

The Eternal Gospel

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the centrality of the Jewish people in the gospel message and the need for a passionate, apostolic proclamation of salvation.

Duration: 1:09:15

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:1-16

Topics: "Eternal Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the decline of the proclamation of the gospel and the need to revive its true meaning. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the connection between being an apostle and being set apart for the gospel. The speaker highlights the significance of the gospel as the power of God for salvation, particularly to the Jews. He also explores the profound nature of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, descended from David and declared with power through his resurrection.

Transcript

I must be losing my Jewish distinctiveness. Oh my. Well, thank you for coming.

You're going to be my guinea pigs. I'm going to try out something on you that the Lord gave me this morning after reading the brochure from the ministry here about preaching the gospel. I want to make some remarks about the gospel and its proclamation because I don't know if you have noticed it is sadly in decline.

It has become a nomenclature for salvation. Step one, step two, step three. It is certainly a decision of a dubious kind.

It doesn't have the apostolic ring. Not as compelling. Nor is it attended by controversy.

Have you noticed? It's become rather bland. In fact, you even wonder what the word gospel means. And I trust that these are the thoughts of the Lord and not the fact that I'm Jewish in myself, but I feel that the loss has somehow to do with the absence from our consideration of the centrality of the Jew that this gospel is the power of God at the salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

And somehow if we have lost that central focus, it has become diffused and something else and something less than God's intention even for the Greek. Very important to obey the priorities of God. When he says first, he means first.

He must have reasons for that. There are many reasons. Judgment is first for the Jew as well as blessing because we're privileged people.

And we were called to covenant and we enjoyed a relationship with him and we were select and appointed. And we suffered double curses for our disobedience. You have suffered double for your sins as says in Isaiah chapter 40 verse 1 or 2. There's a penalty for us that is greater than others.

And maybe for that reason, the gospel has got to come to us first. But I think there are other reasons as well. Paul says in Romans 11 that we are the enemies of the gospel for your sake.

Now I know you have not had ever an occasion to observe that. You need to be a missionary to the Jews to know how vitriolic and vehement and bitter is the opposition to the gospel on the part of most Jews. And until we have observed that in our experience, we lose the sense of how radical a message the gospel is.

We will be brought to an awareness of just what kind of message we're called to bear when we see how vehement, avid, bitter is the opposition to it on the part of Jews. Why is that instructive more so than any? Because salvation is of the Jews. So for Jews to oppose the message of salvation with a degree of vehemence and bitterness more so than others and even to be the inventors of gospel alternatives like, can you name a few? Marxism, Karl Marx, the Jewish, what would you call them, ideologue or Freudianism, also a Jewish invention and many other devices and radical alternatives and schemes and maybe Zionism itself, socialism, all of the isms in which we Jews have been prominent are alternative schemes of salvation contrary to God's.

You following me? Testing, catch the control tower over. Lord, break through the haze and pierce our souls asunder. Bring my God your perspective to bear and rescue us from the kind of bland, wishy-washy, nondescript Christianity that has not moved Jews to jealousy and even questionably if it has affected Greeks and give it to us, my God, afresh in the sense in which it needs again to be communicated in the last days knowing that if we would take it up in that way we can expect the same kind of backlash, violent opposition, rejection, persecution that was the experience of the church at the first.

Somehow the gospel doesn't mean today or invoke today what it did then and we feel that we are amiss. It was right at the beginning but something is amiss now. So, Lord, let these first exploratory remarks begin to probe and open our understanding and our concern.

Thank you for this format tonight, that this should be your heart and burden here and let whatever I'm sharing, is it being recorded? Have a circulation beyond this immediate band of souls where it will do the most good and we thank and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, turn with me to Romans.

I've already quoted it. This gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first. But this morning I noticed for the first time the introduction of Paul in verse 1 of chapter 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

I never saw that before or realized that before, that there's some kind of conjunction between being an apostle and being set apart for the gospel. That maybe, well, set apart for the gospel. I think in other places Paul speaks of my gospel, not that he invented it, but for him it has become something intensely personal and passionate, my gospel.

The man was in love with the message and maybe this is the genius of what an apostle is and what an apostolic church is. And when the gospel will lose its, what, its apostolic character and become a bland

formula for salvation or just a cheap kind of word that people would be strained to define, something suffers with that loss that is apostolic, that the two things go together. Because it was together for Paul and it needs to be together for us.

Am I making any? Well, I won't ask you again. So I'm just ruminating and tossing out. I want to hear myself and want to probe this.

So, just to read this through, Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets and the Holy Scriptures. Well, already I'm getting a slant on this. No wonder Paul is so intensely preoccupied with the gospel.

No wonder it's part and parcel, part and parcel of what it means to be an apostle because look at the distinguished lineage here, promised beforehand through his prophets. Hey, this has got a history and a, what's the word, a backdrop, a preparation that is more than something of a Johnny come lately. Promised through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

The plot is thickening. The gospel according to his son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Isn't that a mouthful? My God, is that a mouthful? That deserves to be taken apart phrase for phrase, word for word, and examined.

It's a jewel. You have to hold it to the light and catch this facet and that. No wonder Paul honors the gospel.

No wonder he's a slave to it. It's his passion, his purpose for being when it has this kind of distinguished ancestry. But how much of this is lost to us? Descended from David.

See how Hebraic this is. This isn't some Johnny come lately New Testament phenomenon. This is a thing that has its formative elements in the whole history of the faith that goes all the way back to the prophets and to David, declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, which had validated and endorsed and made this the significant message of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, I'm remembering a remark made by a Jewish Christian theologian, Jacob Yosh, J-O-C-Z, who has since gone on to be the Lord. He said, Nothing reveals the radical content of the gospel than when a Jew is confronted by it. Now, why would that be? Because we Jews have been in the forefront, as I've already mentioned, of so many movements, of so much that's in the world.

And the vehemence of our opposition to it requires a deeper explanation than the fact that we have been persecuted in Jesus' name. I'm speaking also from the perspective that my Jewish mother, who has just gone to the Lord, Shabbat, this Saturday, at 7 a.m. in her sleep, at the age of 95, almost 96, was only a week old in the Lord and has resisted the gospel for the length of my believing life, 36 years. This is a little microcosm that deserves examination.

Born in London and never once influenced by anything English and Christian. And, in fact, I said, Did you ever notice the White Chapel mission to the Jews, which was a block and a half from the Brady Street buildings where my mother grew up in the Jewish tenement section? She never knew that it existed. Well, maybe some of the young men played ping-pong there, but I doubt if it had any really vital impact on that Jewish community.

Now it's boarded up, probably since I've been there last, it's been torn down, and right across the street is a flourishing mosque. And if the mission to the Jews is boarded up, you can be assured that its alternative will rise up in greater impressiveness than that which was boarded. There's something there that deserves consideration.

And so my mother, through a long life, disappointed in this son of hers whom she loved as a Marxist, atheist, but when I came home from Jerusalem 36 years ago as a believer, at the end of 14 months of hitchhiking, seeking for explanation for the unresolved quandaries of my life, my mother slammed the door in my face in her Brooklyn apartment building and shouted, and it echoed through the halls, he's gone mad, he's gone mad. My mother's had to live all these years with that disappointment of a son of promise who became, quote, a Christian. And for my mother to take the name of Jesus to her lips, no, no way.

She could not even so much as pronounce it. I had trouble 36 years ago in Jerusalem calling upon the name of the Lord. Something is amiss that salvation is of the Jews, and yet, the name of Jesus, the gospel, the word Christian, all of the things associated with salvation for you are reprehensible and distasteful for us.

And that we would resist the message with such vehemence that Paul, in his frankness as an apostle says, and they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake. You notice that last phrase? Like, who needs it? Because Jewish opposition is ultimate. I know you haven't experienced it.

You're probably not a Jew around here for miles. That's why I was mistaken for a Scot. But I can tell you, my first four years of public ministry was as a missionary to the Jews.

And I've had doors slammed in my face more than once and been spat at and kicked. And I know myself, the kind of firebrand that I was in my atheistic days. And if someone tried to witness to me, watch out.

I was dangerous. And yet Paul says, they're enemies for your sake. As if you need that opposition.

Because if you don't have it, you're going to rest on your knees. You're going to become comfortable and casual. And I don't know what.

There's something radical that you need as the church that we Jews and our opposition provide and that has been wanting from your experience that I think is a factor in explaining the blandness of the church. Because if it loses the vitality of the message of the gospel, which is central to its whole being, what can we expect the church itself to be at large? Got the picture? The church is God's provision for the proclamation of the gospel. It's its central purpose for being.

It's the central purpose for Paul as an apostle. So what then shall we say? And somehow, if we neglected you first and don't experience their opposition, something is going to leak out and has leaked out that I think explains our lamentable and present condition. So if that's our error, how shall it be corrected? But by going back to the point at which we left off from the biblical requirement to the Jew first.

Or else the gospel will suffer loss. It becomes disarmed and trivialized. It becomes a nomenclature, a formula.

For salvation is of the Jews. I'm trying to feel my way through something. There's a tension.

There's a connection in the wisdom of God. That needs to be brought together. That the church has lost so much that the Jew is not even considered.

And here's what struck me last night at another meeting here in Scotland. Where a woman said to me after the meeting, I'm talking about the coming catastrophe of Israel. That I'm expecting the defeat of that state and an expulsion again of Jews out from the state and into the world.

And in fact at a time of Jacob's trouble where Jews will be discomforted worldwide. And this woman who has a sympathy, sentimental affinity for Israel was offended by that and spoke to me afterwards. And she said, and what about the settlers? Don't they have God? And aren't they there in those settlements because of God? Don't they know God? Well, can they? Can you know God independent of Christ? No man knows the father but the son and he to whom the father will reveal him.

If you have not the father, you have not the son. That's what I understand in reading John and scriptures. That you can't know the father independent of the son.

The son is the revelation. If you see me, you see the father. I and the father are one.

How can this woman, a Christian, charismatic, spirit filled, say to me that those settlers, Orthodox Jews, know God? You know that that's a dangerous and frightening statement? Because if that's true, then the gospel is only really an option that is not all that important because if you can know God independent of the gospel and independent of Christ, it's only a secondary means at best but not an imperative thing as it was in the apostolic generation. There was an absoluteness. What's the word? A singular minded insistence for which men died.

Go you into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature. No guaranteeing you're going to come back from every part in the world where you're going to preach this because this is an unwelcome message and it's an offensive message and it's a dogmatic message and we're living in an age where dogmatic insistence on a single way is the height of offense. And who wants to offend anybody? You Scots are much too nice and you don't want to offend and you want to be accepted.

So how to be a respectable Christian and find acceptance without offending I think explains the unhappy condition of the church today. If the gospel was the single issue that we are called to proclaim in stubborn insistence that there's no other salvation given by God no other name given in the heaven and earth whereby men may be saved we are going to offend multitudes of people. And not only will we offend Jews we're going to offend Christians.

Particularly those Christians who are ecumenically minded and do not want to offend Jews and don't want to offend Muslims and don't want to offend this faith posture or that that somehow it's all a very nice mishmash and there are many paths to faith and to God and this is only one of many options. This is an age of relativism and pluralism. Why? Because we have moved away from the apostolic insistence that there's no other name given under heaven and earth whereby men may be saved and that the issue of salvation is the foremost reason for being.

Remember when Paul went to Athens and spoke to the philosophers on Mars Hill who were everyday seeking for some new thing and wanted to hear this curious rag picker who was speaking something about resurrection this disgusting Hebrew who didn't have the credentials of a philosopher and he said this unknown God whom you purport to seek you phonies you never do find him and you prefer to have him

remain unknown so he'll make no requirement or demand of your life him I will set forth to you.

Paul had what we Jews call chutzpah arrogance, single-minded insistence and in the end it killed him and maybe we need to understand that if we're going to proclaim the gospel with that narrow-minded insistence of the exclusive and dogmatic message it may require our life also and if we're unwilling for that how important a message is it? How important is salvation? Is redemption? What kind of issue is at stake in it? Is it just going to improve your life and you'll know the Lord and he'll find you a girlfriend, boyfriend and job security and happiness or is there an issue of eternity at stake?

A burning issue of eternity of which I could not persuade my mother she was ready to go to hell not afraid of hell or even believing that such an eternal fate awaited her because we Jews have no consciousness of any dimension beyond this life that's why we succeed in this life we have to because there's no prospect beyond it we've got to make our mark now and leave behind a fortune, a name, a reputation a book, a Nobel Prize you understand?

Eternity is not part of our consideration because you've never impressed us with that reality you're not living as if this life is only a transient thing and its purpose is to make the issue of eternity known and if you have failed with the Jew in your midst everywhere my mother's from London my family is still in London and not one of them has ever come to the faith and has a real, what's the word, contempt for that which is Christian or Gentile because they equate the two things as one they don't know that to be a Christian is one who has adopted their Messiah I didn't know it when I was a university graduate that the word Christ is Greek derived from Christos which is the translation of the Hebrew word Mashiach for Messiah had I known that one thing I would have been turned and

disposed to hear something more of what a Messianist is which is what a Christian is even in Israel they're called the Mashiachim the Messianists but the word Christian Christ Greek, Gentile has no Jewish, let alone Hebraic, connotation and you don't even know that you have so effectively dismissed the connection with the Jewish origins of which Paul speaks of the son of David that a Jew is not at all struck with the imperative question you need to go back and find that connection because you who are far off and without God and hope in the world drinking beer out of skulls were brought nigh by the blood of Messiah into the hope and covenant promises of Israel and even into the commonwealth of Israel salvation is of the Jews and if you have it it's because you have received it through the

Messiah of the Jews doesn't that give it a different coloration? so in the book of Romans in chapters 9-11 Paul is answering the question of the Roman church is God finished with the Jews? did they have their opportunity and they blew it? and now we are to inherit their promises and we are the new Israel of God and they are dismissed, they slew the prophets they crucified their own Messiah he says God forbid that you should believe that they're only temporarily out of the way God is able to graft them in again have they stumbled that they should permanently fall? no, it's only a momentary stumbling that salvation should come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy listen dear saints, I don't know how to say this I don't care whether you're in Tibet Morocco or Scotland the issue of

the Jew is central to the gospel to the faith and to the call of God for the church and to the degree that we have omitted that from our consciousness we are something other than the apostolic reality that God intends and our message will suffer because we're not even proclaiming it and when we seek to it's without the vigor, force and power that would have been ours because God says through Paul that this gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and if we've not seen

that power demonstrated with the Jew how shall we believe it with or for anyone? it takes power to persuade the Jew for 36 years I was unable to convince my mother though I convinced her as a Marxist I convinced her philosophically, ideologically in all my unbelieving years when I

came to the faith, boom! like an iron door shut because of the depth of my mother's prejudice against everything Gentile which is a synonym for everything Christian it took my mother to be nigh unto death a week before her passing when I was called to her bedside somewhere between 2 and 4 in the morning because she was hallucinating and fighting a battle for her soul and catching glimpses of hell that I came down and opened my mouth and out of my mouth poured one verse after another pertaining to the Messiah and to salvation until finally she was so done in by the word of God that she followed me to prayer to receive the Lord so I'm not going to her funeral Thursday I'm going to stick it out in Scotland and England trusting that my mother who is now in the invisible cloud of witnesses

overhead much prefers for me to speak the word of God to Anglo-Saxons who need to be radically reminded of their faith that might yet affect Jews before the end comes then I should run to Florida and be there at her graveside to pay my respect as her son I am antagonizing my uncle Harry in London who thinks it's appalling that I'm not coming to the funeral but I'm here for your sake which is to say I'm here for the Jews' sake because Paul was not an apostle to the Jews but to the Gentiles how do you figure that? a man with the depth of rabbinical background that Paul had that made him so admirably suited to be an apostle to Jews God makes him an apostle to the Gentiles and takes the fisherman who doesn't know which end is up and makes him in his simplicity and rudimentary education to be

an apostle to the circumcision how do you figure that? only one way that Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles because the issue of the Gentile church is the issue of Israel because had they stumbled that they should fall?

God forbid, but through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy there's a purpose for your salvation beyond yourself and if you have not found that purpose and embraced it and requires the power of the Holy Spirit to embrace it and to walk in it all you have adopted is a kind of Christian culture ok for your sake but having little consequence beyond yourself got the idea? you're not saved to the uttermost if you're still the center of your own concern you're saved when there's a purpose for your being beyond yourself and for which you're willing to sacrifice yourself that is salvation Paul cries out in chapter 9 of Romans that he would wish himself accursed for his brethren's sake I'm speaking the truth in Christ I am not lying my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit when he lays it on the line he lays it on the line I'm not... this is a true statement that the Spirit of God himself will confirm that I have a great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people my kindred according to the flesh you know what the church has thought especially in modern times this is a Jew feeling the depth of the lostness of his own people and willing to be accursed for their salvation because he's Jewish well you're wrong this is an apostle feeling the depth of the anguish of the lostness of his people because he knows the value and the significance of the gospel and knows that if they will not believe that Jesus is the Christ they will die in their sins my mother has been narrowly saved being stretched nigh unto death so weak and so frail, so infirm that she finally was able to be persuaded to call upon the name of the Lord that's why I can comfortably remain here and not run to Florida for her burial because I know where she is so if Paul's hot cry is not because of an ethnic identification he's not crying out of his Jewishness but out of his apostolicity what's our excuse? why aren't we anguishing? not only for Jews that are lost but for anyone who is lost but especially Jews, why? because God says salvation is of the Jews for them to miss their own salvation is a special irony of a

penetrating kind it's a scandal I don't suppose you've heard the name Calabar have you?

Swiss-German theologian I think he was a good Presbyterian he said in more than one place that the very existence of the synagogue alongside the church is a scandal and an indictment against the church that we have allowed its existence as if it stands for some valid alternative to the faith is an indictment against Christianity itself he's not inviting us to burn synagogues down but what he's saying is that their very existence assumes that there's something about Judaism that has a validity that does not require the gospel and once you've allowed that for Jews what shall you do with Muslims or Hindus or any other? the apostolic age was narrow, insistent, dogmatic singular in its insistence but why would they go out to every nation and risk their lives? because there's no other name

given on the heaven and the earth whereby a man may be saved out of eternal death so I'm concerned with that woman last night talking about orthodox Jews as if they know God and how then can they experience an expulsion again out of the land because evidently she has a relativistic view that sees for Judaism and orthodox Judaism a certain validity that the gospel and the scriptures do not allow she has a relativistic and pluralistic view that is in contradiction to the absolute imperative of the gospel in the word how did she get it? because she lives in this kind of relativistic world and her church and its message has never made that clear and somehow it even implies that the gospel, that orthodox Judaism can be equated with the gospel and is even a valid alternative to Christ although

the scripture says he who hath the son hath life and he who hath not the son hath not life and the wrath of God abides upon him and for Jews what shall we say? maybe a double wrath because salvation is of the Jews and when we forfeit the life of God in rejection upon us comes a wrath of double magnitude and is that not possibly an explanation for the kind of suffering that has been our experience throughout our whole Christ-rejecting history right up to this present day I think, you know I was going to say there are some of my newsletters out there but in our recent newsletter I wrote an article seeking to explain the present violent crisis in Israel coming at us from Muslims and suggesting that Islam is a heresy born out of Mohammed's adoption of our monotheistic Judaism because Islam is

another monotheistic religion but the faith of God is not monotheistic it's triune and we Jews had opportunity to know that in the coming of Jesus, the son who cried out to the father at the cross and gave his life without spot by the eternal spirit the crucifixion of Jesus was the most profound revelation of the fullness of the Godhead in its triune form that is to say, God as he in fact is and to reject that and stubbornly to insist on a narrow monotheism one encouraged and inspired Mohammed to form Islam along those lines and the greatest threat to Jewish life today is Islamic I was in Montreal, Canada when the days of rage broke out in Israel and on that day six synagogues had their windows smashed, their doors smashed graffiti written on the walls, tombstones knocked over the

reverberation and the consequence of what happened in Israel was felt in Jewish communities around the world and will again be felt with more than doors being smashed but heads this is the ironic judgment of God that whatsoever a man sows that too shall he reap it has cost the Jewish community to reject Christ that's why Paul was grieved and willing to wish himself accursed because he knew the consequence of that rejection that's why Jesus wept over Jerusalem because he could foresee prophetically what the consequences of that rejection would be even in modern times right to the present violence in Jerusalem now right to the past holocaust and right to the holocaust that is yet to come this is an important message, this gospel it's not a little cutesy alternative or shouldn't we be doing

something what is the motive in our proclamation we're bored, we have a guilt a sense of guilt that we should be doing something but is that the passion of an apostolic kind that would proclaim the message of which God says it's the foolishness of preaching by which a man believes are we willing to bear the scandal of that foolishness and the shame of it unless we are really persuaded of the truth and the power of that message because we ourselves have been redeemed by it to the uttermost so this whole view has been lost to the church as it has lost its recognition that but for the grace of God it was without God and hope in the world but has been brought nigh by the blood of Israel's Messiah so as to move them to jealousy that the natural branches might be grafted back in again the

church has an irrefutable and inexorable, excuse my language connection with Israel and the Jew and to the degree that it fails to recognize that and take it into its deepest consideration not as an obligation we have to but joyous affirmation the church suffers as the church its message suffers, its gospel suffers and we suffer our worship is bland we're saying the right things but we don't in the deeps of our hearts believe it it's not yet our reality something is wanting there's something rotten in Denmark there's something rotten in Scotland there's something rotten in Christendom it's the absence and the loss of the centrality of the Jew and of Israel in the church's own consideration for the church is the mercy of God for them and your salvation is not for yourself but so as to move

them to jealousy so until the gospel is said again in this lost context it becomes necessarily trivialized a nomenclature on how to get saved is not yet a dubious decision to insist upon its exclusive claims is to open the church to a fury of retaliation even from other sectors of Christendom desiring an ecumenical peace with Jews and other faiths you want to know that there's a war on? you want to know that there's a controversy? you want to know that there's a scandalous message that we're called to bear? that if we really bore it we would invite the angry reprisal of the world and even of the Christian world let alone of Jews and that there are Christian churches that will say why don't you leave them alone? as a woman said to me on an airplane once I'll never forget it with those

three seats together and I'm turning to this woman how did I even know she was Jewish? there was nothing to indicate that but I knew and I'm speaking to her in a very compelling way and the woman was so uncomfortable being challenged that the woman by the window finally turned in her Christian compassion and said why don't you leave her alone already? that's what you're going to hear why don't you leave them alone? haven't they suffered enough? what are you trying to do, make Christians out of them? this is going to take courage it's going to take conviction that you can answer that retaliating statement no, I'm not seeking to make Christians out of them I'm seeking to make Jews out of them because we suffered the Holocaust not because we were Jews but because we were not Jews enough and

you have an obligation to make known to us our own faith which we have rejected because salvation is of the Jews and who wants that kind of controversy if you're respectable? you don't want to stick out like the proverbial sore thumb you want to be good company cowards what did Shakespeare say? conscience doth make cowards of us all so to insist upon its exclusive claims is to open us to the fury of retaliation its promulgation will be seen as arrogant and that's the last thing that we want to be considered because we're nice guys and we don't want to insist that our way is necessarily the only way that's presumptuous and proud we want to give credibility to other faith postures you see what I'm saying? we're trapped folk we're either Christians of an apostolic kind or we have become

something else and the weakness of our message our inept ability to proclaim it our lack of desire to proclaim it the lack of recognizing its power, its centrality its significance condemns us why? because we have not been obedient to the Lord who said go ye into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature beginning at Jerusalem and Judea and then to Samaria and to the uttermost corners of the world to the Jew first, he gave us a priority because he knew we needed the collision, we needed the confrontation we needed to recognize the radical nature of that message we needed to realize that this message is so hated and despised and opposed that unless we go in the power of the spirit we're dead ducks and unless we're sent by a sending body of an apostolic kind it's vain that we

don't need some what do they call these organizations? para-church groups that are going to do the job for us when it's the task of the church itself well what kind of a church? a church that sends a church that will uphold those sent ones that bear that message in London and where so ever Jews are with intercessions and groanings that cannot be uttered because the church knows this is going to be fiercely contended and opposed why? because the last thing that Satan wants is for Jews to believe if they believe and return to the Lord the age is at its conclusion the king comes and establishes his throne in their holy hill of Zion and in their Jerusalem as a redeemed nation restored to the Lord so everything that the enemy can do to prevent the promulgation of that message to the Jews, he

will do and has done but he doesn't have to strain himself because we ourselves have abdicated our responsibility we're cowards, we intuit and recognize these Jews are tough yes it's one thing to talk to some drunken sop who's rolling in the vomit in the gutter about the gospel but talk to a Jew who has a university background who is erudite and cultured and has never ever so much as raised his voice to his wife, a lot better than what we've done and tell him that he needs your Christ talk about insult talk about indignation are we willing to bear that? see how the Lord has loaded this and are we impressed with their external appearance and their civility and their decorum and they have it all together and they're well mannered as some woman has said they're more Christian than Christians

and you're going to tell them that they're lost not on the basis of what you see with the natural eye in their distinguished being but because you know the word of God that however outwardly impressive they may be they are utterly lost and without hope and without God in the world which was your condition before you were brought nigh by the blood of their Messiah you're not impressed with their culture you know that when the moment of eternity comes and they pass into death there'll be a shriek, a holler and a scream that will send chills down your spine because in that moment all values are reversed and in that moment a person is known as they are known and that they know that they've been living a fool's paradise that they've been seduced by culture that God is not impressed with their

being nice guys or being philanthropists or they've given to charity but that there's no man good, no not one if God were to count iniquity who can stand and the sinner who dies in his sins shall be eternally lost there's a shriek there's an unremitting and eternal cry that's what I wanted to see my mother saved from and by the grace of God he did it at the last moment but only after she was waited on hand and foot by an entire Christian community 24 hours a day around the clock and prayer for years everywhere I've traveled in the world pray for my mother Esther and our own prayer in the face of stubborn repudiation until finally the Lord poured the vial down on her head of all the prayers that have gone up over

the years it's tough to win a Jew they are the epitome of a world system when you scratch them when you press them with the gospel you're not just putting before them some religious alternative you're striking at

the heart of a whole system, a mindset a mentality that is of the world and the powers of the world the invisible spectral principalities and powers of the air have had a field day with that people and when you touch them you touch the world and its power no wonder that they'll scratch your eyes out hey but isn't this the purpose for which we were born again or was it our career or our physical comfort or our pleasant Christian fellowship I mean let's get with it what are we about, what do we call for, what is the church and what kind of embarrassment will we face eternally when

we have to stand before the Lord and have lived a life without distinction or accomplishment there'll be some shrieks and screams from us that will be unremitting because when he comes he brings his rewards with him to give to every man according to his labors and insomuch that we have neglected the priority of God to the Jew first do you know what we have said to the powers of the air that have observed us Jesus we know and Paul we know but who are you your harmless little charismatic society and your choruses and amens and hallelujahs no threat because we have observed that you though you say Lord Lord and sing all of these elegant choruses do you realize what you're singing when it comes to obedience you have flinched and you have found a way to circumvent the requirement of God to the

Jew first and in that you have telescoped or indicated to the powers of the air that you are not a people of obedience to the Lord and therefore you are of no consequence to be feared it's costly to disregard the clear injunction of God and that has been the historic condition of the church since the apostolic time and that's why we're no longer apostolic we're a Sunday culture with parachurch groups to do for us what we're unable ourselves as the church to do you know what God has done he's seen to it that we Jews are proliferated everywhere, try and find a nation in which there's not some Jewish presence right under your very nose so we're without excuse but I'll tell you what if they're not here now they'll be here very shortly it's a whole other story, maybe tomorrow I'll speak about

it Jews are going to be cast again in and through the nations dispersed, another exile another flight another exodus through all nations in the time of Jacob's trouble they'll be coming through and then you'll be tested what will you do with them then what will you say to them then in the last opportunity for them to hear or perish will you speak it as a formula you need to be saved brother well I praise God that 36 years ago when I was the hitchhiking Jewish atheist the man who picked me up as I stood at the side of the road for 3 hours in the drizzle and the rain with a brand new car and stopped and didn't just wave me on but got out of the car and greeted me at the side of the road I thought he's got to be a homosexual why else would a man stop for a soggy mess like me an angry modern

man but he took my filthy rucksack, saturated and threw it in the back seat of his car and didn't even notice what it did to the upholstery I thought what manner of man is this and had me sit down in the front seat and we drove off, I felt like I was an exalted guest and that I was doing him a favor and he turned to me in German and he said why are you traveling like this it's past the tourist season, you're no kid and so well as I could I tried to explain I'm a modern man not only I am a modern man I am the quintessential modern man we Jews are the authors of modernity we have given the world Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein relativism we have created the modern world and it's dying and I said I'm looking for the deepest answers to life and before I could finish I said and I'm a

Jew oh cats, you dumb dumb what do you want to tell him that for and I turned cautiously to look to see if he was offended and the man was just radiating joy it was like a neon tube had been turned on that he had picked up a Jew as if it were a big deal it was not a big deal for me to be a Jew why should he be excited and he insisted that we stop for refreshments at his expense and I poured out my soul to a Gentile

stranger why would I do that to tell a Gentile stranger who picks me up off the side of the road the deepest secrets of my life and the anguish of my soul as a modern man whose ideologies and faith and hope have collapsed with the failure of a marriage to a German woman and all of the other kinds of things that have brought me to an end of myself why would I tell him that why

would I tell him I'm fearful for the future of mankind I'm expecting an atomic holocaust I'm expecting a breakdown of human values I'm expecting blood to roll in the streets why would I tell that to a Gentile stranger when I've not shared something like that with my mother, a closest friend and some family there was something about that man that drew my heart out he listened to me as if listening were an act of love he wasn't just impatiently waiting to jump on me with John 3.16 and put a notch in his belt the man's hearing of me was an act of love and finally when everything was spit out and I'd come to the ultimate end of myself what is this guy going to say now I've been to Marxist institutes I'm a university graduate I'm a teacher of history there's nothing new under the sun I had my

arms folded over my chest and he said to me in a quiet and assured voice Artie said do you know what it is that the world needs I thought wow this guy knows how to ask the questions yeah, I want to know what the world needs I'm dying for what the world needs double dare you to tell me what would you have said if you picked me up of course I wouldn't expect that you would but hypothetically if you had picked me up and you had taken me at your expense to a Scottish coffee house and heard me bare my soul to you and there's a man dangling from a thin strand over the precipice of eternal death disillusioned and utterly hopeless and one wrong word will snap that cord and let him plummet to an eternal doom what would you have said are you saved brother do you know Jesus if you would have said

even that much or would you give me a little pat on the back and give me some I don't know what humanistic aside that would have guaranteed my death I'm looking at this man what is he going to tell me about what the world needs and Artie said you have to hear this in German what the world needs is for men to wash one another's feet and when I heard that down I went at least my human spirit went down and was weeping on the floor while I continued to sit in my chair looking very defiant and totally unmoved be prepared for that don't look at their faces don't think that because they're angry or because they're silent or because they seem to be unimpressed that your words were without effect it's deeper than you know especially if it's not your word but the Lord's if this man had said John

3.16 or quarter of the scripture or given me a formula you know where I'd be long before today dead I'm alive and blessing you I trust because at a critical juncture in a once and for all existential moment a man did not give me a religious cliché which he could cheaply have said and then gotten rid of the responsibility but he spoke the one thing calculated to pierce my soul what the world needs is for men to wash one another's feet instantly I had a vision of the angry art cats hot shots of the world bending to wash the feet of those with whom they're in opposition school teachers with their administrators and black and white and Palestinian and Israeli wherever there's conflict I instantly recognized that washing of the feet of the other would bring reconciliation without bloodshed and

something rose in my heart like Eureka and before I could contain myself this man went on to tell me about the gospel of Jesus Christ in German and I'm trying to say, hey, hold it I'm a Jew, that's not for me, that's you guys you have your book, you have your this, we have ours but I had no voice and he went on and the time he finished I was done for I left that Swiss coffee house like a drunken sailor I staggered out the power of what had impacted me in a moment, because a man did not speak a cliché, but the word of the Lord how did he know to speak it? because the spirit of God knew me and knew that I was an idealist

a social activist a political ideological man always looking for something to save the world that's us Jews and never finding it that even when I was a Marxist and a

communist we were doing one another in and didn't know what kindness is when he spoke, wash one another's feet because that man was in such union with God he was such a man of the spirit that the spirit could give him the thought appropriate to me and to speak it with an anointing that pierced my soul asunder and put me on the path of salvation could you have performed that? not in a moment unless you're consistently a man or woman of the spirit you see? we Jews are for your sake or else you're going to slumber you're going to fall back in your seat you're going to reduce the faith to some kind of bland culture except that we are a test and a challenge for you to be the men and women of the spirit moving us to jealousy speaking words that we cannot evade and are calculated to bring us to

an eternal salvation salvation is of the Jews you owe us something you receive something from us and God is waiting for you to give it even if you'll be called arrogant and presumptuous and narrow and dogmatic and exclusive you can expect anger, rejection abuse, insult, opposition maybe martyrdom hey, what a privilege a crown, an eternal crown for faithful obedience even if it has required my life and here's what you need to know you dear saints there's so much to tell you that the church is called to be a martyr church by definition that when the Lord ended my 14 months sabbatical silence about 15 years ago with an invitation to speak on the mystery of Israel and the church in the last days the first thing I spoke of of 7 messages was that to move the Jew to jealousy and I never said how

and through 6 messages I roamed the landscape, never answering the question went to bed Saturday night Sunday morning is the final message and not knowing what that message was as I don't know tomorrow's at 3 o'clock in the morning not 2.59, 3.01 3 o'clock, I shot out of bed with one word, martyrdom the final message was the church that will move Jews to jealousy is a martyr church particularly if it's a martyr church for their sake what you Gentiles are going to be martyrs for us Jews what did we ever do for you you have every reason to resent us dislike us we are arrogant look at the trouble we bring in the world and look at the things for which we will be accused and you're going to be willing to suffer martyrdom and maybe even at our own hands if that doesn't move a Jew to jealousy I

don't know what will if that doesn't impress a Jew that what you are about is of uttermost importance that you're willing to die for it I don't know what else could move them well let me end this it is the willingness to die for the message that attests to its singular significance and to the issue of eternity itself as not only being real but being a foremost and ultimate consideration we are not living as if that's true and Paul said to the philosophers at Mars Hill God has established of one blood all nations of men and established the bounds of their habitation that they might seek after God if happily they may be found of him Paul is telling philosophers there's only one reason for human existence there's only one reason for the existence of nations, it's not for culture it's not for

anything else but to give men opportunity in this life transient and short that it is to establish the issue of eternity that was Paul's narrow view of reality and the purpose for being and they scoffed and they said well we'll hear again of this man and they never did, but some clave unto Paul and believed because there's something about Paul's insistence and the reality of what he conveyed that you could not separate the man from his message they clave unto Paul and believed the man was his message so either the gospel is a scandal or a cliché a formula for salvation or a message of eternal life that requires the sending of messengers by a sending body that intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered we need to make that message our own that the issue of redemption is something

that we have come to know through the gospel that we ourselves are saved to the uttermost and don't think that that is automatically true many of us in this room have only recited a formula have only quote made a decision and our lackluster Christian life indicates how wanting we are in the full salvation that God intends when you read the biography of Oswald Chambers who was eloquent and impressive as a teacher at the same time going through a dark night of the soul at the very time he was being complimented for how well he expressed the gospel and the scriptures, he himself was agonizing over the issues of faith for his own soul.

The Lord gave him a long season of a suffering of the dark night of the soul but when he finally came out of it he could speak the reality of God and the message of God with such insight and such penetration as has been blessing saints of every generation still and whom I read every morning and you should also are you willing for a dark night of the soul? are you willing to move from bland formulas and easy decisions and shallow Christianity to a radical appropriation of a faith because it has been made unmistakably real through trials to which God will submit you that you might know what it means to be redeemed to the uttermost and therefore proclaim it with that kind of reality I want to pray for the church over the last days that the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former we need to repent for how far we have fallen Lord precious God on high what shall I say Lord, forgive us we have not taken your word seriously you have said to the Jew first, you have said this gospel is the power of God because the message itself is inane the message itself is intellectually embarrassing the message itself does not commend it intellectually to anyone it's a piece of foolishness, it's a scandalous message and unless it is conveyed by power how shall anyone believe it unto salvation and Lord we have not known that power and not only have Jews suffered for the neglect, but Greeks so I'm asking for revival, that is revival indeed going back to the point where we missed it and left off in our own obedience and why you should speak that tonight I don't know, because of the ministry here that is occupied with and purports to be concerned for the propagation of the gospel, you use that to trigger these thoughts for me, I don't know it's just a sounding board and that this word will go out beyond them to a church that needs to be pricked in its neglect in falling into a relativistic, pluralistic world, where it's an embarrassment to be insistent there's only one way and it's narrow and that the issue is eternal and to insist upon that with those who are the foremost expositors of the world and its values, the Jew and to trust the power of God to succeed there and to be willing to suffer, not just insult, but injury because we know that this is a message of life or death thank you my God help me Lord to be what I ought in this regard, calling the church to this kind of reality precious God, teach us as you taught Oswald Chambers what redemption means, my God to esteem it and its message and to be willing to bear the offense of it, no matter what, and we thank you and give you praise for the privilege of it, in Jesus name

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