

Making Part Stand for Whole

by Art Katz

The church has made the part stand for the whole by neglecting the significance of Israel and its relationship to the church, resulting in a lack of fear, a lightness, and a spiritual death.

Duration: 1:15:32

Scripture: Acts 5:1

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights the lack of understanding and awareness among believers about the current age and the powers of darkness in the last days. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing the attacks against God and His anointed, as described in Psalm 2. The sermon also addresses the issue of prioritizing personal enjoyment and preferences over the glory of God. The distinction between the state and the nation of Israel is explained, with the state being a temporary provision and the nation being an everlasting entity in God's sight. The sermon concludes with a reference to the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, highlighting the consequences of lying to the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Lord, gracious God on high, your servants are hearing. What is it, Lord, that you would speak tonight? What is in your heart for our hearts? It's an astonishment, Lord, that we might hear you, that you have an explicit thought toward us and for us. And I ask the mercy, my God, that takes nothing for granted, that you would be pleased somehow and disposed to express it.

We ask the grace, Lord, that will open the inner ear and the heart to hear and to receive the sense of what you are about. I think I can speak for this congregation and say we desire to be changed. We need to be changed.

We acknowledge our need, Lord. And if you will not change us, how shall we be changed? And if we will not be changed by your word, then by what means? So we're asking, Lord, that you'll speak, that you'll require, that you'll put your finger in our chest if we have dodged you or evaded. Come, my God, and let it be a significant night for many, turning point even, for the church at large, for individuals, for men in ministries.

So we thank you, Lord, convey and communicate the urgency of your own heart. We know that your thoughts are not our thoughts and your ways are not our ways. We have taken vast liberties with you.

It's astonishing what we have said and claimed in your name. So, my God, come and chastise us gently. May we not need more than your word.

So do we bless you, Lord, and thank you for your redemption of this night. Look upon the dust that I myself am. And you know, my God, the truth of my condition and my own need, despite the appearance that is conveyed to your people, that this man seems to have it all together.

You know, my God, the terrible weakness that is true. So come, my God, be strength, be clarity, be the precious high priest and apostle of our confession. Come, Lord, may we hear your voice and live.

We thank and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I'm still in the book of Acts, this time chapter five, the episode of Ananias and Sapphira, a remarkable instruction.

Everything calculated for the church at the end of the age, not only the scriptures pertaining the Hebrew scriptures, that says that these things are written for us upon whom the ends of the age have come, but also and especially the New Testament. This is more than historical record. It's fraught with remarkable instruction.

And we need to obtain that. So chapter five of the book of Acts describes a man named Ananias, who, with the consent of his wife, Sapphira, sold a piece of property with his wife's knowledge, keeping back some of the proceeds and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. Ananias, Peter asked, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed or conceived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us, but to God.

Now Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. The young men came and wrapped up his body, and they carried him out and buried him.

After an interval of about three hours, his wife came in. Not knowing what had happened, Peter said to her, tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price. Oh, she said, yes, that was the price.

Then Peter said to her, how is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out and bury you also. Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in, they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things. Now, many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles, etc., etc., etc. Now, because of the jealous apostolic attention to the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of God therefore was available in demonstration of signs and wonders done among the people, because as our book, The Spirit of Truth, reminds us that the Spirit of power is first the Spirit of truth.

The first manifestation of God's Spirit is always as truth, always as the dove. We cannot enjoy the power and the benefit and the advantage of this Spirit and grossly neglect the Spirit as the Spirit of truth. So this remarkable episode is very instructive of how far God will go and how jealous the early church was in protecting jealously the standard of truth in its own midst.

That's an apostolic jealousy, and that Peter was so discerning as to immediately see through the pretense of someone who offered a generous contribution and made it to appear as the whole, but it was only in part. With his wife's knowledge, it's remarkable. You did not lie to us but to God.

How can you lie to the Holy Spirit? You know, when you read the Psalms and the Proverbs, lying seems to be a greater abhorrence to God than virtually any sin. Something about lying that is so detestable, no liar will enter the kingdom because a lie is the greatest effrontery to God. It presumes that somehow he's not seeing, not hearing, not understanding, and that somehow we can get by with something that escapes his attention.

A lie is ultimate presumption upon God. It's degrading God, denigrating God, reducing God, who himself is the spirit of truth. The great question that the church needs to ask is whether we are guilty, historically and presently, of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, namely, presenting something as if it represents the whole thing, the full thing, when in fact it is only in part, and that somehow we can get away with it and impress God that the portion that we are offering constitutes the whole.

So I'm trying to express something historic about the church that might, as I believe, presently be true, and that the part that we are excluding is the significant part that pertains to Israel, and somehow we have allowed its exclusion and present the church as if it represents the whole counsel of God and the whole understanding of God, and have left out that aspect of the comprehensive knowledge that includes the relationship between the church and Israel, and somehow not being a vital aspect of truth, and we are disfigured by this absence. Help me with this. In your spirit, I'm feeling for something.

I believe that the right acknowledgment of Israel is so critical to the church's own comprehension of itself and its own calling and purpose in God that the neglect or the rejection of that has disfigured the church and allowed it to be more dead than it knows, that spiritually speaking it has already been carried out feet first while we yet remain continuing with our practices, continuing with our services, continuing with our programs, so dead as not to even know that we're lacking the vital life of God, and that somehow the now that was true of the early church and so absent from ourselves is dismissed as being appropriate to them historically, but not something that we should expect in our own time in our own generation. The absence of God in power, the lack of fear that is in the church, is more a symptom and a statement of a spiritual death that must necessarily be ours, who are trying to impress God and ourselves that somehow we have it all together when we have only a part, and make that part to stand for the whole. Somehow even a mere acknowledgment of Israel and a sympathy for the present state and a desire for its success, an occasional prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, is as much a rejection of the truth of God about Israel for the church as a total dismissal.

If our attitude and relationship with Israel is only sentimental, is only a gesture, is only so to speak throwing a bone to God, if it is not a vital center that requires some radical effect upon our faith and whole understanding of it, somehow we're guilty of having only in part what we assume is the whole. I wrote here, a merely benign and sanctimonious approval of present Israel in no way threatens our petty kingdoms and leaves them quite intact. The revelation of a redeemed nation resurrected out of death of the present state shatters all and requires and makes necessary even the revision of our understanding of God as God.

If the subject of Israel is not rightly understood and rightly apprehended, if we have been satisfied with only a minimal acknowledgement and sympathy for the state and make that to stand for the whole reality

that God has determined should be central for the church's own understanding of itself, we are presenting something in part that really should stand for the whole. We have not the full appropriation of God's truth. I believe that every petty kingdom that characterizes our present Christianity, whether it's the ministry of a single man or of a denomination, is a statement of the absence of the and only kingdom of God from our consideration and our walk.

And we have lost the reality of the kingdom that Jesus said is at hand in exact proportion as we have lost the significance of Israel in the way in which God would have us to understand it. Israel is not an object for our pity or a basis for our sentimental identification or a place to go. That's interesting.

Israel, in the largest sense, is the purpose for our being as a church. From the very beginning, the Lord created something out of Israel's fall, a Gentile body for the purpose of restoring the nation that had fallen away with the crucifixion of Jesus. That the church today exists without this consciousness and only gives Israel a scant consideration and thinks that the whole issue of Israel is the mere hope for the success of the state is to have in part what God intends as the whole.

You'll know you'll have it in full when it disturbs and unseats every petty and lesser kingdom. There's something about the true appropriation of the subject of Israel, apostolically and prophetically understood and received, that compels every petty kingdom to flee. It requires something of us.

If your attachment to Israel has not made any requirements, if it enables you comfortably to continue in the mode of faith that has been familiar to now, you have not rightly been apprehended by this central subject. You have it only in part. In a remarkable book on the crucified God, a German theologian says, true faith begins where the atheist thinks it should end.

The cross demolishes all religious categories, all sanctimonious notions of who we think God to be. There's something about the devastation of the cross, God crucified. It's God crucified that demolishes any religious notion that we can have that makes it compatible with our lifestyle, with our place in the world.

God has chosen something so contrary to our religious propensity that the apprehension of the reality of the crucified God shatters all categories and requires and calls us to a faith of a deeper kind than what we presently know. Probably one of the greatest tragedies of our Christianity is the sentimentalization of the cross, the removing of its horror, the learning to live with it comfortably, the use of it as a symbol around our neck or in the church architecture. The cross has lost its capacity to stun and to astonish, to shock us in how far God will go in his redemptive intent for mankind.

And the issue of Israel is like unto it, because Israel is going itself to be crucified. Israel must necessarily, as I shared last night, walk a road to Calvary. What we have done to the cross to sentimentalize and minimize it and allow us to fit comfortably a Christianity that is compatible with the world and does not make ultimate requirement and allows us a kind of respectability is the same thing that we have done with Israel.

Israel, to pray for the peace of Israel, is hardly a requirement at all in the way in which Christians have been performing that till now. It's only a moment's consideration that requires really nothing. But to pray for the peace of Jerusalem that you know will not come except that the nation first is subjected to God's chastisement and a devastation and uprooting of the present nation and a dispelling of it into the world and a movement through all nations and a shifting in which a majority of Jews alive in the world today will

not survive.

To pray for that kind of peace that follows that dealing of God is quite another kind of prayer. It's one, in fact, that you cannot even make by yourself alone. That kind of prayer is really a groaning and a travail because it's a prayer predicated upon a knowledge of necessary judgment that knows that the peace, the shalom of Israel is not going to come cheaply by some kind of sanctimonious prayer that removes from us any real requirement and somehow will come easily and readily of itself.

The true peace that will come will be after the smoke clears from a devastating last dealing of God with Israel that Jesus described as being the greatest and final trouble of the nation, exceeding everything that it had known prior to it. And that this trouble will be of such a kind, such a severity, that unless that time were cut short, no flesh would survive. But for the elect's sake, that time would be cut short.

I'm trying to feel for something and to express something, that we have only something in part and we have made the part to stand for the whole. And therefore, a certain death has come into the church while it yet lives. It's an act of deception in which we think we have satisfied God because we have a sentimental affinity for the state that does not require any discomfort or sacrifice that fits in with the way in which we have allowed the faith to be known and to be practiced, that enables us to keep a posture in the world and with the world that does not threaten and even becomes polite and acceptable both by the world and by the church.

The issue of Israel and its apocalyptic judgment that is future, the vast dealing of God with world Jewry being sifted through the nations, to say yes to that, to acknowledge, yes, that that is coming, that is the judgment of God, which is itself a mercy and makes a requirement of the church as these Jews will be proliferated through all nations and require from us a mercy or there'll be no survival at all. That is the true apprehension of the subject of Israel for the church. And until we have understood that and received that, we have made the part to stand for the whole.

Am I making any kind of sense? Only Israel rightly understood brings to the church the tempering fear of God that issues from the awareness of the severity and goodness expressed toward that nation. Therefore, Paul says to the church in Romans 11, fear. There's a lack of fear in the church.

There's a lightness in the church. And I believe that every deficiency in the church in the last analysis issues from the loss of this center. The right apprehension of the subject of Israel for the church's own consideration that requires of it an apostolic faith and a willingness for sacrifice of an identification that is more than sentimental.

The issue of Israel for the church is the issue of the cross. The issue of Israel for the church is the issue of the church as community tempered together as a band that can receive Jews in that last days condition without breaking. It's a people who are willing not only to experience discomfort but even threat to their life.

The issue of Israel is the issue of the cross. It's the issue of martyrdom. It's the issue.

It's really remarkable to me in my 37 years as a believer and the way in which by the Lord from time to time I cross paths with or touch eminent Christian ministers and to find out how few of them have understood or have sought to understand Romans chapter 11, Romans 9 through 11, the heart of Paul's most systematic statement of his apostolic perspective. It's as if they are at liberty to be bankrupt or uninformed about this statement of Paul's deepest apostolic heart as if it's only an item that interests Paul

out of his own ethnic identification with Jews, being a Jew, and bringing no obligation to them as ministers to lay hold of this mystery. When Paul describes in Romans 9, I would wish myself a curse for my brethren's sake, when he gives that stricken heart cry for his kinsmen according to the flesh, the question is, is Paul identifying and expressing something because of his blood relationship with Jews as a Jew or is the cry issuing out of his apostolic heart because he's an apostle? That's no small question because if Paul's cry is not an ethnic identification but an apostolic one that is really the heart of God, then it's a cry that can equally issue from us.

You don't have to be Jewish to be so identified with this people and so desire so fervently their salvation because their salvation is the issue of the kingdom. Their redemption is the issue of the release of the king to come and to inhabit their city and to rule from the throne of David and bring the law of God out to the nations through this redeemed people. Paul's cry is not just an issue of sympathy of an ethnic Jewish kind, it's an apostolic heart cry that recognizes the significance of Israel's redemption so much so that he would wish himself a curse for that sake.

If that does not issue from Paul as a Jew but from Paul as an apostle, what then is our excuse for our indifference or our casual air or our satisfaction with ourselves that we can pray for the peace of Jerusalem though it might take as much as 60 seconds? Can you see this saints? We are found out. The casualness of our attitude about Israel, however well-meaning, is something less than God's identification for the church that makes the church the church and we're content with that. We're content to live beneath the apostolic standard.

We have learned to abide in a church without the glory of God. We do not insist a now will come to us of signs and wonders and power and demonstration of our shadow falling on the sick that they might be healed. We have learned to live with something much less and other than was the glory of God in the church that was at the first.

We have something only in part but we assume that we have it in full. Listen to our vocabulary, full gospel businessmen. We're full.

We think ourselves to be but we don't know that we have neglected that which would constitute that fullness even the issue of Israel. A sister asked me this morning, what do you do with a recalcitrant and unwilling carnal husband? How is he to come into the faith and take his manly part? And my answer was the question is not with him, the question is with you. What will you reveal to him that will win him even without the word as Peter says in chapter three of his first letter that by the chaste behavior of the wife he can be won without the word in the demonstration of a meek and quiet spirit which in God's sight is of great price.

That the issue of a husband's salvation or his full participation in the glorious work of the church will not be obtained by a wife's harassment but by her submission. And that is a picture of the church itself when it will have come into its bridal identity as being adorned for the bridegroom. But how do we come as a church to a spirit of submittedness with a quiet and meek spirit that is not aggressive for ourselves, that is not arrogant, that is not demanding, that is not puffed up, that is not inflated.

By being in the relationship with Israel that God intends that is comparable to the relationship of a wife to her husband. The wife however bright however gifted even of God is called to lay down that expression trusting for it to be expressed through a husband and maybe the thing that has deterred the husband's participation is the wife's overt and aggressive expression of a gifting that God would have expressed

through the head if they were joined as one body and she would find as much gratification in the husband expressing this ability in the word and ability to teach as if it had come from herself. When the church will come to a relationship with Israel of a kind where it will come under and submit itself in a priestly way to the issue of the redemption of this reluctant and unwilling nation to come into the purposes of God they will be won by the submittedness of the church as the husband will be won by the submittedness of the wife.

That is to say the recognition that our foremost purpose for being is not our own celebration or our own success as the church but as God's provision for their restoration. Are you willing to play second fiddle? Are you willing not to be foremost? Are you willing to see the church not as the thing in itself but as a means to a larger and greater end the redemption of an apostate and fallen nation whose return constitutes the coming of the king and the establishing of his kingdom. That is much more than making a trip to Israel planting a tree or attending a feast of tabernacle celebration.

That's the whole. This is the recognition of the church's call that it is secondary in itself to come under and to be the supportive and priestly factor that brings about Israel's restoration and return. Are we willing to go under to play second and not to think ourselves as the thing in itself because Paul warned, I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery lest you become wise in your own conceit.

What I'm seeing as I survey the church worldwide is that thing about which Paul warned the conceit. We are the Israel of God. God is finished with them replacement or we are the we are we are bringing the kingdom or we are the kingdom or we're going to take over the institutions of society and Christianize them and by such a means bring the kingdom.

The church is subject to all kinds of self-exalting exaggeration. That is that is not God's intention for it. The church is not the church unless it exhibits the very character of God himself.

The humility and the tempering and the fear and the submission that Jesus exhibited as a son to the father who never initiated his own remarks or his own acts. He came under and I believe that Israel rightly understood is God's provision for us to come under. I believe that the absence of that explains the lightness in the church the emphasis today for experience called revival worship being exploited as as technique methodology the celebration of feeling of soul invoking God's presence.

I don't know if these things are current in Asia or in Singapore surely in the western church in America the emphasis on invoking God's worship is scandalous. It's as if we can manipulate God by something we perform. In my opinion it's an arrogance of an ultimate kind which could not take place if the church were tempered subdued submitted and humbled by the relationship that by the effect of the relationship God intends for the church with Israel.

The absence of that relationship the sentimentalizing of Israel only leaves us free to be arrogant and pretentious in things that we have assumed for ourselves that God never intended for the church. If we will play second fiddle now and come under the purposes of God for Israel we will play first fiddle eternally. We will rule and reign with him from heavenly places.

We will have glorified bodies. We will have privileges with and in God that even a redeemed and restored Israel will lack. They will have millennial blessedness.

They will have longevity of life. They will have an abundance of fruit and seasons where they will flood the earth with their fruit. They will have privilege being the locus of God's theocratic kingdom but they will not

have glorified bodies to ascend and descend upon the son of man.

They will not rule over five cities or ten. They will not have a part in the theocratic kingdom of ruling and reigning with him from heavenly places. So if we humble ourselves in this life and come into the intention of God for us with this people the reward for that humbling is an exaltation millennially and internally that exceeds even the privilege that comes to Israel as a redeemed nation.

When God when Jesus saw Nathan and he said I've seen you under the fig tree. What thou art the king. Thou art the son of God.

You saw me. You saw my disconsolate heart. You saw my forewarned sense of the failure of Israel.

I saw you when I knew you. Then you're the king of Israel. You're impressed that that I saw you there.

I'll tell you what you will see something greater. It will be angels ascending and descending upon the son of man. Jesus might have said you will see what is the greatest the glory that will come to the church millennially and eternally when it graduates in the purposes of God and receives a glorified body not to save it from the ills of age or the inconveniences of organic failure but to be a means by which we can move in dimensions that Jesus himself demonstrated in his resurrected body when he came right through closed doors.

We will ascend and descend in the fulfillment of our theocratic role obtained as reward in fulfillment for our submittedness to God in the purposes toward Israel in the last days. This right apprehension of the relationship between the church and Israel in my opinion is the very factor the distinctive thing that constitutes the church as church. It's the corrective from giving undue attention to men, their needs, a man-centered church, the neglect of God's glory, the loss of the sense of the kingdom as the issue of God's rule, and the turning of the subject of the kingdom of God into some kind of subjective and personal inward dimension that has missed the greater glory of God's rule over his creation.

The issue of Israel is the issue of the kingdom. The issue of Israel is the issue of Zion. The issue of Zion is the issue of the law of God going forth to the nations.

The subject of Israel is not an addendum. It is the heart of the matter for which God established the church. That you who are far off and without God and without hope in the world have been brought nigh by the blood of the Messiah into the commonwealth of Israel, into the covenants and hopes of that nation, into an existing body, an interim of the continuation of the most holy faith and the demonstration of which would win back a remnant through the jealousy that will be theirs as they observe the reality of God in your life as the church.

Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid, Paul says in Romans 11, 11, but through their fall, salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy. In one statement, Paul gives a purpose for the salvation of the church beyond itself, that there's a reason for your being that has not to do with the benefit that you receive in believing, though those benefits are enormous. But if that's the whole of your Christianity centered in benefit, you lose the very identity of the church and the reality that God intends.

It's only when you realize that salvation has come to you, not for your sake but for their sake, that you come in to the proper realization of the purpose for which you have been saved. And it does not even require the presence of the Jew in Singapore to fulfill this. It could be the church in Tibet, the church

anywhere, understanding and appropriating this mystery and submitting to it that affects the church itself and brings it into a place of reality, authority, and power because it is now the church in truth and the spirit of power is first the spirit of truth before it can be realized as power.

That's why the now came to the church after Ananias and Sapphira were taken away and buried, in a judgment that came because they had the gall and the presumption to offer something in part before men and before God as if it constituted the whole. Those young men that carted the way that husband and wife and buried them received more instruction in God in that one function than entire education in a seminary. It taught them the fear of God.

It taught them the jealousy of God for the apostolic church and its necessity to be jealous over the issue of its truth. For the church is the ground and pillar of truth. And if it begins to become lazy, casual, and indifferent, if it thinks that it has the right to exempt the statement of Paul on Romans 9-11 on the mystery of Israel, if it has neglected the whole corpus of prophecy pertaining to Israel's restoration in the last days, if it has not understood the mystery and feels that it's not under obligation and that it can function quite well without this, merely with a sentimental aside to the present state, it is out of the purpose of God.

It is only something in part sufficient to constitute services, sufficient to have church life and program, but it has fallen short of the glory and it is more dead than it knows. It has been carted out even while it remains. There's a life of dimension waiting that God will restore at the point at which we bring back that has been lost.

The mystery of Israel, central to the church's own understanding of itself. That's why too much attention is paid to men and man's need, too much man pleasing, too little fear of God, too much emphasis on enjoyment, too much manipulation, too much turning up of the amplifiers, too much affecting of the atmosphere, too much making our enjoyment as if that is the whole focus of the faith itself. How did you enjoy the service? How did you like the speaker? As if the whole issue of our faith is our enjoyment and what we like, rather than what pertains to the glory of God.

We have lost the consciousness of God's glory with which Paul ends his great statement in Romans 11, that to him be glory forever. We will not have that sense of glory back and a jealousy for it and the truth that must attend it until we have seen and appropriated God's intention for us as the church with that nation, with that people. Not the state per se, but the nation.

What are you talking about, Art? What's the difference between the state and the nation? The state is a political expediency summoned from 1948 under the providence of God for the purposes that have to do with Israel's ultimate redemption, but is not the thing in itself. It's a temporary proviso that can be extinguished, but the nation, God says, will never pass from my sight. So long as my covenant remains with creation and the sun and the moon give their light, so long will Israel remain before me as a nation.

No other nation has been so privileged. No other nation has come under such consideration. No other nation has been so select.

No other nation is called the apple of his eye. No other nation has received the law. Of what advantage has it to you? Much in every way.

We have been a privileged people selected and chosen by God as a nation, and God's final redemptive purpose in creation will come in the restoration of this nation at the end of the age through the office of the

church in its own willingness to bear sacrifice and suffering for their sake. As a nation, and God's final redemptive purpose in creation will come in the restoration of this nation at the end of the age through the office of the church in its own willingness to bear sacrifice and suffering for their sake. Because the issue of their return is the issue of his kingdom, and the issue of his kingdom is the issue of his glory.

Anything less is a distortion. Anything less is a convenience that gratifies us and gives us a sense of having an affinity for present Israel, but requires nothing substantial. Unless we have laid hold of Israel in the way of God's intention, we will not be required of, and it's the requirement that compels us to be the church in an apostolic sense.

The subject of the Holy Spirit, then, is not some casual concern or interest. It's some benefit that will be derived by some influence in our atmosphere. The Spirit and the gifts, then, become a vital provision from God to sustain us in our last day's radical call in the opposition of the powers of darkness that will fall upon us when they recognize that we have taken God seriously and are willing to be demanded upon for Israel's sake.

We will need the gifts of the Spirit. They will not be a luxury. They will not be a dimension that only distinguishes certain denominations that are distant from us and, in fact, frighten us.

We will need utterly the realities that they themselves have not rightly represented. Now we have lived short of that glory and have not needed it because our Christianity, as it is presently constituted, does not make that requirement. We can well perform services and conduct programs in a way pleasing to us that gratifies us but falls short of the glory of God.

When we come into the radical dimension that is apostolic with the understanding of our role toward Israel, all of a sudden the issue of the church, the issue of the gifts of the Spirit, the issue of a baptism of the Spirit, the issue of the power of the Spirit become no more a trifle or a secondary consideration or something that can be put off as the unique property of denominations who have majored in that but become the essential condition for our own life as God intended. I attended a recent conference and more than one speaker spoke about the church of the 21st century. I thought to myself, surely that kind of expression gives an indication that the church is going to be a continuing and ongoing phenomenon.

There's no end in sight. There's no consummation, no conclusion. There's no eschatology.

There's no expectation of finale and crisis that concludes the age. The church of the 21st century. And then we'll talk about the church of the 22nd century.

There's no sense of terminus, no sense that we are coming to the end of an age and that these are the last days. It's the issue of Israel that is absent, that has robbed us of a last days consciousness, for their return is the issue of the last days. There will not be a 21st century if I know anything about God.

We are coming to the end of the ages now. Israel is in so threatened a condition. Everything already is in place for its ultimate devastation.

It's only the hand of God's restraint that keeps it from these chastisements, and I believe that his restraint is because the church is not ready to receive a dispersed Israel cast into the nations. It's too selfish, too fearful, too safe, too comfortable, too polite. We've lost something, saints, and we've got to go back at the point where it was lost.

I need to recognize that something is lost, that we've been carried out feet first in terms of apostolic identity, reality, and power, because we have not been jealous in safeguarding the truth and the whole truth. We've allowed a part to stand for the whole. We've allowed a mere sentimental identification with the present state to stand as if that is the full statement of God's intention for us toward Israel.

How convenient. We have no sense of a conclusion to the age. We're not challenged.

We're not recognizing the powers of darkness in the last days having a short time and ventilating their fury. We have not understood Psalm 2 and the rage of kings and rulers against the Lord and his anointed because they want to break the bonds of that connection, but God holds them in division and says, I have established my king on the holy hill of Zion. We've not understood Psalm 2 as an eschatological psalm.

We've not seen in it the whole drama of contention of nations against God, and that the issue of all the earth worshiping God is the recognition that the God who is God is the God of Jacob and the God of Israel. We're living in an age of relativism that has given to other faith postures the same kind of credibility and respect as to the church and Christianity itself, as if somehow they represent viable and valid options. We have not insisted on the faith as the only and exclusive way.

We're unwilling for the stigma and the shame of that absolute insistence that is apostolic. We have allowed even the synagogue and Judaism to stand for a kind of alternative to Christianity as if it represents something valid, inconceivable in Paul and the early church. We've opened the door to a whole spate of religious entities that have marked our age as pluralistic.

Many pass the truth when in fact there's only one. It's the issue of Israel that brings again the focus of God and the truth of God, and brings again the reproach of God on a church that will surrender and submit to it. We are a disfigured church, mangled in minors.

The cross has become a decoration. Our practices encourage the maturity and soulfulness of saints, the petty kingdoms and ambitions of powerful men, and relegate the spirit of holiness and his gifts to trifling misuse or actual loss. We have no expectancy of the significance of prophets and apostles, or we're seeking to fill a void by manufacturing them as in America, schools producing prophets in a three-month program, and men being honored as oracles of the hour because they have the ability to say something about individuals and their personal history or future.

But what is absent is the oracles of God presented by prophetic men who bear them. And we do not even expect that from these men who are being called prophets. And if we allow a substitution of a lesser kind, where then is the church founded on apostles and prophets? If these men are false or superficial, shallow counterfeits, what then of the church that is founded upon them? There's a whole debasement that is taking place in our generation, and it's no accident that when I run to hear these men, to be careful that I'm not missing anything, I notice in every case the complete absence in their prophetic presentation of anything pertaining to the subject of Israel for the church.

The most that I have ever heard is some passing acknowledgement about the state and their hope for its success. Other than that, there's no oracular statement about the centrality of the subject of Israel for the church in the last days. In fact, not even a consciousness of last days, and yet they are acknowledged and run after as prophets.

So in the wisdom of God, I believe that the issue of Israel rightly and prophetically understood is his very provision to keep a church from error. It alone provides the perspective by which the church understands itself. Its origin is derived from Israel.

You're grafted in to her tree. Your life is sustained by the sap of the root that flows through the root. Your continuation is by that life, and your destiny is with her final redemption.

Everything about the church, its origin, its continuation, and its conclusion is centered in the relationship to Israel, in the wisdom and provision of God. If we are not acknowledging that we are grafted into their tree, how then shall we receive the life that flows from that root? How shall we bear fruit unless the grafting is actual, acknowledged, and expressed with gratitude? If we have become distant from the source, if we no longer see our connectedness with Israel and her tree, if we have become an independent entity of the church, how are we deriving our life from the sap and the life of God that flows exclusively from the root of that tree and out to the branches that acknowledge with gratitude that they have been grafted in though they are wild? The issue of a right relationship with Israel is the issue of our corporate life that flows out through that root. It's the issue of our destiny in their redemption.

Everything about the church from its inception, its calling, its present life, and its conclusion is connected with this people, with this nation. To sentimentalize that is to fall short of the glory of it. To come under the purposes of God for it is a grace for ourselves, calculated for our humility, and calling for a statue for the church and the reality of his life, or we cannot be to Israel what we must.

If Israel is going to be reduced to dry bones and acknowledge that they are cut off without hope and are dead, how are they to be brought back from the dead except that there be a son of man company commanded to prophesy that those bones might live? Why doesn't God himself directly address the bones? Why does he summon a son of man and bring him out by the spirit and down by the hand of God into the valley of dry bones? Why is it necessary to humiliate this prophet and rub his face into the grit of Israel's death and mock and taunt him by saying, son of man can these bones live? Why does he bring the son of man though a prophet to a place where his prophetic faith is not sufficient to believe that those bones can live and yet command him to prophesy? Because God is as much concerned for the son of man as he is for Israel. The son of man would have remained in another place above and apart from the death of Israel except God brought him down and in. He cannot speak for God except he sees as God sees the truth of Israel's death and then be called to an act of faith beyond what he knows as an evangelical charismatic prophet.

The only faith that will enable him to prophesy to those bones in an obedience to the command is the faith of the son of God himself. God is waiting for a bride adorned for the bridegroom, waiting for a church that is like him, can speak for him, be entrusted with his authority, and will prophesy when it's commanded together as one voice to the dry bones. God makes the church the agent of Israel's deliverance, but a church of what kind? A church that can raise the dead because it's prophesying is not some human well-meaning, well-wishing intent, but an obedience that can be expressed in a resurrection power for it itself is in that power.

It is a church of the resurrection. It is the church itself that has been raised out of its own death. It's a church that moves and lives and has its being in him.

It's a church that can be commanded. Speak to those bones. Speak to the flesh.

And the last thing is, command the spirit to enter. Lord, I'm willing to address bones and flesh, but to command the spirit is an arrogance that I don't dare perform because the spirit, the ruach, is nothing other than God himself. I'm not going to command you.

Sorry. You can ask anything else of me and I'll be obedient, but that I should command the spirit? God says, if you will not, you're not a prophetic company unto me. Because the last thing that disqualifies you is your own religious and spiritual self-consciousness, your own sense of what is propriety, how far you will allow yourself to go in your concept of God that you do not want to violate, that God invites you to violate, because it's the last hindrance to a complete submission to him as God.

If you'll not come to it, Israel will remain in her death. You've got to come to an obedience that brings a death even to your own spirituality, even to your own concept of what you think is proper for a believer, because I suspect that you're much too polite, much too respectable, and this will devastate that last respectability and bring you into that union with God by which you can speak for him and in his authority. In Ezekiel 37, God says to Israel, and you will know in that day that I have spoken and performed this.

What is God saying? The Son of Man has spoken and performed it, and he's saying, and you will know in that day that I have spoken? How can the Son of Man have spoken it, and God calls Israel to say, to acknowledge, I have spoken it? Because God will have brought the church in that day to a final union with himself that you cannot tell where the church ends, where God begins. The church is in prophetic union with him, which is far above any intention we presently have or even desire, and if we will not attain and come to that place of God's own desire to be in union with him that you cannot tell where you end and he begins, we have not come to the place of God's intention, and we're living beneath it and away from his glory. There's got to be a death to your religious categories, a death to your religious self-consciousness, a death to the safe and polite way in which you have understood the faith that enables you to function in the world without embarrassment, or Israel will not be restored.

And what does Paul say about Israel's restoration? If the falling away of them be the blessing of the Gentiles, what shall their return be but life from the dead? Israel will not be able to raise itself, and if there's not a Son of Man company in the earth, that can speak out of the authority of God, for God, as God, to speak to those bones, they remain in that death. The issue of Israel's restoration is the church, but the church of what kind more than what we presently are. It's a church that's in the fullness of God and is not substituting a part and making it to stand for the whole.

I want to pray for that church in this place. Don't balk if you've not understood, or this is confusing, because I'm speaking in mysteries, because I'm trusting and gasping sentence by sentence to communicate what my spirit knows and my mind has not yet laid hold, because we're on a threshold of something beyond my own understanding, my own competence. It's a word that must be spoken.

The issue of our understanding, however desired, is not the issue. God will even speak through prophets to the elements. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Because there's a word that needs to go out in the time of God that he has appointed that is not to be determined by the acceptance or the understanding of those who are being addressed, and I believe tonight is that kind of word. More is hanging tonight on this word being broadcast for Israel's deliverance and future than we can know. The fact that it's beyond your comprehension is exactly the kind of humility that is befitting you as the church, that you don't need to know in the sense that you have to be gratified to understand that you can approve.

May you be as that precious woman in Mexico who heard me speak of the mystery of Israel and the dispersal of Jews through North America and into Mexico, through the Sierra Madre mountains and the most simple and poor Indian villages, and went to the pastor and said, this is a middle class educated woman, not a peon. She said, I could hardly believe what this man was saying. It was unthinkable, but my spirit was saying it's true, it's true, it's true.

May your spirit be saying it's true while your mind is yet waiting for the Spirit of God to bring to the level of your consciousness and understanding what he will in time. Let me pray. Lord, Lord, this is a mystery night, Lord.

I'm not gratified. This is not a preaching enjoyment. This is proclamation.

This is groping feeling for expression, utterance for a word whose time has come. There's a mystery, my God, that has eluded us. It has been absent from our consciousness in modern times, and it has left the church disfigured, less than and other than your intention.

We're missing whole dimensions of power and glory. We have not the jealous respect for the truth that even a child knows that the truth is the whole truth and nothing but the truth, or it's not true. We have been satisfied with a part and thought to impress you that that stands for the whole.

When it's clear that our contemporary Christianity has fallen so short of the glory that the church knew at the first when it abounded in the whole truth and was so jealous over it that any violation brought the death of the violator right on the spot, carried our feet first. My God, we tremble if you should require us to be restored to that standard of truth, for surely there's more death in the body than we know. We have been casual.

We have been indifferent. We have lived with our ignorance. We have satisfied ourselves with a partial acknowledgement of Israel in a way that we can accommodate without sacrifice and thought that we were doing service to God.

So, my God, I pray for this Antioch in Singapore. If it is to be that, it must be restored to the whole faith and to the whole truth, to the centrality of Israel, not as a sideline or a sentimental moment's prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, but the central consideration for its whole being. And every dimension that has been lost to us needs to be restored.

The Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, the reality of God in the Spirit, a church that can move freely and give expression to these life-giving gifts that will be desperately and urgently needed when you will bring us, because of our commitment and consecration, to places where we have not been before and where yesterday's answer is not sufficient for today. We need to hear from God in the moment, by direction, supernaturally given, through vessels who will express it and not withhold for fear of misunderstanding or embarrassment. My God, I ask you to bring a pox on respectability and polite Christianity that has fallen short of the glory of God and has allowed a dismissal of the significant role of the Spirit in the same degree that it has allowed the dismissal of the subject of Israel.

And somehow the two things go together and will be restored together. I'm asking for restoration. I'm asking for revival in a deeper sense than we have asked it.

Not just as some titillation of our feeling and a momentary excitement, but the return and the restoration of apostolic dimensions to the faith. Men who can discern in a moment when something is being offered

deceitfully before God and before men as part, because they are living so much in the truth of God, they instantly intuit and see where the fraudulent thing is being attempted and will identify it and have the power to judge the malefactor, that fear might be restored to the church and that a now might again come, that the shadow of the church falling on the sick will heal them. Lord, I bless the church of Jesus Christ in the city-state of Singapore.

Bring it, my God, again to the paths that have fallen down, to the walls that have fallen down, to the ancient past, to the ancient ways. Bring it to the knowledge of God that is more than technical, doctrinally correct, verbal, phraseologically correct, but to the life of God, that this might be the church of the resurrection, people who move and live and have their being in God and would be as much willing to be your fool before men as I have been tonight. Bless this church, Lord, for I know that I know that the issue of life and death and eternity for numbers of your Jewish kinsmen hinges on the acceptance of your word tonight before this people.

Grant us, my God, the mercy of contrition and brokenheartedness, that we have not only deceived men and deceived ourselves, we have deceived God, as if he could be taken in by our pretense and be impressed, as if he does not see the fraudulence of what we are about, that the whole of our respectability is only something in part that we think he approves and condones and blesses when he, in fact, is grieved. Break our hearts over the condition of the church, taken out feet first, and is too dead even to know it. Give us a love for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, an understanding, my God, of the mystery of Israel intended for us, that distinguishes us, that is the signifying mark of the church that is the church, that does not live for itself but for an other whom you have chosen in the mystery of your own wisdom.

Bless this church, Lord. My God, restore its life, restore its power, restore its credibility, restore its witness, restore its authenticity for Asia and for Israel is my prayer in Jesus' name. Let's just linger, let's linger, not be quick to turn to something else.

Let's take a moment to give opportunity for anyone who wants to pray for themselves aloud, for the church to take the occasion and to turn a service and a message into an event by your own prayer, by your own response, saying something to the Lord, acknowledging something that he has prompted in your heart, and praying it aloud as will be guaranteed to destroy respectability, self-consciousness of a religious kind. Come on, dear saints, your redemption is nigh, your mouth. If you heard something from God, even between the lines, as it touches you and your role in the church, let the Lord hear you.

Let the powers of the air over Singapore who have yawned in your face and have said, Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you? Let them tremble when they hear the earnestness of your spoken response to God aloud. How shall you address the bones of Israel that they might live when you cannot even speak out in prayer in the hearing of other saints? Let tonight be an event of your being set free out of the own mouth in your own prayer, audibly spoken in the hearing of the saints, the Lord, and the powers of darkness who will now tremble.

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