

Israel and Church

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the mystery of Israel and the Church, and the need for the Church to be aware of its role in Israel's fulfillment and to be willing to prophesy to the dry bones of Israel.

Duration: 1:11:21

Scripture: Isaiah 2:3, Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 11:16-36

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the ideological issue surrounding the present state of Israel. He contrasts two statements: 'Never again' and 'we are cut off, we are without hope.' The first statement reflects human defiance and confidence in man's ability to prevent another Holocaust, while the second statement expresses ultimate dejection and a sense of hopelessness. The speaker emphasizes the importance of love, particularly how the church should love the least of Jesus' brethren. He references Matthew 25, where Jesus separates the sheep from the goats based on their treatment of the least of his brethren. The sermon concludes with the speaker praising the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge, acknowledging that language cannot fully express the mystery of God.

Transcript

Good evening, Saints. Well, I have the privilege to expound a mystery tonight, of which Paul says we should not be ignorant. It's the mystery of Israel and the Church.

Not to understand Israel as a mystery is not to understand it. To have a view that's only sentimental, or out of obligation or guilt, is to miss it greatly. The only way to know it, to apprehend it, is to receive it as mystery.

That's the way Paul describes it. That's the way Paul expounds it. And it's central to Paul's whole apostolic perception of the faith, of reality itself, set forth in his most important book.

He's not a systematic theologian, but in the one book of Romans, Paul sets forth his faith more systematically than in any other place. So chapters 9 through 11, the heart of the book, is devoted to this subject. It's not some addendum, it's not an asterisk, that will direct us to the end of the book as a footnote.

It's smack dab in the center of Paul's apostolic consideration. And it needs to be in the same place for ourselves, because if we miss it, we miss our mandate, our calling with regard to that people, but we miss

also our own identity. So there's no way for the Church to even understand itself, perceive its own reality and call, independent of the relationship to which we are called with this people, as a Gentile Church.

That's why it's a mystery. It confounds every category. It's unnatural, that is to say, it can only be understood, and it can only be fulfilled spiritually.

It's the issue of God, it's the issue of the Spirit, it's the issue of his word, the issue of his covenant, it's the issue. So Lord, grace. Grace to propound, grace to understand, grace to receive.

This mystery is central to our faith. If at any time we are to deserve the appellation, the designation apostolic, and indeed, if we don't, we're falling short of the glory of God. Anything less or other than that which is apostolic is incompatible with God's intention.

Charismatic is not enough. Evangelical is not enough. Fundamental is not enough.

Apostolic only. So may you derive a jealousy for that word, because of tonight, that you have not before had, and it will not let you go. It will affect every aspect of the faith.

So Lord, it's a privilege to be called to share this, and it requires grace. Grace to communicate, grace to receive, grace to fulfill. So give us a memorable and a significant night that will affect all the future of this fellowship, the church of this locality, and beyond.

We thank and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's look at the verse that I've quoted in chapter 11, verse 25.

And in my occasional dispute with those who have discounted Israel or feel that the church has replaced it, I find almost invariably they never cite Romans chapter 11 and are often just completely ignorant of its content. Why? Because it can only be understood as mystery. You cannot obtain this by exercise of intellect.

This is not the issue of reason. It's the issue of revelation. So how is it that men who are otherwise competent in many areas of the faith, even impressively, are non-compassmentists when it comes to this subject? I suspect there's something that's blocking the flow of revelation of the mystery, and likely it is some kind of perhaps unrecognized but deep-seated Gentile antipathy against the Jew.

There's a latent anti-Semitism that pervades the whole history of the church and is much more common than is recognized. And until we face that and let the Lord deal with that, we've not yet come to the place of his intention for us. So the whole issue of Israel is indeed the issue of the church, as I hope to indicate to you tonight.

Paul is answering the question of the church at Rome, is God finished with the Jew? And they had every reason to ask that question because they knew that we had stoned our prophets and now we have crucified our own Messiah. So isn't that final testimony that this people have forfeited their calling and the church that has now risen is its replacement? It's a very logical, reasonable question to ask, and in fact there are many who subscribe to that view to this day, that the church has replaced Israel because by every natural and human reckoning they're not deserving of any further consideration of God. They have forfeited their place and their call.

But that's exactly the mystery, you dear saints, that God will yet have a destiny for a nation that does not deserve it is not the statement of the nation, it's the statement of God, who will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy and elect whom he will elect and choose whom he will choose. As if God has gone out of his way to choose a people whom Gentiles would, just by the nature of things, ordinarily reject, because they are the least, because their track record stinks, because they have blasphemed his name in every nation wherein we have been sent and even the nation in which we presently abide. So by every natural reckoning the church would dismiss Israel that would have any place yet in God's intention.

The fact that it does have such a place and must fulfill such a place is not the revelation of the virtue of Israel but the revelation of the virtue of God. Because he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy. Where do we read that? Romans chapter 11.

And God's mercy is God. God and his mercy is the revelation of himself in his deepest attribute and aspect. Because the world, how shall I say it, the world requires merit.

The world requires performance. The world requires a basis for acknowledgement or esteem. But God does not make that requirement.

It's the world that has this pharisaical propensity yet to be found in the church. And that when you begin to take up a subject like this the first thing that is automatically inadvertently expressed is but they don't deserve it. Exactly.

They don't. But they yet obtain it and that there will be everlasting joy upon their heads and mourning and sighing, fleeing away is not the statement of their virtue it's the statement again of God. God in such a way as nothing less or other will reveal him than his mercy toward Israel.

The issue of God is the issue of Israel and the fulfillment of God's word and promise and covenant toward a nation who is not only undeserving of the consideration but is not even aware that it has such a call and doesn't even desire it. And yet he will succeed in it as an ultimate testimony not only to his word but to his power. And that he will employ the Gentile church as the agent for that fulfillment is the final staggering aspect of the whole mystery.

Because where should we expect that Gentiles should have any interest in Israel's fulfillment and let alone that they should be participant that if they are not fulfilling that role Israel will not obtain it. So for example when we read a text like Ezekiel 37 the Valley of Dry Bones where they are reduced to utter hopelessness to which the nation by the way has not yet come the Nazi holocaust did not obtain it but there is a future holocaust coming for which the conditions are already fomenting in which the nation will come to the place where it will say we are cut off, we are without hope we are as dry bones. Why is that so remarkably important? Because we Jews are the epitome of man.

The issue of the Jew is an ideological question. We are the picture of human self-sufficiency human confidence human ability man and all of his assumption and who else could have taken an abandoned malarial wasteland and in half a century made it a remarkable high-tech civilization resuscitating a dead liturgical language and having one of the greatest military forces on earth and with atomic arsenal and all the kinds of things that only Jews could perform but will not succeed in performing because the issue of Israel is not to set forth the prowess and ability of Jews but the grace and mercy of God. We have got to be reduced in our presumption about ourselves as man and we are on a divine course to be brought to that desperation and pitch where we have exhausted every prospect as you can see Israel the state even

now scrambling trying to find every expediency and clever motion notion to ease its predicament and bringing one successor after another as prime minister all of whom are brilliant and that we would all be desirous of such men in high office in our own nations and yet all are calculated to fail.

So there is a great ideological issue I am trying to compress in one statement tonight what already takes at least a three day seminar to expound but you need to understand this because if you have any affinity for the present state of Israel and a desire to see it succeed you are going to be grossly disappointed you are going to be embarrassingly disappointed you will be less and less able to defend the nation as it grows more desperate and is required to employ expediencies that contradict its own hope to have been an exemplary Jewish nation and will find itself acting very much like any gentile nation in the world and in fact even acting very much like the gentile nation that has so recently persecuted it unto death Nazi Germany so brace yourself for a necessary dissolution and

collapse of human expectancy in the state of Israel it's more than I can explain to you in one night which raises you mean God will allow a state to be raised only that it should fail exactly and it will be succeeded by his own work when I will restore I will return I will establish I will plant so that for the whole millennial future the restored nation will be able to compare its own premillennial Zionist experience attempting by its own ability and prowess to establish a homeland and a state and failing exacerbating its neighbors necessarily and provoking them to such a place where their children become human bombs and their parents of these human sacrifices are proud that their children have done something even by being blown to pieces themselves to destroy the hated enemy this is the

result of the last analysis of however well-meaning men may be when they seek in the independence of God to establish something as ultimate as a national homeland let alone a prophetic fulfillment of a nation that will bless all the families of the earth it is not only bound to fail but to fail disgracefully this is hard work so Paul says in verse 25 I would not brethren that you should be ignorant of this mystery because it's the only way to understand the majesty of the issue of that nation and the purposes of God from the beginning and elect people with a destiny that will affect all the nations of the earth and be the locus of God's theocratic rule very few Christians ever consider the subject of Israel in the context of the government of creation and yet we know in Isaiah chapter 2

that all nations shall come up to the mount of the Lord and God will teach us the ways of the God of Jacob and that the law shall go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem believest thou this? you English saints who have had more difficulty in sharing this view than any other nation the greatest resistance to this view has come to me in the UK or its affiliates South Africa, New Zealand, Australia there's something residual in the English psyche in the national fabric that is somehow repulsed by and is antithetical to Israel that Israel should have a destiny that perhaps will even eclipse Great Britain I think those nations that have lingering aspirations for empire instinctively and to resist a nation that is called to be central to all nations the measure of your

humility in Christ is your agreement with God in what he has chosen because the law must go forth out of Zion is not a piece of poetry it's a statement of God's literal intention and if you knew what I know you would realize that the church has historically been guilty of taking all of the literal statements of Israel's restoration and her centrality to the nations and spiritualizing it so that Zion is no longer a geographical location in Jerusalem it's a condition of uttermost spirituality which in fact it is as a second use of the word Zion but a principle of scriptural interpretation is that the first use must be what is intended by the grammatical context so where the grammatical context indicates a literal interpretation that's our first

obligation after that you can preach it as a

spiritual index of spirituality the church has used its spiritualizing to nullify the very literal promises with regard to the nation first because they had not the faith to believe for them and second they had not the desire to desire for them it's something like the elder brother who's unwilling even to see the the profligate return and receive such a welcome from the father as a robe, a ring and a feast you never did this for me and I've always been dutiful and faithful blah blah blah and refused to enter the celebration this is no small question what the attitude of the church is toward Israel and toward the Jew is the whole issue of Israel's redemption because as I said Ezekiel 37 shows the nation being reduced in which they themselves say verse 11 chapter 37 we are cut off we are

without hope we are dry bones anyone who has studied anything in the history of Israel or contemporary Israel knows that that national acknowledgement has yet to be made and that even the Nazi holocaust did not obtain it but a proclamation of another kind never again can you compare these two statements? never again and we are cut off we are without hope never again is still man shocked and bewildered by the treatment that he's received in the holocaust but yet surviving and assured that he'll not again suffer it because before he was hapless and helpless a ghetto individual but now with the state of Israel their prowess, their ability never again is a statement of human defiance and a confidence in man but the statement we are cut off we are cut out we are without hope we are as dry

bones is a statement of ultimate dejection of ultimate what's the word? exasperation of ultimate acknowledgement that we're finished then God turns to someone called the son of man and commands him to prophesy to those bones that they might live these are the texts out of which Paul derives his understanding of the mystery and puts it at the heart of his New Testament faith so who is the son of man? why doesn't God himself prophesy to the bones? he's the God who brooded over the chaos by the spirit and said let there be and there was why doesn't he now take the occasion to raise Israel by his own speaking and they'll be eternally indebted to him but no, he turns to his son of man and commands the son of man to prophesy the moot question is if the son of man is a symbolic statement of the

church of the last days in its ultimate prophetic constituency will it be willing to prophesy? does it desire to see those dry bones live? why not leave them there? isn't that the fate they deserve? and let us be the sole object of God's intention and glory see how great this issue is? the issue of attitude willingness to recognize what those dead bones represent not only in terms of their own fulfillment but in terms of his glory because how does this great book end? this great chapter 11 ends with the most remarkable doxology in the whole of biblical writ from verse 33 through 36 if I get carried away tonight I'll even sing it for you oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God Paul how shall I say it? a sober apostle cannot contain his praise doxology is

ultimate praise because he has seen something of the mystery that he cannot contain language itself is stretched to breaking at the remarkable conclusion of these three verses oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God how great his judgments are past finding out who has given him shall be given again for of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever this is not just a little capstone this is not a little piece of rhetorical flourish this is Paul this is the apostolic mind this is the apostolic heart and it's got to come to you if you're going to fulfill the role toward Israel it will be a sacrificial demand in which the prospect of martyrdom let alone peril will not be out of the question Jews are going to be globally hated they're

already in process of becoming that there's a new anti-semitism pervading the earth it's already dangerous for a Jew to live in France that had been for them one of the safest places on earth and the French government is already telling the Jewish community we're not in a position to protect you though it's the largest Jewish community in the continent 500,000 but it's eclipsed by 5 million Muslims who will not be placated with anything less than Jewish annihilation and there's a proliferation of this demonic phenomenon called Islam all over the world so Jews will not be safe in any place including the United States of America we will be globally uprooted globally hunted globally persecuted globally in flight and Jesus said of that time that there's a trouble coming for the nation such as

it has never before known or will again know he's answering the question what are the signs of the end of the age and of your coming so he's speaking of a last days phenomenon of a trouble for the nation that exceeds any trouble it has previously known or will again know and if that time not be cut short no flesh will survive but for the elect's sake the time will be cut short I believe he's referring to the time of Jacob's trouble and the global persecution of Jews the conditions for which are already brewing and you have an obligation to be aware and to know and to anticipate and to prepare for their expulsion and their uprooting in every nation the majority of which will not survive because if it exceeds all previous trouble that means it exceeds the Nazi holocaust that took six

million lives and if this will be a greater one and yet not again to be repeated what then will be the number of fatalities when Jesus himself comes at the end of the time of Jacob's trouble to oppose the nations that are coming against Jerusalem to destroy it and his feet come on the Mount of Olives two thirds of Jerusalem which is to say the nation have perished one third passes through the fire so if that's the ratio of survival two thirds perishing, one third surviving not only in the land but in the world we're talking about the demise of ten million Jews in a period of time even shorter than the Nazi holocaust three and a half years so in other words it can only be accomplished with a certain vehemence and a bitterness that eclipses even the Nazi determination for Jewish

annihilation by the same spirit that has always sought to annihilate Jews you need to know what prompts that spirit it's got everything to do with the law going forth out of Zion the word of law out of Jerusalem the powers of the air are the false usurping governmental rulers over the nations they are the rulers of this world's darkness and want to continue to be Nazi Germany gives us an example of powers of the air not content merely to influence the conduct of a nation but to totally appropriate its whole mechanism, its whole government, its whole strength and to employ that not only to threaten the whole of world civilization but to annihilate Jews and in fact military historians cannot fathom right to the last days of the war how material and money and manpower was expended in the

continuation of the process of annihilation when it should have been employed perhaps for defense showing there is a demonic press for the destruction of Jews that had captivated that entire nation and its and its strength and that spirit will again be employed in the time to come why? because if Israel can be destroyed if there should be no remnant returning if the redeemed of the Lord perish and fail to obtain redemption and to return to Zion then the powers of the air continue their usurping of false rule over the nations.

The only thing that threatens them is a kingdom come whose rule will issue out of Zion that waits for a restored nation and the redemption of the holy hill of Zion in which God has set his prince alone qualified to rule from that place as a descendant of David from the throne of David got the idea? You see how literal I am? and the way that I am I'm suggesting you need to be also understanding that the view that I'm

propounding is not out of the fact that I'm Jewish, that's just haphazard, that's accidental but the fact that I have a role to perform for the church that has to do with Jews but I'm not favoring them because of my ethnic identification in fact I'm hotter on them than most.

Paul is the steward of the mysteries of the faith we can read in Ephesians chapter 3 and this mystery also and yet he warns us that if we are ignorant of this mystery we should be wise in our own conceit.

This is the only mystery for which there's a consequence, a penalty for the failure to obtain it. You will become wise in your own conceit. What are these conceits? We are the Israel of God we are the replacement we are the kingdom we will bring the kingdom, we don't have to wait for the king we'll take over the functions of society and various other presumptions that characterize our present day Christianity the best of our present day Christianity is afflicted with this kind of conceit because it has failed to grasp the mystery it's not something mechanical there's something about the mystery itself that is tempering that God intended by it to temper the church because it shows that the church is not some independent entity for its own gratification, it's called into being for the very purpose of Israel's salvation, because we read in verse 11 of this chapter, Paul repeating himself from what he says in verse 1, has God cast away his people?

This is what the Roman church is asking and his answer in the most emphatic Greek I'm told is God forbid you should say that, God forbid you should think that that's the least thing that you should ever consider that he's finished with them, and then he goes on in verse 11 to pick that up again, have they stumbled that they should fall? Is God now permanently rejecting them? God forbid, there's that great statement again, but rather through their fall, salvation has come unto the Gentiles if there was only a period there, we would have been very content but leave it to Paul to tack on one additional statement that brings the whole house down for salvation has come unto the Gentiles through their fall so as or for or in order to provoke them to jealousy have you ever considered that?

That there's a purpose for your salvation beyond yourself and that purpose is with them, with a people with whom you would not otherwise have extended yourself being Gentiles, but that salvation has been granted to you in a mystery that requires your participation toward them in such a way as to move them to jealousy for the very gospel that they have rejected, because Paul tells us in the same chapter they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake he's not giving us an easy assignment he's giving us an ultimate assignment and I don't know in 42 years in the faith traveling the world over, even commencing this trip in Malaysia and through most of the countries of Europe I'm now coming to the end of a 3 month journey I don't know of a church anywhere that has consciously willfully taken this mandate to its heart and made it a foundational premise of its entire being to move Jews to jealousy and until we do we will be less than God's intention we may be happy we may enjoy services there will be benefit undoubtedly but we will fall short of apostolic glory for in moving Jews to jealousy is an ultimate requirement that extends and enlarges and calls for such a depth of faith such a reality of a kind that Paul does not describe or tell us how there's no footnote there's no asterisk on what we have to do or perform that will move them to jealousy but that the requirement is given is clear so just to know that there's a purpose for your salvation beyond yourself is itself redemptive because the cancer of egocentrism which we practiced in the world carnally can be brought into the church spiritually so that it's we, us, our our denomination, our church our ministry did you enjoy the service? did you like the speaker? everything is predicated from the point of view of the benefit that accrues to us that is as spiritually dangerous as an egocentrism as to be carnally taken up with questions how does God save us from this innate propensity to be centered in ourselves he gives us a burden and a mandate outside of ourselves with a people whom we would never have chosen

and not only that but a people who by their history and nature are adverse and are opponents of the gospel, they're not just casual rejecters they are professional rejecters as anyone knows who's had anything to do with Jews as a mission field and their history alone is so horrible in terms of what Jews have suffered at the hands of Christendom, the church, the name of Christ, that there are Jews who will cross the street rather than have the shadow of a spire of a church fall on them.

My mother for 40 years could not understand how I would go to Germany let alone how I should be a believer her darling son and her hope though she was saved 10 days before her death in her 96th year by a dream of hell that terrified her into the kingdom of God and enabled her to call upon his name which she would not even allow me to mention. She grew up in London and still remembers I don't know if they're true stories or not how she was pushed into a swimming pool by her gentile teacher and told sink or swim Jew. So she has a whole history of either true or false episodes that reinforce for her an anger and an enmity against the goyim, the gentiles and Christians and that name in which Jews have systematically been persecuted as anyone who knows the history of Jews in Europe and in Germany Jews locked themselves in their synagogues during the Crusades to be saved from the threat of baptism or death by the knights with their crosses on their tunics who looted the Jewish community and financed their pilgrimage and in the end these synagogues were burned down and the entire community went up in flames long before the fire of the Holocaust or they committed suicide there's a phrase in Hebrew Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying the name is the title given when a father will slit the throats of all of his children, kill his wife and they either take his own life or allow another to take it.

So when the doors burst open and the goyim come in whose threat was baptize or die they see the Jews already dead before them. This is our history you dear saints, you need to know this this is, we take this up with our mother's milk, it's in the air that we breathe there's an instinctive resentment of fear that even though you're nice to us periodically, how long can that be trusted? And in nations where we've enjoyed a certain degree of acceptance, the bottom can fall out suddenly as it did in Germany, as will happen in France and I believe will happen in England as in every nation. So they are the enemies of the gospel.

It's as if history conspires against our succeeding with them and yet Paul doesn't say how we ought to move them to jealousy but what he makes clear is it's not by individual virtuosos but by the church as the church something that can only be corporately displayed, something in the relationships of a body that transcends earthly and human categories in a way that is heavenly and altogether supernatural look how they love one another, remember what was said of the early church needs to be said again not only how they love one another but the ultimate test is how do we love them because when Jesus comes as king, the first judgment by which he separates the sheep from the goats among the Gentiles in the world and the nations is over one question or one issue.

What did you do for the least of these my brethren? Read Matthew 25 which the scholars say that he's really talking to the church that the brethren have got to be Christians because Jews at that time will be yet apostate and unbelieving but the sheep and the goats both say Lord when did we see you naked thirsty and hungry they say Lord and so I'm biblically exegeting that the least of these his brethren are indeed Jews in their last days and final extremity they're his brethren before they're saved, they're his brethren while they're yet in apostasy, while they're yet in flight, while they're yet in extremity the question is if that's what they are to him, what are they to us?

So we're moving toward that conclusion of the age for which the church is not now presently fitted we will be exasperated by this people and to extend mercy that they may obtain mercy which is in the conclusion

of Romans 11 is an ultimate requirement from people who do not count their lives dear unto themselves and are willing to give their lives, open themselves to risk of suffering for Jews in the condition in which they will be in their last days flight and not receive gratitude for it and maybe even have to suffer mean-spiritedness and backlash and the kinds of things that Jews will say when they've come undone remembering that this last day's extremity will be very sudden it'll be an uprooting, something like you find yourself in the street the day before you were professional you

had resources, you had wealth you had possessions, the next day all you have is what's on your back and you're in flight from terror so they're not going to come to us in their best condition they're going to come to us in their worst condition and yet Ezekiel 20 verse 33 on says with a fury poured out I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations the fury is the last days anti-semitic persecution and there I will meet with you face to face in the wilderness of the nations so the kind of face that we show them if it's the face of only religious obligation, I guess we have to art said it, it was coming and now it's here, well let's brace ourselves, we will have missed a historic moment they need to see something more than religious obligation, certainly they need to see something

more than irritation and resentment, which if we are yet in our prescientition they will provoke, the Jews have ever and always historically been the measure and test of the truth of the church and the greatest of the church's giants have failed that test, the most noteworthy is Luther himself who became a blatant anti-semite Chrysostom, the golden mouth orator of the early apostolic period, equally anti-semitic and so men have been tested and missed it, there's something about a Jew that frays us and provokes and gets under our skin in the way that my Danish wife does for me maybe she's from the lost sheep of the house of Israel, I don't know but just when you're thinking yourself confident in your spirituality, you come home and your wife will say one thing or spot one thing or make a

comment or remark that boom, she hits the blind spot and something issues from you that is totally embarrassing, just when you thought you had come to a place of spiritual maturity the Jew functions like that so I'm warning you that we should not be embarrassed in that day because what we exhibit with our faces will either save them or lose them and the fact of the matter is as a former atheist, ex-Marxist radical, I was saved in part by that revelation 42 years ago when I left the teaching profession with a pack on my back to travel through Europe and the Middle East looking for philosophical and ideological answers to a disillusioned life instead I met Christians who were picking up off the side of the road born again, I didn't know there was such a distinction, strangely moved by every

one of them just the willingness to pick up a man like myself and this little girl who was an American on vacation having graduated high school half my age and I'm probing her motives, why are you being kind to me?

I'm an ex-Marxist communist party member and I have never seen kindness I've only seen ideological ferocity, but I've not seen kindness and here's this gentile girl beaming walking with me totally unafraid how is it you're not afraid of me? It's the love of God she said. How is it you're being kind? The love of God.

Why are you the love of God? I thought this kid mentions God one more time, she's had it my hobby is to wipe out Christians so what's this little girl to me? she mentioned God once more, I said look, you're a sweet kid I appreciate your kindness, but I cannot stand this God talk answer for me one question that no Christian has ever successfully answered what's that Art? you've been talking about God, how do you

know that he is? there'll be a long delay, she'll think of something from Sunday school and I'll get my steamroller all revved up and crush her, without a moment's hesitation, she tilted that little face, snub-nosed, freckled sandy-haired, what we Jews call wasp, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant and out of that face, she said I know that he lives Art, because he lives in me, and when she said that, down I went like the struck ox, absolutely devastated the power of that statement trying to collect myself, what did she say?

It's not theological, it's not even intellectual what's the power of that statement, and then realizing that it was true and she had the face to prove it that little Gentile face exuded the light of God and that light is the light that lightens the Gentiles is equally the glory of the people of Israel you see, we're in something together, you dear saints you're the key to our salvation and we're the key to your nation when we shall come into the fulfillment of our calling as a nation of priests and a light unto the world for the world needs us in that distinction it's profane and only the priests can teach the difference between the profane and the sacred we have a holy calling but we have to become a holy people to fulfill it and that is not our present condition therefore we have to be

sifted dealt with, be brought to an end to ourselves, and then be redeemed through your faces, your witness your mercy the moving of us to jealousy the willingness to take risks in our behalf at a time when we're globally hated if that doesn't move us to jealousy I don't know what will so, Paul says that blindness in part, in verse 25 is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in this chapter 11 and elsewhere throughout the prophets and the scriptures indicate again and again that Israel needs to be acted upon, that what comes to it must come to it from outside itself for it will be reduced to a place of utter destitution and inability in itself to affect its own redemption and that must necessarily be they have got to be brought to the place of total helplessness

and dependency on what comes to them from outside themselves that it should come to them through Gentiles and through the church who celebrate the name that they can't even pronounce is an utter and staggering phenomenon so that's the mystery that when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in so all Israel shall be saved as it is written there shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins if we did nothing else but spend the one evening pondering that statement it would be time well spent you need to burrow in to this remarkable apostolic mouthful that shows that the issue of Israel is not Israel but the church when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in so the deliverer will come out of

Zion he's waiting for something not from Israel but from the fullness of the Gentiles the church but what does he mean by fullness is he meaning the number that need to complete the church of people for his name from among all nations and the church will have fulfilled its missions in the world and its local evangelism because there is a number that have to replace the fallen angels who's going to be ruling in the heavenly places who's going to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom that's to be established in places that are now occupied by fallen angels that are opposed to God's rule they will be ousted they will be cast out and their prince will be put in chains and confined and finally destroyed so there's a number of replacement this is not I can't show you a text and I'm talking

out of something that I surmise that makes perfect sense for me, that there's a replacement of fallen angels that will occupy the heavenly places in conjunction with the restored Israel in the earth so there will be a harmony in the rule of God out from Zion from the restored nation and by those glorified saints who will rule and reign with Christ as overcomers, remember that? you haven't thought about that you haven't desired that you thought overcomers were for some rare minority but not yourself, you're just an average

saint, yes? and you'll remain an average saint until you take this mandate and call seriously, for it compels you to come to this ground, we need the challenge of being to Israel what we must and that we are the key to a deliver coming out of Zion and taking

transgression from Jacob when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in so I'd like to suggest that it's not only a numerical fullness, it's also a qualitative fullness that is to say, you've come to a full maturity of the faith that can be called prophetic, apostolic, even Hebraic, that you've lost your Gentile coloration and you've taken on a transcendent identity of a kind that for the want of a better word could be called Davidic or or Hebraic it's not that you've become Jews, but your personalities have been formed and shaped under the influence of the Psalms the Prophets, the Patriarchs, the Scripture and you've come into a place that exhibits to the Jew what they themselves ought more rightly to have been, because you are showing forth a fruit being grafted into their tree, having

once been a wild branch that was fruitless where do we learn that?

In Romans chapter 11 stop me wherever I go, I'm too long or you've just reached the point of saturation but Paul takes up this figure about the casting away of them, being the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead for if the, verse 16, the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy and the root be holy, so the branches or some of the branches be broken off, and you being a wild olive tree were grafted in among them and with them partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches, but if you boast you bear not the root, but the root thee, and thou wilt say then the branches broken off that I might be grafted in, well yes, because of unbelief they were broken off and you stand by faith, but be not high minded,

but fear for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest they also spare not thee behold therefore the goodness and severity of God on them which fell severity but unto thee goodness if you continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off and they also if they abide not in unbelief shall be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again, now listen you dear saints perhaps the issue of jealousy is the issue of bearing fruit of a distinctive kind, because you are in a covenant relationship with God by which you receive his life and it gives expression to fruit of an eternal kind that abides, a certain quality of relationship, a certain grace that is transcendent that moves you up and above and beyond your own culture, a national origin into a kind of a heavenly

kingdom relationship presently while you're yet in the earth but how do you obtain that by the sap that flows out from the root of the tree in which you have been grafted but if you're not conscious that you have been grafted in having once been a wild and fruitless branch, you do not receive the benefit I don't know that I'm authorized to say that but I'm taking prophetic liberty because I see so many fruitless branches among Gentiles that are technically grafted in but have not acknowledged the privilege nor are they grateful and to the degree that they have not the faith both to appreciate and to be grateful for the privilege of being grafted into this ancient tree and deriving from its root and its sap the life of fruit, they will not derive that fruit, they'll remain fruitless even

in their grafting so this is a remarkable figure that Paul is employing to show the mystery of the relationship between the Gentile church and Israel that there's a tree that is eternal of which the sap is the life of God through its root and that the benefit is only derived by those that are grateful for the privilege and do not look upon their Christianity as some kind of innovation that took place in New Testament times and was the beginning of a whole new phenomenon but rather see it as the continuum of something that already

had a long existence into which they have been placed though they were once far off without God without hope in the world until they were brought nigh by the blood of Israel's Messiah am I saying too much?

Paul tells us in Ephesians you who were far off and without hope and without God in the world have been brought nigh by the blood of Messiah into the covenants and promises and hopes of Israel, into the commonwealth of Israel, you were without hope you were without relationship but by his blood you have been brought in because salvation is of the Jews but if you're too proud to acknowledge that and you'd rather not be in that tree but you have a tree of your own choosing then you'll just be a dried up Gentile and fruitless in any eternal sense.

This is critical and more than that he says don't boast against the tree yes their branches were broken off that you might be brought in but God is able to graft them in again but if you don't abide in kindness you can be broken off therefore fear behold the severity and the goodness of God well you dear saints if we don't behold the goodness and severity of God in his dealing with Israel where shall we behold it? If we don't come to a fear seeing how far he has dealt with them who are the chosen ones and yet the apple of his eye and there's yet another holocaust coming by which they shall be sifted to obtain a remnant that shall return to Zion what shall we say?

The issue of the fear of God the sense of awe that is so presently absent from the church is absent in exact proportion as this mystery is not known and has been lost there's a lightness that pervades the church over which I ache and I believe that it can be attributed in the last analysis to the ignorance of this mystery because nothing more reveals God both in his severity and his goodness in his judgments and in his restoration and mercy than his dealing with this people and if we don't see it there where shall we see it?

That is to say nothing gives us a more accurate understanding of God as God than his relationship with this nation throughout its entire history and the future that is yet to come as well as his destiny to miss the issue of Israel is to miss God as God we'll continue to use the vocabulary, we'll call it Jesus and sing hymns and all the rest but the reality the deepest aspect of that reality will be lost to us unless it's obtained here notice the text that we're grafted in in verse 17 among them and with them partake in that root and fatness of the olive tree so not all Israel rejected the Lord we know the early church was totally Jewish you came into an already existing redemptive phenomenon called a body that you might be partakers with them but if you don't see them and see yourself as an exclusive entity apart from them you lose the value both of the root and its sap so it depends on how gentile you are, how offended you are too proud to be part of that tree it's interesting I had contemplated this as another subject for tonight the tenth of Shem the blessing that Noah pronounces upon his son Shem who has covered him in his fallenness and says prophetically Japheth shall be expanded that's Europe Europeans are expansive in technology and economics and so on but Japheth shall dwell in the tenth of Shem God's final what's the word for the last days eschatology thank you God's final eschatological glory is that Japheth, the European nations will dwell in the tenth of Shem that left to themselves being expansive they are not only instruments for good but evil as we've seen in two world wars and even now the ambition that yet remains with Japheth but there's a redemptive blessing and a benefit that comes with abiding and dwelling in the tenth of Shem because Shem is the spiritual and Semitic Hebraic reality that God has invested in that people and you need us and you'll be blessed by dwelling with the tenth once we ourselves are in that place so the end of the whole redemptive drama is the relationship of nations to Israel and it even begins in Deuteronomy 32.8 that when God determined the number of nations, he did so in view of the number of the sons of Israel that from the very beginning, I've never heard anyone preach from that text, from the very beginning the issue

of the nations is the issue of Israel.

Israel is central to the nations and there will not be peace, there will not be millennial blessedness until the nations give themselves to that relationship, not reluctantly chafing inwardly but gladly submitting to the design of God though it's contrary to every Gentile impulse to submit to a people like that to the holy hill of Zion where we'd much rather have some mountain or something out of our own nationality that we think far more appropriate to the kingdom.

God has gone out of his way to cut us off at the pass, to nail us in our Gentile pride by the requirement to submit to that nation which he has chosen, even in its terrible track record though he will exalt it, not because of its deserving but because he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy. The question is, will you have it? And in fact, if you don't have it, they will perish because Paul says having told us that the gift and callings of God are without repentance that you in times past have not believed God, have now obtained mercy through their unbelief. If they had not fallen, temporarily been set aside, salvation would not have come to the Gentiles.

Their setting aside was a requirement in the wisdom of God. Perhaps if they had remained, you would not have received their message, or it would have come to you with their pharisaical pride. They had to be set aside in order for you to come into the faith which is in the salvation which is of the Jews.

But the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. And what is the gift and calling? To bless all the families of the earth. To be a nation of priests and a light unto the world.

Even by a people who do not even know that that's their calling, and don't even desire to be that, they would much rather be the successful Hong Kong of the Middle East. But despite their intention, despite their rejection, God must fulfill it because it's the issue of his promise and the issue of his word. The issue of God, of Israel, coming into its destiny is totally, in the last analysis, the issue of God as God.

All the more because they're unwilling, because they're unseeing, because they're undesiring. So for them yet to come in to this calling is the statement of his faithfulness and his power over and against their own unwillingness. And that will glorify him forever.

See what I mean? Everything is stacked against fulfillment that if he's to succeed, and to succeed through a Gentile church, it will be to the everlasting praise of his glory. And that's how the chapter ends. That he might have mercy upon all, that these now do not believe that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

You're going to have a grand opportunity in the last days to express that. And it will not come at your convenience, it will come at your risk. If they are hated globally and despised, and there's an Islamic terror which no nation can control, and in fact even to oppose it is to invite devastation for the nation itself.

We see the nation's already cowering, and your Prime Minister with his red cord around his wrist this morning, in the eighth day since he received it from Hindus, already a condescension to minorities and other religions to show a kind of a liberal mentality that will in the end betray Jews, and will defer to those Islamic and other peoples who hate them. So for you to extend mercy will make you an object of persecution yourself. And why should you? What's in it for you? What did they ever do for you? And to do it, not just reluctantly, with a grim sense like, I guess I have to, but counting it a privilege.

And you're rejoicing for the privilege of having aided so much as one Jew to be part of the remnant that returns to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads. It's for you unspeakable privilege and joy. Even if it requires suffering or the loss of life, because you know that you'll receive a martyr's crown.

Because you know that if you're stripped, you have a greater recompense in heaven than you had in what was taken in the earth. If you know that in yourself. So see what is required? What is required is apostolic faith, apostolic expectancy, apostolic understanding of eternity, its rewards, for which Paul said, seeing the invisible weight of glory, I count my present suffering both momentary and light.

We have got to come to that mentality, that view of eternity, that sense of eternal reward, that sense of destiny and calling with this people as privilege. And that's why Paul says in that conclusion, O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable his judgments, his ways pass finding out. Who has known the mind of the Lord? Paul didn't make this up, and I've not made this up.

This is too complex. This is too rich. This is too altogether contrary to what human reason would dictate.

That Gentiles, a Gentile church, should be the salvific agent of God for Israel's redemption, by an ability to address bones and the authority of God by which they might live, that they're speaking in resurrection authority and power, and desire to see that nation raised in a faith that exceeds its present faith, that is the faith of the Son of God, and a faith that can only work by love and not by sentiment. You see how far you have to go? In fact, your sentiment is the greatest obstruction to that love. Sentiment is false love, and it's cheap and easy to have a sentimental attitude toward Israel to go plant a tree or attend a conference.

But we're neglecting the Jews that are right in our locality, so any true relationship with the Jew that does not require radically of us is a false relationship, a sentimental relationship that makes no requirement. This is ultimate requirement because this is of Him, but it's also through Him that it might be to Him as glory forever. So before I was called on, I felt a wave of weakness.

I couldn't stand up during the worship time. I was preserving my little strength that was ebbing away, and needed something to lean on. It just means that individuals that continue to pray, their individual prayer is a circle.

So our prayer has got to reflect a reality of a kind by which we're more than just alongside each other, but as human church, those that believe we are together. See, this compels us to find the ground of reality that church needs first, and thus know again at the end. And I can tell you, having lived 32 years in community, what it takes to be together is suffering.

Community is not a lark that's imagining before it's born. But it takes a willing participation because we cannot be to the Jew what we must, except how shall we be able to absorb the impact of Jews coming into this broken condition, totally dejected, angry, mean-spirited, just as single individuals. It takes the conservative strength of a tested body to receive that impact morally, physically, spiritually, and to do to them what we want, and make no requirement of them.

And if they're mean-spirited and are not grateful, we're not offended. We don't need their gratitude. We have His, and we can show them the face of their God in love.

That makes no requirement in His uncondition. Why is God speaking like this now? Because we need to begin now with the conscience, which is always humiliating. Give yourself.

With a congregation of this kind, with a pastor of this kind, with a history of this kind, where will you succeed? This is about as auspicious and as encouraging, just the sight of them as any before which I've stood. And so I'm asking my God that you who have brought me in this surprising way in these days, for this one night and this one statement, jealously, to nurture it, and that you'll not allow a syllable to fall to the ground. Amos chapter 9, where you said this, will revive the Holy Spirit for all of His fullness, and may they be eternally fruitful to all our consideration.

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