Gentiles for whom we've done

nothing as Jews but to move you to resentment or irritation or anger by our arrogance and by our unwillingness to go along with the game plan and insist on things that are going to threaten the whole world and will threaten it and cut the oil supply and affect the world economy already look how we're being affected by those two planes that crashed into those towers there are

certain airlines that have gone bankrupt and has set in motion a further complication in our economy that were only at the beginning massive layoffs a crippling of the economy I don't know if we'll survive and we need not have experienced it if it weren't for our identification with Israel but a church that will be so identified with Israel as to be willing to be the victims of Israel as martyrs in their in their own fury and opposing themselves in their ignorance or to run the peril like Kory Ten Boom by taking them into our attics or into our basements when they're in flight and being caught in the process and going to the same concentration camp and not coming out of it alive why should we do that what did they ever do for us look the other way so they they are the least of his

brethren but you didn't see them naked hungry thirsty and in prison you chose not to see them because you were unwilling for the inconvenience and the sacrifice that seeing them and aiding them would require but the church that will extend itself not only is the agency of God's salvation for them but in the very act of extending itself to Jews as Gentiles you're demonstrating another wisdom it is completely against your self-interest as a Gentile to aid a Jew in the epitome of his distress at your own peril but your willingness to do so and not under constraint but willingly voluntarily and joyously that's the key when you will joyously take the risk of loss of life for another who is a Jew who has never brought you any benefit but threat you are demonstrating another wisdom and we need

to be consciously moving toward that fulfillment William Stringfellow whose book I have never read it's probably out of print aliens in a strange land and there's another book about the principalities and powers said any church that conducts itself in complete ignorance to the centrality of this theme and this purpose and calling of necessity is futile beats at the air and serves no real and everlasting purpose to not have this in our comprehension consciously seeking its fulfillment condemns us to a certain kind of cultural or religious phenomenon that in no way affects the fulfillment of God's prophetic and apostolic intention for creation and we're not even even our evangelisms and our programs are vain if we have not first considered and contended against the very powers of the air

that inhibit and blind men in our own locality because our struggle is not against flesh and blood but it's our struggle struggle has never been convenient and Paul uses that word we wrestle not against flesh and blood but we wrestle and if we're not a weed there's no wrestling it can only be corporately performed it's an engagement of totality because though I'm not an athlete a little ping-pong and stickball but I can suspect that the choice of wrestling as a metaphor is not an accident but the very wisdom of God that shows that the deepest engagement beyond strength beyond skill is wrestling when you meet a man eyeball to eyeball and fingertip to fingertip the issue of defeat or victory is not your superior strength or skill or experience but your determination your gut your grit that

that those invincible interior things that can't even be defined we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the powers against the world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness and heavenly places Ephesians chapter 6 and oftentimes the word against against against against against against is against the stream against is against the flesh against is against ease and convenience against our calling is against specific entities that require a corporate opposition that is against so a church that is lazy slothful self-centered loving its convenience wanting its services on

Sunday where it could sleep in and still come back in time for the football game at a golf course is not at all of a mind or disposition to be against anything and the

powers of the air know it and prefer to have it so that's why we have the great attendance that we have here this morning they can't even come up against their sloth against the desire to be at the golf course against lazing around on Saturday or tending the lawn or the take the kids to the park whatever it is there's no capacity against the flesh against not only the things that are carnal but especially the things that are good it's the things that are good and valid and legitimate the kids the family they deserve attention sadly they are from work as the very thing that inhibits the ultimate purposes of God it will take what shall I say a determination of so ultimate a kind where we oppose ourselves in our own flesh we oppose that which is good there's a determination I'm not finding

the right phrase we taste blood it's not against carnality or evil but against that which is ostensibly good that our greatest issue rises because the church will condone and applaud that which is good and lull us into a kind of ease and sleepiness that is morally approved and nice and benefits but keeps us from the struggle for which we are intended we have to oppose our own self-interest in what is good if we're going to be against against against against this is wrestling this is struggle and it's a corporate struggle it's waiting the activity of believers together in Christ as a militant company so long as we remain islands of individuality and self-interest and privacy there's no way that we're going to fight this and I can tell you that the revelation that began to come to us at Ben

Israel took eight years before it appeared we came to a morning prayer meeting I felt hungover I was depressed and I couldn't understand it at the well cats you Jews your moodiness but when I came into the prayer meeting everyone had was in the same mood to were not Jews see the advantage of community it saves you from thinking that your individual barometer is a mere statement of the vagaries of your own soul we were all oppressed and they said well I don't you know what what the problem no what this is the the powwow was on at the Chippewa Nation ten miles away this is the annual powwow and they're beating those drums all through the night and releasing every kind of spirit and we can feel it in the air any of you who have ever traveled in the world know when you cross a border and come

into another country you can feel it in the air there's something in the air even the world uses that language what's in the air over Durham Raleigh North Carolina what's in the air over Greensboro what's in the air over Duke University and Chapel Hill what's over the air of your financial institutions over your religious networks over your apostolic and prophetic bodies of an organizational kind because institutions are the open door for the presence of these powers of the air so we said okay let's pray and so we began to pray eighth year of our history as a community and after two minutes I went knock it off you guys call that prayer what do you think this is a game what are you playing hey this is life and death you know this is the Indians and we need to take those covered wagons and

make a circle and defend each man's back and put your gut in it and we began to pray and put our gut in it as you had come in five minutes later you would thought it was an insane asylum people were flailing at the air there was some were stretched out on their faces every kind of posture of prayer conceivable without an iota of self-consciousness or embarrassment how come that we could pray like that totally abandoned in open warfare aggressively fighting against and wrestling together as a body because we had an eight-year history that's why because we had been in it and through it because we had been had confrontations and and face-to-face dealings and embarrassments and humiliations and failures and every kind of thing for which if people will pass whose life is really together and

who are together frequently enough and intensively enough to face the issues that make a body a body and break the power of privatistic lifestyle it took eight years and as that heated prayer was going up that corporate prayer all I tell you and I looked up I'm not a man given to visions I saw a face and that face was looking down on us leering with contempt Oh been Israel haha no threat they're full of problems they can't get it together there's no real unity that but as the prayer went on and the intensity of it rose in authenticity not prayer as technique or methodology but the gushings of the people who bring something together corporately I watched the face change from contempt and disdain to fear and that face Oh hold your look okay what am I hearing now who like and it began to

back up and we pressed in and finally that thing broke and fled in panic and we were pursuing after in the realm of spirit and we came a moment boom when like a fist broke right through like the splatter was everywhere and our prayer stopped and people started to laugh and giggle they knew that we had broken through triumph in the realm of spirit together that's what he's talking about and I don't believe that any program that's really a program is going to succeed over Durham North Carolina until this first this contention and contending against though that unchallenged realm of spirit reality that has up till now yawned in our faces and been completely indifferent to our best activity taking cities for Christ to worship and even talking about casting out demons and being apostolic and

prophetic and being related to the best-known names today who are organizing the whole structure worldwide they go ha ha this our cats in with a half-dozen people out in the boondocks near Greensboro is more to be feared than they'll then they allowed us professions of what they're going to establish organizationally called apostolic and prophetic the powers know whom to fear because they have only one obligation and that is to recognize what is authentic and when they see that they tremble for that's what God is so when I was in the Philippines I said to these precious ministers and ministers conference and apostolic and prophetic foundations you can believe that unlike this year today every seat was taken for three days in sweltering heat pouring out my soul to those men on these

foundations and giving them an invitation I said to them you know that it's better to be feared and known by the powers of darkness than to be esteemed by men oh that's right on yeah and I know that I'm talking to men who have come out of poverty that they lived off of banana skins and what they could pluck off of vines there's no welfare program in the Philippines if you don't pedal a bike and carry someone there's no income and now they were ministers with a suit of clothing and a house and income and and respect and credibility and I'm saying to them unless you're willing to forsake the esteem of men you will not constitute a fear of the powers of the air you can't have it both way both ways what do you prefer to the esteem and favor of men and your promotion in the religious system or

to be known of the powers of the air and feared it's one or the other oh to have the powers of the air to fear it's odd okay said stand up and follow me in a prayer to reject and forsake the esteem of men who you cannot have the one without the other I tell you it was a moment of trembling and profound consecration and the powers of the air were taking note of what was transpiring at that moment as being more effectual in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of darkness than anything that had come before them so we're talking about the rulers of this age which if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory and Psalm 2 refers to them why do the nations rage the heathen and the kings and the rulers take thought against the Lord against his

anointed what is that redundancy the kings and the rulers was that like saying the kings and the kings or are the kings the visible earthly magistrates and the rulers are the spirit realm overhead the rulers of this

age who are in concert with an influence and jerk the physical visible magistrates below we need to know where the action is and what alone will challenge them because it's a cosmic struggle for mastery over the entire cosmos itself of one moral kind or another one wisdom or another one that predator is predicated upon lust force power threat seduction intimidation and fear and the other self-denial so should we take a break a little breathing yeah Lord thanks for introducing us into a precious mystery we want to be more than introduced we want to be inducted we want to find

our connection my God with the continuum that has been broken off between Paul and ourselves for a whole number of men now have risen my God over the nation that call themselves Apostles and are forming all kinds of consolidations and organizational networks and are endorsing and validating one another by men who purport to be prophetic and endorse the Apostle who endorses the prophet and the system has come up before us that bears these great names apostolic and prophetic that not only constitutes no threat to the powers of the air but might might well be raised up by them as an antichrist substitute for the real thing for anti means not only against but like as always the enemy seeking to steal the scene and to get into the act before and to give men a devious substitute for the

authentic thing that does not require their sacrifice their suffering or the cross appealing to nice established middle class people that they can enjoy all of the semblance of apostolicity and propheticness with with no stoop no fuss no bother no cross no suffering no sacrifice a new vocabulary that sounds exciting and now they can go and pray in and some call it kind of supposed authority that affects the powers of darkness not at all so Lord I'm crying out this morning for the real thing for what is apostolicity if it is not the real thing what is an apostle if he is not authentic what is a prophet equally my god and these substitutes are inundating our Christian world and I'm asking for discernment that only a body can have that has made its commitment to God that its first purpose

for being is the fulfillment of his eternal purpose and once that consecration is made there is a new discernment given a perspicacity and understanding a sensitivity to fathom into sense that which is dubious that which is questionable that which is imitative that which is a substitute that which is false because they have opted for that which is real and they're willing to pay the price of it my god we're crying out for the church today in America that has no explanation for the disasters that have come to this nation and will come so Lord give us an understanding not that we should be coffee time dilettantes with our feet up on the coffee table sprouting a new kind of knowledge but that we should be the thing in ourselves that we should be pioneers a militant cadre in advance of the

church demonstrating and calling others to the reality my god that makes the church the church help us with a little help my god we pray mercy my god for our failures for our shortcoming have mercy on our ambition and that we have been groomed in a religious world to succeed coming out of Bible schools and seminaries and becoming youth ministers and worship leaders so that we can become associate pastors and then full pastors senior pastor and we can have our own little kingdom and compete with and be as alluring and have as as great a number and an attendance and a budget as the most prominent of our counterparts sound and fury signifying nothing so my god give us we pray something of your divine jealousy because you are the high priest and the apostle of our confession and you call this

as holy brethren to the fulfillment my god of that vocation and I pray that you're doing something today and something through this tape that will go into the heart and spirit and consciousness of those whom you've called to here and are willing to this to put aside and cast away every faint substitute for the real thing because they know that they know that the real thing is costly it means their life it means their martyrdom

and they're willing not begrudgingly but kept with all joy that's what stupefies the powers of darkness not only that we bear suffering but we wish we take it with all joy because we have eternal understanding of what lies beyond this life the rewards that are eternal and shall not fade away even the reward of the Lord's own coming and kingdom which we hasten by

being the manner of men we ought and receive the reward for our labors that our labors deserve for they are his works and not our own and can only be fulfilled in the power of his life my god wake us up to what the church is called to be and bless it and have an expression of it in this locality my god where you have brought us in these days that your word shall not return to you void but accomplish the purpose for which you have sent it and we thank you and give you praise for the privilege of this historic penetration whose time has come that has been discarded and rejected by men who purport to be interested and even the expression of things prophetic and apostolic and have not been so moved as even to attend and to hear what is being set forth so my god watch over your word jealously

to perform it give us a breather a break bring us back my god for such conclusion as it pleases you my god to perform give us the full measure of your heart today for this is a day that's once and for all it will not be given again and we want my god all that you have ordained in it and we thank you for the privilege of what you're setting before us may we grant you the response my god for which you wait we thank you in Yeshua's holy name God's people said

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