

# The Nations in Relation to God

by Art Katz

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*God has purposes for the nations, and the church should bring His perspective to the secular mind and sound a warning to the nations.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 24:1, Acts 17:26

**Topics:** "The Church's Role", "Nations and God"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes the relationship between nations and God, arguing that nations have strayed into independence from divine authority, neglecting their obligation to seek God. He highlights that every culture, while seemingly gracious, often harbors hostility towards God, and warns that nations will be judged for their failure to pursue God's purposes. Katz points out that God created nations with the intention that they seek Him, and he urges the church to act as a prophetic voice, guiding nations back to their divine purpose. He stresses the importance of understanding Israel's central role in God's plan for the nations and calls for deep repentance and prayer for nations, particularly in the context of their historical failures. Ultimately, Katz calls for a reawakening of the church's responsibility to proclaim God's truth to the nations.

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## Transcript

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We are all familiar with the Scripture, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and the nations and those that dwell therein." We have quoted this Scripture many times, but we have not really believed it, and have therefore allowed the nations to indulge themselves in their independence as if they have no obligation to God. This is a sinful neglect of God, and when the Lord comes, He will judge the nations for that failure to seek Him.

Every culture is full of hostility against God, although its external appearance may seem gracious. National culture may be dear and familiar to us, but I am persuaded that the origin of national cultures comes not from above, but from below. The nations have an independent mind of their own. In many cases, they are willing to allow us a Sunday presence. They will tolerate that as long as we respect the difference between

the sacred and the secular. They will give us one or two hours for the sacred on Sunday, but the real affairs of men, where the important decisions are made, is where they do not welcome our intrusion.

The church continues to allow the nations to indulge that mentality. Independence from God is as much a sin for a nation as for an individual. We have an obligation to bring them God's perspective, the divine perspective to the secular mind, for if we do not sound a warning to them, who else will? No longer should we condescend to their terms and their categories.

But look what Paul says to the epitome of secular men in Athens, in Acts 17:26-31. This is the glory of ancient Greece, the same architecture that Hitler used in Germany. Greek architecture emphasized great, monumental pillars to underline the importance of their government and culture. Nazism was a re-creating again of those values. It was, and is, a civilization that celebrates man. But God has purposes for the nations; they were formed and created by Him. That is what Paul tells the Greeks, "He has made from one blood every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having appointed their boundaries, times and habitations." If someone makes something, they own it, and the maker decides its purpose and use. That is true with the potter and his clay. It is true of God with His church. It is true of God with Israel. He made it and formed it for Himself, and so also the nations.

It says that God, "established their boundaries, their times and their habitations," and who has ever considered that in verse 27 the purpose is given, namely, "that they should seek God, if perhaps they might find Him though He is not far from any one of us." This verse was a turning point for me. Up until that moment I had always thought of this verse only in personal or individual terms. But God has established nations in order that the nations themselves would seek Him. What is God's purpose for us as a nation? Why did God create our nation? Have we sought Him for His purpose for us as a nation? The tragic history of Germany can be traced to their failure to seek God for their purpose in being. Instead, the nation has sought its own national ambitions, and still seeks them now. It has been fifty years since the death of Hitler, but how do we explain Neo-Nazism and nationalism that is springing up again? It is a spirit that is rising again in exact proportion to the rise of German national ambition, independent of God. In fact, I do not know of a single country that has sought God's purposes for itself. What would God say if we asked Him?

We ourselves need to understand that Israel is not just 'another' ethnic group among the nations. It is God's nation, and He calls it His inheritance. And "according to the number of the sons of Israel," in Deuteronomy 32, "He has established the number of the nations." How humbling for the nations to consider that their whole existence, their boundaries and their times are altogether related to the nation Israel. In other words, Israel is central to the nations, which is why "the law must go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem,"--the appointed center.

But it is not a law for itself alone, but unto the nations, "that they should study war no more and beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." We, as the church, need to align ourselves with the mind of God, and understand His purposes for His creation. Further, we need to communicate that reality to the nation itself, for we ought to be God's prophetic presence in the nation. How should secular and non-biblical men understand this except it be told them by the "nation" within the nation--God's Israel, His covenantal people, His prophetic people, i.e., His church? It says in verse 31 (Acts 17), "He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness"--not just individuals, but the world itself which He created. "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). We have not thought in terms of the world. God has a plan for the nations and this age concludes

with God's theocratic rule over the nations.

That which God has created and formed, He has every right to determine its purpose. He has made the nations for Himself and His purposes, and what do we know as individual believers when we gave up our own autonomy and independence, and gave ourselves to the purposes of God who made us? We received God's peace and joy; to surrender to the purposes of God is life itself.

We need to pray for our own nation, but not in a sentimental way as if revival would be enough. No, the deepest repentance, going all the way back to the origins of the nation that has been so hospitable to pagan gods and still is. Lust, incest, sodomy and abortion are here because we have not sought God who made the nation. There may well be a purpose for our American nation, not yet fulfilled, that has to do with Jews in the Last Days. There is a reason why in Amos 9 God says, "I will sift Israel through all the nations."

What is God's strategy? Not only to find a remnant out of Israel at that time, but also to sift the nations themselves through which Jews will pass through. The nations needs to be alerted to that soon-coming time by the prophetic church in its midst. It will blow the trumpet and not hold back, and have a view of its own purpose within the nation, much larger and deeper than what we thought, and not allow the nation to define us as a Sunday afterthought.

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