

The Scandal of Specificity

by Art Katz

God's choice of Israel is not arbitrary, but rather a means to fulfill his promises to Abraham and to bring nations under his dominion.

Duration: 1:27:55

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:19, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:10

Topics: "Specificity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the state of the world and the predicament faced by Jews and Israel. He emphasizes the need to rely on God's wisdom rather than human intelligence. The speaker shares a personal experience of being confronted with the story of the woman taken in adultery from the New Testament, which challenged his previous beliefs. He then references the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy and reflects on the urgency of the times and his own journey of surrendering worldly possessions for a life dedicated to God's calling.

Transcript

It's the word that Paul used because it's not evidently disclosed to our understanding and there needs to be something from God the Revealer to apprehend this which is at the heart of his faith. So I make two disclaimers from the beginning. Unless you think that I'm choosing a subject because I'm Jewish, I have a special affinity.

That's not so. I often say if the Lord had chosen another people, I would be celebrating his choice. But the fact of the matter is I should not deny that choice, lest you think that I'm partial to it because I am Jewish.

It's a strange ambivalence, intention, contradiction, but God is a God who chooses. Remember, there are two trees in the garden and gave us the issue of choice and that was the pregnant issue that would determine rebellion or fellowship. And when he calls Israel his chosen people, his chosen nation, we need to pay a special attention to what God chooses because in his choosing he reveals himself as God.

And some have called this the scandal of specificity because they don't like when God gets that particular. They like when we can generalize, when he doesn't mean this, he doesn't mean Zion as a particular point or physical place in the of Israel. Zion is a more general term that describes the people of God in every generation, et cetera, et cetera.

There is a sense and a significant and valid sense in which the word Zion can stand for the people of God. But there is also a literal and geographic intention of God that must not be displaced by the secondary and spiritual consideration. I'm giving you a principle of hermeneutics or interpretation because the issue of interpretation is critical and Israel has essentially the ethnic specific choice of God.

This particular people with a particular history, a particular location and a particular destiny has been shunted by the church historically right through to this present Allah. And because of the scandal of the specificity of God's choice and if I can sense the wisdom of the heart of God in making such a choice, he said, I didn't choose you because you were the greatest. I chose you because you were the least.

Because in choosing you as the least, in choosing Zion as the place of my sanctuary and dwelling and the locus of my eternal millennial and eternal theocratic kingdom, I chose Zion for the same reason I chose you, because you're the least and because Zion is a hill, but it's a holy hill. In terms of the great mountains that God might have chosen that we would think in our humanity of eating off the wrong tree, that would be the logic of God's choice. Mount Olympus or the Geneva or United Nations in New York.

No, God chooses a dunghill. He chooses a cave to begin the whole Davidic kingdom. He chooses a stable to make his own point of entry into time and into history, because this is God.

He's revealed in his choices. He has a preference for the least, for the weak, for the foolish, to confound the things that are supposedly or ostensibly wise and great. What you need to understand, and I wish that I had all kinds of time to develop it, is that at the heart of the whole genius of the faith is a moral struggle between two opposing moral views, two wisdoms, two kingdoms, darkness and light.

Two intentions of prevailing over creation itself is the underlying struggle in the whole primeval history of creation to this present hour. And Israel somehow is the pivot and the point of this struggle, particularly in the last days, because if the powers of darkness can destroy this people and destroy this entity as one that can be located in time and place as ethnic and visible, it will have removed the ground for the realization of a kingdom that must be established through them and with them in the place and locus of God's choosing, Zion. You understand? That's why you're going to see the most vehement, bitter, ruthless, merciless, anti-Semitic crushing of this people in the last days, of which the Hitler time was almost just a kind of preview.

It was the powers of darkness who are really the ruling powers. The prince of this world comes, Jesus said. He acknowledges that he still has a kind of, though he's been defeated at the cross, there's still a prevailing usurpation of it in a governmental way that affects nations and their conduct.

And they don't want to give that up. They are usurping powers and love to jerk and to manipulate. And every present day genocide, whether it's Rwanda, in Africa, whether it's Indonesia, wherever you look, cannot be explained except in terms of the underlying and invisible powers of darkness that prevail and want to establish their rule.

Their ultimate end is chaos. Their wisdom is destruction. They play upon force.

And so God of necessity has to prevail and succeed by the very antithesis of another wisdom different than their own. That's why it says in the Psalms that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has perfected praise. In order to stop the mouth of the enemy or the adversary.

God has got not only to obtain a moral defeat that will be eternal, but he's got to obtain it on the moral ground of his own righteousness. And therefore he avoids the use of force, violence, intimidation, threat, and plays upon weakness, humiliation, and the things that are with the reflections of his own character and being. So Lord, send us on an excursion to understand that the issue of Israel is not some affinity for that political state that presently exists and which is doomed, that must necessarily go into a destruction, into an expulsion, into a devastation, into a scattering, into an exile.

And then also from the survivors and the remnant, the restoration and the return that will reveal both the judgment and the mercy of God. Lord, this is awesome. How do we approach it? It's a mystery where we come, my God, with hat in hands and tip toe.

We don't want to be brash. And I'm just asking that you would select from the multitude of scriptures and prophetic things that which will give this people tonight a sense of this great drama, which is the context of the church itself. There's no way that the church can understand itself, its activity, its call, except it sees itself in the context of this restoration that concludes history, that brings in this longstanding historic stiff-necked and apostate people back again to their God and to their place in the garden, in the land that he has chosen, where they will then eat from the right tree and be to the nations all that he intends.

So this is a great drama, Lord, and the church is no accidental split off or some Johnny-come-lately phenomenon. It is birthed out of and called to and for the consummation of this mystery in the last days. And who can begin to speak this? So grant us grace, Lord, by your spirit and single those things out now that would give us a precious framework of understanding that will affect all our categories as it ought.

And we thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I just quickly opened my Bible and was looking for something else, and somehow I had a bookmark in Deuteronomy.

Maybe you want to turn there in the last statement of Moses before his own passing away. It's called in chapter 32, The Song of Moses. And I don't know if it was literally sung, but I believe it was meant to be memorized.

And maybe there was melody that went with it so that it could be sung from father to son and through the generations, because it contains a warning of such an explicit kind of what would befall Israel's descendants in the latter days. And I can say as a Jew who grew up in a normative Jewish environment and culture, which is to say non-religious, non-spiritual, though I was bar mitzvahed, I went to Hebrew school, knew nothing of this. The word God was not so much as mentioned.

We had no knowledge of scripture as being divinely inspired. The prophets were some kind of strange thing that you chanted on the day of your bar mitzvah, only to get the right intonation, but without a knowledge of the content. You can't believe how dark we are in our darkness.

So don't be in any way intimidated by Jews that they have a supreme knowledge of scripture and they'll make you look like the fool. The fact of the matter is that any Sunday school kid that has the most elementary understanding of even the basic stories can far outwit the most celebrated and intellectual Jew. So had we known this, had my father sung this to me, had I had a father who could sing, the fact that we can't sing and the fact that we don't have fathers, that we have a matriarchal mother-woman dominated society is all of the perversion that comes to people who have forfeited the great father.

The loss of him, we have lost everything. And it's amazing that despite all of that and not from pillar to post and the Holocaust, which is not just the Nazi phenomenon, but the one that went on behind drawn shades and closed doors in apartments in Brooklyn, New York and Manhattan and all of the places where Jews have been dispersed, it's been a Holocaust and attrition of broken lives and bodies and varicose veins and nervous breakdowns and suicides more than you can know for the want of the relationship with God that was his normative intention for us as a people. So just to leap in, well I think it's interesting to take a look at verse 8. I have not in 36 years as a believer ever heard anyone ever make a comment or preach this publicly.

But look at this, verse 8 of chapter 32, when the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, mankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. Now you may have something else in your margin. There are some optional readings.

Some say the sons of God, some say the sons of Israel. But more than I'm able to say, there's an angelic correlation in the heavenlies with the physical and visible manifestation in the earth. There are sons of Israel and there are also an angelic counsel in God that are relative to those sons.

But the point of the matter is this, that when God established the nations, he did so in recognition of Israel. That from the very beginning in the concept of God, that Israel was to be the pivot and the center of his relationship with all nations. And when you read the Psalms, you see how frequently the cry of the psalmist is against the nations.

Lord, how long are you going to suffer them? Show them that they're just men. How long are you going to tolerate their intransigence and their arrogance, who will not bow to you as the God of all the earth and the God of all the creation, the maker of the nations? The psalmist knew that their God was not some little ethnic and tribal deity. Their God was the creator and the God of all nations.

And the whole issue and struggle is bringing those nations under the dominion of God through the governmental structure that he has in his mind, whose center is Zion and whose people is Israel. If you can picture the 12 tribes of Israel, one tribe had the exclusive function of being the priest to all the rest. That ratio of one tribe out of 12 had only a priestly function.

And so can you imagine that a nation in total would have a priestly function to all nations? That's God's design. And we had better recognize it because when the smoke clears and the last ravages are over and the millennial conditions prevail, that's what we're going to see. The nations will come up to Jerusalem.

Literally, they will bring their goods and their blessings. They will bow before the feet of those whom they formerly oppressed. It says, the Gentiles of 10 nations will clutch the skirt of a Jew and say, take us to your God for you know him, really know him because you've been through the mill.

You have been sifted. You have been refined at his hand in the most severe dealings that any people have ever received. And yet also you have experienced his mercy and his restoration out of his own power.

You know him supernatural. You know him in his judgment. You know him in his severity.

You know him in his grace. You know him in his mercy. You know him.

It's not a Talmudic knowledge. It's not a head knowledge. You know him in the most authentic way that a people can know him because in fact, you are the first and only nation that has ever been raised from the dead.

The issue of God is the God who makes those things to be which are not. It's the God who creates ex nihilo, out of nothing. It's the God who raises the dead.

And I want to say, point blank, there'll never be a fulfillment of what God spoke to Abraham. And remember that God as God, his reputation, his name, and his honor depends on the fulfillment of his word, his promises, his covenants. The issue of Israel is the issue of a God who can pay off and fulfill what he has long ago spoken, despite every adverse condition to the contrary, even Israel's unwillingness to be the chosen people, to be a nation of peace and light of the world.

When you talk to modern Israelis today, you know what they say? We want to be like every other nation. We want to be the Hong Kong of the Middle East and they're fast becoming that. And when they try to entice their Palestinian neighbors to join in the prosperity, that would be theirs if they laid aside their aggressive and violent intentions.

They're not kidding. They are going to be a center of Babylonian prosperity. And I mentioned already the class separations that are taking place and the mistreatment exploitation of foreign workers, as well as Israelis themselves.

So why did I bring that up? Well, I forgot what I was saying. This is a nation that in order to fulfill the promise of God to Abraham, that from your lines will come with people who will bless all the families of the earth, not impress them, bless them. See, we're very impressive in what we can do coming out of concentration camps with nothing but a tattooed number and a tatted shirt.

And give us 10 years and we'll have a garage filled with cars and kids going to private schools while you're still struggling at minimum wages. No wonder you're resentful and envious. But in that kind of success and the arrogance that it breeds, how can we bless anyone? We're contemptuous.

We're disdainful of the goyim. If you ever heard my mother spit that word out, you would shut her, the goyim. She was as polite as she could be to that German visitor.

Tell the story, you haven't told that yet. Oh, you haven't heard this? We had a German guest the other day and we're seated at the dining table and I'm introducing them. He's married to an American woman.

And I said, this is a brother who's from Germany. They're living now. Oh, my mother said, well, he can't help it.

He was born there. The poor guy choked and spluttered. If my mother wasn't 95, I think he would have punched her in the nose.

She can't understand why I go to Germany. She won't set her foot in a Volkswagen. Of course, she comes into my Mercedes Benz.

And that's where you learned your social skills, right? That's the end of the story. My mother tooted me. So we're joking, but we need to understand God's design.

That even the nations, the number of the nations is relative to the sons of Israel, not sons by mere ethnic or genealogical birth, but sons also in the spiritual sense that we too are being called to sonship, to rule, to authority, to dominion over God's creation, to sharing with him the precious privilege of co-rulership because a son has only one intent and passion is the glory of the father. He never has an agenda for himself. Can you imagine Israel coming to that place where it has no intention for itself per se as a people, but to celebrate and to glorify its God and its maker? That will be a historical fact when the smoke clears at the end of the age, but it will take death and resurrection.

And so Israel is on a course with death now. We can see the state said the enemies are glowering and in its frantic defenselessness, having to negotiate and have anything continually blow up in its face. And God has brought a predicament to Jews and to Israel of a kind that even Jewish intelligence cannot solve.

And we have had to come to that place. How did I come to that place? I had to come to a place where my confidence in mind and wisdom and human goodness was shown to be threadbare vacuous without substance. So that when I was apprehended by the Lord in the first reading of a New Testament of the woman taken in the act of adultery, I'd never read that before.

And my new Jewish hero who was inspiring my heart that was better than Karl Marx and Freud and all of the other Jewish heroes who have collapsed was faced with the issue of this woman taken as what do you say hotshot? You said you've come to fulfill the Lord, not to destroy it. This woman was taken right in the act of it. What can he say? Judgment, there's no other alternative.

And my heart was pounding because I was an adulterer myself, justifying it in the modern contemporary Jewish manner. It was love. It was poetry.

I don't know how we do it, but now I knew it. Now I knew it was sin and that it deserved judgment. And I was in the predicament with that woman.

I was, you know, when you read the scriptures like that, it becomes another book. And I'll tell you what, guys, the scriptures are going to become like that for us, another book. What we have only been reading as Bible study now will be a nuts and bolts provision of God for people living in extremity in the last days under persecution.

And these letters will be written to us with instruction and guidance. The issue of the church of eldership and government and the role of the Holy Spirit will no longer be an idle matter of a Bible study. Never go through what we were doing before.

It will be our very sustenance. That's what I've long waited for, that the conditions of our life will begin again to approximate those to whom the scriptures were first given. And so we'll come full circle and the church will again be an oppressed island of sanity in a sea of hostility and worldliness.

So Israel is en route to its death and it cannot extricate itself. So one of the provisions of the Oslo agreement was a minimal police force for the Palestinians to maintain their own order. I believe that the number was 9,000.

What they have in fact now is more like 50 to 75,000 of an army armed to the teeth. These are not local policemen to maintain local order. This is a hostile army pointed at Israel's throat and waiting its first opportunity.

I can show you in scriptures that we could not have understood until this present predicament historically was unfolded. That shows Israel not only as a defeated nation but a humiliated nation. You can read it at your own leisure, Isaiah 50, 51, where they drink to the dregs the cup of God's wrath.

It's not some arbitrary thing that has befallen them. It's not even just the malice of the nations that surround them. It's God's own judgment employing those nations to bring Israel to a place of defeat and humiliation because there's no going up without first going down.

We will resent God and have a controversy with him over the severity of these dealings unless we understand what the end of them is. A transformed nation brought back out of humiliation and death to a place of honor and distinction before all nations throughout the millennial period and eternally. If we know God's intention for this people because they are chosen, not because they have a merit.

It's not because they're qualified in any way. In fact, their lack of qualification has been our historic embarrassment. God says, I'm not doing this for your sake because you have blasphemed my name in every nation where I have driven you.

I'm doing this for my sake that my name which you have blasphemed shall be honored when the world and the nations will see my mercy. Because what is mercy if there's any way in which it's deserved? Mercy is not mercy except that's undeserved. And what nation is more qualified in its undeservingness than my own? And all of us when we think of it, when we think of it, and God's dealing with Israel will make us think of it.

Because if you begin to, if you start to get irritated at God's singular selection of Israel and something rises up in you almost inadvertently without, unconsciously, they don't deserve it, then what it's revealing is that though you have subscribed to the doctrine of grace, in effect you have been living an Old Testament works and merit-based religion. And your response to Israel and God's mercy and grace that totally undeserved will bring up from your deeps the truth of where in fact you are. And this is part of the mystery.

That's why you can't understand the church independent of Israel. That Israel, even in her apostasy and backslidenness and vileness, performs a function for the church that is critical and without which the church itself cannot come to its maturity, its sonship, its bridal character. There's a reciprocal dealing and relationship.

Oh, I can show you scriptures. I wish I had all kinds of time. And I thought in fact that the three speakings would be that time, but the Lord had another thing, though it's related.

For example, in Psalm 102, God says, the set time to favor Zion has come. The deliverer will come out of Zion. And Paul quotes this in Romans 11, that when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, so all Israel shall be saved as it is written.

Can you see that if you negate Israel as a visible and ethnic entity, how then is there fulfillment? There's got to be a people that are recognized, that recognize themselves as being that, and that the world recognizes. Because it's God's dealing with that ethnic body that is the revelation of himself, both in judgment and in mercy. When the deliverer comes, I will take transgression from Jacob.

Israel will be acted upon. They will be so inept, so incapable of anything in their own behalf and must be reduced to that, that God might become all in all. They'll not know him as deliverer and as savior and as redeemer and as healer unless they experience these powers of God vested upon them in their total and

inept hopelessness.

So we're going to see a nation so thoroughly reduced, it will be incapable of affecting anything that pertains to its own salvation. And when that salvation and deliverance comes, can you imagine the praise? Well, you can read it in the psalms. Some of the psalms are eschatological, as if they are written after the event and they're celebrating the triumph of God's restoration and giving him eternal praise in the restored Zion.

It had to be written then, but it's for future use. And so picture Israel celebrating this God that has brought it back out of dungeons and out of desperate places and darkness, because they will be cast to the farthest corners of the earth. The powers of darkness want to either destroy them or to keep them as far from Zion as they can be kept because their restoration will be the end of the false usurping powers of the air.

Because the Lord himself, it says in Acts 3.21, is contained in the heavens. He has imposed upon himself a restraint out of his own wisdom and faith until all that has been spoken by the prophets of restoration will be fulfilled. Read Acts 3.21. And the church in its typical usurping, what's the word, misappropriating arrogance has taken a literal statement about Israel and turned to take it to itself.

The prophets spoke nothing about a restoration of the church, for God knows when it's needed and will not come until the church will humble itself and receive the centrality of Israel in the plan of God and bless the Lord for it and agree with it out of their hearts. Israel represents the last bastions of want to surrender on the part of the church. It measures that, though it doesn't know it.

When it says they don't deserve it, it's really saying something about a lack of an appropriation of the grace of God for itself. It's not unlike the prodigal son and the older brother. Remember that the father ran to greet the son so grateful for his return and he did not withhold from him, letting him go and being reduced by his own misuse of his freedom until the time he was eating the scruff with the pigs.

And he says, my father's servants do better than this. I'll go back if he'll have me. Well, he ran to greet him with a robe, with a ring, with a kiss and with a feast.

But the older brother was, what's the word, outside and refused to come in. Look at the depth of this obstinacy and pouted and you never did this for me and you're doing it for him and he squandered his substance. And the father said, but don't you know that all that I have has always been yours? Evidently he didn't know and we don't know it either because if we knew it, we would have a largesse of soul and a magnanimity full of grace to welcome back this prodigal son without any thought that it would mean for us a loss of our privileged place with the father.

Listen, I'm a Jewish believer. Can you understand? I resented and resisted this revelation. I was so centered in the church that I looked upon the restoration of Israel as somehow threatening the church and its glory because unto him be glory in the church.

So who are these upstarts coming back out of a history of apostasy to become central? But the Lord showed me, hey, cool it. There's plenty of glory both for my church and for my nation. The fact of the matter is that they have reciprocal and similar but uniquely different rewards.

The restored Israel does not receive a glorified body. It receives an extension of natural life where if a child dies at an infant at the age of a hundred, it's considered an abnormality and much blessing on the land

that it's increased. But the church is glorified, literally glorified.

We are raised up. We are given bodies of a kind that fit us for our millennial and eternal destiny, which is to ascend and descend upon the son of man. Remember what Jesus said to Nathaniel? I saw you standing under the tree.

I saw you mourning and lamenting the loss of Israel's dignity and call and the seeming hopelessness of the situation, the way some of us often feel about the church. Oh, thou art the Christ. Thou art the son of God.

You're the king. You saw that. You must be the holy one, the awaited one.

He said, and I'll show you something greater. He should have said, I'll show you the greatest angels ascending and descending upon the son of man. He was making an allusion to the same thing that Jacob saw in his dream.

That is the consummation of the age, a people who are in a transcendent condition where they can move through the dimensions that are both earthly and heavenly in their governmental function. Remember how aggravated Paul was when he saw two Corinthians going to the court of law to settle a dispute between them, going to a civil court? He said, what are you guys up to? What are you doing? You're going to the court of law to resolve a difference between you. Let the least of those in the church handle that dispute.

Don't you know, he said, you're going to rule over angels. Don't you know you're going to rule over nations? They didn't know. And we don't know.

So we have a millennial and eternal destiny in keeping with the theocratic rule of God established with Israel's restoration and the Lord's return, which is the fulfillment of all that the prophets have spoken. We need not be jealous. In fact, it'll be in compliance with and in accord with with Israel's earthly place and we in our heavenly place.

It once says, when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, so all Israel shall be saved. What is the fullness of the Gentiles? A people for his name from among all nations and evidently a certain number that can be fulfilled. And I'm just, I don't say this as the say of the Lord, but as an opinion that the number is specific and relates to the vacancies in the heavenly places where the usurping and fallen angels had continue in their gift and call, which is irrevocable, but had misused it to become the gods of this present world and to turn the allegiance of men away from God and to themselves.

You know, you can't understand Nazism or mass tribal genocide in Africa, any of the other things without understanding the place of these powers as they affect nations, but they are going to be cast out of the heavens. Who then replaces them? Who's qualified to rule? That's why Paul said, some will rule over five cities and some over 10. On what basis? On the basis of your overcoming life in this world and in the context of last day's persecution, where our reward is not just the cloud with a harp.

I mean, maybe you like that, but actual participation in the government of God from the heavenly place while Israel is operating from the earthly place. And for the first time at the end of history and at the commencement, what makes the millennium, the millennium, an agreement between heaven and earth from the earth to restore Israel in concert with God and his purposes, to have sons who have no purpose for themselves, but to glorify the father and to bring the benevolent rule of God to the nations and the wisdom of God. When we talk about government in the biblical sense, we're not talking about

bureaucracy, shuffling papers or self-aggrandizement.

We're talking about making known the essential wisdom of God on how to live, how to be merciful, how to be wise in the depths and intricacies of relationships and conflict. We can bring that to nations. How? Because we've learned those lessons in the church.

Our church was not just a succession of Sunday services. It was meeting real issues head on, face to face and looking and eyeball to eyeball and dealing and learning from those experiences. We didn't shun it.

It's our school and we'll graduate and have rulership with him in proportion to the expertise, the knowledge and the humility that has been gained in this life, because we cannot rule except we rule in the spirit of the lamb himself. And that's why Israel itself as a nation has got to be broken, because now it is so arrogant, but it's brokenness that has to do with servanthood. And that's why Israel itself must walk the road to Calvary of its servant Lord before them.

The same kind of thing, they'll pass to the nations. There'll be no beauty that any will desire them. It'll be marred more than any man.

When you read Isaiah 53, you come to a place in the chapter where the text shifts and it's no more the prophet narrated describing someone broken, but it's the nation itself speaking. Oh, he was wounded for our transgressions. Oh, with his stripes, we are healed.

Oh, now we understand that he was stricken by God and spitting. Then we thought that what makes them change? What makes them see what they had not seen till now and must see to understand their Messiah and his suffering in relationship to his servanthood. It's their own suffering.

It's their own road to Calvary. It's their own rejection. It's their own being despised.

And that ties in with Matthew 25, where the issue of judgment for the nations is one thing only that separates the sheep from the goats. What did you do for the least of these, my brethren? So I know that I know that I know that there's a coming time where a nation shall be brought into humiliation and death. First in Israel itself, which we could not possess because the possession of the land is relative to the relationship with the Lord and our ability to keep his covenant.

We'll not have the land except as gift, except as inheritance, except on the basis of a covenant-keeping ability that God will give us when he makes for us a new covenant of an everlasting kind, which you as believers have already received. And that covenant will never again be broken. It's everlasting.

How come? Because it has nothing to do with our Jewish ability of covenant-keeping. Here's what makes it new, not its content, but its fulfillment. I will write my law in your hearts.

I will be your God. You will know me. It will no longer be one teaching another.

You will all know me from the least to the greatest. And so that's the desired conclusion when Israel is brought first through terrible devastation, a sifting that is appropriate to its call and destiny. You can't be a servant.

What does that, what does it mean, a servant? It's not some officious guy throwing his weight around who has the credentials and you better heed me or else, because I'm Jewish, I'm Israel. It's someone broken, grateful even to be able to breathe, who by every reckoning deserves eternal obliteration and somehow

has not only been saved and delivered and whose national identity is still preserved, but is called to the honorific place of serving the Most High God as priest with him that can come under the people that they're going to serve. So can you imagine Jews bringing the gospel to Jordan, to Iran, Iraq, to their present enemies, to Palestinians, to those now where a good Arab is a dead Arab and bringing it with compassion, with mercy, with love.

That will take the profoundest brokenness that any nation has ever experienced. And in fact, the repentance that comes to Israel in Zechariah 12, when we shall see him whom we have pierced. Picture an expulsion of a nation, some residue remaining behind, which has always been the case in every expulsion, but then a return of some residue of those that have been cast out for the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion, implying that they were there before, but not as the redeemed.

And they come having passed through an experience of brokenness and the revelation of the Lord and the mercy given through the church who recognized them as the least of these his brethren. The Lord speaks of them as his brethren before they're even saved. He foresees the relationship and he's identified with them even in their pre-conversion condition, even in their judgment, he's one with them.

And when the church will be identified with them in the same way as he, we will have arrived. And that's why in Psalm 102, when does the set time to favor Zion come? He says, when my servants, he's speaking about us now, not Israel, when my servants shall have pity on her dust and compassion on her stones. Imagine, how shall I say this? I want to be sweet-spirited and nice, but I have to say that in all my experience of traveling the world and bearing this message, I was sharing with someone today, nowhere have I been more rudely treated and rejected scornfully than in Great Britain.

I don't know what it is. There's something about Anglo-Saxons, the British, where I pick it up in New Zealand or Australia and places like that, but Great Britain itself, the severest resistance to this word about Israel. I can't tell you how rudely I've been treated.

So can you imagine a church of this national and ethnic background that sees itself in vying with and competition with and even superior to, and even has used, taken for itself Israel's destiny, having to acknowledge, no, that there is a place that God has designated for this ethnic people that I must not desert, but come alongside and participate in their recovery and in their restoration and even have compassion on their stones and pity on their dust. That doesn't mean a new affinity for Israel's archeology. It means a sympathy and a compassion for Israel's judgment, for the stones and the dust of which Psalm 102 speaks is Haifa, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beersheba, and every modern city of Israel, because the prophets tell us consistently their cities will be left as ruins and in rubbles.

The land will be made desolate. It'll be without an inhabitant. And even Israel cries out, the land has become our destruction.

It's going to be reduced to rubble. And most of the world will gloat over this and rub their hands in glee. I don't know what it is, this Gentile satisfaction at Israel's humiliation.

They had it coming. Look at them. They did this.

They did that. That will be the prevailing attitude of the unregenerate in the world. But my servants will have pity on her dust and compassion on their stones.

It's more than even a sentimental. It's an identification of being standing with Israel in the shame of its judgment. Because therefore the grace of God go we.

We are essentially of the same stuff. We ourselves have failed. And what have we but what God has given? And what is our salvation but his grace? And as we don't merit it, they don't merit it.

But we can identify with them. And God says, when I see that the set time to favor Zion has come, then I will come out of Zion and be her deliverer. It's as if the issue is not Israel, but the church.

God is waiting for something in the church that by instinct, by tradition, by history, being essentially Gentile, has usurped or overridden the literal statements of Israel's restoration and its nationality and its whole Gentilic makeup. There's an enmity, an animosity against the Jew. I can't tell you.

I'm like a man between two worlds. I've been in the Lubavitcher Hasidic communities. I see them with their beards.

I've been in their synagogues. And I know that everything about them is calculated to irritate and rub raw those who come from another kind of culture. I'm seeing this acted out in my own home.

I have a wife who's the Gentile of the Gentiles, Danish. And I believe that from her pagan gods going all the way back, it's a covenant rejecting Israel, Hebrew, despising people. And so she has to feed my mother every day.

And her Danish dishes are full of cream with meat, with sauces, with gravy. My mother would puke. And so now she has to rigidly separate meat from milk.

And it's irritating her to death. And how many dishes can she think of the way she has to cook for my mother in a special way? Why does she need a special? Why can't she eat like everybody else? She's 95, blah, blah, blah. So I'm seeing this friction.

What my mother is in and of herself by her nature so rubs raw what my wife is by her nature. And that's the underlying tension of the ages. And that's the mystery of God, that he can take the Jew and the Gentile that have been historically separated and had enmity one with the other and make of them one new man, one people.

It's the everlasting praise of his glory. And the church is the place where it has its first fulfillment. See, to me, what a struggle it is for us.

So when we will have compassion on her stones and pity on her dust is the thing that God waits for. Then he turns and delivers Israel himself. So the issue is the church.

And we're going to face that test. And even our eternal destiny will be affected because those who did not recognize in the least of these his people, the brethren of the Lord, and did not extend mercy that they might have obtained it and survived by it will find themselves cast into the lake of fire, prepared for the devil for his angels. I mean, I myself gasp.

I want to cry and say, Lord, in my human mind, disputing with the judge, isn't that too severe an eternal judgment for the failure of one thing? But the issue is that the failure of that one thing is the failure of everything. More than you can understand, the issue of the Jew, the issue of Israel for the church is the issue of everything. It's your attitude toward God.

It's your relationship with God. It's the knowledge of God, his heart and his spirit and with yourselves. And in so many things, if there's something residual, something unresolved, something that is still based on merit and human ability that is rather than the surrender to God's grace, this issue of the Jew will reveal it.

So I say to the church, don't measure your relationship by the euphoric feeling that you can yourself engender by your own worship. I was telling Bob in the car the other day, I'll tell you how foolish Ben Israel is as a community. We're covenanted with God, Lord, don't let our worship exceed the truth of our relationships.

Don't give us a false sense of reality that somehow we have it all together. And look how spruced with it, because we're experiencing the euphoric effects of our own worship, but keep it related to where we in fact are with each other, with you. I said, if you walked in, you'd put your fingers in both ears.

It was discordant. It was out of concern in Romans 11. I would not have you to be ignorant of this mystery, brethren, lest you become wise in your own conceit.

I can't tell you how fateful a warning that was and how much it has been, in fact, described the church of our own generation that has become conceited, inflated, pompous, presuming, self-aggrandizing in all of its programs of the kingdom now and so on, is all to be traced back to the absence of this mystery. There's something salutary, there's something efficacious in the understanding of the mystery that brings to the church a temper and a balance that makes the church the church. If this is omitted from our consideration, and I'm not talking about technically and certainly not sentimentally, I'm not talking about running to Israel to plant the tree or however blessed that might be.

I'm talking about a spiritual appropriation of the mystery of the kind that I'm trying to set forth tonight, is God's intention for our sanity, for our balance, lest we would, in our usurping posture, take to ourselves what God never intended. What was the problem with Adam and Eve? They took to themselves what God never intended. They exceeded the parameters of God's wisdom for them, and in that they brought their own destruction and expulsion.

And we're in danger of the same thing by not allowing ourselves to be restricted to what God has intended for us. But when we take on Israel's destiny as being our own and have no place for it, we are exceeding what God has chosen and what God has prescribed. It defeats us as a church and is an obstruction to the fulfillment of what can come to them only through the church.

God is going to reduce Israel in such a way that unless something comes to it from outside itself, it will not survive. And that something must come from us. And that's why I can go in every nation.

My brother asked me, what are you doing in Zimbabwe? His own place of birth and upbringing. And I bring the message there that I bring to Singapore and Japan and wheresoever I am. Even Egypt, I'm telling them with a complete confidence, you're not exempt from the obligation to be to Israel what God will require from all nations and the church of all nations, because I'm telling you that the day will come when you will find expelled again into your nation Israelis.

Because God said, I will scatter you to the farthest corners of the earth and beyond the river Cush. And I can tell South Africans be prepared for the sudden devastation that will come to Jews worldwide in the time of Jacob's trouble that will uproot them out of Cape Town and Pretoria and Johannesburg and to find themselves flushed out suddenly with nothing more than they can take on their own backs and cast out

onto the roads and byways. And they'll not survive unless there's a church that anticipates this and has already set in motion a way to receive them and to move them on in a clandestine manner that they would not be detected of the kind that we saw in embryo through saints in World War II, like the hiding place in Holland, where I have been actually in the wall in Corey Ten Boom's bedroom of a false wall that they opened up where you can come in and it's a suffocating thing.

And there were seven adult Jews in that wall while the Nazis were outside pulling up the floorboards and trying to find the hiding place because someone had ratted on her, on that family, and they could not find them. And these Jews had to hold their breath. Imagine the humiliation of having to pass around a little can for the urine and to do it quietly.

You can't sneeze, choke or splutter, but it'll be your death. A Dutch brother in one of my messages in the States, living there now, he said, Art, I lived through that time, you know, that many of my Dutch people died because they took Jews in, but Jews were not used to the confinement. They couldn't stand the tension and they broke loose and ran for it and of course were caught and under interrogation they revealed where it was that they were being hidden.

And so those who had taken them in perished. That's going to be the challenge before us, the prospect of an almost inevitable martyrdom of the giving up of our life, more than our convenience, because if they're going to be in fight worldwide, if they have to leave South Africa, if they have to find a place of refuge in North America, if we ourselves have been in northern Minnesota for 25 years having received a supernatural call to establish a place of refuge in Minnesota to receive Jews coming out of Canada, where then can they and will they be safe? The time of Jacob's trouble is global. And I was going to take you into the book of Amos where it says in chapter 9, I will sift you through all nations and as one sifts corn in a sieve and not so much as a kernel will fall to the ground.

Those that transgress against me, the rebels will say, this shall not come upon me, I'll bring them out of the lands where they have sojourned, but I'll not bring them into the land. This is the two thirds that I estimate of Jews that will not survive this process, but the redeemed of the Lord. The remnant will survive it and return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads.

Why everlasting? Because this is the last time of their national affliction. There's not going to be another Holocaust. This is the final one.

And they survive it because of the mercy that has been extended by Gentiles, believers who have obtained mercy, that they may extend mercy. And so I say to the church, are you able to extend mercy? Or do you only know it technically and phraseologically rather than authentically and existentially? Listen, we're middle class saints. We live comfortably and well.

We're enjoying much benefit. Where in fact do we know the mercy of God? Where have we had to know the mercy of God that we can extend mercy? But if we have not had to know it until now, the commitment to God's program of Israel's last days attrition will require that knowledge. How do I know mercy? Because I'm experiencing it right now, as I have experienced it this morning and Friday.

Why? Because I'm always thrust into life and death situations. You guys may have thought it was a meeting or a message that could afford to fail. For me, it was a life and death thing of eternal moment.

So I experienced the mercy of the deliverance of the word. Like tonight, there's not one of us that can estimate what tonight means. I keep looking at my brother here, and I get a Holy Ghost chill even as I'm saying that, that there's a significance in your participation in this mystery.

Maybe because of your African origins, or your place of eminence in the business world, or Ellison himself was a Jew who's the head of your organization. I don't know what it is. That maybe even your basement will one day not house believers, but Jews who have to be abruptly taken in and then move quickly from this place to another.

I don't know what. But we've come to a place, and you have to believe, as I'm not speaking these things because I'm Jewish, but I'm speaking them because of an office and a call, that we're coming to a place of such an urgency that I even shrink from the melodramatic character of it. I want to flee from it myself.

But how can I flee when I'm living in the place in northern Minnesota, eight miles from the closest town in the boondocks, where I left a 17-room house in New Jersey with nine bedrooms and five baths and two Volvo's, and gave up that whole lifestyle because there's a God who rescued me. When I was a speaker in northern Minnesota, they said, oh, there's a property for sale. Would you care to see it? I said, why not? It's nice to look at the countryside.

They drove me up to this bankrupt boys camp with a chain across the road, and I got out of the car and I stepped over the chain. When my foot came down on the property, the Lord said, Dominion, the name that the camp has borne now for a quarter of a century, end-time teaching center, community refuge. I never knew what the refuge part meant.

I put it up on the shelf until, as I mentioned this morning, the Lord ended our community and sent me out in that season of death to go to a Lutheran seminary in La Catechica at all times to show how God confirmed that, and then began to reveal in that season of death, this mystery, that it took a 14-month sabbatical silence before the Lord would ever allow me a first speaking on a subject so sacred. If it's that holy, that sacred, requiring that kind of revelation of a mystery out of death, what will it require for the church for its fulfillment? And that every time that I speak this, there are no two times the same as you can compare the first time that we met and I shared. I'm not in control of this.

This is not out of my mind. I gasp. How will you take us? In what direction? So somehow the issue of death and resurrection is central to the whole economy of God, and I'm being opposed by Jewish believers, by messianic congregations.

I'm persona non grata in Israel. I'm an offense and a stink in many places because of the holocaust book, and in defense of myself in the newsletter, there's an article on true and false prophets in which I say I'm being brought now to a place where I have to raise the issue for those that are hearing me. Are they merely listening to a human opinion? If so, they can discard it.

Are they merely listening to a man who has had some kind of revelation of a subjective kind? Well, then that can be discarded. But are they listening to a man who is speaking out of an office given of God as prophet to interpret the prophetic scriptures itself and to unveil the pattern of God in the last days that requires a devastating judgment before a glorious return? Mourning and sighing will flee away and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. So in the co-joining of mourning and sighing is the statement of everlasting joy.

But the mourning and sighing cannot be understood except as I prophetically interpret it on the basis of an office given as being the mourning that is not explicable except that you see it as the loss of the nation state. You can't understand what Israel, Zion, present Israel has meant for Jews, their own homeland at last. We don't have to be at the mercy of the Goyim.

We have our own nation. We have a place of safety. And ironically, what has become has become our greatest threat.

And that's why I'm opposed now to Jews going to Israel. To go there now is to run into the vortex of violence and make your death almost inevitable. Later on, it will be millennially a place of abounding peace and blessing.

Now it's going to be a crucible of devastation, judgment, and violence. So I'm raising the question, what's your obligation of what I'm sharing? Can you dismiss it as a man's opinion? And because there are other men who are saying, no, present Israel is the prophetic fulfillment. Yes, they're going through a hard time now, but they'll adjust and they'll overcome.

There may be a time of Jacob's trouble, but not like you, what you say ought that there's going to be an expulsion, exile, be cast into the nations. They've done that already. This is permanent because God said in Jeremiah 26 that you'll always remain before me as a nation, because I made my covenant with the moon and with the stars.

It's rooted in creation itself. So how can you say that this nation is going to be destroyed and the people be cast out again? Because God is not under obligation to preserve a state, especially a state that has been birthed out of human Zionist, socialistic, and atheistic endeavor. He's allowed it in order for them to see the difference between the Jacob grasping of something and that which will be subsequently given to them as an inheritance when they receive a new heart and a new spirit and an everlasting covenant and are planted in the land.

They have to see the one in order to eternally appreciate the other, but our mistake as eager Christians operating out of our own minds, oh no, this is it. You're talking, no, it can't happen. Don't tell me what can't happen and what God will not do.

Do you feel that the coming together of the natural state of Israel as it is right now is a fulfillment of prophecy in preparation for the nations to gather? Yeah, absolutely. Because in the time of Jacob's trouble is spoken by Jesus himself in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. And my opponents say the time of Jacob's trouble is past.

It's the Nazi time. Well, then how do you explain that Jesus said there's a time coming of a trouble greater than any that this nation has ever known in its history or will ever again know. And if that time were not cut short, no flesh would survive.

But for the elect's sake, the remnant, it will be cut short. How can you say that that was a Nazi holocaust? When Jesus says, when you see these signs, you who are in Jerusalem flee to the mountains of Judea. Pray that it doesn't come on the winter.

It doesn't come on the Shabbat. Why? Because on the Shabbat, everything ceases. You know, it's clear that the origin of this time that will affect Jews worldwide has its inception in the nation itself and in Jerusalem.

So of necessity, there had to be a preliminary of return. But that preliminary is not the fulfillment. It only provides the platform in which the drama is further enacted to the point where there's an abomination of desolation spoken in Daniel.

That is the sign when you see this fleet, because that's the beginning of this inveterate hatred that's going to be poured out upon all Jews beginning at Jerusalem. So to misinterpret that as being the fulfillment, God's not under obligation to preserve the state, but the nation will never expire before him. His word said so.

He's rooted it in creation itself. And we need to distinguish between the political entity of a state, largely the result of human intention and ability, prowess, Jewish ability and finance as against the everlasting entity that will distinguish this people and glorify God, which is the redeemed nation, both on the same land. Okay.

Do you see the miraculous, though, even in the coming together of a nation that's been dispelled for 2,000 years? Yeah. God's providence is undoubtedly in it, and that he's preserved them in their past wars because the time was not yet for their destruction, and the whole issue of the tension now between Palestinians and Arab nations had to be brought to its final pitch that only an anti-Christ figure of world-renowned and recognition could solve. We're waiting for the appearance of that figure.

We don't know when this treaty is concluded. It's a secret. It may not even be revealed publicly, but we'll know that the time has come, the seventh week in the middle of it, when this covenant that has been made will be broken.

It's a covenant with death, when the one who has authenticated it by his own anointing and world recognition seeks now to obtain from Jews the recognition of himself as God. And Jews will recognize, my God, have we fallen this far? We rejected the Son of God. And Jesus said, you reject me, but others will come, and then you'll receive.

My covenant, my new covenant, you have refused. Their covenant you'll make. You'll make it with the devil himself, because your back is to the wall, and the issue of your own survival, the preservation of your own state compels you to negotiate, because the technology of our age is such that there is no defense.

You cannot defend against missiles that take only moments or minutes to come from any neighboring nation full of germs, gas, and that stuff. Only negotiation. But who's going to validate these negotiations? What figure? Is it a pope or someone of that kind of eminence? History will soon enough reveal, and when we see that, then we can expect this explosion when Jews refuse the acknowledgement of this figure in his claim for deity and realize the error of their ways, and then will suffer the fury of his retaliation, and it will affect Jews worldwide.

So then, how are the redeemed of the Lord to return to Zion? When they are sifted through the nations. And why is the sifting required? Because in Ezekiel 20 it says, I will sift you through the wilderness of the nations, and I will meet with you face to face in the wilderness of the nations. There's something about wilderness.

There's something about stripping. Maybe even the film *The Gladiator*, a man of eminent rank as general had himself to be so reduced in the nations where he was cast out. I'm just thinking of the application, and made a slave, and comes back to the principal capital in the guise of Gladiator.

It is something of playing upon the same theme. What's the reference? That's right. Can you give us the reference for the Jews meeting in the wilderness of the Lord? What's the reference? Ezekiel 20, from verse 33 on, we can take a look at it.

There's a clear pattern in the prophetic scriptures of a last day's expulsion and a sifting through all nations. And it's the basis, as I've already said, of the judgment of Jesus now seated with Israel's restoration. And what is his first judgment? To separate the sheep from the goats, one by one, one question only.

What did you do for the least of these, my brethren? And they say, when did we see you, Lord? See, the Lord terminology indicates a certain kind of Christian identification, but not sufficiently spiritual to have recognized that in this despised and rejected people who had no commonness that we should desire them are the people of God. And not enough of an identification for their stones and for their dust or for themselves that we should extend to them mercy to take them in, because when did we see you naked, thirsty, hungry, sick, and in prison? They're going to be in all of those conditions, including Steven Spielberg. The biggest hot shots, Gerald Levin of Time Warner Corporation and all of the men that are riding high in the multi-billion dollar astronomical realm of success will be utterly reduced and stripped and thrust into environments in which with which they are totally unfamiliar in the fearful panic and terror of being in some place in which you have no control over your destiny, your fate, or your survival.

You're cast upon others and ultimately the Lord himself. Isaiah 35 is another beautiful text. The wilderness will be glad for them.

Can you imagine dumb and insensate nature will rejoice when it sees Jews tramping through in their broken and despicable condition, because they know better than we that this is already a sign of the end, that the torment in which creation itself is bound with a curse is soon to be relieved with the restoration of this people? What about Messianic Jews? Who are they? Well, they'll have a special obligation, you know, with their own people, particularly those in Israel. That's interesting. I mean, I go off on so many tangents that when I share there, you know, our last conference, there wasn't a Messianic fellowship that would receive me.

There was not a platform for the word. We had to have the conference in our own hotel and every night be given a larger room, because the title of the conference was The Coming Calamity of Israel. I went to announce what must be heard and must be considered, lest when it comes it would take them by surprise.

But you know what these men, these friends tell me? They're no longer, they don't consider me a friend any longer. Art, if what you're saying is true, what about our ministry? How can it be true? You know, devastation is coming. What about my ministry? And one ministry in the most recent mailing made it quite clear.

They just bought an immense multi-million dollar facility in Tel Aviv as a center of worship, praise, prayers, that gives every indication that they don't think that a devastation is coming, but rather that Israel's restoration is going to come through a one-by-one salvation, largely the result of their own ministries. Because there are Jews being saved in Israel. There are congregations growing up and they are Jewish believers in the church, but their destiny will not be with the nation, but with the church.

They will receive glorified bodies. My destiny is not with the nation. My destiny is with the church.

I'll rise with the church. So what they don't know is that their real ministry has yet to be obtained, namely to anticipate the coming calamity in Israel, the vortex of that violence, and already to anticipate and prepare an outlet by which some Jews will be totally panic-stricken and overwhelmed, might be brought to a place of safety and refuge. And that will be our challenge in the places where we are in the world.

At what point do you see the total fulfillment of the promised land? It's at the climax, the consummation, when they are returned, the redeemed of the Lord are returned to Zion. And the first thing that we see in the prophets is the rebuilding of the cities that have been laid waste, left in ruins, and made desolate. So it indicates that there's a massive dislocation brought through the violence that has brought destruction to their cities, and that the first thing upon their return is the rebuilding of the cities that have been laid waste.

So they return to the land. And God says in Amos chapter 9, I will plant you in the land, and you'll no more be plucked up nor removed. That's future.

But it's not too distant. Is that when Messiah is back on the earth? He's contained in the heavens, waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. The Lord's coming is relative to the whole unfolding and climax of this drama.

When does he come? When do his feet set on the Mount of Olives? When Israel enters it in the final throes of the threat of extinction, two-thirds have already perished in the land. And he comes in Zechariah 12 to pour out the spirit of grace and supplications upon the city of David, and to battle against all nations that have come against Jerusalem to destroy it. He becomes the visible deliverer, and we shall see him whom we have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for one's only son and for one's firstborn.

So what we're going to see is the most profound national repentance that has ever taken place in the history of salvation. We've known individual repentance, but a national repentance of this depth and magnitude is so intense, because when they shall see him, all the things that you have been saying, all the things that you have shared in your witness, and when you have taken them into your homes and have helped them on the way, and they've turned to deaf ear and they've opposed you and something of that lodges, and when they see him, it brings to life all of the things that they've tried to close out. It's a staggering, penetrating revelation.

Can you imagine my mother? I'm wondering how God's going to save her without her dying from fright in the moment of his revelation. How will he accomplish this? Because in that moment, she'll realize that everything that her son and others have been trying to save for 36 years have been true. And I've said to my mother, she says, shut up.

I don't want to hear that. Arthur, don't talk like that. I can't get it.

Hey, I'm a communicator. I'm God's prophet, but to my own mother, I'm shut up. And when I get a word in there, as I say, the day will come in eternity when you will lament and moan, not that I have said too much, but that I have not said enough.

So it's a grace to see him whom we have pierced, but it'll only be a surviving remnant that will see him and every family repents apart. Now, on what basis do we repent? God is not even going to allow us that ability out of ourselves. He pours out a spirit of supplication and grace that we might repent because we cannot take credit for anything.

From beginning to end, even repentance is a gift of God or we'll be made unable. There'll be nothing in which we can millennially or eternally boast God has become all in all. Is that before the cities are rebuilt or after? Well, we're not given all that detail.

Evidently not rebuilt because he comes in the midst of warfare and there's devastation. He's sucking Jerusalem from all the nations coming against Israel to destroy it. And some of them are actually going to go into the Mount of Olives, right? His feet are going to stand on the Mount of Olives.

It's going to split. They're going to physically run in there to hide, right? I think so. I know it's a moot point, but it's... Yeah, there's going to be great geophysical disturbances, there are earthquakes, earth splitting, and in fact Jerusalem itself is going to be raised up to a higher altitude than it has ever enjoyed and it will become the city of the most high.

I'd just like to comment on Ezekiel 20, what transpires in the wilderness in terms of God's children of Israel. And the other thing is, I remember in the early days of the charismatic renewal when Hal Lindsey came up with his kind of Pentecostal sort of treaties, late great planet earth, where he does say that there's going to come a devastation and a final battle and Israel's going to be attacked and everything like that. So I find it unusual that you are going around telling people that such a thing is going to come to pass and all these people are worrying about their ministries and I don't get it.

There's a little difference between he and I. No, I appreciate it. Do you understand that? Yes. Because he's saying that the church will have been raptured.

Yes, they're going through a time of trouble. Oh, poor souls, let's pray for them, you know, we will enjoy safety being out of it, they'll be in it. And that's why that kind of a Christian operates toward Israel with a sense of guilt, because they're going to be saved out of something that the poor Jew is going to pass through.

I'm saying no, the church is in the earth at that time, there's no pre-tribulation rapture. We pass through it with them, because in Isaiah 35, when Israel is passing through the wilderness that is made glad for them, we read at a certain point where God is speaking not to Israel, but to some unidentified entity who is with them in the wilderness and says, say to them, your God will come, he will bring his recompense, he will deliver you. And when that word comes to a people who are bedraggled, defeated, broken, ready to die, because the issue of death is not so much physical as it is moral.

And these people are without hope, nor someone needs to speak to them a word of hope before the visible advent of a deliverer coming, or they'll not even be alive to wait for that deliverance. And who is there to speak it? That knows God so well that when they say, your God will come, the eyes of the blind are opened and the lame leap, and water breaks out of the dry ground, because that statement is not a hopeful human sentimental wish, but a prophetic declaration of a creative kind that can only come to a church that has itself come to prophetic fullness. And I still don't see why.

I still don't see why people would reject your your hesitation that there's coming and coming devastation to Israel. Isn't that, wasn't that commonly accepted amongst charismatics? Okay, because I have people arguing with me. Yes, you're right, Arthur, there's clearly a time of Jacob's trouble.

But where we differ from you is this, we don't think that it's going to go as far as you say. In other words, yes, it's a time of trouble, but not trouble to the point of extinction or threat of death, but that God will bring

them through. And my point is that there's no resurrection without death.

It's not amelioration or progressive improvement that Israel needs, but transformation that can only come from a resurrection that issues out of a death. But don't they accept the fact that two prayers of the Jews were going to be built during this? Somehow they don't, it doesn't register. Or why are they buying prayer centers in Tel Aviv and building prayer towers on Mount Carmel if there's going to be that kind of widespread devastation? There's something about not being able to think the unthinkable and to avoid and to shun from our consideration a scenario of an apocalyptic kind and somehow to soften it and to give it a kind of a view that we can mentally accept.

It's false. It's a saying peace when there is no peace. It's false prophets giving false assurances and false comforts from the severity to which God must bring that people.

And so when I say I'm speaking not only out of my prophetic office and my understanding of scripture given to men in that office, but I'm speaking also my understanding of the centrality of the wisdom of God, which is the cross and the absolute necessity for a suffering and a death, which precedes a glory. The issue is not the success of a nation state and giving Israel a national homeland, however much that's to be desired. The issue is the glory of God forever.

And that's going to require, there's no glory that is not first preceded by a suffering. So the issue is really an ideological theological difference over the centrality of the cross itself. And those Christians who want a happier scenario for Israel are those who are trying to shun the issue of the cross for their own lives.

I have a whole message on that. To pray authentically for the peace of Jerusalem is not a moment's afterthought. Okay, we've prayed everything, now let's pray this.

God says we should. To pray for the peace of Jerusalem authentically is to pray with the knowledge that that peace cannot come without their first being, the greatest devastation and judgment, and then the restoration return, the knowledge of God and the peace that passes understanding. To pray for the peace is to pray for what precedes it.

And who can pray that way? In fact, I said the issue of Israel is the issue of everything in the last analysis, including the issue of prayer. Because when I finished my presentations, the most precious intercessors who've been praying for Israel and for the success of the state and down with Arafat and praying, I said, well, then how then should we pray? Arafat and the Palestinians may well be God's rod of chastisement. We're praying against even God's will.

How do we pray without erring? I said, ah, you're on new ground now. Now you cannot pray out of your knowledge. Now you can't pray out of your human mind, out of your opinion of what you think is good, because what you think is good might actually be in opposition to God's intention and plan.

Well, how then should we pray God? You've got to pray out of the tree of life. You've got to pray out of the spirit. You've got to groan and travail in things you don't understand and don't need to understand, but that the spirit has so the possession of your life that he who knows the mind of the Lord can groan and travail through you and beyond to open the heavens and to bring that peace to the travail through which Israel must pass.

That means that the church is brought into an existential dimension of a reality that is not an issue of personal prayer, but corporate travail, corporate intercession, which means that just as we said with the

Lord, don't let our worship exceed the truth of the reality of our relationship, neither can prayer exceed that. Our prayers cannot be any more effectual than the truth of the statement of our life together. See what I mean? So the issue of an effectual travail of groaning by which a nation is birthed is the issue of a people who can perform that together because they are together and not just alongside each other sitting in pews.

The ability, can you pray with your wife, your husband? Isn't it amazing that many of us can't because we have not a relationship of an intimacy of a kind. There are too many barriers and hurts and things like that. We can better pray with one we know at a less intimate basis than to pray with the one closest.

So that means that there's going to be an authentic travail that opens the heavens and brings God's answer for people who are at the mercy of everything, have no thing in themselves. The issue is the church, its condition, its quality, its character, the truth of its own relationship because its prayer cannot exceed that truth. So in a word, the issue of Israel, once understood as mystery, brings a dimension of urgency to the issue of our church life that was not there before.

It's transport all of a sudden from an issue of happy and successful services and programs to an urgency to come into a prophetic entity that can speak to a people a word of not mere comfort but creative transformation that at the hearing of which their eyes are opened. And that's going to be a corporate speaking as much as Ezekiel 37 of the Son of Man speaking to the dry bones. There's not a single prophet but a prophetic entity whom God can command to prophesy to those bones.

See what I mean? So there's an agenda for us that calls us to uttermost maturity, to prophetic reality. So what's my value for the church? Hope, put your hand down. My value for the church is that in my own person and in my own call and in my own struggle and in my own life and in my own reality which you can see and feel and touch and hear is your own call.

The church itself is called to be a prophetic entity. Yes I know that there are distinguished and individual callings, I have one myself, but that we mustn't misunderstand that the church as a corporate entity has itself a prophetic designation and a call. And in fact unless it finds that and is able to fulfill that in reality and truth, Israel has no chance.

Because when we're called in that moment of time and it will only come once to address those bones because we're commanded, what if we don't feel like it that day? What if it's not our best day? You know what I find? That the greatest demands that come upon me where life and death hangs in the balance, where I have to speak to 4,000 people in a once in a while time, I'm not at my best but at my worst. I'm not rested, I'm not inspired, I'm banged up, wiped out like I was Friday night when I arrived with you guys. But I cannot withhold myself from an obedience because I'm some kind of prima donna that requires optimum and perfect conditions.

Because the great things that were required of us on the last days is when we're least in that ability and least feel ourselves able and yet are people who will move with God's command and will move together as one, with one voice or the word will fall limply to the ground. That means all of our subjective variations and opinions and I don't know about this and I don't know about that, will prevent us from speaking that one word in the fullness that comes when people have one mind, one heart and one will and can be commanded and have the faith to believe that the word out of their mouth will raise the dead. We can believe God can do it but can we believe that we can do it? Are we in that union with God that our word is his word? That we can command the elements to cease and that we can raise the dead? It seems to us

presumptuous and the last thing that we're called to do, having spoken to the bones in their form, is to now address the breath.

Speak to the ruach. Speak to the spirit of God because unless the spirit comes in they're still dead even with their bones and their flesh. Well Lord, I could speak to the bones but you want me to command you? You are the ruach.

You're the Holy Spirit. I should command you whom I... So in the last analysis even our religious inhibitions and our sense of propriety being violated, I'm not... I should command... God says unless you command me they'll perish. So you've got to transcend even your own sense of propriety in what seems in every way externally to be an arrogance is actually ultimate humility because humility is obedience to God even in those things which offend our own sensibilities.

That's what I've been speaking to you guys in these days. Praise God for tonight. It's all coming together.

But how are you going to come to that condition? It's not by a magical wand. It's going to be by a process of your own obediences, the thrashing out of your own issues that come into these realities and that's the issue of Israel's deliverance. So what's going to happen in the wilderness? Okay, Ezekiel chapter 20 from verse 33.

You know what it says in italics over that break in the chapter in my Bible? God will restore Israel. Chapter 20 of Ezekiel from verse 33. As I live says the Lord God surely with a mighty hand with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you.

Remember Israel's last national statement? We will not have this man to rule over us. Remember that? What that has cost us for 2,000 years. We will not have this man.

Give us Caesar. Give us Barabbas. We will not have this man.

God says I will rule over you because if I don't rule over you how shall I rule over the nations? You're first and foremost. If I don't rule over you, I have no credence, no credibility, no authority with nations. You're first and if it's going to take a fury and it's going to take a fury, why? Because we're opinionated, self-willed.

We want to do our own thing. We're autonomous. We want to establish our own state.

I will rule over you with a fury poured out. That fury is the time of Jacob's trouble. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered and we are in every nation in the world.

I have found Jews in Singapore, in Yugoslavia, in Egypt. It doesn't matter. We're scattered and if we're not presently there, we will be there.

And that's part of the whole thing of expulsion that I can tell the Filipinos, hey, there'll be Jews trekking through your jungles. They may not be native to the Philippines but they'll be brought there. I can tell the nation of New Zealand that it'll not just be Jews passing through the wilderness of the nation.

Your whole nation will be wilderness. So somehow there's something select in your whole nation. Why? Because God is not only sifting Jews, he's sifting the nations themselves and the church within the nations so that no one can be with excuse.

When did I see you hungry, thirsty? Everyone will have had an opportunity to see them for they will pass through all nations. This is the issue of interpretation. When God says all, he means all.

And in Amos 9, I will sift you through all nations, not only for your sake, but because I have a controversy with nations and they're going to be tested over the issue I present to them through you. That's why this can't be prayed away. People say, well, can't we pray that Israel will repent without having? No.

This is God's massive last days testimony to the nations and it cannot be altered. So with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out in verse 34, it's mentioned the second time. Anytime God speaks twice, the same thing, take note.

When he says wrath poured out, it has to repeat it. Well, what else will remove Jews from Toronto or their penthouse apartments or Steven Spielberg's Long Island summer home or other places of prominence and affluence and comfort that Jews enjoy? It will have to be a fury. I was in Berlin living in the apartment of a Christian couple attending a conference on prayer for Israel that made me my guts not.

And I was told that this was a Jewish neighborhood and I knew somehow in my spirit intuitively that I was in the apartment of Jews in the Nazi time. And I came back one night and I had a vivid sense of the Jew of that apartment hearing the stomping of the jackboots up the stairs, coming up the stairs, knowing that the dreaded knock was coming upon his door. And within moments he was going to be apprehended.

And he's in a fury. He's breaking out of a sweat. What do I take? What photographs? What memorabilia? What things of my life? My books, my treasures, my music, my records.

And it's upon him and everything is lost. They're uprooted and face the prospect of death because a fury was poured out. And Jesus says that the one that is coming will exceed the one that was passed.

Not so much in its savage brutality, but in its magnitude. That was confined to Europe. This one will be global.

So, and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. Other Bibles express it another way. You have another? Yes, I will plead my case with you face to face.

Plead with you. So it's a God entreating, a God explaining, which means that you're not only going to be required to provide physical sustenance in your refuge, but prophetic and biblical and spiritual explanations. God will plead with you.

These Jews are going to be totally deranged and beside themselves in the confusion and stupor of what has befallen them. And you're going to have to sit them down, calm them. And they'll say, how did you know we were coming? How is it you anticipated us and prepared for us? And because they're going to be moving from place to place in the whole economy of places of refuge, God will have established by his spirit.

So my son David says, dad, you're central in all this. And you know, this people to the north of you, to the south of you, you know them from Canada to Mexico, which is the route, by the way. Why don't you establish a circular letter? Why don't you organize? I said, no, there must be no human organization at all.

This must be the patent revelation of God and his majestic glory by his spirit. And the whole thing is relational and trust face-to-face in relationship that has been tested through which we have passed. And we were sorely tested.

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