

The Set Time To Favour Zion

by Art Katz

This sermon emphasizes the need for total surrender to God, highlighting the struggle to let go of our own virtues and spirituality to fully unite with God's nature. It challenges believers to relinquish even the best aspects of themselves to attain a deeper union with God, reflecting His compassion and mercy. The ultimate goal is to become a bride adorned for the bridegroom, reflecting the glory and nature of the Lord.

Scripture: Isaiah 35:4, Ezekiel 37:1, Philippians 1:21

Topics: "Total Surrender", "Union with God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for total surrender to God, highlighting the struggle to let go of our own virtues and spirituality to fully unite with God's nature. It challenges believers to relinquish even the best aspects of themselves to attain a deeper union with God, reflecting His compassion and mercy. The ultimate goal is to become a bride adorned for the bridegroom, reflecting the glory and nature of the Lord.

Transcript

while you're ahead. You don't want to push beyond. How can the Lord go further? So precious God on high, you're an alpha and omega, and there's yet something, my God, to bring completion to these days, to dot the i's and cross the t's, to round it out, to bring the full content of your heart, Lord.

So God forbid that I should in any way be presuming upon you or we ourselves that you're obliged to fill our schedule. And we have this schedule and you're obliged to be on and have something to share. But we trust, my God, that you yourself have orchestrated the entire occasion and that there is something tonight that's needful and that it will bring a completion of a sense that we need.

So we look to you, my God, to be as gracious now as you were this morning, because you're not a God who changes. You're the same yesterday, today and forever. So excuse our fluttering hearts and our human apprehensions and the little axioms that we have, not pushing your luck.

Thank you, my God. Come and show us that you can take us yet even further into realms of glory, of joy unspeakable, of understanding that we thought we had touched in a way that can't be described. So come, Lord.

We look to you for your preciousness and that your own heart will be gratified. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, my little devotional book, *Praying with the Prophets*, Eugene Peterson, ever hear of him? Oh, good stuff. Just so happens that the prophet through whom he's going in these very days is Jeremiah, and he's in chapter 30, and every day's installment is so apropos to what we have been discussing. April 14th, Jeremiah 30, 17, I will restore health to you and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord.

Because they have called you an outcast, it is Zion no one cares for her. And his comment is, two great facts about Israel describe us all. One, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you, nothing devised by physicians or politicians will make us whole.

Two, I will restore health to you. God cures the incurable. God uses the act of judgment as a very means of salvation.

April 15th, I am going to restore Jeremiah 30, 18 through 22. I'm going to restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob, and have compassion on his dwellings. The city shall be rebuilt upon its mound, and the citadel set on its rightful site.

I remember sharing that particular verse with one of the most esteemed prophetic men in the land, whom I had known for many years, trying to indicate that there's yet this devastation that's future. And I said, the city will be rebuilt upon its mounds, its heaps. And he said, Art, look out the window, there's the earth movers now, there's the massive equipment.

That prophecy is being fulfilled now. I said, but your dear man, read the scriptures carefully. It says it will be rebuilt upon its mounds or upon its heaps as unto the Lord.

And this building is not that building. In fact, this building will constitute the heaps and the mounds. And he said, get out of my office.

Thank you, Lord. We have to be careful and not miss the scripture that indicates whether something is past, present, or future. So he writes, judgment has ravaged the city, turned the temple to rubble, decimated the population.

Often there's like a double application, both past and future through the same verses. The worst is nevertheless where the best is. And then he says, when was this prophecy fulfilled? Hinting that there's yet a future fulfillment that very few dare even to consider.

April 16th, Jeremiah 30, 22, 23, 24. The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his mind. In the latter days, you will understand this.

April 17th, grace in the wilderness, Jeremiah 31. At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel. They shall be my people.

This says the Lord, the people who survived the sword, found grace in the wilderness. When Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. His comment, Israel delivered from Egyptian slavery.

See how he's casting this in the past. Found in the wilderness because that's the only wilderness with which he's acquainted. He doesn't contemplate a future wilderness.

That God was all sufficient. That living by faith put her in touch with the deep realities of God's blessing. Deliverance from exile will renew that experience.

Yes, indeed. And his prayer, Lord God in the wilderness, where I used to see only emptiness, I am discovering your fullness. In the place where human achievements are non-existent, I discover your work in me and know your blessing.

Thank you, God, for grace in the wilderness. Ever been in the wilderness? My wilderness was in Denmark, not Minnesota, where I lived, oh, I don't know, a few months, my wife's country. It was for me a veritable wilderness and anguish of soul for people who had coffee at 4 p.m. every day if the world was coming to the end.

And they had three kinds of cake prescribed, and I don't have a word to describe the Danish mentality, the mindset, that rubbed me absolutely raw and stretched me every day to breaking so that a comfortable civilization that predicates reality on creature comfort was for me the place of wilderness. God can do it in your own home and behind your own drawn shades and constitute that as a wilderness, because a wilderness is a place of stretching, a place of emptying, a place of exasperation, of futility, where there doesn't seem to be end or answer. I think it's imperative, incumbent on every saint to have a wilderness experience and to find God in it so that when we come to comfort them in the wilderness, we come with a tested Word.

Okay. Today's text, tonight's text, Psalm 102. And this psalm is eschatological and apocalyptic.

These are two words from which you cannot be relieved. Every saint must, if they understand only two Greek words, maybe three, exegesis, drawing out from the text, they need to understand eschatological, the things that pertain to the end, eschaton, the end, the meaning of the end, and apocalyptic, much more difficult word. It actually means revelation, but it means a revelation of things that come at a time of judgment and devastation.

So that the view of things that are apocalyptic are charged often with violence, tumult, destruction. This psalm is both eschatological and apocalyptic. So are you saying, Art, that there are psalms that are ancient, that go back to much earlier times, that speak and are descriptive of that which is yet future and not yet in our experience? Exactly.

That's what this psalm is. It begins with a description of a man in a concentration camp. We'll read it in just a moment.

And it's not a far-fetched description of what my Jewish kinsmen will be experiencing, because God will bring them out of dungeons and out of prisons and out of chains, out of confinement, out of hopeless situations, dark holes and pits, that they will be cast to in the last days in the farthest reaches of the world. If, after all, this will be a greater trouble than any previous trouble, and two-thirds of world Jewry will expire in a much shorter time than the Nazi period required for six million, then something of a systematic kind will be required. It will be more than just a death here, a death there.

There's going to have to be wholesale annihilation, wholesale death camps, wholesale places like of which Auschwitz and Birkenau were the prototype. So let's look at Psalm 102 and catch the sense of this. And in my Bible, it says in italics under the title 102, a prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.

So the Spirit of God gave to the psalmist this psalm that beggars any description of things in the psalmist's own experience, or even in history, in Israel's present up to that time history. It's speaking of a future time.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.

Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble, Jacob's trouble. Incline thine ear unto me in the day when I call. Answer me speedily.

Well, so far we're encouraged that because of the trouble, that people who have not been accustomed to calling upon the Lord are constrained to pray. Hear my prayer and my cry, let it come up unto thee. The distress of this afflicted one compels him to cry out to a God whom he would not otherwise have sought had his life continued to be untroubled, predictable, safe, affluent, and comfortable.

That's why troubles come. Because though that would have been an enjoyable condition, it does not bring one to God. And the whole purpose for life is to be found of God.

Tell me a text where that is stated. By the great apostle himself. Mars Hill, Acts 17.

Speaking to philosophers who are every day looking for some new thing, who delight to refer to God as the unknown God. It sounds so spiritual, but it's so phony. And the apostle will not let them get away with it.

He whom you worship ignorantly, I declare unto you. The God who made the heavens and the earth and all that in that is, including Athens, has established by one blood all nations of men that they might seek after him if happily they may be found of him. What he's saying is, you guys can be philosophical all you want, but the purpose for existence, for the nations, for the bounds of the nations, and the blood by which all men are made, is that they might seek after God and be found of him.

That's the purpose of human existence. Kind of narrow view, wouldn't you say? But it's the view of God, and the apostle proclaims it with complete emphatic assurance. And the world has not heard that kind of word since.

The world needs to be told that whatever you think its purpose is, commerce and civilization and trade and science and culture, that's all frill. Here's the purpose. Don't be deceived to be found of God while you yet have breath.

And here's a man coming to this discovery, this realization, only out of trouble and out of distress. You could almost say it's the love of God who would not allow the man to die in the deception that was godless, but brought him trouble to break through the conventional categories by which he was assured he was living rightly. And for the first time, this Norman Podhoretz is lifting his voice and crying out to God.

Hear my cry, oh Lord, this is unprecedented in my experience. But my trouble, my distress, constrains me. For where did you hear the kind of plight that he's in? For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

My heart is smitten and withered like grass so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. This is almost a description of the concentration camp inmates.

Bones and skin and darkened and blackened, not able to eat, smitten. I am like a pelican of the wilderness. I am like an owl of the desert, solitary.

I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. My enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. If that's not a description of Islamic spite and vengeance and

vehemence of having a Jew captive and every day baiting him and goading him and bringing him to an anguish of soul, I don't know what it is.

The Nazis were not like that. I mean there may have been an occasional slight and rough word, but now this man who's in prison has got daily to listen to a people who take in a special vicious delight in spiteful taunts and mockings because they know they've got this guy captive and for him there's no hope. So he's crying out to God.

I'm a pelican. I'm an owl. I'm a sparrow on the roof.

I'm alone. I'm helpless. My skin clings to my bones.

I can't eat. I'm being taunted and mocked every day. From those who are mad against me.

What do you have in your Bible? Do you have mad against me? Who has something else? Riled? Rail? Okay. Anyone else? Swear an oath. All of that I think.

Angry? Angry? The best taunt, the best, better is vicious, spiteful, bitter. It's a kind of phenomenon we have not seen in modern times until the rise of Islam because it's inherent and intrinsic to the Islamic demonism and it likes to ventilate itself upon the infidel and of all the infidels upon the Jew. So here's a Jew in a plight that if I'm right, my people are going to be experiencing in very great measure at a soon time.

But there's a purpose in God. As I have already said, a man who before would never have considered calling on God, that would have been kid stuff, that's medieval, that's play acting, that's nursery stuff, is now doing it. This urbane Jew sophisticated and had it all together, his life has come apart at its seams and he's in a hopeless predicament for which there's only one place to turn and to cry, God.

Is that that important that God will allow that distress to come? Yes. My enemies reproach me all the day. They that are angry, spiteful, vicious against me are sworn against me for I've eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping because of thine indignation and thy wrath for thou has lifted me up and cast me down.

Well, praise the Lord. This guy is beginning to see daylight. Not only is he beginning to acknowledge God, he's beginning to acknowledge something that is consonant with that, that what he's suffering is not merely at the hands of men, but that God himself is the author of this condition.

He's beginning to factor in that what we experience is come at the hand of God as judgment, but not only that, it's a judgment justified because he says your indignation has cast me down. It's a depth of awareness of the utter reality that is otherwise concealed in the amenities of life that is the ground of very truth itself. Suffering, judgment, but deserved judgment.

Your indignation has cast me down. So it's not only acknowledgement of God, but that what I'm experiencing is from the hand of God and I deserve what I'm experiencing. It's not a complaint against God that I'm just a hapless victim without reason.

No, I see now in the severity of what I am experiencing that you're not only a God who's existent, but a God who is just and that what I'm experiencing is altogether appropriate to my sin against you for my long discontinuity and my long ignorance and indifference against you, which is the epitome of sin. This is

eschatological. This is describing a condition to which my people have not yet come, but will come, because this complainant, this person in the psalm is speaking in behalf of an entire people.

It's not just an individual here, but a people who have come to this condition. My days are like a shadow. Let's go back again.

Thine indignation, indignation, verse 10, and thy wrath. Now, this is not God who's just irascible and unreasonable and just blows off steam and gets mad because he's free to have the prerogative of being God. His wrath is just.

His wrath is righteous. His indignation is a justified indignation. And for the first time, this Jewish guy in this predicament is seeing and acknowledging that.

He's close to truth. He's close to salvation. And whatever the predicament that has brought him there, it's worth it, because the issue of eternal salvation is worth all of the afflictions that we can suffer in this earthly life, not to carry it into an eternity in which is an anguish of soul and a gnashing of teeth without remedy.

If we don't understand this, we will find complaint with God when we see Jews suffering this and say, where is he? How is he allowing that? How is this the God of justice and love? Because Paul says that one of the phenomena of the last days is a great falling away. And I want to suggest it will be from faint-hearted saints who are shallow, merely sentimental, and are disappointed in God in the way in which they see he's allowing his people to be treated a second time within a generation in a way more devastating than even the Nazi time. So that those who had hoped that the state of Israel was the final coming through and a homeland for Jews, and even though there were some troubles, they would come through, they would be settled, they would be hunky-dory, we would be hunky-dory, and all things would be altogether sweet, are utterly disappointed.

They're not being raptured, and Israel is not being established, and Jews are once again being cast into a furnace of affliction that exceeds anything that they had previously known historically, even the Nazi time. I'll tell you that if you don't prophetically anticipate and understand the reason for the judgment of God in wrath and indignation, you will be offended against God and say that he has failed you, he's not the God that you had expected, his scriptures are not true, Israel is not established, you thought the scriptures indicated that. You will be among those that fall away.

And in falling away, you're going to find yourself in the camp of the oppressors against the oppressed, killing those who yet retain their prophetic and apostolic faith and justify God in his severity, and say, and they will kill us and claim they're doing God a service. Listen, saints, there's a centrifugal thing taking place through the course of time and history by which as we come increasingly to the end, God is sifting the earth, not only Israel, but the church and the nations, and those who are faint in their hearts to God and never had occasion to express it will be, find themselves justified in forsaking him and their faith and becoming themselves apostate and persecutors of those who believe and justify God in his severity, because they know that God's judgments are not merely punitive, but redemptive, and that there's an eternal end and an eschatological end and a millennial end by which he shall be glorified and Israel shall be delivered, but not before it's preceded by a time of trouble. Thank you, Lord, that we had this session just to save individuals from within this present congregation and those watching or hearing the tapes from the prospect of apostasy and falling away that comes out of a disappointment of a God who seems to have failed them because of their inadequate understanding of that God and the necessity for trouble and indignation and wrath so as to bring a victim to a place of understanding and recognition by which he is

eternally saved.

How far will God go to save Israel from an utter and final irrevocable damnation? How far must he go to save them for the purposes for which they're called, in which his name and word and honor are at stake, who has given them an irrevocable call to be the nation of priests and light of the world? He will go this far. Are you offended when God goes that far? How far will you go, Lord? How many times have we said, ouch, it's enough already, Lord. How much must I bear this? I'm at my end.

I can't take an iota more. And instead of being relieved, he turns up the juice, tightens the screws and brings you yet into deeper convulsions and pain and wracking in which you thought that you had come to your limit. How far will he go? He goes far because the issues are great and they are eternal.

He'll go as far as is needful to attain what he must because in all of his vengeance and wrath and dealings, he is after all a God of mercy. Let every man be a liar. Let God be true.

Let us be stupefied and choke and splutter and kick and complain and say, where is he and how dare he? But know that we know that what he is in his nature is unchangeable and true. He is love. He is mercy.

It's not just an attribute. It's not just a little external cosmetic of his personality. It's what he is in himself through and through.

So I don't care what he does. I don't care what kind of a trouble comes. I don't care how much it makes me stagger and be stupefied and unable to explain it.

I'm not required to explain him. Who am I to explain him? His ways are past finding out. But this I know, he does all things well.

This I know, he's perfect in all his ways. This I know, he's altogether righteous. He's altogether just.

And even his severity is his mercy. When you know that, you know God. You've got to know him or you'll be offended.

And the great test will be his dealings with the Jewish people, whom you love and want to see spared. And instead of being spared, they're going to be clobbered brutally by the most vengeful force in modern history, Islam. I've never spoken like this.

First time. I'm glad I'm hearing it and it's being recorded. But thou, O Lord, my days are like a shadow, verse 11, that decline.

I'm withered like grass, but thou. Beautiful statement. My days, me, I was a hotshot in times past, but now I'm withering, I'm nothing, but thou.

Oh, dear saints, I am yearning and waiting for my Jewish people to go from my days, me, but thou. I'm waiting for the but thou. I'm waiting for the shift of emphasis, the true center point, the true basis and pivot of reality.

Thou. They've not come to it, even when they're orthodox. Even their orthodoxy and their orthopraxy and their minute attention to kosher and rules and regulations is not yet the but thou.

This but thou, this new acknowledgement that there's an entity in the world beside me and greater than me, it's God. I'm withered like grass, I'm dust, but thou. Oh, whatever it takes, Lord, to get your Jewish people to say that out of their deeps is worth everything.

Because until they come to that, what blessing can they bring to the world? What kind of priestliness can they minister until they have come to the but thou? Have we come to the but thou? And when do we come to it? That is deep. It's when we are withering like grass, when we're drying up, when we're afflicted, that however we are reduced, we can still turn to the whole purpose of life and existence, God, but thou, Lord, but thou. Thou, oh Lord, shalt endure forever.

I'm transient. I'm a piece of dust. I'm flim-flam.

I'm here today, gone tomorrow. My days are a vapor, but thou, oh Lord, shall endure forever. Wow, whatever it took to bring this recognition to a secular, resistant Jew was worth it.

But thou, oh Lord, you're timeless, you're eternal, and your remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise. Listen to this cognizance, this understanding that's deep about God, much deeper than many of us who have been lifetime believers have yet come.

Because however short a period of time this represents in this individual's life, the depth of his suffering and his calamity has driven him to an awareness of God deeper in many ways than most of us who have lifetimes of believing that are casual and superficial. Listen to what he's going to say. Not only do you endure forever, but you shall arise and have mercy upon Zion for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come.

Well, you dear man, how do you know that? That there is a time with God, however hopeless things may seem, there is a moment of God's choosing in which the most hopeless situation of predicament will be reversed, will be turned around, its purposes will have been served. And because you know that, that God's final word is mercy and not judgment, that this experience that I'm suffering is not the last word. There's something to come that must come in God's time.

And the word in Greek for the time, the set time, is not chronos, what time is it, but kairos, the appointed time and the set time. Have you come to this awareness of God? There's a set time. And you know what, excuse my naivety, these very days for us in this little place here in New Zealand is a set time whose time has come.

Will you believe me when I say, 41 years in the Lord, speaking throughout the world, I have never heard myself as I'm hearing myself in these days. There's something taking place, there's a depth, there's a precision of speech, there's a, I don't have a word for it, there's something taking place here whose time has come. Not only for you, yes for you, but through you and beyond you, to the church at large, its time has come.

A word, a presentation, an understanding, the set time. We need to know that it's God. He's not, time does not just run on, events do not just take their course, it's moving towards something.

This is a God who's skillful, this is a God who knows the end from the beginning. This is a God who has purposes to be served, and there comes a time when that purpose is served, a set time. And if it were not for that, that we can expect that and look to that and hope for that, we would collapse.

Because one day would be like another. There doesn't simply be any light breaking on the horizon, but we know that we know that there's something already in the elect mind of God and his will, and which, what seems to us to be irreversible, hopeless, will be turned when the set time is come to favor Zion. Now wait till you hear, how does this man know that the set time is about to come? What will it take? What is God waiting for that he will recognize that the time has come, the appointed hour, to be Israel's deliverer? And here it is, it's a remarkable statement.

Verse 14, the heart of our message, for thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof. Huh? That's the set time? What is that? What is being said here? In the cryptic, terse, poetic, and prophetic way in which the psalmist speaks and sums up in one verse an enormously profound statement for which God is waiting from his servants. Not from Israel.

Israel is the complainant. Israel is the one whose skin is cleaving to their bones. Someone else is being referred to here, and the word that is used to refer to that other one is servants.

My servant people, if Israel were the servants, they would not be in the concentration camps. It's someone else whom God is addressing as he addressed in Isaiah 35 in the wilderness, speak to them and say to them. He's not speaking to Israel, he's speaking to someone else who remains unidentified, but will have a prophetic power to speak in such a way as to make the lame to leap and the blind to see, and water break out of dry ground.

Here again is another cryptic reference, mysterious. Why doesn't the scripture say the church? Why servants? Because this psalm has existed for centuries. The word church was not even in existence.

It would have been confusing. God in his wisdom had to give a word descriptive of the church, and yet one that would not throw readers off, but servants of such a kind. How are they described? As those that have mercy upon Zion, who take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof.

They're not, he's not talking about antiquity. He's not talking about archaeology. What is he talking about? To take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof.

The stones in my prophetic understanding are the ruins of the cities of Judah, present Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, all the cities of Israel shall be crunched. There will be wholesale devastation. They will be left in ruins, the great diamond tower of Tel Aviv, and all of the things that Israel has built as if they have everlasting security, and this shall not come upon them.

It's going to be a devastation. It has to be because the scripture says that it is without inhabitants. The cities are left in ruin and desolate and without inhabitants.

Why? Because they are stripped, they're ruined, they're brought down. It's a judgment of such a kind on a state that presumed to think that it could establish itself independent of God. And you know what? The world is gloating and taking enjoyment and rubbing their hands in glee.

They had it coming. They couldn't find a way to make peace with the Palestinians and with the Arabs, and they were contentious and they used force, and true enough. But there will be a strange presence in the earth that will not gloat and enjoy Israel's misfortune.

A people who will have mercy and compassion and identification with her ruins. That's a poetic way of saying that this people will be identified and stand with Israel in the judgment that the ruins suggest. Not

just the sympathy from a distance and clucking your tongue and saying, oh too bad about them, but being with them in their plight.

Their plight is the result of their sin as judgment. And yet you freely identify with them in that brokenness, in that mishap, that misfortune, is exactly the same kind of act as Jesus being baptized in the Jordan by John. And John was astonished.

I have need to be baptized of you. What are you doing here? This is a place for sinners. This is the water of repentance.

You have no need. Jesus said it's needful that all righteousness be fulfilled. I have got to identify with my people in their sins.

I cannot stand on the banks and look down from some superior height. I've got to join them, be with them in their plight, though I myself am innocent without sin. And when God saw that and Jesus came up out of that water, the heaven opened and the dove came down.

The voice of the father said, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. Because what he has voluntarily done here, this identification with Israel in its sin, is the statement of what I am as God. I'm compassionate.

Yes, I judge, but I identify. I'm with this people. Because though we are not guilty of their sins, of what sins are we guilty? And do we have to wait to cry out, Lord, blot out my transgressions, as I said earlier today, because I've committed adultery and murder? Or can we cry out, blot out my transgressions, because I'm capable of adultery and murder? Because I was born in iniquity, I was conceived in iniquity, not because my mother was in a sinful state when that conception took place, but because through and through, in my frame as man, I am sin.

You have every reason to identify with Israel. You don't have to wait to prove the truth of your condition, because you have actually committed this or that. There but for the grace of God go you.

And unless we identify in that way, we don't identify. Got the picture? It's like me on that day 50 years ago or more, coming back from my first visit to Dachau, the German concentration camp near Munich, on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur. I didn't go to a synagogue.

I went to the concentration camp. Oh, I knew about those Germans. And I had an anger bristling in my gut toward them.

And I made the rounds and I saw the places of flogging. They were still in place in the early 1950s. They had not yet cleaned it up.

It still had all of the visible accoutrements of a death camp, of a place of torture, whipping posts and all the rest. I went right into the gas rooms and saw the signs in German for people to take a shower, not knowing that what would come out of those jets was not going to be water but gas. And then the furnace, the bones, I got sick in my soul.

I thought I knew, but I didn't know as I ought to know. And I remember coming outside and gasping for air. I was overwhelmed.

I was so overwhelmed that my little brittle categories of good guy and bad guy had dissipated in the smoke that ascended from Dachau. That what I was seeing, the magnitude of this evil, unconsciously, though my mind was not yet revealing, was saying in my deeps, this evil is too great merely to be attributed to Germans. This is human evil.

And you cats, you self-righteous prig, you smug, complacent piece of Jewish vanity who think that you're morally superior to those Germans, you're as capable of them as this evil. And until you recognize that. As Solzhenitsyn said, the line between good and evil runs through the heart of every man.

Good. Perfect. And there I went staggering onto the train to go back to Munich and found myself in a second class car with the sliding doors, the European style trains.

There was only one other passenger, a blonde man with blue eyes, my enemy, the Aryan, but without arms and without legs. The guy was a multiple amputee. And we were seated opposite each other.

This Jew with his superior morality being smashed to smithereens by the evidence of what men in their evil can perform that is beyond our explanations, beyond our categories. And here was this piece of the man who had ventilated that upon us, my enemy. And I felt the thing welling up in me, anger, indignation, but the poor sucker was in pain.

And he was trying with his hooks to adjust his artificial limb and couldn't succeed. And I had my arms over my chest saying, suffer your dog. Whatever pain you're experiencing now is minute next to what you have done to my people.

But as I watched, something greater than myself welled up in me. And I got out of my seat without a word and I went to him and I put my arms, my hands on that loathsome artificial limb and twisted it at his beckoning until he achieved this piece. And then he beckoned me to sit down, offered me a cigarette.

And we looked at each other, Jew and German face to face. And he's trying to spit out something in German and me, what can I say? And something about the Krieg, the war, what he's trying to say, the tragedy of it that has left me a mutilated stump that has left your people ashes. Who can account for it? And as I looked at him coming out of that experience that day, for the first time I thought, there but for the grace of God go I. If I had been born German instead of Jewish, if I had grown up in Germany instead of Brooklyn, I would just as readily have put bodies in the ovens as he.

There's no man good. I didn't know the scripture, any scripture, but a truth was being conveyed that 10 years later God fingered in order to bring me through to salvation. There's no man good, no not one.

If God is to account, God is to mark iniquity, who can stand? How dare we distinguish ourselves? How dare we think ourselves superior to anyone? How dare we look with contempt and derision at the Jew in their judgment as if it has not come upon us, we're superior and better and we can just smugly, condescendingly feel a little sorry for them. The set time has not come, if that's the depth of what we're capable. The set time only comes when we have love for their stones and mercy for their dust.

When we're so compassionately joined with them, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, yes they have deserved what they're necessarily experiencing, but we're one with them in it, even in their sin. When that comes and it's a remarkable state of being, it's more than just nice guy feelings, it's union, it's identification. In fact, it's the heart of God.

This is God's heart to be identified with his people because didn't he already so identify with his people that he bore their sin? And this compassion on their stones and mercy on their dust is but the reiteration of the same heart of God that led the Son of God to the cross to take upon himself the sin of his people and of mankind. When he has a church like that, he has the church. The set time has come to favor Zion because the purpose through Zion is to bring the church into a place of identity with God himself in his compassion and in his mercy because God is in his essential identity mercy.

This is beyond sentiment. This is nothing less nor other than union. This is a people who have, who are not just walking along with God, but God has been, Christ has been formed in them and they can say with Paul, for me to live is Christ.

This is a deeper apprehension of God than what we know to this hour. For us it will be sufficient if he will help us. We see ourselves as a distinct entity separate and other from God and he will help us, then we will do for him, which is okay.

It's better than nothing, but it's not God's ultimate intention. His ultimate intention is union where you cannot tell where you end and God begins, where you prophesy to the bones because your prophesying is his prophesying. Where your compassion is not just a human sentimental disposition, but God's very heart, which is your heart because nothing less than that will suffice.

All the rest of the world still in their humanity will hate, will despise, will relish, will rub their hands with glee and take delight in Israel's distress, but there'll be one peculiar entity in the world. My servants will have compassion on her stones and mercy on her dust. My servants.

And when that comes, the set time to favor Zion has arrived. Then I can deliver her because my purpose in waiting for the church to come of age in ultimate maturity and union and oneness with me has been established because it has been proven and revealed in their attitude toward a people that are now universally despised and for whom the whole world gloats in their distress. This is not affectation.

This is not makeup. This is a statement of a reality to which a servant people have come because the issue of Israel has always been the test of the church and this is a final test. In that degraded condition, in their ruins, in the judgment that has brought their great cities to ruin and to dust and to be expelled, we alone have an attitude and a heart toward them, which is God's.

The set time to favor Zion has come. And so great is the act of God for when he waits for this sign, that the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth by 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. This shall be written for the generation to come and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For he has looked down from the height of his sanctuary from the heaven that the Lord behold the earth to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death, to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the people are gathered together and the kingdoms to serve the Lord.

We need to learn how to read scripture. We need to learn how to draw out the meaning that is so compressed in these few verses that implies that this set time that has come, that not only releases the Lord to be Israel's deliverer, is so remarkable a phenomenon that the world itself is required to take notice. Somehow it registers on the world's consciousness that they realize that these servants are Gentiles and

yet they have an attitude toward the Jew, toward Israel, in the depths of their destitution that is not to be understood or seen in any other people, that must be remarkably nothing less or other than God.

This demonstration, this posture affects the world so the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord. The Lord doesn't tell us how or why but that this verse follows the other indicates that there's a consequence not just for Israel's deliverance but for the world as they see a phenomenon that is not to be understood or accounted for in any rational way, that this compassion and mercy is the very evidence of God as God and it's seen through a people who are his servants. When there's no justification for such an attitude, when everything points to everyone joining in the celebration against Israel, this compassion and mercy indicates God profoundly in such a way that the heathen are moved to fear the Lord.

How much so that in verse 22 the kingdoms serve the Lord, the people are gathered together, the people, the Gentiles, the nations and the kingdoms to serve the Lord. It's not just that they are impressed, it's that they are impressed unto salvation, that they are impressed unto surrender to God because the dealings of God before the face of all nations which is not hid or in a corner is his very device to bring unbelieving humanity to the place of surrender to God that his praise might go forth from one end of the earth to the other so that the event of Israel in her calamity and her judgment and the conduct of the church that is the church toward her are used of God to affect the world's salvation and surrender to God so that their kingdoms are now under his sovereignty and under his rule. Believe us all this? I'm looking into the face of hard unbelief.

This is a remarkable eschatological and apocalyptic psalm that is spoken and stated so compactly, so terse, it needs to be unpacked which I am attempting to do but it staggers your faith but it summarizes the entire mystery of what we have been about in every single session in these days. This is a capstone, this is a completion, this is the bringing of the whole thing together, the whole great mystery for the issue of Israel is the issue of the nations. Israel's redemption out of its final utter hopelessness as described in the early part of this psalm where he hears the groans of the captives and looks down from his sanctuary and hears the prayer of the destitute is a remarkable statement about God and a revelation of God to the nations for they are going to see the hopeless captives delivered.

They're going to see these who are about to expire set free. He's going to saw the bars of iron, he's going to release the captives, he's going to loose them out of their caves and prisons in the most distant places of the earth as only he can and the world is going to observe the supernatural reality of it in which God is unarguably the God alone. The God of Israel is a lone God and deserves and will obtain the surrender and the worship of all nations and all the petty kingdoms that have opposed them.

It's this remarkable demonstration of God toward Israel that will be visible in the nations that moves them to the surrender to him as nothing else was calculated to do. Israel is God's lever to bring the reluctant nations into the relationship with God which ends his redemptive work in the earth. And what is the key to this final dealing with Israel at the time of their utter hopelessness and despair? The condition of his servant people, the church.

When he sees that we have compassion on their stones and mercy on their dust, when he sees our identification, when he sees that we have come to a place which is his place, that this is not just human sentiment but the heart of very God revealed in a people who have come to such a place of union with him, that this is its expression. It releases him to deliver and the deliverance releases the nations to believe. You can almost say that the whole mystery of God has been completed because Israel is

restored.

The nations have surrendered and believe and the servant people who show forth his deepest heart and nature which is mercy and compassion have now come to a place and a condition as to be fit to be the bride of Christ because he has now a bride adorned for the bridegroom. Can you see the remarkable drama, the factors that shaping Israel for her destiny, the nations for their surrender and the church for their eternal state, a bride adorned for the bridegroom having the glory of the Lord, having the beauty of the Lord, having the nature of the Lord for who else would be fit to be his co-regent except one like him who is in its own deepest nature mercy. Israel has brought us to that place and if the Lord does not have a bride, redemption is not yet complete for he cannot rule over creation.

He cannot have dominion because in the beginning in the pattern given with Adam and Eve in the garden he gave to them dominion not to Adam alone but to them dominion. There has got to be a them that concludes the whole majestic redemptive work of God throughout history that at the end not only is the nation Israel restored and the rebellious nations surrendered and submitted but a bride appropriate and fit for the bridegroom has been obtained by the very press that Israel is in her final condition that brings the church into a union with God by which his very nature is established and expressed and the Lord has a bride, a co-regent and can now reign and have dominion over an entire creation. Yeah.

You said something about Jesus that I have never known that when he was baptized he identified with Israel in that baptism. He told someone that to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven the man was to be baptized and follow him. If we are baptized and don't know this then in that baptism we identify with Jesus identifying with Israel.

Yeah. We've missed it. I've missed it.

Yeah. And that if we do know, I almost feel like I need to be baptized now, if I do know that in baptism I identify with Jesus identifying with Israel and then in the days that are coming I refuse to extend mercy to Israel. My baptism is worthless and I have rejected God.

Because baptism is union with him in death and in resurrection. The newness of life to which we rise that we can say with Paul it is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me. Many of us who accede to the truth of this have not come to its actuality in our experience.

We're still shy of union. We want in many ways to retain yet our identity and our independence. If only we would get wrong, get rid of the hang-ups.

If only we would get rid of these unsettling and disturbing things that yet continue to hamper and harass us. We want to retain our own life but only employ his aid. God's intention is greater.

Union with him where you cannot tell where we end and he begins. That he is our life and our heart. His nature is our nature.

His thoughts are our thoughts. His words are our words. And the remarkable thing is it doesn't make us like stamped off the assembly line that we're all units formed in God in a boring uniformity.

But the remarkable thing is that when he's the life of our life we come into the uniqueness of the vessel that we are. This is the end of God for the church. This is the bride of Christ.

This is his intention from the beginning and we're pressed into it by the crisis that Israel is and requires from us something more than evangelical or charismatic well-meaning intentions and resolutions. Because that will never address the bones. The bones have got to be prophesied to in the authority of God himself.

That's why God brings the prophet out and down into the midst of the bones and pushes his face into the grit reality of Israel's death. And then presses the question son of man can these bones live? And the poor guy though he was a charismatic success in the realm that he occupied before he was brought out and down and into has to choke and sputter and say Lord thou knowest. He cannot even have the faith to acknowledge that those bones can live.

This is beyond charismatic faith. This is beyond evangelical faith. This is an ultimate faith.

The only faith that can believe that those bones can live is the faith of God himself. The faith of the son of God by which Paul says he lives. And what a Paul that is for that very reason who has counted all things as dung including his Jewish distinctiveness, including his natural attributes, including his scholarlyness and all of the factors that made him an outstanding individual and a prized student of Gamaliel was counted as dung that he might win Christ.

When he says for me to live as Christ he's not just speaking a little euphemism. He's speaking the brute fact of his apostolic life. And God is wanting a whole people in that place.

Even the son of man who's brought down and into and has to acknowledge he has not the faith to believe that those bones could live. If he can't believe for it how can he address it? Because without faith what can take place? But it's a faith beyond his faith. He's been brought into a crisis that compels an existential shifting of gears into a faith not his own but God's.

But it's a faith that has got to work by love or it will not work alone. Faith by itself will still leave those bones as unless it's a faith working by love. So what shall this son of man say? Does he have that affection for that heap of bones? Pitiful.

There's nothing in it to evoke affection or esteem. And in fact as I said before the son of man would like to allow those bones to remain bones so that he will be the only object of God's devotion. Why allow it to rise? Why allow it to come to life as an exceedingly great army that will draw a great portion of God's affection and attention when it now is uniquely his and he can bask in it alone? This is a remarkable requirement that no man, even prophetic, is capable of in himself.

Something is happening by the crisis to which the son of man is brought, in which he's made to realize his faith is inadequate, his love is inadequate, his desire is inadequate, and yet except that he prophesy those bones remain dead and the glory of God with them. Why doesn't God himself speak to the bones who brooded over the chaos in Genesis and said let there be and there was? No, the son of man has got to be the one. Why? Because God's concern is not only for the bones and for Israel but for the son of man, the church.

There's a drama here where both are equally in the heart of God's concern and Israel's restoration out of death is the one thing but the son of man's being brought into a place of union with God is the other. And the only way that he can prophesy is through the faith and the love of God because otherwise those bones remain dead. And so he prophesied as he was commanded, bone to bone they came together and the last was prophesy to the wind, prophesy to the ramah, to the breath, that breath can come into them.

And that's where every son of man would balk when I speak this message because it's an offense to one's propriety because to command the breath is to command God and no man has the effrontery to do that. It's one thing to speak to bones but to address God and command him, that breath come into them violates the son of man's sense of spiritual propriety which he wants to retain as his own distinction as being a spiritual person. But unless that dies, unless he forfeits that, the breath will not come in, the bones will not come into life though they have flesh.

And so the last thing that is human, that is religious, that is, there's another word, self-conscious piety has got to die for there to be affected a full union with God by which the son of man is transformed even as the bones are brought to full life. Got the picture? The crisis of Israel compels that final and ultimate transformation through union because the object of God, the final object is a bride for the bridegroom that is adorned for the bridegroom and is like him. So you put that in your spiritual pipe and smoke it.

Because if you are not this, the set time will not have come. You're the ones being addressed. You're the church.

You're the servant people. And if you'll not do it through you, where shall we see it done? This is not academic. This is God putting the ultimate and final challenge in our laps.

It's interesting here. It's when the peoples and the kingdoms are assembled to worship the Lord, those ones that have seen the compassion on the bones and seen and cared for, then the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem. That sort of speaks to me that it's when those nations gather together in worship that the full expression of the remnant of Israel coming back to God will be expressed in Jerusalem.

Is that the right way to say it? Yeah. It affects the nations. They're seeing something so altogether supernatural, so overwhelming that they are moved to a recognition that there's no explanation for this phenomenon of a servant people to have such an attitude that is God's.

That makes it clear there is a God. There's only one. It's Israel's God.

That the same God who's brought these people to distress has brought these servant people to this identification and union with him, and it's the end. The wind is out of their sails. Their rebellion is ended.

They surrender. It's the consummation of the ages. All nations shall acknowledge that the God of Israel alone is God and celebrate and worship him.

It's all together in the great mystery of Israel through the church that affects at the end the rebellious nations and brings them unto himself, and it will take generations to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, his praise in Jerusalem. They will review this. Generations yet unborn will have occasion to celebrate the greatness and the magnitude of God and adore him for the remarkable mystery of his will, the magnitude of his redemptive mind, and the power to perform it.

For he hath looked down from the height of the sanctuary, from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to loose those that are appointed to death, to declare, which is to say, to reveal the name of the Lord in Zion. The name of the Lord is not a catchword. It's like, oh, it's Jesus? The name of the Lord is his identity.

It's what he is in himself. It's his essential nature. It's his character.

His mercy has been revealed to Zion. How has it been revealed? Through his servants who have had mercy upon her stones and compassion on her dust. And it will take generations to celebrate this great work in Gentiles, that they should have this attitude, this godly attitude toward this people, not when they are smelling like a rose, but when they are in the most abysmal depth of their judgment, calamity, and devastation.

There's no natural way to explain how a people can have this kind of compassion except God. This is what he is in himself. And it's going to be revealed to Israel.

It will be revealed to the nations. This will be his name when it is revealed in Zion. It's a great... I don't have a word for it.

It's the climax of the ages. It's the consummation of all things through a Gentile church, through whom we can hardly expect a sympathy toward the Jew in those days, let alone this depth of compassion by which they identify with Israel in her judgment, as God himself does, because they are exhibiting his very nature, because they have died to their own, to their shallow sentimentality, and to their piety, and to their nice kind of predictable Christianity that was comfortable for them, but fell short of the glory of God. It's not the hang-ups that are obstructing us.

We're only too glad to bring them to the place of death. It's our virtue. It's our good character.

It's our best nature. It's what we want to retain and be distinguished by and succeed by, God says. Until that is brought to death, until that meets the cross, the union for which I wake with you is hindered.

You're stubbornly insisting on succeeding on the basis of your own spirituality, your own ideal of yourself, which is no doubt impressive, but falls short of the glory of God. You have got to die to the lesser thing in order to join with me in the greater. Your shallow sentimentality, however impressive, cannot make those bones to live.

Only my love. You'll not be able to meet these people in the wilderness and take them in and offer them refuge and solace. You'll be offended.

They'll be marred more than any man. They'll be stinking. They'll be mean-spirited, and you'll be quick to be offended when you thought you were a nice guy and being generous by taking the risks.

It'll only take one mean word from a Jew to have it go up like a puff. Unless they see his face, you will meet with them in the wilderness face-to-face. They must see his unconditional love that cannot be offended against.

Can you see that the whole issue of Israel's deliverance, whether in the wilderness or in this final episode, requires very God, made manifest through his people in union beyond anything that we have known or would have sought or desired or sacrificed to be willing to bring the good things into death in order to obtain the perfect. The crisis of Israel demands and compels the bringing to death of the last things that we would have retained because they're good and because they distinguish us and yet keep us from union with himself. God's waiting for this at time to favor Zion.

Israel will be helpless and God will act upon them. Nothing that they deserve or perform can affect their deliverance. A deliverer must come out of Zion.

People who have come to that condition corporately is the end of the mystery and it's available to us even now to come progressively and deeply into that union with God in Christ. And what you've been hearing through me to the degree that it is really God's word is to the degree that that issue of union has been affected in my own life. Have you been hearing from man or have you been hearing from the Lord who commandeers and possesses that man in his mind, in his soul, in his spirit because he has not deliberated on what message shall follow this message.

He came without a thought, without a strategy. There's an unfolding and without a God saying, art tonight this, Psalm 102. How did I know that this is the text? Because inwardly, in my life, the resonance, the thought was this and no other.

And I yield to it without any assurance of success in it. So the prophetic man, as I told you, is required not to exposit to demonstrate the thing to which you yourself are called. Union with Christ.

That you might say with Paul, and it's not an imaginative thing that is not attainable for me to live, is Christ. So pray for that. This is the end of the whole colossal redemptive drama of God.

A bride adorned for the bridegroom. Having the glory of God being like him, as him, with him, as one. Lord, precious God, watch over your word to perform it.

The best of your saints are staggering in unbelief and incredulity. They can't bite this bullet. They can't accept and receive this requirement, my God.

They went so far, but now no further. This last thing is a thing that obstructs. It's an obstacle.

It shakes us to our foundations because we want to retain our own individuality, our own spirituality, to grow in that and develop in that and have a proper attitude toward Israel and so on, and yet be distinctive and separate and other from yourself. It's the last thing that must go. Not our hang-ups, not our defects, but our virtues.

Not the worst of what we are. The best of what we are is obstructing this union, even our piety, that will prevent us from, by commanding you to breathe. How dare we? Never.

No, I have my standards, my principles. Well, that's exactly what's in the way. That's exactly what has got to be brought to death, for it hinders God's completion in Israel's restoration.

And when you'll yield that last thing, that last piety, He will have you. Then His life can speak in resurrection power. Then the bones that can be raised.

Then deliverance will have come to Israel. Then the nations will declare and believe and surrender, and the whole earth will sing praises to the glory of Israel's God. Come, my God.

It waits for a set time. In the servant people of the church, let them tonight resolve whatever it takes, whatever last impediment, not my hang-ups, my virtues, the things I've spent a lifetime in cultivating, even those things given by God that I cherish as spirituality, need to be totally surrendered to be in that greater union with you. And I'm unwilling.

I stagger. I hold back. I want to retain my life, not yield it.

So come, precious God, and persuade your saints, argue with them, call upon them to give up, my God, even the best which you yourself have given, that they might obtain the ultimate, the life of God, final union, the character eternally of a bride, the completion of all mystery, the consummation of all redemption. In Jesus' name we pray. How far will you go with God, you best of all saints? How great is your surrender, the total yieldedness of everything, believing that God raises the dead? How jealous are you that he should have a bride for the bridegroom, which is you, or there is none, corporately, corporately, that the final mystery of, what is it, over creation, dominion, is attained by them? Thank you, my God.

Lord, help your saints. Help your saints, Lord, to understand that it takes even a divine enablement to understand what you're asking, what you're requiring. That has to be voluntarily given up.

You will not constrain, you will not compel. We're quick to give up our defects and our vices, but to give up our virtue, to give up our spirituality, to give up the best of what we have and are, by which our identity has been established, and how we want to be recognized and known, that, my God, is asking the ultimate and the final thing, and there we stagger, there we balk, and so long as we balk, the set time has not come. Bless your people, Lord.

Let there be a remnant, let there be a first fruit of those who have come to this utter and total surrender. Let there be joy in heaven for it. We thank and give you praise for your mystery, Lord, that has brought us this far and asks us to relinquish what you yourself have given.

It's the cross in its final statement. Power and reality. To give that up is death, but the doorway to eternal life and glory, and it's freely given or not at all.

It's not what I want, it's what you want. It's not for my kingdom, this world, it's for your kingdom. Your kingdom to come and your rule to reign.

Thank you, Lord. I know not the next thing, it's up to you, but I give you permission. I confess that I'm a sinner and nothing, nothing that I have or do. Seek the Lord before you, seek the Father Jesus.

Amen. In my life, I know my righteousness that you both have worked so sincerely out of thanksgiving. But Lord, you are saying it's up to you.

Let there be joy in heaven Lord, God, help me to learn that I was not a sinner. Your will, God, not mine, is done. I pray that you wrestle with the Lord, sleep on it, whether you'll bring yourself to a death sentence, and that we can really sing in truth.

I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Jesus Christ.

I surrender all. That all is the last and the best of what you have and what you are. That he might occupy and possess your total vessel, mind, body, soul, and spirit, that you might say in truth with the great apostle, for me to live is Christ.

In him I move and live and have my being. My thoughts are not my own. The disposition of my heart is his.

The intimation of his spirit is his. Lord, through the night hours, be with your sons and your daughters, my God. Tighten, take that one more turn, my God, on that press, that olive press.

That last drop, my God, must be extracted or everything falls short. We just end up as nice guys, meaning well, but totally helpless, inert, hapless, to be any kind of a factor in the redemption of Israel and of the nations. This union, my God.

Oh, thank you, my God. Give them a struggle through the night hours, but before the dawn breaks, let that surrender of all have been given. And you know when it has come.

And they will know because there's a release. There's a joy that remarkably springs up when the last struggle is over. So come, my God.

Come, my God. And complete your work in these days for everything pointed to this conclusion and this consummation. Thank you, precious God.

Lord, be with your children. Help them to sign that final death warrant that gives over the best that they have and once and for all not to be taken back. That if there's no resurrection, they are of all men most to be pitied.

So do we bless you that Christ be formed in us. Thank you, Lord, that his great compassionate heart be expressed to the astonishment of the nations unto their surrender. We bless you, Lord, seal tonight.

Let your word perform its work and not return to void. Let joy break forth, my God, out of a final cry of surrender. We'll thank you and give you praise in Yeshua's holy name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0NSSr-5VaQw.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/the-set-time-to-favour-zion/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net