

# The Lord's Coming in the Clouds

by Art Katz

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*The sermon explores the significance of the Lord's coming in clouds, emphasizing the connection between suffering and the true revelation of God.*

**Duration:** 48:37

**Scripture:** Mark 13:26

**Topics:** "God's Nature", "Suffering And Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need to recognize and acknowledge the true nature of God. He criticizes the tendency to view God as an 'errand boy' who exists solely to fulfill our desires and provide us with worldly blessings. The speaker also discusses the importance of understanding the Holocaust and grappling with its horrors in order to truly comprehend God's presence in the midst of such darkness. He urges listeners to confront the darkest facts and not shy away from the difficult questions, as this is essential for a genuine relationship with God.

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## Transcript

I appreciate the opportunity to submit it and to test it, and have earnest students to interact over it, and then take it back to his desk, and then finally it comes to publication. And so, far be it that I'm any kind of Karl Barth, or even a junior kind, I do appreciate the opportunity to test things. And I've already done that with the Abraham Foxman material, and I think it's been profitable for us.

Now, I have another paper that I've just written, it's called, The Lord's Coming in the Clouds. I know that when you read something, it's often deadly, but I have to do it because I don't have copies for everyone. You need to listen all the more intently, which is part of being a student, to hear something spoken, and make note for yourself of a certain phrase, or word, or scripture reference, and not to interrupt the reading until it's only three pages, and then we'll go back over it again as we did the Abraham Foxman thing.

But my spirit is excited by this experimental word that is a kind of, I don't want to say fanciful, allegorical kind. That somehow the Lord comes exclusively in clouds. His final coming, his eschatological coming, will be in clouds.

But previous comings have been in clouds, and there's some conjunction between clouds and the appearing of the Lord that would be interesting for us to recognize, and particularly the way in which I developed this, of what clouds themselves mean. So I'm reading first from Mark 13, verses 24 through 26,

very familiar verses. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken, and then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Which is to say, they will see the Son of Man as he needs to be seen, and as he in fact is, in glory. But that the seeing of the Son of Man, or the seeing of God, in glory, which is to say, as he in fact is, and not as men think him to be, must always require a coming in clouds. And I want to develop that thought.

So without in any way questioning the literalness of this eschatological glory that is coming in clouds, I suspect, as is often the case, that it contains an allegorical and spiritual meaning as well. This is really interesting because I'm the man who most opposes taking literal scripture and making it allegorical and spiritual. This is how the Church has in fact eliminated the subject of Israel by treating it as allegory.

It doesn't really mean Israel. It doesn't really mean Jerusalem. It doesn't really mean Zion.

It means a spiritual condition. It means the Church. So this is a danger, that scriptures can always be interpreted in an allegorical or a spiritual or mystical way, and it's very rich in the meanings that can be derived.

And I think God intends that we should derive such meanings, but not at the expense of nullifying his first and literal intent, which the Church has unhappily done with Israel. So here I am, the defender of the literal word of God, so to speak, now choosing to use it in an interpretive, allegorical, spiritual way, to bring out a meaning which does not challenge the literal meaning. There is a coming of the Lord in clouds.

You say, well, why do you need to say that? Because I know at least one movement that denies that. That they do not expect a literal coming of the Lord in his own body. His coming in the body of Christ.

And we have been at hammer and tongs with this movement for 15 years over this issue. It's interesting, they reject the coming of the Lord in his literal body, and they reject the coming of Israel as a literal nation. And the two rejections are related.

So I'm not questioning the literalness of this eschatological word. You know the word eschatological. The study of things that pertain to the end.

I suspect, though, that is often the case. It contains an allegorical and spiritual meaning as well. Perhaps even a principle pertaining to the coming of any revelation of the Lord in fullness.

That is to say, when he comes in his glory, it's in his fullness, as he is in his totality. So that any coming, any revelation, the word coming, maybe our brother Ron can help us in this. What is the Greek? Perousia actually means appealing or revelation, as does the word apocalypse.

So the revealing is the coming of the Lord in himself as he in fact is, and not as men think him to be. Don't think that because we're Christians that we know God as we ought, or that our perspective of God or our vision of God is accurate. It is more subjective than we know.

Often more the projection of our own fancy than we realize. And many have not the fear of God, because the God whom they profess to believe is more the working of their own imagination than he in fact is. And that's why the church, more than any, desperately needs the revealing of the Lord.

But he comes only in clouds. What does that mean? Namely a coming or revelation of the Lord that must somehow of necessity be preceded by or accompanied by clouds. But clouds of what kind? Oswald Chambers in his July 29th selection, and this is where I got the inspiration, suggests that except he come in clouds, there cannot be a coming.

That somehow such a glory requires a shrouding. That God cannot, I'm quoting now from Oswald Chambers, quote, God cannot come near without clouds. He does not come in clear shining.

Maybe no man could take it if he did. Unless that glory were shrouded, we would be devastated. He exists in an unapproachable light.

The clouds of God are a mercy. In order for him to reveal himself, he must come in clouds. But what kind of clouds does Oswald Chambers suggest? We're not talking about vapor.

He's talking spiritually that the clouds are suggestive of, quote, sorrow, bereavement, and suffering. And if there were no clouds, we should not have faith. Isn't that interesting? And I put in the word to say, if there were no clouds, we should not have true faith.

True faith is the understanding of the revelation of God as he is, and not as we think him to be. And unless we see him in the clouds, we'll not see him. And Oswald Chambers is saying, not clouds of vapor, clouds of bereavement, sorrow, and suffering.

Now what's the connection? And that's what I'm wanting to pursue. Isn't this suggested in Mark 15, verse 33, when Jesus was crucified, there was a darkness that came over the whole land? In the Gospel of Luke, it is described as a darkness over all the earth, and that the sun itself was darkened. The margin says obscured.

And what's the connection here? Because the crucifixion of Jesus is the revelation of God as he is, not as we thought him to be. In fact, it is so scandalous a revelation that it threatens, controverts, and challenges every opinion of man religiously of what they think God to be. The God on the cross is God.

In the suffering of judgment, sorrow, in suffering itself, suffering reveals. There's something about the nature of suffering that reveals things as they are, that somehow are eclipsed or dulled or blunted, except that we see them in the revelation that comes in that way. The Jewish people have paid unspeakably a price for the loss of the knowledge of God that would have been theirs if they had recognized that that itinerant preacher who was hanging on the cross is not some misguided man who thought himself to be the Messiah and paid the price for it, but was very God himself.

It was God crucified. And that's a statement about God that shatters every religious view of whom we think God to be. And it is an ultimate revelation of God in judgment and in righteousness and in mercy, all in one.

To disavow and to reject that revelation is to leave us godless and to have a concept of God, monotheism, that is not God and not a God that can save. I can't say enough that the issue of the knowledge of God is all. And all that they would know me is the cry of God.

And what does the scripture say? To know him is life eternal. To know him as he is, but to know him as we think him to be, as it fits in with our categories, is not to know him at all. So to know him is to see him in clouds of darkness.

When the sun is obscured, do you remember when Jacob saw the revelation of the ladder of God? It said the sun had set on Jacob. And the sun must set. There must be a darkness.

And I'm not trying to be fancy. That is the paradox of God, that the light of God issues out of a darkness when our sun is set, when the clouds come over, because that eclipses our categories and then leaves us open to see him as he wants to be known. So darkness is over all the earth.

The sun was darkened or obscured, it says in the margin of Luke 23, 44-45. In Genesis 28, 11, over Jacob, the sun had set. And as indescribably horrible as the crucifixion scene was, it was also at the same time an ultimate revelation of God, both in judgment and mercy.

If you don't know God in judgment and mercy, you don't know God. And that's why God's last historic act in the earth is his judgment upon Israel, the time of Jacob's trouble, and then his restoration from the nations where they had been outcast and brought back by himself supernaturally in his mercy and established as his people. Where he gives them the grace to repent.

So the world is going to see both the judgment and the mercy of God, which is to say they're going to see God in his action upon Israel, which is perfectly in keeping with Israel's call to be a witness to God, not in Israel's virtue, but in her judgment. So the horrible scene is the revelation of God both in judgment and mercy as he in fact is and not as men had supposed him to be. Therefore, a coming in such fullness must necessarily be shrouded in sorrow, bereavement, and suffering.

Is this why Jürgen Moltmann in his book *The Crucified God*, this German theologian, cites the saying that the true faith begins where the atheist thinks it should end, in the mind-boggling contradiction of all that we thought to be true about God. There's a remarkable parallel between the crucifixion of Jesus and the crucifixion of the Jews in the Holocaust. Both of these dark acts rattled the cage and confused and controverted naive religious belief about God.

It raised questions. Where is God? How could such a terrible thing come upon his covenant people? Where is he? He's not the God that we thought, the God of righteousness and justice and mercy, or would not have happened. And exactly the same questions are raised by the crucifixion of Jesus.

Is God himself bringing ultimate questions, knowing that men would have satisfied themselves with definitions of God less than what he is, and that only in ultimate acts of the darkest kind that absolutely are mind-boggling and make us spit out our guts and wonder what did we ever really know about God, is God then at the place to be revealed? Can you follow that? And that's why many of us are going through horrendous things personally. Or else we would have been satisfied with naive and simplistic views of God that satisfied us but did not reveal him in a way that he needs to be known if there's going to be salvation at all in this earth in the last days, especially for the Jewish people. So true faith begins where the atheist thinks it should end.

Like where is God in the Holocaust and where is God at the cross? In the mind-boggling contradiction of all we thought to be true about God, is that not in fact what may have been divinely intended for Israel through the stupefying darkness of her recent Holocaust? Chambers writes, there is a connection between the strange providences of God and what we know of him. Unless we can look the darkest, blackest fact full in the face without damaging God's character, we do not yet know him. What does Paul say? Let God be true and let every man be a liar.

It's only when you face the stupefying contradiction of God in a way that you cannot figure him out. How do you explain this? It seems to contradict all that you understood, that you're close to the threshold of where God can be revealed as God. And listen to what he says.

This is worth hearing again. Unless we can look the darkest, blackest fact full in the face, that is to say the Holocaust, the unspeakable atrocities against the Jewish people coming from the most elite civilization on the earth, German civilization, unless we wrestle with that, unless we leap into the grave, unless we take the cadavers to ourselves, unless we come into the ashes in the ovens and shriek until we understand how God can be in that, we don't have him. We've got to look the darkest facts in the face.

It's the issue of Moses turning aside to see when everyone else who has two cents worth of sense would have passed on by. Why do you want to see something burned that is not consumed? That's threatening. If you look into that, as the rabbis say, you're not likely ever to go back to your previous looking.

You're finished with all of the categories that you thought you understood because now you're faced with a phenomenon and a demonstration that shatters all your previous categories. But that was when God said, Moses, Moses, when he saw that he turned aside to see. Our church, our contemporary church is under indictment from God for failure to look at the darkest, blackest facts of the 20th century right in the face without accusing God or dismissing God as the church has done and saying, well, this is just man's cruelty to man or some other explanation as if God is not sovereign, God is not omnipotent, and God is not fully existent in the midst of the horrors of the Holocaust.

We don't yet know him until we have looked the darkest facts full in the face without damaging God's character. That is, something is reserved, here's where I'm summing up, something is reserved in the knowledge of him that can only be obtained in the cloud of sorrow, bereavement, and suffering. That comes back to our conversation, what is a prophet? It's a man who has entered the cloud.

Moses had to enter the cloud. He's made himself a candidate for suffering because with it comes the revelation of God as he in fact is. For what is a prophet and what is an apostle? Why are they the foundations of the church? Not because they have clever answers and they can resolve church disputes and difficulties because they bring the revelation of God as he is and that's the foundation of the church built upon the prophets and the apostles.

But what kind of bereavement? You know what the word bereavement means? You French saints, you know? A sorrow for something that has passed in death. It's a terrible sorrow, it's an ultimate sorrow. But note, not a bereavement or sorrow for the loss of life only, but for the irretrievable loss of one's cherished concept of God, of time-honored religious verities that perish in the furnace of the unthinkable.

I think that Jews have the greater complaint against Germans not only because they were physically robbed of life in the gas ovens, but they were robbed of their concept of God. They were robbed even of the ideal of German civilization which they had taken to themselves as being a messianic alternative. And they can more quickly forgive Germans for the physical loss of life than the loss of the reasons for life, their ideals, their hopes, their enthusiasms.

This is the thing that is believed. I'll read that again. There's something reserved in the knowledge of God that can only be obtained in the cloud of sorrow, bereavement, and suffering, but not a bereavement or sorrow for the loss of life, physical life only, but for the irretrievable loss.

What does that mean? You can't get it back again. Once it's lost, it's gone forever. Of one's cherished concept of God, of time-honored religious verities that perish in the furnace of the unthinkable.

If so, was God not judging of Auschwitz and all previous Jewish calamities the inadequacy of Jewish court faith to whatever degree it in fact existed authentically or could exist independent of the revelation of the Holy One of Israel? A faith sufficient for Jewish existence, perhaps, for its cultural identity and religious need, but falling far short and in opposition to the saving knowledge of himself that was forfeited in the rejection of the crucified Christ. When you read Elie Wiesel, the greatest Jewish commentator on the Holocaust, he laments the loss of his youthful, orthodox idealism in Judaism. He was a Talmudic student, and he loved rabbinical commentary and the whole of orthodox Judaism, which was okay until the dark clouds came.

It could not stand up in that darkness. It was sufficient for their life, sufficient for their culture, sufficient for their identity as Jews, but it was not sufficient in the darkness of what came upon them. Then it collapsed, not only for Elie Wiesel, but Richard Rubenstein, whose famous book is called *After Auschwitz*.

I've met this man, and the book, interesting to read, in which he says, there's no longer, since the Holocaust, any plausible ground for the knowledge of God. God died in the Holocaust, and let's face it. Come on, let's be realistic, and let's stop playing religious games either as Jews or Christians, where we make reference to a God.

If there were a God, he would have shown himself in the Holocaust. The fact that he allowed that unspeakable horror to come shows that he does not exist. It was a naivety, and we need to divest ourselves, but not of Judaism and Christianity.

Let's go on playing the game, because Judaism and Christianity perform a service for man. They bring a dimension of morality and ethical consideration for which the world is made better. But let's not think that there's a God who can really be celebrated as God.

That's his conclusion after Auschwitz. Has Elie Wiesel ever recovered from the irretrievable loss of his view of God as he had it in his Talmudic Jewish Orthodoxy? And the question is, I'm raising the question, did God ever intend that he should have it? Did God ever intend that it should go on and be any kind of foundation for Jewish belief about God? Was God ever satisfied with it? Was it ever the revelation of God as God, or some kind of formulation of men that serves the purposes of men until the dark clouds come? And the reason that the dark clouds come is because God cannot allow them to perish in their naivety and ignorance, thinking that that was himself. Are you following me? So I'm saying, what was God doing in Auschwitz? Was he judging the inadequacy of, quote, Jewish faith? Does such a faith exist? Can it exist, independent of the revelation of the Holy One of Israel? That there may be a faith, quote-unquote, sufficient for men, for their existence as Jews, for their identity as Jews, for their cultural and religious needs, but it cannot be a saving knowledge of God.

Dum-da-dum-dum. The knowledge of God, that is the true knowledge of God, is the knowledge that saves. And that's why to know him is life eternal.

So a pre-Holocaust religious orthodoxy of the kind whose passing Elie Wiesel lamented, which had served his youthful idealism, collapsed, as it did for Richard Rubenstein, as for many, never to be recovered with the dark clouds of the Nazi time and the anguish which followed. And I'm saying, and it's a horrible thought, that God allowed it for that very purpose. Is that what it takes to know God? Yes.

What did we say before? The first task of the prophet is to root out, pull up, and destroy the fabrications of men, the false things that purport to stand as true before the truth itself can be established. And what is the prophet? He's the spirit of Jesus. It's the testimony of Jesus.

It's God. That's what God does. Because the prophet has the same burning passion in his heart for the jealousy of God as God and will not suffer any kind of human or religious substitute.

He's fierce. He'll wreck, he'll tear down the traditions of men that are hallowed. And God himself did so in the Holocaust.

He gave us a 2,000 year interim to review our mistake. And far from recognizing it, we continued to develop rabbinical Judaism, Reformed Judaism, and every other kind of thing that served our purpose but kept us and was in opposition to the saving knowledge of God. Dark clouds had to come.

And that's why an Oswald Chambers who died long before the rise of Nazi Germany knew spiritually that the revelation of God is one that must come in the clouds of bereavement, sorrow, and suffering. So instead of the clear shining in which God comes as it were through the clouds, Israel, not unlike the church today, satisfied itself with banal sentimentality, rabbinical constructs, or a Reformed liberal Judaism of a more rational kind in keeping with the secular temper of the pre-World War bourgeois society, which is to say German society. And what was that temper? Supernatural things are considered impolite and distasteful.

We need a more rational form of Judaism without this icky stuff about a God who comes down, a God who does this, a God who speaks. Come on, this is the age of science and reason. And what we need is a Judaism more fitted to the temper of the age.

That is Reformed Judaism. And that's what God judged. With an orthodoxy that was equally as false from the other side.

It had to come down. So Yiddishkeit, you know what that word means? Jewish mess and we celebrate and my mother loves it and drools over it and has made it a substitute for God himself. Yiddishkeit, folkloric adages and ethical and moral prescriptions, all of the kinds of things that are so attractive even to Christians in Jewish life, which are endearing to men and hallowed by usage, cannot substitute for the knowledge of God in righteousness.

A knowledge which alone dispels all those idolatries which are dear to men because they serve the purposes of men in freeing them from the radical requirements of God. Why do men want a knowledge of God that is not the true knowledge? Because it's not the true God. Because the true God does not make place for their idolatries.

The true God is the requiring God. He calls us to a cross, calls us to sacrifice, calls us to ultimacy, calls us to consecration. But the false God, even if you call him the God of Israel or call him Jesus, call him what you will, does not make these requirements of men.

And God in his mercy, knowing that the end of the age is at hand and there's an eternity to pay for an ignorance, a willful ignorance of God, brings clouds of judgment. Oh, that they might know me as ever the cry of God through the prophets, whom to know is life eternal. And wasn't Moses required to enter such a cloud and to remain in it for six days, the number of men, and being called up to God in the very presence of God, which was shrouded until the seventh day? Then it says in Exodus 24, then Moses went up into

the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain.

Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai. There's always a conjunction between the cloud and the glory. He comes in the clouds in his glory.

And the cloud covered it six days, that number six men. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Moses would not have been Moses, would not have been a deliverer, except for that knowledge of God that came on the mount, out of the cloud.

And of the disciples on the mount of transfiguration, talk about another mount? Remember that cloud came over the mount? And Jesus was revealed in his glory standing with Elijah and with Moses? And it says they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And I'm writing characteristic of Peter, symbolic of the church, tries to institutionalize the moment in making three booths, not knowing what he said. This is a picture of the church with blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and David Wilkerson writes in his newsletter, his heart is just torn because of the thousands of letters that he gets from Christians throughout America who are perishing and starving and drying up for the want of a true word from God that they're not getting.

Except we know the God who has us to say. Until we see him as he is, our saying is a babble. It is a Peter frothing at the mouth, speaking nonsense.

That's why Moses had to see God on the mount and in the cloud. So also with ourselves I would suggest we are full of prattle about God whom we do not know as we ought, and often serve mistakenly out of an immaturity and carnal zeal. It is only out of the cloud that came over them that they saw no man but Jesus only.

And they saw him glorified as he in fact is. Always, but the cloud revealed the glory. They saw no man.

One commentator says they did not even see their own seeing. They were brought out of human seeing and into the revelation of God in glory in the cloud. There's too much.

There are too many references to the appearing of God in glory in clouds to dismiss it. And it says they feared as they entered the cloud. And I'm saying, yeah, rightly so.

This is the very fear so conspicuously absent from the contemporary church that has inevitably trivialized God for the want of that fear. We need to enter the cloud because it's in the cloud that you rightly fear. And it's this fear, the absence of this fear, that has disfigured the church and trivialized God.

But how many will walk from entering it? If we had that opportunity, would we come up? And into? The heart of the matter, I suspect, is the fear not of God but of the loss of the comfortable sense of God fashioned according to our own measure and contingent upon our own view of ourselves, our ministries, our categories, of reality itself as we perceive it and we have it to be understood. We don't want to enter a cloud that will in any way threaten our categories, our seeing, our notions, our view of reality, our view of God. We have too much invested in it.

But unless Moses was six days in the cloud which took from him his every notion however correct, because it's not enough to have correct notions, we need the kind of revelation in which his glory is revealed only in the cloud. Our correct notions, however correct, will not sustain us. There's a lot of correct things in the Judaism to which Elie Wiesel subscribed, but it had not the reality that is God.

And God cannot allow a substitute knowledge, however close, however much it contains elements of truth. As we say in Brooklyn, a miss is as good as a mile. That comes out of the idiom of baseball.

You can swing with all your might, but if you hit the ball just a fraction off, instead of a towering blast that clears the bases and the fans are on their feet shouting for the home run, all you did was you, the ball dribbled or popped up somewhere into nothingness. A miss is as good as a mile. Only the true knowledge of God suffices.

Only that knowledge is saving knowledge and saves men from their very idolatrous about God, which is not God, because they do not want a God who requires. Not only requires, but gives when we come to him in the truth of the knowledge of himself. And so I'm saying, how many will not enter the cloud for reasons of that kind and therefore compel God to bring them involuntarily to a darker, more ominous cloud of inflicted terror and bewilderment.

If we will not come into the clouds to which God invites us, he has to bring clouds of another kind where it's not a matter of our willingness, it's involuntary. It comes, like the Holocaust. And like the Holocaust yet to come for world security and for the same reasons.

How much for that reason is that yet Israel's necessary future experience and equally that of an escapist church itself. The tribulation of the last days is not some arbitrary act of God because he's malicious. It's the necessary act of God by a people, whether it's the church or Israel, who have a view of God less than what he is in himself.

And nothing less than bringing us into the clouds of bereavement, sorrow, and suffering will reveal him. And it will not come through voluntarily, it will come to it out of necessity. And that's what the last days of tribulation means at least in part, and I believe in great part, because we are an escapist church, because we have notions of God that serve our purposes.

Jesus is a little patsy. He's our errand boy. He takes care of us.

He makes nice. He gives us the wife, the husband, the job, the security. We've made him an errand boy.

We've lost the sense of God in his awesomeness and in his fear, which is only God in his fullness and in his glory that must come with the cloud. So here's my conclusion, and I hope to speak this if God gives me the opportunity in Germany at the conference, the Lausanne consultation on Jewish evangelism with Germans who are interested in things pertaining to Jews. The title of their conference is How do we preach the gospel to the Jews after the Holocaust? What's our justification? How do we approach Jews after the church has so colossally failed and has virtually executed them in the Nazi time? Where do we come off now to speak to them this gospel in that name? So the conclusion for me is for Israel, the cloud of his coming is their final tribulation.

For the church, I'm asking the question, is it not the entering into the revelation of God through the stupefying consideration of an identification with Israel's suffering? We have to come into their cloud with them. We are the Israel of God with them. We're not just observers standing at the sidelines.

We are identified with his people, and we will enter into their suffering and be persecuted with them. The persecution of the last days is against the people of God, whether it's Israel or the church, and particularly that church that identifies with and stands with Israel. And our coming into the cloud of their suffering, their bereavement, and their sorrow will do us a world of good, as it will do them also because it fits us eternally

to rule and reign with him in the knowledge of God and has a purpose before the days end historically.

So for the church, is it not the entering into the revelation of God through the stupefying consideration of an identification with Israel's sufferings, both for past and future Holocaust as being the statement of his mind-numbing judgment? It's not just to acknowledge the suffering and to identify with it, but here's the tough part to recognize it as the judgment of God because when you do that, you're brought face-to-face with God in the dark face of the things that are stupefying in their categories, that this is not just some arbitrary judgment or even some other way to explain it. This is God in judgment and the revelation of God in judgment is the ultimate revelation of God. That's what he did on the cross.

He was suffering in judgment for all mankind. The revelation of God is the revelation of righteousness, the revelation of judgment, and the revelation of sin. And we modern Jews have no sin consciousness at all.

Abraham Foxman, I'm sure, goes to bed full of self-congratulation that he's really doing, if there is a God, he's doing God's service. At least he's doing the Jewish community service to protect them from those horrible Southern Baptists that want to convert them. He has no knowledge of God and no knowledge of sin.

You know how come? Because the most profound revelation of sin is what Jesus died to pay for on the cross. To dismiss the cross as the mere execution of some megalomaniacal man who had thought himself to be the Messiah and was a political misfit is to miss the whole revelation of God in the clouds of darkness. And when you miss that, you miss everything.

You don't know God, you don't know sin, you don't know judgment. And we must know why we yet have breath. Because we will stand one day, everyone before God, at their white throne judgment seat.

And then we will be without excuse. In a moment we'll know. We'll see as we are seen.

And I can't describe the shock, the horror, the gasp that will issue from the Abraham Foxmans of the world who refused the revelation of God in the clouds of darkness in the holocaust past and the holocaust to come but will stand before him now and suffer eternal holocaust without remedy. Unless we understand that we cannot forgive God or understand him for the clouds that he brings now. Do you follow that? It's only in the context of eternity that the clouds of the suffering of the holocaust past and the holocaust to come make sense.

It's God's last ditch appeal to reveal himself as God as can only be revealed in the clouds of bereavement and sorrow and suffering which the holocaust is. The church needs to understand it or else it will agree with the Jews, yes what a terrible thing we did and it's all the church's fault and your right and how dare we presume to bring you the gospel rather than understanding you got what you deserve. This judgment was long coming and long promised in God's very word but you did not heed it and finally it came in exact magnitude as your own sin and will come again because you refused to look God in the face in the dark cloud of the Nazi time and you found another explanation.

It was the failure of the church it was the failure of the nations it was Hitler, you did not see it as your failure. Therefore you've got to face it again in yet greater proportions and if you'll not see it then, you'll not see it ever. So this is mind numbing, it destroys all of our naive, simplistic views of God as we would like him to be, nice, loving, patient to the world, which he is.

So will that not be as transfiguring for us as the cloud on the mount when both the Lord and the prophets co-joined together, Moses and Elijah and it says, appeared in glory and spoke of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The cloud came over the mount of transfiguration and the disciples entered that cloud but what was the cloud? It was the revelation of the glory of Jesus as he is conversing with both Moses and Elijah about his coming decease in Jerusalem. Only one of the gospel accounts of the mount of transfiguration speaks that.

So even here in the cloud is the revelation of a bereavement, a loss, a sorrow and a suffering, the very death of Jesus that must take place in Jerusalem and would now speak of Israel in the same place. The cloud that is coming over that is now gathering, even now speaks not of the Messiah's decease but Israel because there's a remarkable way in which Israel as also a son of God must follow the career of the son of God in its suffering and its affliction and its decease in Jerusalem and this is exactly the message that the church in Israel does not want to hear. They don't want to enter this cloud but I'm saying that they must.

We must not balk for fear because Israel's decease is going to come in the same place as it came for the Lord before them. We must not, especially as friends of Israel balk at the entering into these dark clouds of dread consideration. You want to know what a prophet is? He's one who turns aside to see.

He's one who will not balk at the painful consideration of what must come to his own people and even speak it to them without balking. He will not turn away from the necessity to speak the hard thing and the dark thing that must and what is he but the symbol of the church itself called to be prophetic in the earth and prophetic especially to Israel. We must not balk from entering the dark cloud of dread consideration.

We missed it at the Holocaust of the Nazi time. We agreed with the Jewish interpretation. We did not want to read it as God's judgment and we missed it.

We did not warn them and direct their attention to its meaning and we're not even warning our nations as to why it is we're suffering drought and upheavals and insect manifestations and disease of all kinds and convulsions because you don't read that as the judgments of God and we don't proclaim a prophetic warning within our own nation. We don't want to enter the dark clouds. The issue of God as God is at stake and the making of him known as a saving God to as many as will before those days and that tribulation and going back now to the scriptures read at the very first in Mark 13 by which alone they will then see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Our entering the clouds now with Israel and telling them of the deceased that they must suffer will be a revelation to them of God and of themselves that when he does come in the clouds they will not see him with horror and shock but with inexpressible joy because they will have been prepared for the revelation of his coming. Am I getting too fancy? The church now must not shrink or balk from entering these dark clouds of Israel's future suffering. In order to be an explanation and a prophetic voice to Israel who will suffer their deceased Zionist political Israel will experience decease in my opinion so that when the Lord does come because they will understand his coming in the clouds because of their suffering they will receive him and see him with inexpressible joy and not with an eternal lament of sorrow.

There's something very great at stake. It's to prepare Israel for the coming of the Lord. And if they'll receive his judgments now they'll receive that coming with joy as they deliver and not with horror as one caught with his pants down and here's the one against whom we have last seen all our history long now coming as our deliverer when all nations come against Jerusalem to destroy it and too late with a shriek and horror of a realization that will fall upon those who were not prepared to see it.

That's my little paper on the clouds. The Lord's coming in the clouds. I welcome any feedback.

It's time for our lunch and I just want to pray a little prayer. And if anybody wants a copy of this to dote on this and dwell on this we can probably do it but I think it's worth thinking on especially if I'm to speak from this to that coming of ministers in Germany who feel that they're not justified for speaking dark things to the Jewish people. How can we speak to them of the gospel after the Holocaust? All the more reason to speak because of the Holocaust coming for which they're not prepared and into which dark clouds they must necessarily enter.

So Lord we just thank you for this illumination, my God, a glimpse of something and asking that you would make it yet more clear in our hearts and give us the courage, my God, to bear such a word to those who need to hear it as you are calling us to Israel itself to speak of the soon coming time of Jacob's trouble and to those who are friends of Israel and don't want to enter the cloud of either their past or their future suffering and are thereby disqualified to reveal God as God to a nation that needs most to know him in a saving way. Lord, bless this word. Let it pass through the furnace of the earth seven times and come out with an authority and a penetration, my God, that will bring men before you in a new way, in a willingness to have their categories shattered and their naive views that have served their own purposes utterly brought to naught that they might see you as you desire and need to be seen in fullness and in glory before the age ends.

We thank you and give you the praise for encouraging our hearts in this direction. In Jesus' name, amen.

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