

The Purpose of the Church in the Great Tribulation

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the church's vital role in Israel's restoration and the necessity of God's glory during the Great Tribulation.

Scripture: Isaiah 35, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:18, 1 Peter 1:7

Topics: "Great Tribulation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes a personal experience of feeling isolated and abandoned by the community. He reflects on the melancholy sight of leaving his house and the deep sense of loneliness he felt. The speaker emphasizes the importance of experiencing and understanding death and desolation as part of our role in delivering others. He also discusses the influence of the entertainment industry and the need for believers to be prepared for their eternal destiny as a nation of priests and a light unto the world. The sermon concludes with a call for individuals to surrender everything and be willing to endure whatever it takes to fulfill God's purposes.

Transcript

These days, I'm very fond of calling upon him as the Alpha and the Omega. He gave us the beginning of these days and he'll give us the conclusion. And unless he shows me otherwise right now, I think that he'd be happy for me to give another text to bring a fuller clarity to what was brought last night and to show you that this theme is not suspended on some frail one or two references in the prophetic word, but that there is, if you'll excuse the language, a plethora, a plentitude of prophetic scriptures that support the view of Israel's last days dealings through the nations, employing the church as God's agent of deliverance and salvation in the mystery of God.

And the purpose, as I said last night, is not only Israel's sifting, but our own. It's not only Israel's restoration, but the church's transfiguration for these are the last historical episodes in time that fit us for our millennial and eternal destiny, which has been absent from our consciousness. We have not thought in these terms.

We have not seen our faith in the context of a millennial or eternal conclusion, and therefore we have not seen. The church is substandard. It is living beneath the intention of God and his glory, and I think that if we had the ability to see as God sees, we would see how much of what we have lost has been lost to us

because of the exclusion or the omission of the centrality of Israel itself.

There has been a strain or a component in the history of the church that itself has been anti-Semitic, that has rejected this kind of emphasis because it is calculated by God to flush out our ethnic and racial pride. We don't begin to understand the depths of what is in the human heart, and even in the heart of the church, until we have to wrestle with and come to peace with what God has chosen. It is called, a phrase that I employ, the scandal of specificity or the scandal of particularity that God has chosen what he has chosen.

It's not what men would have chosen. Men would not have chosen a hill in Jerusalem to be the locus of God's theocratic rule over his entire creation. They would have sought something far more prestigious, Geneva, New York City, something of that kind, appropriate to the dignity of the kingdom.

But they have not understood the nature of the kingdom or the nature of the king who comes lowly and meek in his triumphal entry as prefiguring himself as king in that city on the back of an ass, not even a mature ass, but the cult of an ass, the baby, young and unformed upon which never man sat. That the king's triumphal entry is a picture of weakness and foolishness because it is the wisdom of God that confounds the wisdom of the powers of the air. That's why the king had to come as an infant, in a stable, in complete dependency upon those to whom that infant was entrusted.

Talk about faith. So, let me pray and let's look at Isaiah, chapter 35, composed 700 years before the advent of Christ and yet pointing to a conclusive or concluding event almost 3,000 years from the time of its composing. There's something even about the issue of Israel that brings a coherence to all scripture.

I can't tell you what happened to me. That when the Lord began to open my understanding and lift the veil of my understanding about the mystery of Israel and the church, it was not only for me a revelation about Israel, it was a revelation about everything. It brought the entire faith into a focus that I had not enjoyed before.

I had independent and separate components, the church, the spirit, the word, various very precious things that God had given, but when God inserted the hermeneutical key, the key of interpretation, click, click, click, click, everything began to fall into place into a comprehension of the faith in its total, organic, apostolic, and prophetic unity. Then the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit were not some kind of adjunct, a little kind of something tacked on in a charismatic Pentecostal way to our evangelical faith which we could take or leave. It was central to the whole fulfillment of this mystery because it cannot be fulfilled from mere evangelical well-meaning intention, the subject of the resurrection in which I had always delighted, and the Christ life now made an immense sense that unless the church itself was a resurrection phenomenon and were the sons and daughters of the resurrection, there's no fulfillment for Israel.

Israel is not going to be delivered out of its last day's extremity by evangelical well-meaning intentions, but only by the life of God himself expressed through a church for whom his life is their life, and they do not know any other. That means that that church must bring to death any other dependency upon which it has trusted till now, namely its own cleverness, its own ability, its own religious expertise, and all of these kinds of things for which no one has faulted us because we have done it so impressively, and it works, and by that we can conduct services and bless people and continue to function in church and missions and all these things. But the issue is not success.

The issue is not efficacy or getting things done or blessing saints. What would you say the issue is after all of these days of speaking? Unto him be glory in the church, not success. Unto him be glory.

This isn't some esoteric word, some phantasmal thing that has no distinct meaning. It's not just a little evocative phrase that we don't know what it means. It's like a wisp that goes through our fingers.

The glory of God is a very substantial thing. When men saw it in Old Testament times, they went down on their faces when it filled the house of God, and the priests came out, for they could not minister, for the glory of God had filled the house of the Lord. And Israel, looking upon this sight, this visible glory of God, cried out, The Lord is God.

They went down on their faces. Unto him be glory in the church, for if he will not have it in the church, he will not have it. Only the church.

So Lord, bring a word now as it pleases you to fill out our understanding, this dotting of the I's and the crossing of the T's, that explanation, that further thing that brings us through, where we don't just nod our head in begrudging acknowledgement, yes, I suppose this is true and we have to live with it, but that something is raised up out of our deepest being, that says, yea and amen. Hosanna to the King. We rejoice for your way.

We rejoice for your wisdom. It's painful in its fulfillment, but glorious in its conclusion. We agree with you, Lord, and we give ourselves to your way, and we thank you for the privilege of our participation.

So Lord, bless us in that way, and bring that concluding word that is in your heart, not as some makeshift last moments thought on your part, but what you had always desired to conclude these days, seeing that we are walking out works that were established before the foundation of the earth was laid. And spoil these saints. Give them such a taste of these realities, my God, that they will be ruined for anything less or anything other than the continuation of this kind of apostolic and prophetic verity, that this is the faith they've tasted of it, and they will never again be satisfied with any kind of religious, human hype and play on personality or the kinds of things that have constituted our religious life till now.

We're ruined. We've tasted real stuff, and it's normative, and you intend that we should live by such words, and we ask and desire that we might continue to hear them and contemplate them and grow by them and become the people of God of the last days who shall stand. Bless the ministers in this room, my God, and spoil them, that they should not look up in some admiration as if these are the men of faith and power, and I'm just your ordinary saint and minister, that there's nothing that they've seen or heard expressed by us that is not available to them.

We who ourselves are the least of all saints, but that this is the life of God, waiting for entry and for expression to those who will yield. We thank you, Lord, for the preciousness of such a faith and such a call and the grace to fulfill it in the life of him who was raised from the dead. In Jesus' name, amen.

Isaiah 35, the wilderness. King James Version, the first words, the wilderness. Before I read any further, what is there about wilderness that is so esteemed in God's sight? I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations.

I will sift you through the wilderness of the nations. What is there about the nature of wilderness? Think on that. Wilderness is God's creation script of any kind of accretion or development or product of man.

No buildings, nothing that speaks of man's prestige or ability. It's raw nature itself in its most primal form. And when a man is thrust into that, he himself is stripped and has to face the ultimate questions of his own existence.

On the ship coming here, Jim and I have both been seamen. I was a high school dropout and wanted to see the world and have adventure and learn what this world is about. And when I was on the high seas as a 16-year-old kid stretched out on the bow plate of this little freighter bobbing like a cork in these tumultuous seas with the stars overhead, I had a view of life and reality for the first time that I never had in Brooklyn, New York.

New York cluttered the landscape with buildings and skyscrapers and signs that blink on and off that stand between man and God who is the creator. But when you are out in the breadth of his creation with nothing to relieve it that man has made and it's you and creation and the God who made it, you see things and begin to understand things and ask things that would never have occurred to you in the world that is filled with its distractions. I'm saying something I have never before said anywhere in 60, almost 7 years.

I have never raised the question of wilderness because wilderness is significant, especially for Jews because what are Jews but the architects and the purveyors of modernity? We are the modern world. We have made it. You take away three significant Jews of the 20th century and you will not be able to recognize modern times.

Can you name them? Karl Marx, who? Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. You take those three German-speaking Jews out of existence and you would not recognize the world today for what it is. And to that we can add Sigmund Freud that has affected multitudes in their view of man and how to raise children and complexes and sex and all these kinds of things and the whole field of psychoanalysis, psychology.

I mean take that out from the consideration of modern man and you don't have modern man. You don't have films. You don't have novels.

You don't have literature. You don't have the kinds of things that have shaped the thinking and perspective and actual substantial life of the majority of mankind. That's why we Jews need to be strict.

We are the purveyors of illusion. We are the Steven Spielbergs. We gave you E.T. I don't know if you've seen that.

I haven't seen it and I won't see it but I have a sense of what that junk is. We own Disney Studios. We make all of this myth, this fanciful life, this phantasmal life of entertainment.

Mickey Mouse and all of the other things and dinosaurs have come out of our imagination. Metron Goldwyn Mayer was a Jewish company. Warner Brothers, all of these studios, Time Warner Corporation has as its CEO a man by the name of Levin, I believe.

We are in the most prominent places of the amusement and entertainment industries that have more effect on the minds and imaginations of millions than the church and God is fitting us for our eternal destiny as a nation of priests and a light unto the world. What is it going to take? It's going to take this. Uprooting a loss of everything to which we have given our lives, our possessions, our wealth, our fame, our prestige.

We'll have nothing on our backs but the shirt on them. That's why we will be hungry, thirsty, naked and in the wilderness stripped before God who made us. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing. Isn't that remarkable? Nature, dumb inanimate nature is going to rejoice for them when they are thrust into that solitary place because they know that something is now coming to its conclusion through Israel's restoration for which even the trees will clap their hands and the hills will skip as lambs because even creation now groans and travails waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. What an indictment against the church that dumb and inanimate nature is more responsive and more expectant for the eschatological conclusion of the age through Israel's restoration than the church.

It rejoices for them when they shall be thrust into the solitary and desert place. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them but how shall they survive in it except there be a supernatural provision where the water breaks forth out of the dry ground and pools of water flood the ground because we secular and rational Jews have no understanding or sympathy for the supernatural. Oh, I'm telling you guys things, wow.

I had a debate. Tell me if I go on too long. I had a debate when I was a missionary to the Jews in New York City with a teacher at a Jewish high school.

The kids wanted to meet one of these Jews for Jesus freaks. And so they called up and I went down and I shared with these kids my faith and then I got into an open debate with their teacher and he was the prototypical Jew right out of central casting from Hollywood. Van Dyke beard, a yarmulke on his head, orthodox, he was the epitome.

I'll tell you if there was no God this is the model of what mankind should aspire to attain. But if there is a God however impressive he is externally this is grotesque. And so we got into a debate and the bell rang, the class left and we were still out in the hallway talking and all of a sudden my eyes began to squint at him and I began to realize however orthodox this man is in his practices he is not orthodox in his belief.

And I said, excuse me, I said Do you believe that God parted the Red Sea that Israel could go over as on dry ground? Silence. Well, what he finally choked out was that what he really believed was it was a confluence of the tides. You know what I realized? That there's something about the supernatural that is terribly offensive to man.

Not only unbelieving man but even believing man. Isn't that true? That for the church there's always some dimension in God that we're fearful of or suspicious of or afraid of that is a further bringing of us in to the supernaturalness of God. How much more the secular, rational Jew when we talk about Jews here's what we need to understand we are not just speaking about an ethnic people we are speaking about man quintessential man as man is in his mind in his hostility and separation from God.

That's why God's dealings with Israel is so severe because Israel stands for man and stands for the whole of mankind that God's dealing with them is God's statement for all men everywhere. They are the epitome they sum up all that is in man that is rebellious and opposed to man and their God who is supernatural so that even when they are orthodox they are orthodox in their practice you try and get them to so much as move an iota away from how their tables should be set and how their cup of wine and their practices and their holidays and celebrations but when it comes to orthodoxy and conviction and belief it's another

question.

So the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it the excellency of Carmel and Sharon now it doesn't mean that this is Lebanon or that this is Carmel but the excellency of those places will be given to it whether it's in Mexico or northern Minnesota or the Philippines God will give the excellency of that to those places and they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God God is going to reveal himself to his ancient modern people supernaturally or they will perish now we come to a very interesting part in this text there's a shift in the text and all of a sudden it's not Israel that is being spoken

about or spoken to but another people who are not designated or revealed and here is God speaking to them almost as a command of instruction and saying to them strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong, fear not behold your God will come with vengeance even God with a recompense he will come and save you you see how we're required to be real bible students real exegetes really searching, probing and examining the text what is God saying? who is he addressing? telling them that you shall say to them who is the one who says and who is the one who hears? well my own prophetic interpretation is this we are the ones being addressed you say to them who are weak and whose hands are limp and whose knees are sagging whose hope is

fading who have been crunched by the sudden uprooting and being thrust to the wilderness of nations who have lost everything they've lost their orientation they are despondent their life is fading from them something to hang on to something that if you don't have it you die you crumple you give up you sink into oblivion now this is critically important because this indicates our role in their deliverance you strengthen their weak knees and confirm their weak hands and confirm the feeble knees and you say to them that are of a fearful heart you don't have a fearful heart you're a believer they have a fearful heart they do not yet know God and they are overwhelmed by the catastrophe that has come upon them with great suddenness and what do you say to them of a fearful heart? be strong fear

not behold, your God will come with vengeance even God with a recompense he will come and save you now it's remarkable to read what the effect of those words are upon those who hear them it's not just that their morale is lifted they are affected as if the word itself is not just instruction but an event for it says then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped then shall the lame man leap as a hart as a deer and the tongue of the dumb sing for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert and the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water and the habitation of dragons where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes and a highway shall be there and a way and it shall be called the way of

holiness and the unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those the wayfaring men the fool shall not err therein no lion shall be there nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon it shall not be found there but the redeemed shall walk there and the ransom of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing and everlasting joy upon their heads and they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away what a remarkable text that telescopes and brings together all of the elements that were being shared last night Israel in its extremity Israel being thrust not only through the nations but the wilderness of the nations that God might reveal himself to them supernaturally by the provision that must come or they will perish but not the least of the provision is

not just water breaking forth out of dry ground but the word of the Lord that comes to them when they are just about down and out God has not yet come they have not yet received their vindication they have not yet seen the Lord but a word comes that if it did not come it would be a question of whether they would have held on long enough to receive the full redemptive work of God something has got to come to them in the midst of their wilderness experience that is a word that is more than just a word of encouragement it's a prophetic word or a word of event but who speaks it? the church who meets them in the wilderness but the church of what kind? the church that can say don't be afraid your God will come and he will come with a recompense and he will save you and he will deliver you now

listen saints what's the difference between a little pep talk and a little encouragement which will fade away under the difficulty of their conditions and a word that comes that constitutes event the difference is the quality the character and the stature of the faith of those who speak it it's one thing to say don't be afraid but if you yourself are still subject to fears of any kind all that you're saying is hardly anything better than well-meaning advice and which could be given by a rotarian, an elk or a fraternal order you need to listen very carefully to what I'm saying now because this is going to be the issue right now of life or death for these people before their full redemption comes they must hear a word of a certain kind in the midst of their weakness where they're just about

to give in and to expire for the want of hope who do not know God they need to encounter a people who can speak with such confidence with such faith a word that in the hearing of it it's not just an encouragement but the eyes of the blind are open that lame leap the word has transfigured them because it is a prophetic word spoken in prophetic fullness and prophetic authority by a prophetic people who themselves know that God will come you know how they know it? out of their own tested experience out of their own wilderness experience because in their being stretched out to breaking when it seemed like there was no answer or hope God did come I want to be so careful with what I'm saying now you know I told you or you may not have heard but in our own community after ten years of existence

not at a point where we were sagging and collapsing but at the point where we were breaking through to finally having it together the Lord disbanded the entire community and stripped it down to the bone required everyone off the property and brought it into a complete death there was one brother who was one of the fellow elders who said I don't think that God is asking for this and he's the man who said I'm here after your prophetic ministry and I said listen I'm telling you on whatever authority I have in the office that I have God is wanting everyone off this property he wants everything brought into death he wants the whole community this ministry even my marriage myself and you into death there's a death that God is calling for well I don't think that he means that I think that we can

still stand I tried to persuade and plead with this brother and finally after weeks and months we had one last final elders and wives meetings and again I tried to persuade him what I thought God was wanting no he wouldn't hear God hadn't told him that and so I just let him go and we went to bed and we were to have a final cup of coffee in the morning and then go out different ways and when he walked into the house that final morning the moment I saw his face I said to him what happened to you? his face showed something had happened between the time I saw him last and this morning oh he said before I went to bed I prayed Lord he said if I'm mistaken about this you know please you know correct me and he said the Lord said to me if you will not leave I will kill you he left we lost our

insurance no insurance company would cover us an abandoned property open to the vandals open to the severe elements and I had to come once or twice over the course of those three years to do something or

get something I can't tell you what it means to taste death to come to a place abandoned that was once filled with the life of God and all you hear is this terrible eerie silence just broken by grrrrr a door back and forth and it went grrrrr I had my dog with me we went the property was covered with snow I went in as far as I could twenty feet I couldn't go further the dog went out of the car he went a few feet and came back with his tail between his legs because he felt the death that was there now why were we required to experience that the people that were in the faith prosperity

message were not experiencing it only us and here's the reason a prophet is required to experience his message a teacher is not required a teacher can discuss and develop and show forth principles of the faith and illustrate it out of scripture that's his calling but there are not many prophets and when you'll hear me today you'll understand that there are not many who will want to be it's none of this romantic stuff it's death saints and the prophet has got to live his message he has got to experience the essence of what he will later be required to proclaim we have experienced the desolation of God I remember I left the house I was living in it I painted it yellow it was so drab that just to alleviate the drabness I painted the house a terrible yellow and I remember that when the Lord

after I was on a 14 month sabbatical silence the Lord forbade me to preach He didn't tell me why I was just not allowed to speak a message to anyone and the first time that the Lord lifted that was to speak the message on the mystery of Israel and the church in the last days so I left my empty house my wife was gone and vowed never to return my children were gone the community was gone and I was like a dog living in my own empty house and I left that day I had my suitcase in one hand and my attache case with the papers that I had developed over the mystery of Israel and I left the house and I turned the corner and I stood by the barn and I looked back and the sun was just going down over the property it was the most melancholy gut-wrenching sight that you could imagine silent, lonely

death a man by himself and the Lord quickened that verse they that go forth bearing precious seed weeping shall doubtless return bearing what's the word bearing sheaves of eternal fruit when the Lord gave me my first computer when every time I turned it on that verse came on the screen we had to experience and to taste death and desolation at the hand of God our community did not collapse because of any intrinsic defect God himself brought it down that we would experience and taste desolation and death and now we're back again on the same property I was telling the dear wards they know the Mexican family who were the first ones back with me because we were alone for a year and a half in that house for one function only to intercede before God and to travail and to cry out of our spirits

every morning at 5 o'clock for the restoration of that community that my wife would come back that my children would come back that the Lord would restore life there are many mornings that I was up at 3 o'clock 4 o'clock and I heard them upstairs moving about and we came down we started to pray at that time we did nothing but intercede for a year and a half and now the community is back not the same different in quality different in character because it goes into the ground as a seed but the resurrection form is of another kind so we are experiencing death and desolation and now restoration so that when we speak to our own Jewish people that your God will come and your God will restore we're not just giving a hopeful suggestion we're speaking out of the depths of what we have experienced

ourselves in the God who makes desolate and the God who restores and that word and that word alone will bring life and no other now you're called to that exact ministry it's you in the wilderness place that needs to say to them don't be afraid that's why between now and then God has got to work on you and strip you from your fears and everything else that would keep you from a place of authentic prophetic faith

listen dear saints it's not enough merely to be creedally correct we think that if we can pronounce the creeds of the faith or recite them or subscribe to the correctness of doctrines that we believe believing is an existential reality of a dimension of living that is altogether other and contrary than what is known on the earth it is a heavenly posture a mind, an attitude an

awareness of God a knowledge of God as he in fact is and not as we thought him to be a God who can make pools to break forth out of dry and arid places a God whose word makes the blind to see and the lame to leap we've got to move from our places of mere doctrinal correctness into the place of prophetic and existential appropriation of the faith that the word of God out of our mouth is true that we can take the widow's son who is dead and stretch him out on our beds where we live right into the midst of our privacy and prostrate ourselves over that dead child eyeball to eyeball and fingertip to fingertip and cry out to God three times and its life returns again and we take it to its mother who had despaired and said see your son lives and she'll say to us now I know that the word of God

in your mouth is truth the issue of Israel's restoration is not Israel the issue is the church and this dear sister is why God has got to reduce Israel to total hopelessness in itself and for itself because we Jews are the most supremely self-sufficient people we can come out of the holocaust and be stripped we can come out with just a number on our arms with nothing and within ten years we're in business we're successful our children are going to private schools and we're utterly confident and we can say never again that kind of arrogant conceit and self-assurance cannot bless all the families of the earth Israel is a witness to God and not of itself and it has got to be brought to a place where it is so stripped so inert so incapable of doing for itself that if it survives at all if it

is restored at all it is because something comes to it from outside of itself the church which modern Jews today despise and look down upon with disdain and contempt is God's calculated agency for their deliverance and their restoration in the last days oh the depths both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God who has been his counselor and that's why Paul says in Romans 11 I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery brethren lest you become wise in your own conceits because this mystery is calculated for the church it calls the church to prophetic maturity to be entrusted with God's own words that are creative events when the church speaks them with one voice and one agreement and one mind that brings life to a people who would otherwise expire in their terrible disaster and

catastrophe and confusion and hopelessness a word comes to them in the wilderness do not be afraid it's not a suggestion it's not an option it is an event that those who hear it become unafraid those who hear it see those who hear it leap it is the creative event of God but not spoken directly by God but someone in the wilderness prepared to bring forth that word because they themselves know of a God who will come so you dear lovers of Israel how far are you willing to go how far are you willing to allow God to bring you before that time in your own experience to wilderness situations that you have never before experienced to strippings to dealings to trials where if God be not God you perish that you come to a quality of transcendent actual existential faith that the word of God out of

your mouth will be true our conventional Christian church experience however much it may have blessed us has not prepared us for this role and it may well be that it's not for everyone who calls themselves Christian but as many as will I think everyone whom God has called to be a prophet has said who me? and has said look I'm only a child I think what Jeremiah was trying to do was get out of it can't I just be a pastor? it's a suffering but it's a glory and I think that we would be robbing you if we didn't lay before you an explicit invitation to say yes to the Lord I'm willing to be brought to whatever wilderness condition of

stripping and of dealing that will bring me into a dimension of the knowledge of you that I can communicate to a dying people that when they will hear my word they

will leap to life I want to be an instrument in this last days drama for Israel's redemption for I know that Israel's redemption is the issue of your coming and your kingdom and I know it will be a suffering for me but I want share in the eternal glory so I just want to end my little portion this morning with an invitation and I know you've heard many invitations and I don't think we have given one till now maybe it's waited till the very end where the faint hearted and others who have heard a little bit and have not come back are not required to consider this question but those of you who are here are and those who will hear on the tape this is voluntary and it's free God is not compelling anyone to be an actor and participant in his last days purposes toward Israel you're not required

to do this and you can still be a fine believer and bless the church and many other ways live a satisfactory Christian life but these are the ultimate things that pertain to the completion of his last days purposes and the issue of his glory forever Israel's restoration is the issue of God's glory forever it's of him I didn't make this up saints and it has got to be through him in order to be to him as glory forever that's why it can't be on the basis of your ability it can't be on the basis of your religious expertise but only on the basis of his own life it's of him and it's through him that it might be to him as glory forever what Israel needs to meet in the wilderness are the sons and daughters of the resurrection whose word is the resurrection word that brings life to those who hear

it for it makes their eyes to see and their legs to leap and the waters to break forth and life out of a dry place so Lord I thank you precious God I have tried to be simple and clear we're not looking for esoteric texts that can inflame our imagination some giddy kind of thing for the end times Lord this is nuts and bolts this is practical this is down to earth this is the reality that the scriptures make clear again and again and again we have virtually to be willfully blind not to see it and it makes an ultimate requirement of the church as nothing else has required it but the crisis of Israel and I'm asking you to look upon us my God there are sons and daughters in this room who have been carefully nurtured by you, called by you brought through their experiences, brought from faith to

faith and now you're putting before them a final and ultimate proposition of what they themselves must taste and experience in a God who makes desolate and a God who restores that they can say to Israel your God lives your God comes, he will save you for he has saved me again and again out of extremities of such a kind that if God were not God I would have perished and I made myself a candidate for those extremities by saying yes Lord fit me to be those who meet Israel in the wilderness and can speak the word of life to them can anyone say yes to this can anyone stand to this, raise a hand to this bow before God for this some statement of your body, your life that you say yes whatever it takes, I can't imagine what it's going to take, I don't know what the equivalent will be of shutting

down a community in Minnesota but I know that it will be as radical you know where I am you know what I need, you know the secret fears of my life you know the places where I'm not victorious and overcoming you know how concerned I am for how I'm seen and how men appreciate me and prestige and success and all the things in the religious system in which I've been brought up, but I'm willing to be stripped to the bone bring me into your wilderness even behind the drawn curtains and the shades of my own home you know how to fit me and prepare me for this ultimate and prophetic use that will be the issue of life or death for Israel and I am willing, I am standing now at this brother's invitation as a statement to you and the powers of darkness overhead who are trembling at the very sight of

this, that I am willing I must know you in this way the word out of my mouth has got to be more than just well meaning intention, form me my God in full prophetic maturity and stature together with a whole people that will corporately express this to the remnant of Israel in the last days that the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion and mourning and sighing flee away and everlasting joy be upon their heads in Jesus name seal these children Lord you know them by name let it be recorded in heaven and may you be released now from this morning, from this moment to bring into their life those dealings, trials and things calculated in your wisdom and love to bring them to that ultimate maturity and use for which they will eternally rejoice and receive the gratitude of a restored nation

seal it, perform it and I bless them Lord whatever my own prayer means I bless them I bless them Lord I bless them with all heavenly blessing in Christ Jesus give them grace upon grace upon grace in all that they shall be required to bear and we thank you for the high calling in Christ Jesus which we have chosen freely to receive this morning counting it all privilege and joy thank you my God for this historic moment now being registered in heaven let the powers of darkness recoil let them break out of their orbits at this demonstration this morning for they are finished, their time is up, their number is up, their end is imminent when they see this consecration thank you my God not only for the blessing that will come to the Israel

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