

Prophetic Anticipations for the Last Days

by Art Katz

The sermon describes the emerging global system, the rise of the beast system, and the true church in the last days, emphasizing the need for radical apostolicity and love for enemies in response to opposition and persecution.

Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16, Matthew 24:9-10, John 15:18-19, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Ephesians 2:12, Ephesians 3:10, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Revelation 13:16-17

Topics: "Prophecy", "The Remnant Church"

Description

Art Katz addresses the prophetic implications of current global trends, emphasizing that the world's deteriorating conditions are pushing nations towards unification, often at the expense of individual ideologies and moral principles. He warns that societal decay will lead to a rise in chaos and violence, as traditional freedoms are sacrificed for the illusion of safety. Katz highlights the emergence of a true church that will seek genuine faith amidst a culture of superficiality, facing persecution from both the world and within the church itself. He calls for believers to prepare for a time when they will be polarized into either persecutors or the persecuted, with a remnant church standing as a beacon of light against the encroaching darkness. Ultimately, he asserts that this remnant will play a crucial role in God's plan, culminating in the return of Christ to judge and restore righteousness.

Transcript

Concern about decaying environmental, economic and political conditions is moving the world toward global unification. Safety and self-interest will likely take precedence over ideological distinctions between nations, just as doctrinal differences between major church bodies will be eclipsed by the overriding interests of peace and unity. Historic principles, such as international law and the sovereignty of nations, will be sacrificed for the expedience of world order. Major powers will act summarily to maintain peace in their respective spheres of influence with the tacit approval of those who would formerly have opposed them on ideological grounds.

The pragmatic urgencies of high-tech global economy will supersede ideology, allowing its rhetoric, but rendering its purposes as merely ornamental and not serious by those who wield power. Thus, with the possible exception of Israel and the Islamic powers, the stage is set for that global federation that constitutes the beast system. The social character of the world, in its inexorably fallen state, will become more vile and filthy. Through appeals of the uttermost sophistication, both overt and subliminal, merchandise will be fashioned from the very souls of men - especially of children and youth - corrupting if

not absorbing or consuming all who do not consciously and sacrificially resist its power.

An impatient, vacuous, inherently lawless, culturally illiterate, sensual world - frustrated and exasperated in its contention for what it cannot materially obtain - will give increasing vent to explosive anger and physical violence. Increasing calamity and disaster will give rise to looting, pillage and deepening chaos beyond society's ability to control. Emergency powers, setting aside due process of the law, will introduce a regimentation and curbing of traditional freedoms unknown and unacceptable to earlier generations.

What is banal, lewd and vulgar will be enshrined as desirable values celebrated as good by the mass-cult of dark and degenerate media-blitz idols of entertainment. These glitzy non-persons will accrue robber-baron fortunes for themselves, as well as those who package them through the willing, exorbitant sacrifice of ecstatic, blasphemous, Christ-despising millions. Paradoxically, society will be forced to abandon even what remains of Christian restraint, morality and propriety in its attempt to protect itself from the endemic evils of drugs, sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancies.

As is already the case in Zurich, the city of the Swiss Reformers, free syringes, prophylactics and AIDS tests will be universally dispensed, in effect sanctioning the very evils being opposed! Such an implicit official endorsement of evil cannot take place without further compromising the very moral constituency of society, thereby ensuring the destitution and emptiness that moves multitudes to mindless experimentation, addiction and death. Thus, global disillusionment and final dejection will be the portion of disappointed ideologies and secular utopian dreams - even democracy.

The dreaded environment of the nihilism of despair that was the root of Hitler's Nazism of the 1930's will also be the breeding ground for the global totalitarianism of the end-times. The dissolution of contending ideologies and the unification of world economies will produce a blurring of national boundaries, which even now is resulting in a massive shifting and relocation of peoples. This will add to the fears and tensions of ethnicity and race among the unredeemed, but render to God through a transcendent globally-minded, non-parochial church, the means to sift out and draw to Himself a remnant people from among all the nations.

Many from among world Jewry will find themselves increasingly vexed and harassed among all nations, experiencing as the Gentiles in New Testament times, being without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12). This emerging true church will finally grow sick of the hype and the banal predictability of a merely phraseological Christianity. It will seek the deeper reality of faith and relationship, counting the cost and increasingly taking on the visage of pilgrim, stranger and sojourner in the earth.

Those that remain in conventional church situations, either impervious to the need or unwilling to pay the price, will settle under a deception of religious unreality, condemning as heretics and agitators those who cannot abide the same. Centrifugal forces will polarize Christendom ultimately toward two camps: the persecuted or persecutors - reminiscent of the opposition of the Reformation churches to the Anabaptists of the 16th century! Finally, impeding unities will drive the religio-political kind to fury against that minority of the Spirit which will not subscribe to their ecumenical designs.

So once again, and finally, a man will find his enemies to be those of his own household; yet, one's love for his enemies in response to opposition and persecution will be the distinguishing mark of this consummating, remnant-martyr church. Such a response will be the possibility of those whose conscious, determined preparation and sanctification begins now. The light of His countenance in such a separated

people will be the very factor that brings upon them, as it did Stephen, the retribution and assault of those who hate the light and prefer darkness - both from without but more so from within the church.

Radical apostolicity or apostasy will prove the only options during this polarization. Neutrality or middle-of-the-road alternatives will be waste and void. We will be, finally and at last, compelled to be true believers, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, in an age when the only other option is to wear the mark of the Beast. For those unable to buy or sell in the global world economy, Christian community of a creative, productive, life-sustaining kind, however much dreaded by many till now, will prove one of the few, viable alternatives for sanctity and life.

For those sons and daughters who radically separate themselves, not to so much as even touch the unclean thing, the love of the Father, the actuality of God as Father, known by few, will become a sustaining power against insecurity or falling in all the tremulous pressures of the end (2 Corinthians 6:18). Such a people, a saving-remnant dotting the globe, will constitute in themselves a living accusation against sin and evil. Their presence in an age where iniquity abounds will no longer be tolerated.

They will, in many instances, provoke their own martyrdom, thus fulfilling the mystery of the purposes of God in suffering. Through this, the usurping Powers, the false gods of this age, are evicted from the heavenlies by this ultimate demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God! (Ephesians 3:10). In such a manner is that governmental vacancy created to which a glorified church shall be elevated at the coming of its vindicated, long-awaited King - even the return of the crucified Lord in glory, to fearlessly judge the earth and to rule the nations in righteousness through a redeemed Israel.

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