

# Arab-01 Where's Your Identity

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz challenges Arab believers to embrace their identity in Christ and to actively participate in God's redemptive plan for Israel.*

**Duration:** 58:54

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:8-9, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Matthew 5:38-39, Matthew 10:22, John 14:6, Acts 9:1-2, Romans 11:25-26

**Topics:** "Identity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's revelation and crying out to Him for hope. He refers to a passage in the Bible, specifically Ezekiel 37:12-14, where God promises to bring His people out of their graves and into the land of Israel. The speaker highlights the supernatural power of God in bringing about this transformation and emphasizes that it is God's work alone. He also encourages believers to understand their calling and purpose, which is to bring glory to God rather than to claim their own rights or ancestral land. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to lead believers in the process of dying to self and living as people of resurrection.

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## Transcript

I'm always telling the Lord what a privileged man I am. I'm feeling especially privileged this morning as a Jewish believer to address my Arab cousins as brothers. Amen.

It's the wonderful grace that has come to us in the Messiah Jesus and the only grace that will save us all. I came to a conclusion in this present visit about preaching in Jerusalem that 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. It's the same one that I brought two years ago, seven times in this land three times in Jerusalem that I have to say I think has 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 cultural or generational religious entity but an authentic apostolic presence. And it's the issue of Israel that requires this.

God gets such a maximum benefit from the information even in its unbelief. All the more in its unbelief. And we will be increasingly tested and challenged by Israel in such testing conditions.

It's a condition I'm not expecting to improve. It's one that I expect will worsen and worsen unto death. My gladness is a sickness unto death in order to glorify God and the Son of God.

Nothing less than resurrection issues in glory. That's true for the church and it's true for the nation. The difficulty for us is the death that precedes resurrection.

And I want to suggest a perspective by which we can view the present calamity or perplexity of Israel. The intifada, the Palestinian uprising. The tortuous peace process of bringing 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 Jews cannot find solution. And I want to submit that God is the marker of every perplexity. And I want to tell you that God places these nations in every perplexity.

I want to tell you that God causes all these things, not by chance but by a precise plan in order to bring these nations to their destination and introduce them to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we ourselves who are sympathetic and lovers of Israel stand the risk of being offended by God in 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. Or it is the issue of his eternal glory although the effecting of it takes place in the last days of time. There is something in God's intention much more than a successful a nation that will bless all the families of the earth.

And even here I am struggling for words because the word blessed 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 lead to the nations where Paul was to the Gentiles.

I want this nation to return to God and to change so that according to the idea of Paul the Apostle this nation will become a glory to God and to the others. So that these brethren or enemies who stand against the existing ideas 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 if it is read carefully that suggests to me it speaks of a future time. But the truth is if you make sure that it speaks of a future time. The time that we are now attending and also the time that God is preparing for this country and its future.

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 death. That is why I am not expecting a resolution of Israel. 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. To 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. And 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.

In that day you will know that I am the Lord who has both spoken and performed. There is not in the history of all of our countries a divine prophecy of the return of the people to Christ. Notice that we are in the last moments of history.

The issue of God is no longer a Sunday or Saturday matter. We need to anticipate the divine intervention of very God. The establishment of a theocratic rule over the nation.

The rule of God over all the nations and all the world. The absolute authority. 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. Then they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning.

Then, but what precedes that then, the final cataclysmic clash of the powers of darkness and light. Amen. Hallelujah.

Of which we the church are the principal actors and agents. The restored Israel is God's subject. But it is not the agent of its own restoration.

It can 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.

Arab. Christians. Jews.

Believers. 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. I'm 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. Amen. If we miss this point, we miss the holocaust.

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

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

But the hope in what? Any hope that is not hope in God is false hope. However much we are endeared to that nation and love the chorus of Taqikva, 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 or the physical power and not our hope on God. God is jealous.

God is sad. I am boldly prophesying that this will come. This future.

And all of Israel's present expressers are moving her to that place. I want to tell you that all of the complications and problems that exist today lead our country to this point, my dear friends. I am certain of that.

The dreams that happened in the Sabaean. 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? Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We have no distinctive different from other nations.

We know what we need to do. 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. And he commands him, he says, prophesy to these people. Say unto them in verse 12.

Say unto the Lord God, behold all 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. Say unto the Lord God, behold all 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 in power. 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 their hands hopeless. 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? 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 but also in the treasure. Hallelujah.

Not only does the Lord hope to save the people that are there. But with glory to the glory of the church and its greatness. Do you have the desire to do this at this moment? What are you able to do at this moment? All of this depends on our salvation in this dead country.

Do you know? This is the hope. And the hope is cut off and your word is waiting. And what a word it must be.

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

Hallelujah. All the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. Who has been his counselor? A 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? The agent of mercy.

The son of man. So that the poor people don't understand. Hallelujah.

This is the thing that is being designed at this last moment. Hallelujah. But this is the thing that is required of us now.

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. The use of force or insult.

Son of man, can these bones live? And do you desire that they should? It's an ultimate challenge to the Arab church. 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're Christians because your parents were. It's a social and cultural condition.

It's rare to find authentic Arab believers. The issue of Israel is for you the issue of authenticity. And the situation of Israel for you is the situation of the person you pity and pity.

Because he has no place in the sin. What do you feel when you begin to show mercy and love to these dead bones? But if you do that, maybe in the eyes of people you're not a trustworthy person. 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? You're a tormentor and oppressor? Or the people of your own nationality and ethnic group and race? This is an issue that we as Jews have had to face in coming to Christ. And we're all going to be required to face it.

To stand with Israel is to suffer her reproach. It's 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 of the church? First of all, we are Christians.

We believe in Jesus. Our faith is before our nationality. What is the reality and the truth in our deepest and the shortest of hearts? As they say, am I a Jew or a believer in Jesus? I am a believer in Jesus even though I am a native.

What will rise and reveal in your heart? What will 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 and the last days purposes of God is to invite retaliation. We believe in God's plan for the salvation of the country.

We invite pain, calamities and trials for the sake of Christ. People do not understand what it is to be a believer. We look to the idea of God and the fulfillment of God not to the fulfillment of the state.

As an Egyptian, I do not look to be with the fulfillment of the Egyptian or American state. I want glory and glory to Jesus. 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 cannot 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.

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 midst 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. God is calling us beyond nationality.

The issue of Israel becomes the issue of the church everywhere. True church. 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 will.

Not of people who would be grudging, I guess I have to. Just because he says so, I have a religious obligation. I don't 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 is now speaking was the friend whom he loved.

Brother Mark, you don't understand. You're not living in Israel. You're not living in Jerusalem.

You're not an Arab. You don't know what we've suffered. What you're suggesting is beyond us.

It's enough just to even 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's not only Israel's restoration over which God is jealous.

But your transfiguration. A 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 of 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. Brother, speak English, brother.

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

For only a people who know the reality of resurrection can be the voice of resurrection for that 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 well-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. Greater than anything.

Glory. Amen. I will be sanctified through you O Israel before the face of heaven.

Not for your sake do I do this. But for my glory and for my request. But that is not our jealousy.

And the source of our conduct and our life. We will fall short of God's requirement. This jealousy for God's glory will never be satisfied.

This jealousy for God's glory will cost us a lot. But this is the time. It is not enough to be a believer only.

Fifty or more than fifty countries. But to be like Christ. 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.

Who is more Arab than a Jew? We are believers in God. 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. And shall put my spirit in you and you shall live.

I shall place you in your own. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. That I the Lord have spoken it and performed it.

Sayeth the Lord. This is either careless biblical terminology. I have spoken it and performed it.

Or it is the heart of the mystery itself. How can a 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. There is two kinds of people.

His 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. We want the people to be delivered. Because this is the hope of God and our faith.

I want to tell you. We have the issue of the salvation of the country here. This is a very important issue.

And God cares for their salvation. It is the issue of the church. Notice.

This is the main subject of the church. That will be unto him as glory forever. And not a quaint and cute curio for visitors in Israel.

An awesome apostolic and prophetic. As it was in the first. Or Israel remains in her grave.

And the nations of the earth remain unblessed. 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. 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 all your internal justifications.

And your bitterness in the heart of man. As the nature of humanity. And you remain a true Christian.

All this depth and wisdom of God. God is calling you by your name. To be his.

A son of man. To prophesy in that day. 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 cloud of invisible witnesses. Hallelujah.

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. We have so persecuted the early church. So that we make ourselves candidates for persecution.

To stand with God and 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 an eternal death. And inviting you to martyrdom.

Whether or not it is required. We are not talking how you shall die in a final moment. But how you shall live in all your moments.

When you leave this room and get jostled by death. When you 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 it has to do with the word of God. All of us do not have any rights. We 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 in that day.

Our people will be eternally grateful for you. Your faith raised us from our graves. It will take eternity to express our gratitude.

And to celebrate the God whose wisdom has called for us. Who will stand for martyrdom today. That was always the true identity of the church.

In every generation. And must especially be in the last generation. 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. Amen. Unto death.

Hallelujah. Amen. And not reluctantly with sadness.

Not with that self pity cry. Why me? Couldn't I have been a nice Arab Christian with you? 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 through 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. Feel us in our standing.

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