

Arab-01 Israel in the Last Days

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Israel's restoration and the church's role in its fulfillment, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that come with standing with Israel in these times.

Duration: 58:44

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1

Topics: "Arabic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the Arab Christian community and emphasizes that God has called them to a glorious purpose, not just a comfortable life. He prays for those who have been consumed by hatred and bitterness, asking God to reveal the beauty and holiness of their calling. The speaker then focuses on the passage from Ezekiel 37, known as the Valley of Dry Bones, and discusses whether it represents Israel's past or future. He concludes that it points to a future restoration of Israel, where God alone will be their deliverer.

Transcript

I am here in this special service this morning as a Jewish believer. I am here as a Jewish believer. To address my Arab cousins To address my Arab cousins As brothers The wonderful grace that has come to us in the Messiah Jesus The wonderful grace that has come to us in the Messiah Jesus The only grace that will save us all I came to a conclusion on my endless-present visits about preaching in Brisbane I came to a conclusion on my endless-present visits about preaching in Brisbane We have come to such an hour and such a time historically We have come to such an hour and such a time historically That the only kind of message that really is appropriate is a prophetic message.

I intend to bring you one this morning. The same one that I brought two years ago, seven times in this land. Three times in Jerusalem.

That I have to say that I think I've been essentially rejected. But it's still my burden this morning. And it's my first opportunity to preach it to an Arab congregation.

And to trust the Lord to bring out the particular implications for Arab believers. That may be the more ultimate and radical requirement than for any other. It's a requirement of such a kind that requires the Arab church to be the church indeed.

No longer sufficient to lurk in the shadows and to be a kind of a cultural or generational religious entity with an authentic apostolic presence. And it's the issue of Israel that requires. God gets such a maximum benefit from the nation even in its unbelief.

All the more in its unbelief of its challenger as the church. And we will be increasingly tested and challenged by Israel in such circumstances. It's a condition I'm not expecting to improve.

It's one that I expect will worsen and worsen unto death. My blindness is a sickness unto death. In order to glorify God unto the Son of God.

Nothing less than resurrection is in this world. That's true for the church and true for the nation. The difficulty for us is the death that proceeds from resurrection.

And I want to suggest a perspective by which we can view the present calamity or perplexity of Israel. The intifada of the Palestinian uprising. The tortuous peace process that does not seem to bring any proper solution.

Have you ever seen a nation in a more intractable position? That whichever way it turns it is in such a state of perplexity that even you cannot find solutions. And I want to submit that God will be the marker of every perplexity. Nothing in that brings me to a happenstance but a calculated program of God in the bringing and setting of a nation for its millennial destiny in the world.

And we ourselves who are sympathetic and lovers of Israel stand the risk of being offended by God and how far He will go to offend us. The problem is with us and not with God. We have not understood the issue of His glory.

And how far He will go to attain it. The issue of His eternal glory. Although the accepting of it takes place in the last days of time.

There is something in God's intention much more than an acceptable Israeli state. A nation that will bless all the families of the earth. And even here I am struggling for words.

Because the word bless itself has become so cheapened in our own generation. I am not talking about some condescending Israeli who is going to make nice to his Arab brethren. I am talking about a transfigured nation that will be to the nations what Paul was to the Gentiles.

I want this nation to return to God and change according to Paul's idea that this nation has become a glory to God and to others. That the same Arab people today who fear us and despise us. Will one day hang on our necks and weep bitterly if they think that they will see our face no more.

This is a transfiguring glory. And requires something ultimately from the church. And the text that God has quickened for me that encompasses all this is Ezekiel 37.

The valley of dry bones. I won't take the time to read the entire text. It is familiar to most of us.

The only question for us really is it a picture of Israel's past or Israel's future. Some suggest that it is a statement of Israel's past in the time of the Holocaust. At a time when we were literally reduced to bones.

But there are some indications in the text that is read carefully that suggests to me that it speaks of a future time. A time toward which we are now attending. A time for which the nation itself is being prepared

for a future time.

If we don't understand that we will join the chorus of the nations against Israel for their failure to be the nation that they hoped to be. But it is not a nation that they can be independent of God. It is not Jewish expertise and ability and prowess that will bless the nations.

It is the very character and spirit of God himself that becomes the character of the nation when it is resurrected out of its own dead. That is why I am not expecting a resolution of Israel's present difficulties. I believe that they are calculated by God to bring the nation down.

I believe that they are calculated by God to bring the nation down. That God might raise it up. For the fulfillment of his own Abrahamic calling.

And of his own millennial destiny. Don't tell me that this is a nation like any other nation. And it has no special consideration of God.

Unless this nation says, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the Lord does not come. For when he comes he comes as king. In the only place where that rule can be established.

Upon the throne of David on the hill of Zion in the city of Jerusalem. In a land and in a nation that has been restored to him by the work of his own hand. In that day you will know that I am the Lord who has both spoken and performed.

Nothing in Israel's present history till this moment has brought that awareness. We are in a new and final historical moment. The issue of God is no longer a Sunday or Saturday matter.

The issue of God and the importance of God is no longer a Sunday or Saturday matter. There is something more important than that. We must be committed and aware of God's true ideas.

The establishment of a theocratic rule over the nations. According to God's own choosing. That the law of the Lord shall go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.

Then the nations will study one another. They will think their swords into plowshares and their spears into prophets. Then, but what precedes that then? The final cataclysmic clash of the powers of darkness and light.

Amen. Hallelujah. The final cataclysmic clash of the powers of darkness and light.

We, the Church, are appointed to this service. To restore Israel is God's subject. But it is not the agent of its own restoration.

It could never be that. Knowing Jews as we do. We can never be the architects of our own salvation.

It must be something that comes to us from outside. Something external to us. And a source that we would never have suspected.

For whom we have had historic disdain and contempt. Gentiles. The Church.

Arabs. Christians. They are supposed to be the source of blessings and salvation for the country.

I wish we had a three-day seminar for this. But time requires me to get right to the heart of the matter. Israel is hopeless and inert according to this chapter.

Verse 11. These bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.

Tell me when you have heard that statement recently or historically coming from the Jewish nation. I am going to stretch my brother's Arabic to the point of breaking. There is something about us Jews that is indomitable.

That will not say, uncle, we will not give up. There is something about us that we pull ourselves up from our own bootstraps. If we miss this point, we miss the whole.

If the Holocaust itself was not sufficient to evoke this national cry of absolute helplessness and abject dejection, what will? It will hurt. By whatever means God will require. It will shred us who will be here to observe it.

And bring that nation to such a place of absolute hopelessness. We are without hope. What is the national anthem of Israel? The hope.

But the hope in words. Any hope that is not hope in God is false hope. However much we are endeared to that nation and love the chorus of Hatikvah, we need to understand that God is too jealous over his own glory to allow this nation to be sustained on a false hope.

God is jealous. God is jealous of his heart. That we put our hope on the human power, the physical power, and not our hope in God.

God is jealous. God is sad. I boldly predict that this prophecy or this realization will come soon.

And all of Israel's present distresses are moving her to that place. What has been our national dream when we were in the diaspora, in exile? If ever we would have a Jewish nation, we would show the world what a distinctive nation that kind of nation would be. For we fancy ourselves as having a distinctive as Jews, namely of an ethical and a moral kind.

It is easy to imagine that for ourselves while we are in the exile, in the ghetto, in diaspora. But what has the reality of our recent national life revealed? That power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We have no distinctive different from other nations.

We know what we need to do. It is in order to preserve our national existence. Even if such conduct contradicts what we thought our state to be.

That revelation must come. Or else we will not cry out, we are without hope. Our God is waiting to hear it.

And the moment that He does, He turns to one who is called the Son of Man. Amen. And He commands them, He says, prophesy unto these ones.

Say unto them in verse 12. Say unto the Lord God, behold O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. You may have brought yourself previously.

But my bringing you will be exclusively my work and supernaturally empowered. Then you will know that I am the Lord who has spoken. There cannot be any question for the Israel of the millennium.

That God alone is her exclusive deliverer. And a deliverance that has come exclusively in His power. Uniquely expressed through His word.

But not spoken by Himself. But through a Son of Man. Whom He employs to speak the word of God.

To a nation dead in its grave. In the earth it has no place. Waiting for whatever mercy can come to it outside of itself.

And this is where my precious Arab brethren come in. If you were the Son of Man would you prophesy? Hallelujah. What an opportunity to allow Israel to remain in her grave.

Only your word can save her. Would you be a fool to speak it? Haven't you suffered enough at her hands? In violence and injury and insult and humiliation? Everything that is human in you will say serve the right let her remain there. I want to say that Ezekiel 37 shows that God has not just an exclusive interest in Israel's restoration but also in the transfiguration of a church.

Hallelujah. What you desire to do in that moment. What you are able to do in that moment.

Is the whole issue of Israel's restoration. I am helpless in waiting on your word. And what a word it must be.

An ultimate word. A prophetic word in all authority. And a faith that works alone by God.

Hallelujah. All the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. Who has been his counselor? The Son of Man can these bones live? Do you desire that they should? Isn't everything that is human in you remembering every insult and humiliation? Isn't there something in the Arab temperament that wants retaliation and vengeance and justice? Can you be the agent of mercy? Is not something that will be decided in that final moment.

It is something that is being required now. As every justification for resentment rises. And you face it daily.

Jewish contempt. Israeli contempt. High handed policies.

Arrogance. The use of force or insult. Everything calculated to produce anger, bitterness, resentment.

Everything they do to increase anger, hatred and aggression in the country. Do it. But despite this, you as a believer, Son of Man, can you participate in the revival of this greatness? Do you desire that they should rise from their graves to know the living Christ? This is the real challenge for the Arab Church and the believers.

And I praise God that the historical hour has come. For the condition of the Arab Church is well known in Christendom. Christians by circumstance of birth.

You are Christians because your parents were. It is a social and cultural condition. It is rare to find authentic Arab believers.

The issue of Israel is for you the issue of authenticity. The situation of Israel is for you the situation of a person whom you sympathize with. What can you expect if you begin to exhibit a mercy toward that

nation? You will be called traitor.

Your neck will get hot with embarrassment. Everything that is powerful and national and traditional and natural will tug at you. What is your first identity? Arab or believer? What is your deepest identification? With the people of God in their apostasy and hateful condition? Your tormentor and oppressor? Or the people of your own nationality? Or your ethnic group and race? This is an issue that we as Jews have had to face in coming to Christ.

And we are all going to be required to face it. And we are all going to be required to face it. To stand with Israel is to suffer her reproach.

It is to raise the question of what is our first identification? Natural, earthly or spiritual? Do we join the angry chorus of the haters of Israel and of the Jews? Or recognize in them and in their extremity the chosen people of God called to a millennial destiny? This is the question that is before us now. It will compel us either to be Christians of an apostolic kind or to stand with God's purposes for Israel as an Arab is to invite oppression, persecution and martyrdom. We will not be far behind you and that will be our issue also.

In the age of Antichrist, martyrdom will be the condition of the church. Are we Christianized Arabs? Or Arabs who are Christians? What is the reality and the truth in our deepest and the surest faith? What will rise and reveal itself in the moment of extremity and challenge? A crisis will reveal the truth of where and what we are. To identify ourselves with this nation in the last days purposes of God is to invite retaliation.

We are people who cannot be expected to understand our identification. You will not be able to explain yourself. You simply have to suffer their wrath.

This is my experience with my own people as a Jewish believer. University confrontations and other times of clash with radical Jews. You are worse than Hitler they say.

Hitler only sought to destroy our bodies. You are trying to destroy our souls. You are trying to remove our Jewishness.

Make the Christians out of us. You are some paid flunker. You are a missionary.

What do you answer them on? What do you answer them? You can't answer. In the heat of that moment no answer is possible. You have only to absorb their fury.

Absorb their anger. Absorb their prejudice, their misunderstanding. And let them spend themselves on you.

Then when they have ventilated their fury you might get a word in. We have just come back from Egypt. And spoke from Isaiah 19 to the believers there.

Yes there is an altar that shall be raised up in the middle of the land. In the name of the Lord. It will be a key to the turning of the entire nation.

But it is an altar of sacrifice. From the blood of martyrs. Who may suffer that because of their identification with the nation that is hated because of the historical conflict between the two.

We believe in something that is written in the word. That can make us confront with all the people who do not understand the word. That God wants to save his people.

God is calling us beyond nationality. God is calling us to believe in Christ. By the way the position of the church from the people around us.

Is the position of the church everywhere. Of an apostolic and prophetic church. A radical presence in its community.

And the word that comes from it constitutes event. Because it is spoken with one heart, one mind and one love. It does not come from one thought, one conscience, one opinion and one design.

I am not a person who says I must do this. I am not forced. But I have a religious obligation.

I do not like it but I guess I have to. Can you imagine Jesus in that spirit addressing Lazarus in the tomb? The word that came forth out of his mouth. Was a creative event.

Because the one who was now stinking. Was the friend whom he loved. Brother like you do not understand.

You are not living in Israel. You are not living in Jerusalem. You are not in Iraq.

You do not know what we have suffered. What you are suggesting is beyond us. It is enough just to be polite to these people.

I should believe for their resurrection. And desire it. And speak it with an absoluteness of faith.

A faith that works by love. That is more than just condescension and acknowledgement. This is beyond me.

Exactly. It is not only Israel's restoration over which God is jealous. But your transfiguration.

The church indeed. In all apostolic fullness. Because it loves what God loves.

And it chooses what he chooses. It will not limit the holy one of Israel. Because of its personal experience.

Or what it has suffered at the hands of the other. Ultimate church. Fitted for its own eternal destiny.

By the final prophetic maturity to which Israel requires it. Hallelujah. Amen.

Thank you brother. Speak English brother. Oh my goodness.

Hallelujah. It will not only require death then. It will require death forever.

Death now. For only a people who know the reality of resurrection. Can be a voice of resurrection for their nation.

This is beyond religion. Even of a charismatic kind. And we ourselves must be the people of the resurrection.

And not merely approve its doctrine. For if we have not experienced the power of God that raises us up from our death. How shall we believe it for them? This is more than planting a tree in Israel.

We will see where your love really is. The depth of your love. And I want to say that a mere identification with Israel however pure and low meaning is not enough.

There is an issue greater than Israel. Greater than the church. Both of these are only means to a greater end.

The glory of God for us. I will be sanctified through you O Israel before the face of heaven and earth. Not for your sake do I do this.

But for my great happiness. For my glory and for my desire. And for the sake of saying the Lord.

If it is not a testimony and a real push for our glory. And it is the glory of God. And the name of God.

Then there is no need to ever stand up again. This jealousy for the glory of God will cost us a lot. But it is time.

It is not enough to be Christian. Charismatically or nationally. But to be Christ like.

Out of a compassion that is His. For the very people who have abused us. Is the statement of the unconditional love of God.

Beyond anything that we have known. The faith that believes for dry bones to live. Is beyond any faith that we have known.

We have come to the place where we say for us to live as Christ. And what keeps us from that identification. We are Arab Christians.

We are Jewish Christians. There is always something hyphenated and joined together. We are believers in the Lord.

God calls us to Himself. Have you noticed how this text ends? You shall know that I am the Lord in verse 13. When I have opened your graves O my people.

And brought you out of your graves. I shall put my spirit in you and you shall live. I shall place you in my land.

Then you shall know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it. This is either careless biblical terminology. I have spoken it and performed it.

Or it is the heart of the mystery itself. How can the God of truth say I have spoken it and performed it. When the son of man spoke it.

Because he has brought a people to a place beyond itself. Their speaking is His speaking. His love is their love.

His faith is their faith. His obedience is their obedience. True church.

Can alone be Israel's deliverer. Against every national and natural factor to the contrary. For us the issue of Israel is the issue of God.

It is the issue of the church. It will be unto Him as glory forever. And not a quaint and cute curio for visitors in Israel.

Not for glory or greatness for some visitors. But glory returns to the Lord Jesus Christ. And a specific prophetic identity for the church of Christ.

As it was in the first church. And our nations and the whole world will remain in the sins of the first grave. And all the nations of the world will remain without blessing.

Because they did not save the people who were destroyed in their sins. The Arab nations of the earth. Waiting for a resurrected nation to come to them.

The same purity and power as Paul. Who was born before his time. A figure of the restored nation in its apostolate.

Blessing all the families of the earth. To the eternal praise of His glory. We are caught together in this mystery.

And the hour is now. I am going to give you an invitation. To die.

To your national feelings. To your justifiable resentment. To the bitternesses that you want to nurture.

And still be Christian. All the depths of the wisdom of the knowledge of God. God is calling you by name.

To be His. A son of man. To prophesy in that name.

Let's pray. Hallelujah. Yes.

Gracious God, we ask that history be worked this morning. In keeping with all the holy apostolic and prophetic things that have preceded us. We believe that as small as this place is, we are surrounded by a crowd of invisible witnesses.

Who are not yet complete without us. We may have to share their martyrdom. By at the hand of our own outraged people.

Opposing themselves in their own ignorance. Even my soul persecuted the early church. So that we make ourselves candidates for persecution.

To stand with God in His purposes for Israel. In an hour when hatred is rising against them everywhere. We will be called traitor.

And we will not be able to explain. But we earn for ourselves a crown of eternal life. And invited you to martyrdom.

Whether or not it's required. We're not talking how you shall die in the final moment. But how you shall live in all your moments.

When you leave this room and get jostled by an Israeli soldier. On your way to the Damascus Gate. Or they spit or curse at you or give you a dirty look.

And want to give you every reason to leave the land. But you have a purpose here beyond your knowing. And it has not to do with your rights.

But with the word of God. What rights do any of us have? Who have been brought back from the dead. No longer to live unto ourselves.

You are here for God's glory. And not to claim your ancestral land. Settle it in your heart.

Are you an Arab who happens to be a Christian? Or a Christian who happens to be an Arab? God's glory alone. Whatever it takes to obtain it. Is our determination.

Who will say yes to God for this? Allow him to deal with your heart. Bring you into deaths of humiliation. You didn't know that there were such deaths of pride in you.

Or the fear of man. But God will flesh it out. And bring it to the cross.

That you might be his. And his voice and his speaking. Our people will be eternally grateful for you.

Your faith raised us from our graves. It will take eternity to express our faith. And to celebrate the God whose wisdom has called for it.

Who will stand for modernism today? That was always the true identity of the church. In every generation. And must especially be in the last.

Whether you're from New Zealand or Canada. Or you're an Arab, an Israeli, Palestinian born. Our call is one thing.

Have you answered that call? I invite you to stand if you will. Once and for all. I know it's a lot.

I'm to death. Hallelujah. Amen.

Hallelujah. Amen. Amen.

Hallelujah. Praise you. Hallelujah.

And not reluctantly with sadness. Not with that self pity cry, why me? Couldn't I have been a nice Arab Christian without this? He's not called you to what is nice. He's called you to what is glorious.

Lord see us this morning. Thank you for sending this word. Let the cassette of it go far and wide to the Arab speaking world.

Where there are bewildered believers. Who don't understand what their call is. Who have been drawn into the sea of hatred and bitterness and resentment.

Grant them my God the veil to be removed. To see the beauty and the holiness of their calling. That eventuates in your glory forever.

Lord heal us in our stand. Bring the process of death into our life where it's at. Find us out in the subtlety of our hearts.

That we might be a men and women of the resurrection. Whose word is event. Even life from the death.

For the blessing of all nations. In Jesus name we pray.

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