

The Holy Ark of God

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes the profound significance of the Holy Ark of God as a representation of God's presence and glory in Israel's history and its relevance today.

Duration: 53:54

Scripture: Psalm 102:12, Matthew 6:33, Acts 15:14-17

Topics: "Ark Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for a fire to fall upon us before it can fall upon the congregation. He calls for a sacrifice of purity, praise, and righteousness to be offered to God. The speaker also highlights the importance of proclaiming the full counsel of God, including the eternal fate of those who do not accept Jesus. He urges the audience to understand the urgency of the times and the need for repentance before the impending judgment.

Transcript

This is tape number K013. Art Katz speaking on the subject, The Holy Ark of God. It's a great honor given of God to bring the word at this holy convocation.

And it wasn't until this afternoon that I was told by my precious brothers that I had the word, that I was first informed that I was going to be speaking it. But this is not an uncommon experience in these days, to sit in an auditorium and to know that you're to be the speaker that night, and to hear a word come forth by the Spirit of God that enjoins God's people to hearken to the word that shall be spoken, and you yourself wondering who is the speaker, what it is that you're going to speak. But I'll tell you that from the very inception of Shekinah 74, this has been the characteristic mode of God.

The Spirit of God has given us the name of this convocation. He gave us these dates, He called us to this location, and He told us to call it a convocation of charismatic Jews. We've enjoyed a wonderful peace of God.

There's been no human sweat nor striving. No flesh has lifted up a tool. God is all in all.

And after my colleagues told me that I was to bring the word in this service, and I had nothing, I went to my room and sought the face of God, and I have a word. It's a word which I've never before spoken. It's a subject for which I am vastly in the natural unqualified to speak.

It's a subject so ambitious, so profound, that I think it would terrify the most astute scholar. It's got to do with the holy ark of God. I'm going to ask you just to bow your head with me.

I believe that that ark and that presence has already been born into this place, and that God wants to speak to us something utterly significant for the end times. Precious holy God, Lord, we're full of tremblings, mighty God, to stand before Thy people, Lord, and to open our mouths, Lord, to proclaim the holy things of God. But we ask You, precious God, such a possession, Lord, of Your vessels in these days, that no flesh shall boast, Lord God, in Your presence.

All to the glory of God. To God be the glory. Lord, speak to us this night.

Oh, precious God, unburden Your heart. Speak to us things, Lord, that have been concealed from the beginning of the ages that are now being revealed. Breathe upon us the spirit of revelation.

Open to us Your mysteries. Teach us, Lord God, the enigma of our Jewishness. Work Thy great work by Thy word and by Thy spirit.

We wait upon You, Lord, and anoint our ears and hearts to receive and to respond to Your word. In Yeshua's great name we ask it. Amen.

I had read references to the Ark of God here and there. I had never made it before a study. I knew it was a vast theme, one that I should keep my hands off.

This isn't something for a novice. I knew that it was attended by mystery. I knew that it had its inception in the beginning of Israel and that it shall come again in its glory at the culmination of the ages.

I knew that when it existed, Israel's glory existed. And when it departed, Israel's glory departed. And I just reviewed this afternoon some of the highlights that pertain to the Ark of God.

And if there's anything that has been pressed upon my consciousness is that however sacred and holy a thing this is, it has been something that has been grossly maltreated by the children of Israel. Early in our history we committed it to the keeping of two of Eli's sons who brought it out to a battlefield where the battle was lost and the holy ark fell into the hands of the Philistines. Maybe we should have known better than to entrust it to the hands of two such priests as these, who are priests in name only, who seduced women at the temple door.

One's name was Hophni and the other's name was Finis. And I understand that the name of the first means fisty. And I don't know what that suggests, but I get a picture of something belligerent, something that has to do with prowess and muscles and throwing one's weight around.

And maybe we have some expression of that in our modern Jewish scene today. God calls these two sons of Eli, though they were technically priest sons, and sons of Belial, sons of worthlessness, because no fistiness and no belligerence and nothing that has to do with a knotted fist can have anything to do with the purposes of God. The other's name, Finis, means mouth of pity.

And here I'm at a greater loss. And if the first has some shadowy suggestion of a J.D.L., perhaps the second has a suggestion of an American Jewish committee, an A.J.C., and the whole spectrum of Jewish organizations that are mouths of pity, well-meaning, humanistic, philanthropic, having to do with good intention, but not truly of a priestly kind. Sons of Belial also, worthless in the sense of affecting God's

end-time purposes.

And so was the holy ark of God lost to the Philistines in that battle. You may wonder how it is that God allowed so holy a thing as his ark to fall so into their hands. But a clue is given us in Psalm 78, where we're told that the Lord cast out the heathen also before them, in the 55th verse, and divided them in inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God. They kept not his testimonies, but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers. They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel, so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hands. The news of the lost tabernacle of God, of the glory of God, the ark of God, was brought to Eli in the very hearing, in the mere word of that loss.

Eli fell backward and broke his neck, and was killed. When the same word came to his daughter-in-law, the son of one of these two that were described, who was in travail and childbirth, the child was born, but in her dying breath, she named that child Ichabod, meaning the glory of God is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken. And later on in the melancholy history of that ark, when it had for 70 years remained with the Philistines, and I wonder then what Jewish religion was without the holy ark of God in its place, that we learn that in attempting to bring it back, some very sorrowful lessons.

It came finally to a community of Israelites in Beth Shemesh, and some men peered into the holy ark, and we read in the scriptures that God slew over 50,000 of the men of this Israeli community for peering in the ark. I don't know what that suggests to you, but I know that that kind of curiosity is not honored of God. And I suppose that there's something still of this nature that persists in Jewish life.

Men that love to play with the law, and love to expound upon it, and love to delight themselves in the expounding of great sages and seers, and the great rabbis of old, they play with it, they examine it, they turn it over, and I wonder if we haven't suffered a kind of spiritual death far greater in number than the 50,000 who peered that day into the ark of God. It's not an object for curiosity. It contains the holy tablets of the law, not something that we should calculate, but something by which we should live.

And then when David came to obtain again the holy ark, and bring it back to its rightful place, he brought it on a cart that, instead of bearing it upon the shoulders of the priests, separated unto God, and when that cart was jostled, when the animal stumbled, a man raised his arm to touch it, and God immediately slew him. He was not a priest separated unto the Lord. And again, the ark was put aside, and when David finally came to obtain it, it was borne as God intended as it should from the first, on the shoulders of the Levites of God, under separated priests, according to his word.

There's a mystery about the ark, but in numbers and early references made in the 33rd verse of the 10th chapter, where we read, they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey to search out a resting place for them. Is this mere biblical style? Can we suggest that an ark has the attributes of personality, that an ark can search out a resting place for Israel? That's clearly what the word of God says. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp, and it came to pass when the ark set forward that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before

thee.

And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel. Precious children, I don't think that this is some kind of biblical style. Moses addressed the ark as if he were addressing God.

It was the ark that searched out a resting place for Israel. When the ark moved, Israel moved. When the ark rested, Israel rested.

Return, O Lord, Moses said, unto the many thousands of Israel. We see again in 2 Samuel, in the 7th chapter, in the 5th verse, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me a house, a house for me to dwell in, whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle, in the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel. Spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar? In the 6th chapter of the same book, in the 2nd verse, And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Balale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubim.

I learned something this afternoon. I learned that to the ark is ascribed all of the prerogatives and even the character and nature of deity, all of the things that pertain to the personality and power of God. I learned in the verses just spoken, that God himself acknowledged that he was in the ark and one with the ark, that he dwelt and he walked in that tabernacle and in that tent.

And I learned in the verse most recently spoken, that the ark of God has a name, and that name is the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubim. And I suppose for us Jews, one last reference on this theme in 1 Samuel, in the 4th chapter, in the 7th verse, it comes from the lips of Philistines themselves. When that ark was first carried into battle, when Israelites thought that by the bringing of such an object into battle, that somehow they had a good luck charm, something that was going to win the day for them, when the glory of God had already essentially departed them.

And the Philistines heard a great shout as the ark came into the camp and girded up their loins to meet these inspired Israelis who had the ark in their possessions. And the Philistines, it says in the 7th verse of the 4th chapter, 1 Samuel, were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Even the uncircumcised knew when they heard the shout that the ark of God had come into the camp of Israel, and when the ark of God came, God had come into the camp.

God wants to remind us tonight something about a holy ark who, when its presence was with Israel, so also was God's glory, and when it departed, so also did God's glory. It was an ark made of very precious wood, overlaid with gold, and set about with a crown of gold. What a wonderful picture of the humanity of Jesus in that wood, a fleshly kind of tabernacle, overlaid with gold, that substance that speaks to us of deity, and then set about with a crown of gold, the lordship of Yeshua HaMashiach.

The ark of God is God. And when that ark shall again return to Israel, so shall the glory of God return. No accident that in the gospel of Luke, in the second chapter, when that little child was brought to the temple to be dedicated, of all of the thousands of infants that have been brought to the temple to be dedicated, I don't think that the infant Jesus was distinctively different from other of the Jewish children.

And yet there was an elderly Jew whose natural sight was dim, of whom we are told that he was brought by the spirit of God to the temple, for he had been told that he shall not depart this life until he had seen God's Christ. And when he looked upon that child, he said, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. What an embarrassment to us, who have had the advantage of this testimony in our possession for 2,000 years, and who profess to be waiting for the coming of the Messiah, and are willing in our disputations with Jewish believers to say, well, I have no need of your Messiah, mine is yet to come.

I wonder with what eagerness are they waiting? Because of this, when it was said, he was a devout and just man waiting for the consolation of Israel. And I believe that that has got everything to do with being able to perceive God's Christ. Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, this precious Jewish man said, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel.

Nothing has changed, children. It's still an ark made of wood, overlaid with gold, and set about by a crown, the lordship of Yeshua HaMashiach. And this ark has ever and always been at the heart of Israel's destiny.

It was with us in the wilderness years, in the tabernacle. It was with us at the Jordan crossing, when God said, you've been on this side of Jordan long enough. When you see the priests of God and the Levites bearing the ark, then prepare yourself to cross over, for you've not been this way heretofore.

The following of the ark has ever and always been the heart of Israel's destiny. We took it with us through the wilderness, and we brought it with us into the new land of promise. It was with us at Shiloh, and it came again at Zion, where David brought it up with the shouts of priests, and music, and trumpets, and dancing, and was himself rebuked by his own wife for the unabashed demonstration of joy that he gave in the day when the ark came to that tabernacle that rested on Mount Zion.

And then it came finally to a permanent abode in Solomon's temple. How Jews have been ruminating and lamenting over the destruction of the temple of Solomon. And even to this very day, can we find our Orthodox brethren bowing, and weeping, and lamenting, and wailing by the proverbial wailing wall.

Why? The last physical remnant of something that once housed what was the glory of God. And I tell you, when the ark of God departed the temple, the temple was but a shell. And it wasn't long before the glory departed Israel, and not one stone was left standing upon another.

Precious children, where is the ark of God today? Where is the glory of God today? Because I know from my own experience, however sharp and bright, lustrous, prepossessing, impressive a specimen I was until ten years ago, I have covenanted with my God, and he has utterly stripped me of every such natural endowment. And you never met a more dull thing than art cats without the holy anointing of God. Except that the Holy One of Israel, who came to lighten the Gentiles, is my glory, I have none.

And so is it for the entire tabernacle of God, which is being built in this hour. He is our glory. Where is the ark of God today? Two thousand years of religious history without the glory of God.

Oh, what a wearisome exercise, however well-meaning and well-intending. All kinds of shackles and bobbing of our heads, all kinds of dutiful attention to our religion. It's a pitiful thing without the presence of God.

Ceremony, ritual, duty, without God's presence, without God's shekinah, without God's glory. What is God doing now to restore it? In Acts, in the 15th chapter, a reference is made to Old Testament portion from the prophets, when James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.

And to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written, After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down. And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

I will return, God promised. I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and the ruins thereof. I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called.

Upon which Gentile was God's name called? When the prophet, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recorded and spoke that passage. I believe that this is an utterance for our ears. When Gentiles the world over are called by his name, many of whom have missed also the same glory of which we speak tonight.

But the set time is come, God tells us in Psalms, in the hundredth and second Psalm, thirteenth verse, twelfth verse, but thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come. We don't have time now to breathe to you God's present day dealings with his Jewish people.

Many of you know them intimately well, and if we had the occasion, the opportunity, to pass a microphone through this audience, how well could we acknowledge out of what God has done in our lives, as unsuspecting Jewish men and women, who had not so much as the vaguest notion of a living God, falling on the sand by the beaches of New York, in our utter desperation, not so much as having received witness from human lips or a piece of literature, in our desperate cry, O God, if you are, show me, to see in the heavens a vision of Christ on his cross, and offer it the death and the resurrection of the Lord, and to fall upon our faces and cry out, the Lord he is God. We can multiply such testimonies in this day, for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come, for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof, so the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all of the kings of the earth, thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer, and I suppose perhaps we can call ourselves the destitute. We had invited two renowned rabbis to address us, and although they instantly assented, as we came closer to this event tonight, first one, and then the other declined. One without so much as the courtesy of himself giving the explanation, and the other with much explanation of the enormous pressure that had come upon him in rabbinical circles not to participate with us in this convocation.

We're a sorry thing in the eyes of some of our kinsmen, a destitute thing, and a beggarly thing, but God says that he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. And this shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. We are hearing the words that were addressed to us early in the time of David for this generation now.

The time to favor her, Zion, yea, the set time is come. And so God reminds us in Isaiah 60, arise and shine. For thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness to people. But the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and the kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Lift up thine eyes round about and see, all they gather themselves together. They come to thee, thy son shall come from far, and thy daughter shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.

The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The time has come again, children, for the ark of God to be lifted by the priests and by the Levites. For a great darkness and intense and thick gloom is covering the earth, and God is speaking to us to arise and shine, for our light is come.

If we return to 2 Chronicles, the 5th chapter, we have a reminder of one instance when that light and that glory came to Israel. An enormous occasion in the history of our people when after God had dwelt with us in tents, he allowed a house to be built, a permanent abode and a dwelling. And what went into that temple staggers even our modern imagination.

So unstinting and so lavish was the pouring out of Israel to prepare a dwelling for the Shekinah glory of God. Gold and silver and jewels and earrings and bracelets and all that they had poured out for the building of this great temple. Sums of money that would stun modern economists.

And the glory of that temple was so great that no man now can have some sense of the magnitude of it. And imagine when it was completed. God did not allow a hammer to be lifted that the sound of labor could be heard.

Stones fitted together that were prepared in obscurity and so also is the pattern to this hour. But when it was finished, we read in the second verse of that fifth chapter, then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes and the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel unto Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David which is Zion. Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which was in the seventh month.

And all the elders of Israel came and the Levites took up the ark and they brought up the ark and the tabernacle of the congregation and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle. These did the priests and the Levites bring up. Also King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark sacrificed sheep and oxen which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

And the priest brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into his place to the oracle of the house into the most holy place even under the wings of the cherubims. The tenth verse, there was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt. And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place for all the priests that were present were sanctified.

And they were addressed and arrayed in white linen that in the thirteenth verse it came even to pass as the trumpets and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised the Lord saying for he is good for his mercy endureth forever that then the house was filled with a cloud even the house of the Lord so that the priest could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud for the

glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. I believe with all my heart that we're not just reviewing an historical episode in the glorious history of Israel but that God is impressing again upon our hearts a pattern that has never changed.

How desperately do we need the Shekinah glory of God to fall upon a world that is growing increasingly dark upon a Jewish people who in their most well meaning intention have wearily grown in a religion without the glory of God. How the world desperately needs that light, that presence, that freedom that invites praise and worship and love and the extinction of everything in us that's freshly that leads to separation, divisiveness, anger, bitterness. Oh precious children, God gave us the name around a table wherein were seated several Jewish disciples, Shekinah 74.

The glorious presence of God but I believe that we shall not see this presence outside this auditorium, the world and among our people where it is so desperately needed until all of the elders of Israel are assembled together before the king. All of the heads of the tribes, all of the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel before our king. And I suppose if we could imagine that nothing should be accomplished in this conference but this one thing, it would have been justification enough.

But I know that God has many glorious things. But the one thing to which I'm alluding now is this. Do you recognize how historic an hour this is in this university? In the same place where only a few years ago, students ran amuck under the inspiration of satanic spirits to destroy, to ruin, to make travesty, to urinate and defecate in the university president's office.

Sadly, much under the leadership of our Jewish brethren, God has said, in this place you shall hold this holy convocation. And we sent out the invitation. We trembled.

We had never undertaken anything so large. We wondered if this room was too large and we would not be able to fill it. But I just ask you to turn around and see what God has done this night.

There are Jewish believers and friends of Israel in this room from probably almost every state in this country, from coast to coast, north to south, from Louisiana to California, and Jewish ministries are represented in this room who have never in one place, in one time, ever been together before. Precious children, there's a pattern tonight to which God is reminding us. You want the glory of God to fall? You want again His Shekinah glory in His presence? When all the elders of Israel and all of the chiefs of the fathers and all of the heads of the tribes shall be assembled together with our King, we shall meet the first but necessary condition of our God, for His way has never changed.

They were brought to a feast in the seventh month, and so also are we. This is the end of the ages, and everyone who has an eye, a spiritual eye to see, knows it. And we're brought to the final consummating feast of God.

We are in the seventh month. And so King Solomon and all of the congregation of Israel are assembled unto him before the ox, sacrificed sheep and oxen which could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And however ignorant I am, and don't deserve in terms of natural credentials to be speaking to you, I can say this on the basis of my scant understanding, that whenever the fire of God has fallen, wherever the glory of God has been revealed, it has always been preceded by a sacrifice of vast magnitude.

If not numerically, then in great significance and meaning. Elijah had to lay out a great sacrifice before God. Hack it to pieces and lay it open before God, nothing concealed.

Bloody, painful sacrifice. And even that was not sufficient, except that it first be watered by twelve barrels of water, each for the tribes of Israel. And so also is it to this day that if God's fire is to fall, it will not fall on dry sacrifice.

We must make of ourselves, our bodies, a living sacrifice if the glory of God is to fall in the end of the ages. This was a mighty sacrifice and we shall have as much of God's presence, God's shekinah, God's glory, as we ourselves shall willing to be laid out before him in a sacrifice that cannot be counted nor numbered nor told for multitude. I praise God with all my heart that this convocation is not a Ben Israel production.

I praise God that it's not a Ben Yeshua production. I praise God that it bears no man's name and no organization's name. It is a convocation of charismatic Jews.

God is wanting to sacrifice children of sheep and oxen that cannot be counted nor numbered for multitude. Our fleshly ambitions, our lusting after the acknowledgement of men, our craving to be seen and to be heard, wanting our name, our ministry, our organization to be promoted and to be made known. But God's fire shall not fall except everything fleshly, everything carnal, and oh, I tell you, there's a need for a great heaping sacrifice.

Jealousy, pride, dissension, suspicion, rivalry, contention, but speak the name Jewish and you think of two men, you get instantly the three proverbial arguments. And embarrassingly enough, Jewish believers are not altogether exempt from this Jewish characteristic. Oh, children, there needs to be a sacrifice made before God of sheep and oxen that cannot be told nor counted nor numbered for multitude.

There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb. And even when the priests came in to minister, though they were priests called of God, though they were dressed in white vestments, yet were they required to leave the holy place, for the priests could not minister when the glory of God fell. There was nothing in the holy of holies but the two tablets of the law.

And so must it be also in the end of the ages. There's got to be a unity of God's people. All of the elders, all of the chiefs of the fathers, there's got to be a sacrifice that cannot be counted nor numbered.

There's got to be a purity, a holiness, that there be nothing but the two tablets of the law. And who is fit to speak even on this word? Who of us is simple enough to think that we're going to run to Webster's dictionary and find an ample explanation of the meaning of the word holy? We've got to experience it. It's got to happen to us.

God has got to breathe upon us such a spirit that we might understand to what degree we have already trafficked in this world. To what degree the things that are subtle and insidious have already stolen their way into our hearts and spirits and minds and lives. There was nothing in the ark but the two tablets of the law.

And even those called to be priests dressed in priestly vestments were not allowed to stand in that place where God's Shekinah glory came. There's got to be a praise, one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and praised the Lord saying that His mercy endures forever, then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.

And every one of us, I think, understands that there's praising and praising. And we have already enjoyed this night such a quality of praise in such a purity and such an authenticity and such a freedom and such a

joy that it beggars and makes sickly any lesser thing than has to do with amens and hallelujahs that are shouted mechanically and by the numbers. One voice, children, in a praise that comes out of hearts and lives that are truly redeemed in mind, body, souls, and spirits, whose lives are healthy and pure before God, whose marriages are a testimony to His redemptive power, whose fellowships are His glory.

When we shall speak with one voice, one shout, one praise, the cloud of God shall again fill His house. The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. And in the seventh chapter of this same book we read from the first verse, now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices and the glory of the Lord filled the house.

And the priest could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever. I don't know what's going to happen in these days.

None of us who have been with Shekinah 74 from its inception know. We only know that we have been following God step by step to this moment. For the first time God has called such a convocation as this in the heart of this great city, my own birthplace and the place where I grew up as an adolescent and many times stalked these streets in despair and futility and trying to understand the nature of this life and this world.

Two and a half million of our people in this city. It's a great Jewish city. It's the crossroads of our Jewish life, the heart of our intellectual and Jewish culture.

God said hold Shekinah 74 here, a block and a half away from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Across the street from the Union Seminary where we have the Gentile equivalent of our desiccated Judaism. Across the street from Manhattan School of Music where Jewish kids are seeking careers in culture whom God has called to be nation of priests and a light unto the world.

Teachers college around the corner and so can we go on repeating the institutions of culture and intellect that are everywhere about us. Have you ever come back from witnessing to your own people and even your own family with a sense of futility and saying what does it take? What does it take? I'll tell you what it's going to take and what it has always taken. It's going to take the Shekinah glory of God.

It's going to take fire of God falling from heaven. Because when Elijah made that great sacrifice, when he fulfilled the conditions of God, when by the power of this Holy Spirit he challenged an apostate backslidden people, how long do you halt between two opinions? If God be God, follow him! And challenged the false prophets of Baal to build their sacrifice and call on their gods to bring fire and there was none. Nor was there any god to hear nor to answer.

And then he built his own sacrifice and then he said to God, Lord if I have done these things according to thy word, let thy fire fall. And the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the water and the dust. And when a Jewish people who had too long halted between two opinions, outwardly satisfied with a modicum of Judaism and inwardly following the false gods of this world, saw the fire fall, they cried out, the Lord he is God! The Lord he is God! Precious people, there's a pattern here.

I don't know whom God shall bring into this auditorium in these days and I don't know if God shall send us out from this auditorium in these days. But I know that disputation is past. There's little room for polemics.

Two thousand years of a painful Christian history has too well insulated our Jewish people against the name of Jesus Christ. Satan has done too thorough a job to poison that holy name for our Jewish consideration. Our scholarly brethren say to us, you can't speak to me out of these scriptures, why that's the Gentile translation.

You don't know Hebrew and our mouths have stopped. I'll tell you only one thing is going to turn our people and bring them again as they need to be on their faces before a holy God to cry out, the Lord he is God! The Lord he is God! When the glory of God filled the house, when the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house, when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshipped and praised the Lord saying, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. My final word is this, and some of you have heard it from me.

It's something that burns indeed like a fire in my own heart. I'm so preoccupied with fire because I know that in the end of the ages, fire is going to be the enormous element with which men shall have to contend. A fire of God's judgment, a heat that shall melt the elements, a fierce afflicting flame that shall come upon the earth.

And as we had not made sacrifices, so shall the flame and fire of God lick at the high fire the wardrobes, the cars, and all of the aspects of affluence and comfort and luxury that have so well kept men from the knowledge of their God. I've commended to people the book from Elie Wiesel called *The Night*, in which he describes the melancholy experience of the community of Jews from which he himself came. In central Europe, Transylvania, a pocket of Jews who somehow had survived the horrors of the last war and felt that this shall not come upon them.

It had come to the Jews of Warsaw, it had come to the Jews of Berlin and Munich and other great European cities, but it had not come upon them. This too shall pass, they thought. But one day to their horror, there came such a rumbling and shaking of the earth that it caused them to have pained expressions upon their faces.

Something ominous was in the air, something frightful, a suggestion of something from which they wanted to flee. And off on the horizon was a great cloud of dust that was coming closer and closer, and their hearts began to beat. And finally, with the great noise increased and the shaking of the ground, and that cloud of dust became tanks, armored cars with the swastikas and all of the Nazi insignia as it swept into their little village.

Their breath stopped for fear, but they breathed to themselves, this too shall pass, this too shall pass. Oh, what a people we are. We have to cling to one kind of faith or another.

But woe to that people who, like in Elijah's time, were calling upon a God who could not hear and could not give answer. And one day by day, the edicts went up on the walls. Jews were required to leave their homes and to move in a certain walled section of that town.

They were required to give up certain portions of their property, but they believed this too shall pass, this too shall pass, it shall not come upon us. But one day, a sign came up, next morning at sunrise, you are to

be assembled at the train station by the square of this town with only such objects as you can personally carry. And that night they were busy sweating, digging holes in the basements and backyards and burying their menorahs and their Jewish heirlooms and their valuables.

Oh, we'll come back, this too shall pass, this shall not come upon us. And when they came that next morning early with the early light upon them, to their horror they saw the cattle trains all lined up, ready to receive them. Children clutching their legs, their pants, crying, terror, fear, and they were herded in like so many animals, jammed, body upon body, no room to fall to the ground, to sit, to stand properly, suffocating, choking blackness as the doors were locked shut and jerking back and forth three days and nights through the European countryside they knew not where.

Hysterical people, shrieking people, women fainting, children, teenagers fornicating, who had a somehow intuitive knowledge that this was their last opportunity to taste of that joy. What a macabre, solemn picture if we might see by the eye of the Spirit a world even this night hurtling to its doom, locked in such cars as that in inky darkness, fornicating in a moment's pleasure, not realizing that they're soon going to come to an all-consuming fire, a fire of which Jesus spoke as a lake, a fire that shall not be quenched if men will not repent and call upon the name of the Lord. There was a woman in that train that the writer describes who was in a certain kind of coma and would wake up from time to time and cry out one word over and over again, fire she cried, fire, I see fire, and it so chilled the hearts of those who were in the car with her that they punched her and beat her unconscious that she should not speak that word.

And sure enough she would awaken again and cry out fire, fire, I see fire. And finally one day the train stopped in a kind of an ominous screeching halt and before the doors were even opened they smelt a most peculiar odor, a kind of an acrid smell, and when the doors were opened in came the flickering light from burning gasoline and troughs lined up alongside the railroad tracks and half-dead infants were plucked out of the arms of shrieking mothers and tossed right into the fire and the men were marched off in one direction and the women in the other, fire, fire. Oh, precious children, we are at the seventh month and the final feast and the consummation of the ages but my own heart cries out that many more of my own kinsmen may come and sit at that table and eat at the table of the Lord, dressed in the spotless wedding garments of God.

And I tell you that we've not wanted to speak the whole counsel of God, we wanted to emphasize the love of God, not how groovy the benefits, the advantages of all that Jesus would do, if you would accept him. But we have not been faithful to proclaim the full counsel of God for how shall we know the love of God except we understand the eternal fate of a fire that shall not be quenched, from which it is that he saved us by the shedding of his own holy blood. Precious people, in the end of the ages, only one element shall be pressed upon the consciousness of modern men.

And how little we have been occupied with it, who have grown up in a TV age where even reality has become sort of glimpsed through a glass and somehow has been made unreal and we turn switches and lights and all kinds of objects and gimmicks and somehow we have heat and warmth and cooking. We haven't understood the power, the nature, the all-consuming character of fire. There's a fire that needs to fall first upon us.

There's a sacrifice to which God has called us first, before his fire might fall upon this congregation of Israel that are assembled before him in this holy convocation of these days, when we shall be all assembled, the elders and the chiefs of the fathers before our king. When we shall heap up a sacrifice that

cannot be counted nor numbered for multitude, of fleshly sheep and oxen that do with ambition and pride and selfishness and vanity. When we shall meet the conditions of God in purity and in praise and in worship with one voice and one shout, even the priests shall not be able to minister.

A cloud shall fill this house, the shechina of God, the glory of God. A fire shall fall over this city and a people who have not known understanding shall understand as they always have in that instant when they've seen the fire and cried out, the Lord he is God, the Lord he is God. First the fire for us that we might be a pure people before God and a united people.

Then the fire of God's presence that many might be saved from a fire that shall not be quenched. I'm going to ask you to bow your head tonight. My brothers told me that I had a message to speak tonight and I didn't know what it was, but this has been characteristic of all of the things that have pertained to Shechina 74.

We drafted a letter that went out to 1500 rabbis, synagogues, temples and Jewish institutions. I say we drafted it, but it was written by the Holy Spirit. A word from one brother, a word from another, a suggestion, a correction and that's how this convocation has been shaped.

In submission one to another the Spirit of God has moved and I have submitted to my brothers and so at the face of God and God has given me these words to speak. Rough hewn words, unfamiliar even to me. A theme having to do with the ark of God made of wood, overlaid with gold and set about by a crown that when that God was at the heart of Israel there was the glory of God.

When that ark departed so departed the glory. Precious God in the name of that one of whom the ark is so beautiful a description. That one who was always with us precious God in his humanity and in the gold of his deity.

Who is with us in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Who is with us Lord in all our stumblings and murmurings and testings. Who went before us that we might cross over that river of separation and death to be possessors of the land.

That the holy ark might come finally into the tabernacle of David and then again into that more enduring temple Lord God on Mount Zion. And now precious God for two thousand years and longer we have been without that glory and you are at the end of the ages restoring the glory of God. That light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of the people Israel.

We want to see fire in these days. We want to experience your holy presence and we ask oh God tonight and through these night hours that your spirit would point out to us where the sheep and the oxen are. That we might through these night hours and even before we leave this room tonight put upon the altar of God everything that needs so desperately to be consumed by your fire.

Everything that speaks of pride and selfishness and vain glory, fear. Oh precious God consume that fire Lord. We wet it with our tears twelve barrels for each and for all of the tribes of Israel.

Let your fire first fall upon us that we might enjoy the Shekinah presence of God in these days. And that that fire Lord God in that cloud of glory might go forth around this community to the Jewish theological seminary of America where young men are being trained to be rabbis. Across the street to Barnard's College where many Jewish young women are who have been sucked into the poison of women's lib.

Across the street Lord God in the Manhattan School of Music where men are seeking careers rather than priestly service. Oh precious God may your fire fall upon the people Israel in this great Israel which is New York City. Precious God Hallelujah.

Let your fire fall on the sacrifice that cannot be counted nor numbered nor be told for multitude even this night. Precious God Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah.

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