

The Theocratic Kingdom

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the critical need to restore the understanding of the Theocratic Kingdom of God and its implications for Israel and the church today.

Duration: 1:55:46

Topics: "Theocratic Kingdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the central subject of Jesus' teachings, which is the kingdom of God. Jesus spent forty days after his resurrection speaking about the kingdom of God and providing convincing proofs of his resurrection. The disciples, at the end of this period, asked Jesus if he would restore the kingdom to Israel, showing their lingering nationalism. The preacher also discusses the lack of life and oppression in certain regions, highlighting the need for the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about change.

Transcript

actually have experienced, have been participants in the revivals of the past and however valid the revivals are today, Reggie mentioned last night that they don't seem to endure they dissipate away, and so occasionally we hear that the problem is the necessity of a wineskin that will hold the new wine and I thought for myself that that must be some kind of a structure maybe the problem is that we are, our Christianity is too institutional and we need a more apostolic community setting and that would hold the wine but I want to suggest this morning that I'm shifting gears that the wineskin that will hold the new wine is not a structure so much as a mindset, a mode of understanding an apostolic view, and that that view is necessarily the view of the kingdom of God so probably as many men

as approach that subject will speak of it differently it's that variable and that large, so I want to ask the Lord's blessing again that he'll give the thrust of this as it pleases him who is himself the king the kingdom of God is remarkably absent from our consciousness and if we allude to it, usually it's in some kind of subjective or personal sense that the kingdom of God is within, or that it's some kind of sense of principles by which the church conducts itself, and all those things are true but the sense in which I want to communicate it this morning is theocratic the political structure of God for the nations and for the world it's that view of the kingdom that has been lost and it has been lost in exact proportion as we have lost the centrality of Israel the two are inextricably

joined so if there's the restoration of the one, there's necessarily the restoration of the other because Israel's calling is the kingdom of God and the kingdom is necessarily the kingdom of David, it's a Davidic kingdom God has made a promise to David that on his throne will be a descendant who will rule over Israel forever and to rule over Israel is to rule over the nations because Israel is the most obdurate and rebellious and when God says in Ezekiel 20, I will rule over you it's a kind of a note of vehemence remembering that the last official statement in the record book was we will not have this man to rule over us so when God will rule Israel, we'll have all nations but this is the first and the foremost nation and in coming into its kingdom inheritance, it will no longer be the

tail but the head and so we're not going to see peace in the world until nations will be rightly related to that nation that God intended as the centerpiece of his kingdom and that there's a necessity for the fulfillment of what is spoken both in Isaiah and in Micah, exactly the same words and I don't think that either copied from the other the spirit of God gave it to them independently but identically that the law must go forth out of Zion and the word of God out of Jerusalem so when we say thy kingdom come, this is what we're saying and the great opposition against Israel is to prevent that fulfillment if Israel could be obliterated as a nation actually removed from the earth, then there's no prospect of the fulfillment because there's necessarily a land, an epicenter a focal point, a

locus, L-O-C-U-S for the kingdom of God and it's Zion but Zion, like the phrase kingdom of God has been very largely spiritualized by the church over the ages and that's how we have been robbed of the specific content that would have changed everything the church is flabby and its ship is loose because there's only one dynamic, one understanding that would have affected a tightening of the whole thing and a direction, it's the understanding of the kingdom of God literally to have this dynamic, this understanding that we're moving toward some very large fulfillment and that it would have to do with the rule of God over his creation the kingdom of God, the theocratic rule of God would have greatly affected the church in its every department every aspect of the church its composition, its

relationship, the role of the Holy Spirit the gifts of the Spirit, the structure, the offices everything comes into another focus when the kingdom of God is reinserted as central to the church's whole understanding of what it is about in the purposes of God so Lord, we ask for your view as the high priest and the apostle of our confession you're the soon coming king you're the son of David, you're the root and the offspring and you're the one intended, my God, for the occupancy of Zion to dwell there, for it to be your sanctuary and the locus of your rule so instruct us, my God, and inflame our hearts and create a desire for the kingdom that when we sing or say, thy kingdom come it's not some airy and intangible thing that we're referring to or a subjective thing, though it has that

aspect but we're talking about the clear rule of God over the nations the rebellious pockets of resistance the defiance of the nations to come under your authority that is resolved when Israel itself will come and out of that Zion will go forth your law so instruct us, Lord, and lead us through the scripture and affect our understanding and obtain our participation we thank and give you praise for so great a theme so central to the faith, so long neglected and now hopefully to be restored in Jesus' name we pray, Amen well we know that John the Baptist and then Jesus had at the heart of their proclamation the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is at hand that was the motif in the note that was struck and you don't read anywhere where any of their hearers questioned them as to what

they meant by that it was something so understood in the anticipation of Israel that all that was waiting was the announcement not the definition and that kind of sense of expectation of the kingdom has been

lost to us as the church so lost that the church historically and even presently thinks that it itself is the kingdom and that is a piece of presumption and the kind of conceit against which Paul warned Jesus performed the signs of the kingdom what do you say at one point if I by the finger of God cast out these demons then has the kingdom come among you so the evidence of his power and his authority particularly against the powers of darkness was the most vital and significant sign that the kingdom was at hand he was giving a preview of what will be the reality when in fact the

kingdom is totally established he was exhibiting the credentials of the king in his mastery over the powers of darkness his ability to heal this was the fulfillment that Israel was expecting deliverance, healing, restoration and he was giving the signs of that through the authority that he had as himself being that son of David now it's just interesting to trace some of these things in scripture I love the angelic pronouncements about the birth of Jesus because what is angelically spoken is perhaps the purest expression from God without admixture it doesn't pass through a human vessel that it would be in any way tainted this is divine pronouncement so even the angelic pronouncement of the birth of Jesus in Luke chapter 1 to Mary, verse 32 has this statement he will be great, he will be

called the son of the most high and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end so it's remarkable that of all the things that could have been said to introduce the advent of the Lord the thing that the angel fingers is his identity with the kingdom of God the fulfillment, the long awaited fulfillment of the promise made to David that from his seed and ancestry that one would come who would reign over his house forever and also reflecting the statement in Isaiah chapter 9 of the very same phenomenon for unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given from verse 6 I don't like my translation, it says authority rests upon his shoulder what do you have in yours? the government

shall be upon his shoulder I love that, it's specific and explicit and the word government, I don't know about you but when I hear it I wince it's almost like an instantaneous recoil because the word government has been so traduced and corrupted in our time when you hear the word government you think of men lining their pockets with gain, greed, manipulation smoke filled back rooms where plots are hatched but the government of God is the antithesis of human government this is not corruption or men seeking things for themselves this is the most objective, dispassionate equitable, just rule of God over his creation this is righteousness itself spelled out as it affects the conduct of men and of nations he will rule with equity and with justice he will arbitrate between nations you know that

the resolutions that will come from God will be unquestionably perfect so the government will be upon his shoulder and we don't think of the Lord in these terms that somehow we're a bit repelled we may think that it's somehow incompatible to think of government, order, the exercise of authority actual political rule with the Lord we'd rather think of things spiritual ethereal, lofty but that the practical rule is somehow incompatible with God and with his nature, quite the contrary it's perfectly compatible and we ought to be yearning for it so the government shall rest upon his shoulders and he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father Prince of Peace and of his, you have it in yours, verse 7 of his okay there shall be no end upon the throne of David here's

again that specific reference and his kingdom he will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore and the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this and the statement of Peter on the day of Pentecost these references again occur but before we turn to them maybe just as long as we're going to the book of Acts to be reminded of what Jesus spoke to his

disciples in the 40 days in which he was with them before he ascended of all the things that could have been said to set the church forth with a right perception of what its role and function would be what are the issues that are incumbent upon the church it says in chapter 1, after his suffering in verse 3 he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them

during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God isn't that remarkable? of all the subjects there was only one subject because that one subject is the all-inclusive subject and the central subject and so he didn't mince words and he didn't misuse the occasion but he addressed them on this subject alone and you wonder how much can be said on this subject that would occupy 40 days but that's how rich it is and so there's little wonder that at the conclusion they asked him when they had come together in verse 6, Lord is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel you would have thought what an opportunity for Jesus once and for all to shoot that down that this is a lingering kind of nationalism Jews that still want to be exalted and have their nation freed from Roman

conquest and all these other kinds of things such a petty nationalistic concern so out of keeping with their apostolic call but there's not even a hint, not a scintilla that in any way Jesus was displeased with this question he answers it in a way so as to imply that the question itself is not invalid only the issue of its timing is something that needs to be considered, the question itself is totally valid totally Hebraic, totally Jewish, totally Biblical it was absolutely right and valid for these men to ask that question after all they had been instructed in the kingdom, is this the time now then to expect its fulfillment and he implied it's not for you to know the times or periods that the father has set by his own authority but you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon

you you'll be my witnesses and so on so you can see from the way that Jesus and John the Baptist began the kingdom of God is at hand the announcement of the angel to Mary that this one who will be born who is great is to occupy the throne of David and he will rule over the kingdom of God forever and over Israel, the mentality of the disciples, the apostles kingdom conscious, knowing that this is the fulfillment, this is that son of David who will rule is it time now then to establish this kingdom the kingdom of God was foremost in the consideration of the church from its inception and that consciousness affected its whole myth its whole conduct and so it ought and for the absence of this same consciousness we have been going off in all directions we have revivals that are not in any way

kingdom related, we have a church that is entirely subjective, everything is in terms of how it itself is affected, will they be blessed will they be revived but it's not a revival that points to a fulfillment of this central thing something is absent, profoundly absent that has brought the church in my opinion to its beggarly condition and that one thing is this kingdom so that when I was in East Germany as mentioned last night I saw two pastors in one day whom I had known 15 or more years ago when they were still under communist rule, in fact I had counseled the wife of one who was pregnant to go ahead and have that child though the doctors had told her that her life was threatened and it would be born deformed they wanted an abortion and my sense was no, believe the Lord and you'll

have a healthy birth and she did and she had a healthy birth this was my first time back in 20 years and as I came to the house there was a guy outside of it about that age with spiked hair and tinted, what do you call it, staining up I don't know if he had an earring or a nose ring but I think he was capable of it and maybe he puts it on when he's out of the sight, this was the son that had been prayed for 20 years later, is now completely unrelated to church, doesn't attend services has no consideration for God, goes to the discotheque and he's a rapper and so when we had our cup of coffee I asked this pastor the same

question that I asked the other one earlier in the day what has replaced the tension under which you were living and serving during the communist time then you were an

outpost of God under siege the other pastor was actually threatened with imprisonment for speaking about Israel just bringing up the subject, so these were men who were harassed by atheistic communist officials they lived with a degree of threat and risk and it gave to their church life and to their own ministry a certain texture and a certain tension a certain heightened significance that made their days very real, their prayers very earnest the people who would come to a fellowship under siege and being noticed and recognized as believers in an atheistic society are people who put themselves consciously in a place of peril, so the fellowship with the saints and hearing the word of God when you come together was altogether critical for them now, communism has gone out the window the wall

is down, they're one with western Germany I can see the physical improvements everywhere, the buildings the buildings had always been deteriorated when you crossed the border from west to east Germany it was like coming into another land where the clock had been turned back to the 1930s and nothing had changed nor improved since that time.

To go from west Berlin to east Berlin was like to enter a time machine you went from the hotspot, the showpiece of western Germany, Berlin into east Berlin on the subway the elevated train, and when you came across the border and came down the steps and into east Berlin it was like entering another world I remember I came down the steps and there was a bus with people in it, and I'm looking at that bus what is it that's so strange, and I realized what it was they were all holding straps, but they were absolutely lifeless, there wasn't a smile, there wasn't a conversation on that bus, they were going listlessly to their work or coming home from it there was no life in the land, I can't tell you how dead now the wall is down and there's only one Germany which I'm not happy for and so

there's been a material improvement or else where would this kid go with the discotheques so I said to these pastors what has replaced this oppression that you had served under that brought a dynamic of an earnest and urgent kind into your whole church life and the answer was nothing in fact we're just drifting, we're just marking time we're treading water, there's nothing that gives to our life I'm just paraphrasing, anything that would compare to the urgency that we knew when we were under the gun I said well, what do you think about the kingdom of God, I had not thought about it myself, it had not been a subject for me for years and they gave me the traditional answers, well the kingdom of God is within it's something subjective, it's something personal, but they had no concept of the

kingdom of God as being theocratic as having to do with actual rule over God's creation and I became conscious that it's the absence of that understanding of the kingdom that very much explains their present condition and that their present condition would never be remedied until the kingdom of God in it's theocratic sense would come into their consciousness and be first and foremost in their every consideration and from that time on I believe that the Lord has been stirring me to consider again, the kingdom in that sense there are many references in the Psalms, the prophets as we just read in Isaiah that hint that or actually speak literally of a time when God would rule over all nations that Israel was God's instrumentality for his rule through them to the nations, it was an expectation

and one that grew out of their own covenantal relationship with God, that what they experienced in the governance of their own life through covenant was a first installment of a much larger intention of God through government for all nations so you can see it in some of the Psalms you can look at the Psalms

and we can't extensively go through it, but even Psalm 22 I just noticed him the other day it has to do with the suffering servant, the suffering Lord where you would not think that that would be an occasion where such a reference would be made actually concludes with it begins with my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me but it ends with verse 27 all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations shall worship before him, for dominion

belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations if God is God, if the God of Israel is God this is a necessary and inevitable conclusion, he cannot be God and be the creator and not have also the right and the authority to rule over his creation it's the divine logic, but more than that and as well as that, the references to his eventual rule were all through the whole texture of Israel's understanding of God and of the eschatological future Israel had a sense of future and destiny that affects all nations so that it even goes back to the time of Abraham and the promise made to him the covenantal promise, the first of God with that people who would descend from him in Genesis 12 that out of your seed will come those that will bless all the families of the earth and the sense of bless

was not some kind of superficial pat on the back but something that would issue from the descendants of Abraham that would affect all nations for their betterment I'm trying to, a thought has just eluded me and that thing could be found being expressed through the prophets and elsewhere for example, Amos chapter 9 where it talks about, in one final chapter is a summary of Israel's judgment when God will sift Israel through the nations but it speaks in the same chapter right after that of the tabernacle of David being restored that that which had fallen down would again be raised up and we, sappy charismatics have construed that reference to mean a restoration of Davidic worship which I don't want to knock, I like that Hebraic flavor but this is something much more profound because when

you follow out the text it says, and Edom shall come under that rule, and all the nations which know God so this is more than an issue of technique or a form of worship that is called the tabernacle of David the tabernacle of David is the kingdom of David that is restored and the government, the Davidic government of God from the throne of David and out of Zion that will affect Edom and all nations this is lost to our consciousness but so enormously significant to understand the whole format of what God is about and how the age concludes Psalm 149 is another cogent expression of Israel's expectation for its own role in how the age ends as it affects nations praise the Lord, sing to the Lord a new song let Israel be glad in its maker let the children of Zion rejoice in their king these

references to king are not, what would we call them poetic poetic, yeah it has a lovely valence to it when they used it, it was both poetic and actual the word king always resonated the word rule and only this can dignify God only this was compatible with his eternal dignity that he deserves to rule because he is also creator and that Israel is the first nation to come under his authority but of the increase of his rule of his government and of his peace there shall be no end we read in Isaiah chapter 9 so what begins with Israel is to extend to all nations and that Israel itself would be an instrument to the nations in the rule of God and so also the church as Jesus made that veiled reference to Nathaniel who was impressed that he saw him under the tree and he said you are the Messiah

you are the king of Israel and Jesus when he heard that was blessed he said I have not found one in Israel so without guile and you are impressed that I saw you under the tree you recognize my qualification and my credential I'll show you a greater thing angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man no explanation of what that means but in my own sense this is the destiny of the church of those guileless ones of Israel who are not necessarily Jewish who will be ascending and descending upon the Son of Man

that is to say will rule and reign with him not from the earthly place Israel will be performing that from the earthly place of the restored nation but the church will be operating in its glorified body that's why it will receive a glorified body not that we should be freed from

the aches and pains of our earthly bodies but that we will have a vehicle appropriate to our call we need to be able to penetrate time and space in the same way that Jesus walked through closed doors and he would ascend and descend we also shall in the operation of the governmental privilege that will be given to us in proportion to our coming of age in this life that's why it says some will rule over 5 cities and some over 10 this is totally absent from the consideration of saints we don't know what our eternal reward is and we don't know eternity so eternity is absent from our consideration because we have lost the whole eschatological framework that was understood by Israel and gave it a hope for its future that's why Abraham we read in Hebrews was in the land as a stranger he was in

the land of promise but he was in it as a stranger because it was not yet the time when that land would come under the kingdom rule of God that is the millennial and eternal dispensation and at that time of no more be strange it will be his reward and it's our reward also and our rewards are proportionate to our labors some of us maybe will not even be fit for the government of God at all because in this life there was very little government we couldn't so to speak fight our way out of a paper bag we couldn't bring our own households into the order of God our own fellowships and churches were disordered we were not faced with questions of a kind that called for Solomonic wisdom in arbitrating issues of a significant kind that affected the life of the church the only decisions we had to

make were exchanging the carpet or inviting the speaker so this life is to present us if the church is authentic with that kind of challenge and experience that would affect what our eternal destiny will be because the ability to rule in the spirit of the Lord is not something that is going to come to us magically but will be the expression of what has been obtained in this life so in Psalm 149 where the children of Zion rejoice in their king I would just say that the children of Zion is not every Jew, not all Israel is Israel this is the elect of God the prepared vessels of God those who have suffered for his name in this life and rightly can look forward to the privilege and the honor of ruling with him they rejoice in their king let them praise his name with dancing make melody to him

with tambourine and lyre for the Lord takes pleasure in his people he adorns the humble with victory let the faithful exult in glory let them sing for joy in their couches let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands to execute vengeance on the nations to bring retribution because the nations have been in a rebellious state since the time of the Tower of Babel they were not even in the right place physically they should not have been on the plains of Shinar they should not have been in the place where they could have conspired to compete with God by building a tower as high as the heavens you can see the chutzpah, the arrogance of nations wanting to do their own thing and to equal or to exceed God that he had to bring down by confusing their language

but they were not in the government of God and I believe that that's visible in the history of nations to this day where nations are located what their histories have revealed shows the deep inveterate rebellion of nations against God and Paul speaks of this in Acts 17 when he addresses the Greeks at Athens because Athens was not just a city it was a city-state and it was the supreme statement of civilization of man in that generation and yet he tells them that they're going to be accountable and that God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men by that man whom he has raised from the dead and that the bounds of the nations and their habitations were given them, not that it should be a playground or that nations should do

with it what they will but that they might seek God in

order to understand the reason for which their nationhood was given them but what nation has consulted God?

Every nation has acted autonomously independently, has done its own thing has had its own ambitions and the bloodshed the rivers of blood that have issued historically are the evidence of greed, vanity, pride World War I is the outgrowth of German chancellors and Prussian generals and admirals in the navy with their tin soldiers and toys on chessboards on great tables like this plotting strategy so that their national pride could have a grand fulfillment when they would defeat France or Great Britain and what were France and Great Britain doing?

Exactly the same. They're playing games a gamesmanship that has to do with pride, esteem national dignity but the end of it is unbelievable, a holocaust of life and among my experiences is to go to Verdun, one of the great battlefields of World War I that was maybe 10-20 acres, the whole thing but there was a seesaw thing back and forth between France and Germany, taking some ground losing it, in trenches that an entire generation of German and French youth were entirely wiped out in those few acres, so that today when you go there they have an ossuary, a building built to contain the bones of those who died on that battlefield and it is as big as 5 football fields, filled with the bones of an entire generation.

I can say having lived as long as I have that the America of today bears little correspondence to that America that I knew prior to World War II. Something happened with World War II, with massive bombings with destruction of cities, with V-bombs falling on England and armadas of planes wiping out Leipzig and what's the city in Germany that produced China? Dresden, China They say that there were 5 or 6 days of successive fire bombings with British planes that so sucked the air out of the city that people died of asphyxiation as well as burning, that the heat was so intense that their feet were stuck in the melted asphalt and they perished by the tens of thousands. There's no return from that, there's no return from the Holocaust There's no return from bloodletting from genocidal death where nations are no longer content merely to fight soldiers against soldiers but involve civilian populations and to win a war not only by the destruction of civilian populations but by the terrorizing of them You can't end the war and then go back to life as normal Something has happened in the moral universe that is irredeemable, irretrievable You'll never make that ground up again So when I look at my early years as a kid in Brooklyn before 1941, it was like what shall I say, a paradise, the air was clean poor as we were if I had to borrow a nickel, which was a substantial sum of money, I would say to this kid I promise to pay you back, I give you my word of honour Okay, here it is that someone talking like that was understood and received, it meant something that kids in the street could talk about their word of honour Where does anyone speak like that today, even as an adult, let alone as a child We have children today that are monsters that are the candidates to be the Nazis of a soon coming time and they will be destructive of the church and of humanity and will be without pity and without natural affection.

All of that is the residue and the ultimate logic of what was set in motion by the two great world wars, which were set in motion by imperialist ambition and nationalistic rivalries and people in an industrial age that had now cannons and tanks and great battleships wanting to use their toys because they had never sought the Lord to ask What is the purpose for which you have given us the bounds of our habitation and what Paul is saying is God is going to judge all nations for that failure. We need to understand this that the world is a rebellion against God. There is an enmity against God in the world and the nations in their nationhood and in their independence are thumbing their nose at the living God.

I don't care that their sessions of Congress begin with prayer or any of the other soporific amenities that men perform religiously. That's whitewash that's nothing. The reality of the matter is God is not taken into their consideration He's not consulted, He's not considered Can you imagine Clinton calling a day of fasting or saying that our national problems or the murders in our high schools are of a kind that there's been a deterioration in the whole moral atmosphere of the nation and nothing that we can do as a program is going to arrest it We need to seek God and repent that these things, these symptoms are breaking forth that show godlessness even in a pseudo religious country.

Can you imagine a man that would ruin his, any president who would speak like that would be dismissed as some wild, radical, I mean he has no sense, he's dooming his political career because common sense and practicality and political wit and wisdom is predicated upon not the inclusion of God but His exclusion So we need to understand how God sees this. He has been shunted to the sidelines. The God who created the earth and the nations is not entitled and invited in to their consideration and he's watching the bloodbath, he's watching Kosovo and Bosnia and all of the other eruptions the mass rapes as a military policy and the helplessness of parents to protect their own daughters It's savage and all of that is the evidence of nations that have not consulted God.

We ought to know that deeply and our cry is come Lord Jesus not to take us out of this but come as king. Come and establish righteousness. Come and establish equity in your rule.

Mediate between the nations and I believe that when the Lord will come, we're not going to see the proliferation of nations as we have them today. What is it? Over 200? Every little language group Here in Yugoslavia is a perfect example. Ethnically and racially it's the same people.

They're all Slavs but religiously and culturally and nationally they have different histories and that one difference is enough to exacerbate the difference and to bring one against the other as an ethnic cleansing though they are genetically made of the same stuff. And so what's their answer? There's got to be a Serbia. There's got to be a Croatia There's got to be a Bosnia.

A Herzegovina What were the people Albanians There are many nations now as there are minorities. There's a multiplicity of nations and of course the greater the number the greater the opportunity for incendiary differences that will flare up and eventuate in conflict and violence and death I believe that when the Lord comes and Israel is at the center, we're not going to see that great number but we'll see the number that God intended from the first and they'll all be related to the nation that he intends as the head and not the tail and his word will go out of Zion and the law out of Zion, the word will go out of Jerusalem How do you know that?

Because Isaiah chapter 2, known by every Jew in its religious experience and knowledge of the prophet says that the law shall go forth out of Zion and that because of that nations shall study war no more and they'll turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into prunicles There's going to be a radical alteration of the purposes of nations that will no longer require armaments Can you imagine what that releases for mankind?

The untold wealth of nations that has been spewed out in weapons What that 40 some odd days of bombings in Yugoslavia cost this nation is inestimable One of these guided bombs or what do they call them, smart bombs some of them are close to a million dollars even the most ordinary aspects of their arsenal ran to tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars let alone the planes these stealth bombers and so on and so forth and the whole technology of warfare is an enormous drain on the wealth of nations so

the one thing that and there'll be many things but if God did not affect anything else but nations studying war no more and turning their resources from death to life it would be a change universally that would be to the betterment and happiness of millions but who can affect this? what

philanthropist or man of of ideals is going to affect this? only God himself when he has his own rule in the one place that he has designated the Zion of God, the holy hill of Zion and the throne of David this is the explicit choosing of God and he'll not have his government in any other place therefore the issue of God's rule and God's government is the issue of Israel's restoration and that's why if we have dismissed the consideration of Israel we have taken the ground out for any possibility of theocratic government it has got to be through them according to the many scriptures shall we take a look at Isaiah? chapter 2 instead of paraphrasing it yes in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills

and all nations shall flow unto it focus on that, all nations shall stream to it that's either poetry that we can idly dismiss as having a nice sound to it or it's God's explicit intention that affects everything if this is his design and this is his way of resolving dispute and crisis between nations and the way of establishing his peace because of the increase of his government and of his peace there shall be no end, then this should be crucial for our consideration and make very clear that except that this government comes to the nation that he's appointed it shall not come at all if you want other confirmations, Ezekiel 37 if you can turn to that a little further into the prophets I was looking at that this morning we read about the valley of dry bones but we don't read the whole

chapter through what happens after those bones come together and are restored and come to life again from verse 15 on we get the conclusion of the matter the reuniting of Judah and of Ephraim making of Israel one people and then in verse 21 then say to them, thus says the Lord God I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone and will bring them from every quarter and bring them to their own land I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel and one king shall be king over them all never again shall there be two nations or be divided into kingdoms, never again defile themselves I will save them from their apostasies cleanse them from their sin into which they have fallen they shall be my people, I will be their God this is the great

climax of the age as it pertains to Israel's restoration and it's solely and exclusively the work of God Israel has no part in it, it's not their accomplishment it's their gift, it's the purest grace of their restoration that glorifies God and until that happens, the rest of it does not follow, but when it happens my servant David shall be king over them and they shall have one shepherd, they shall follow my ordinances be careful to observe my statutes and then further down in verse 25 they shall live there forever and my servant David shall be their prince forever I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them I will bless them and multiply them and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore God is going to dwell in their midst present

Jerusalem is not a fit habitation for the king I chafe if I have to go to Israel and walk the streets of Jerusalem I don't like the grass coming out of the cracks I don't like the jerry built houses I don't like the cheap sleazy atmosphere I don't like the moral thing that I sense and feel it's got to be a city for the king and it will not be that until it's first reduced to rubble and ruin and then rebuilt as unto the Lord but it will be his internal abode God is actually going to dwell in the earth and in the piece of earth that he himself has designated there he will establish a sanctuary and he would not be comfortable nor desire it except the people themselves will restore it and of a character and of a kind appropriate to their king that's why Israel

has got to go through this

devastation and death in order to come up as the redeemed of the Lord as a people appropriate to their king and his city my dwelling place shall be with them and I will be their God, they shall be my people then the nation shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel when my sanctuary is among them forevermore just his very presence is an endorsement of Israel's restoration that the nation that had been scandalous and had done so much to threaten the well-being of the world or the Middle East is now sanctified and that God's dwelling among them establishes for the nations the truth of Israel's restoration there's two words that go hand in hand eschatological we've already mentioned that the things that pertain to the end, the consummation of all things but what precedes it and is part of it

is apocalyptic, judgment, destruction devastation, exile, expulsion and then return and restoration so we'll turn in a moment to the Pentecostal message of Peter quoting from Joel this is that which was spoken in Joel about the coming of the Holy Spirit but the cry of the people, what must we do men and brethren and come out of this untoward and perverse generation was the expectation that the last judgment was about to fall and after that judgment and coincident with it is the giving of the Holy Spirit to the remnant that would survive that judgment because they called upon the name of the Lord and would receive the enablement by the Spirit of God to be the people who would be in the nation that could receive the Lord in his sanctuary and from which the rule of God would go forth the

only thing wrong with this expectation was the issue of timing they didn't understand that there was going to be an historical parenthesis before the fulfillment that the Holy Spirit was given to set in motion and give enablement to a church that had purposes to fulfill that would bring that final consummation but I think like Paul, they expected a sooner consummation and those Jews, the devout Jews of every nation that had come up to Jerusalem for one of the three occasions of Pentecost knew these things they had both a millennial eschatological expectation of the time when their nation would be restored but they knew also that what preceded it was devastation and judgment that's why Peter says, come out from them come out of this perverse generation doesn't mean generation in the sense

these are people who have lived 40 years generation in the sense, come out from this kind who have been rebellious, who will not repent and for which reason God's judgment is coming and out of which only a remnant will be returned we read from Isaiah chapter 9 that unto us a child is born but do you know what exactly precedes that in verse 4, for the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders the rod of their oppressors you have broken on the day of Midian for all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire it's a picture of apocalyptic judgment of burning, of blood, of devastation of oppression and this is repeated in many of the prophets that there is a time of judgment chastening for Israel a sifting out of

which only a remnant survives who go on to be in the restored nation out of which the rule of God will come and when Peter spoke this in Acts if we understand that, his statement takes on another flavor when the spirit of God fell and they were speaking with other tongues and they said these men are filled with new wine says Peter standing with the eleven, isn't that beautiful only one spoke but they stood together in agreement, explained to the devout men who had come running who were assembled in Jerusalem at that time what this phenomenon meant, and it begins by quoting in the last days, verse 17 of chapter 2 of Acts that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh we've thought of that as full gospel businessmen as if what we have seen in our charismatic time is that but when Paul speaks

of it, he speaks of the spirit that we have received as a token there's another word that he uses, like token a force by say a pledge, a down payment of what? of the larger fulfillment that is intended not for the church, but for Israel why? because Israel has a theocratic destiny, it's going to rule from the earthly plane, it's going to address nations nations are going to come to it the gentiles of ten nations will clutch the skirt of a Jew and say take us to your God for you know him this spirit is given for that purpose and so this is the first installment the first down payment, but the greater fulfillment of it is yet future, after the devastation and ruin that comes with the final chastisement of God, the spirit is poured out after the moon is darkened and the sun is turned to

blood it comes together in the context of Joel and also in Amos that there's a cataclysmic occurrence that even affects the stars and the sun and the moon and a violence, but out of that comes a restored remnant to whom the spirit of God is given, that they might function theocratically in their restored nation where the Lord himself is in the sanctuary of their city.

Verse 20 speaks about verse 19 that great day is the day of the Lord's judgment first for Israel and then also for the nations then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved not saved in the sense that we have been employing it saved out of sin, saved out of hell, though that's true, but saved out of destruction saved out of apocalyptic devastation that's going to fall on the nation.

These Jews were tuned in, the signs of the times were everywhere about them, moral decay there'd been no profit in the land for four centuries the nation was occupied by a foreign power all of the kinds of signs that indicated that it was coming to the end of its tenure. These were already judgments and now a final judgment was to come and now with the giving of the Holy Spirit, this alerted them that what Joel spoke of and what Amos spoke of and what Isaiah spoke of is just about to take place but if you'll call on the name of the Lord you'll be saved out of that devastation. That's why there was such a note of urgency what must we do, men and brethren? And just interesting to read Peter's whole statement about the Lord being crucified and how David spoke of him in verse 25 I saw the Lord always before me and that the Holy One should not suffer corruption so that it's not David that's being addressed but an ancestor of David in verse 29 who both died and was buried in his tomb David's tomb is with us today and since he was a prophet he knew that God had sworn to the north that he would put one of his descendants on his throne foreseeing this David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah saying he was not abandoned to Hades nor did his flesh experience corruption.

This Jesus God raised up of which we are witnesses being therefore exalted at the right hand of God that's where Stephen saw him remember the first martyr?

I see the Lord at the right hand of power and when those who were opposing him heard that they put their fingers in their ears and ran upon him and gnashed upon him with their teeth and stoned him to death they could not conceive that this criminal who was executed with criminals outside the city in the dung keep was now at the right hand of power that he was exalted having suffered the humiliation of death as a criminal and that he was the one of whom David spoke and that his exaltation has to do with his being in the place of political authority and rule from the right hand of power and that for this reason you received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and therefore in verse 36 let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah

this Jesus whom you crucified the word Messiah means anointed King he's Lord and King, this is the one and maybe that generation had a notion of Messiah that had to do with personal deliverance or the

removal of sin and had not the fullest understanding of the issue of Messiah as a son of David and the throne of David and the rule of God through a David that is restored but this statement of Peter brings all those things into focus for his hearers and that's why they were stricken they did not realize, they were ambivalent and conflicting notions of what the word Messiah implied and now Peter is setting it forth it has to do with this David who was promised as a descendant of that one whose tomb is with us now who would rule from that throne over Israel forever he is both Messiah and King

and the evidence is that he was resurrected out of that death and ascended from it and he's now at the right hand of Paul I was thinking this morning how Jesus responded to a blind man from, was it Jericho? he was moving through a crowd and this blind man cried out and they couldn't shut him up Jesus thou son of David and the Lord stopped and the disciples tried to shut this man up but he wouldn't he kept recalling Jesus according to that title and according to that designation and it's a real judgment on Israel that those who could see were blind and that he who was blind could see who Jesus was as the son of David he called him according to his messianic title and had all the implication of rule and for that Jesus stopped and turned to him and ministered to him so maybe we're blind

we've not understood who the Lord is, what he represents what he was fulfilling, what the whole of Israel was anticipating the centrality of the kingdom and one who would occupy the throne of David in the holy city of Zion from the place city of Jerusalem was altogether in the expectation of the nation which of course is lost to the consideration of present day Jews and Israelis but it should not be lost to the church and my repeated assertion is that until this is restored to our consciousness, until we have a wineskin, an apostolic framework of understanding of what we are about in God what the issue of Israel represents why it is that the powers of darkness will seek their annihilation because the powers of darkness are the ones who are effectually ruling the nations of our time, they

are the gods of this present world and their rule is uncontested, the only thing that will upset it and end it is when the actual and the true rule of God takes place from the throne of David and in the city of Zion in conjunction with the nation that is restored for the purpose of that rule and to whom the Holy Spirit shall be poured out without measure, the powers of darkness know better than we, what is at stake here and why the Jews hate it not because of any spirituality but because of their destiny even a remnant of them so if you don't know who the remnant is that will be the redeemed of Israel the safest thing is to wipe out anyone and everyone who is Jewish and that's what we are going to see in our time that's what Hitler sought to do by the same invective of the same vile

spirit of darkness in Europe and succeeded in annihilating one third of world Jewry almost totally eliminating Polish Jewry and European Jewry and had the war not ended as it did he would have succeeded had they won the war there wouldn't have been an American Jew that would have been safe remember the man who shot up the Jewish community center he boasted he turned himself in and he said I've done this to ring the alarm to alert the nation that Jews have got to be killed that that is the spirit of hell that's darkness that has taken possession of the vessel but expressing its mind it hates the Jews because the Jews are the threat to its uncontested political rule over the nations they are effectually and presently the gods of this present world and it's interesting that the church has no

more comprehension of this the reality of the principalities and powers over the issue of rule than it does over the issue of Israel's restoration or of the kingdom of God itself because the whole thing is indivisible it has no scene that to know and understand the one is to be brought to the understanding of the other but to omit the kingdom of God is to lose the definitive defining principle that opens the understanding of the

whole drama so maybe if we can take a look before the break at Psalm 2 the issue of rule is all we need to understand that and for that men will kill and they'll be ruthless what do we see in just even ordinary politicians look at what's going on even now the vying and striving of who's going to be the candidate for this party or that or to remain in office once

having obtained it you can't even dislodge these men they have such privileges they receive such benefit they want to go on endlessly this guy that bird from Virginia what is he 80 or 90 still in office and he's been in unbroken office for 40 years or more so there's something about political power that men refuse to cede or give up how much more the principalities and powers who are effectually ruling through the ambition of these men and are gratifying themselves with the lust of this power that can manipulate and jerk nations and even precipitate the acts of violence and chaos that destroys what is made by God and is in God's image the powers of darkness exalted in Verdun they loved no man's land they loved a generation being wiped out and its blood being spilled in Germany and France

how many potential Beethoven's and who's the great mathematician who became the believer of the French Pascal how many geniuses died in that bloodletting the powers of darkness are the antithesis of God they celebrate death God is order they are chaos God is peace and righteousness they are for violence and hatred they want to rule they want to express what is innately their nature and up till now they have been getting away with it and will continue to do so the only reason the whole world has not been more fully plunged into sexual violence is the restraint of God but what we're watching now is that restraint being progressively released and now we're seeing kids act in ways that can never be imagined parents killing their own children children blowing the brains out of their parents

because they couldn't get the keys to their car I mean acts of violence are absolutely senseless that have not to do with robbery or theft or just violence for its own sake at a scale of the kind we've never seen as the Lord lifts his restraint men are showing themselves what they are under the influence of the powers of darkness because they either have one Lord or another and in Psalm 2 we see the most graphic statement of this opposition to God in the nations why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain this is all nations and I was astonished to learn that Japan has the highest rate of the production of anti-semitic literature of any nation in the world it exceeds Poland and Germany what does Japan have to do with Jews is there a handful of Jews or businessmen in Japan why

this vitriolic hatred that Japan is the publishing center of anti-semitic literature in the world it's for this reason it's not because of the number of Jews in the land it's because Japan is ruled by a principality that hates them and is using them in its full access to produce those things that will foment a hatred unto annihilation of that people we need to understand this these are the realities so when we talk about kingdom of God we're not talking about the kingdom of God is within you we'll praise God for that I'd love to live by kingdom principles and have the presence of the king but I don't want that to exclude or eclipse the sense of kingdom in its ultimate meaning because that brings, again I'm saying to our faith the parameters of dimension and reality and earnestness that

makes the faith the faith and the church the church it is for this reason our identification with Jews at a time when they're going to be pursued unto death that puts our own lives at jeopardy that the persecution of the church will have everything to do with our identification with the Jew and with Israel not because we're sentimental about it but because we know it's the issue of God's glory that their return and their restoration is his release from heaven to be their king and to occupy that sanctuary and to be the prince that rules over them forever it's the issue of his world rule and that's why we're related to Israel because in the

ultimate sense it's the issue of pertaining to God's glory God's kingdom is his glory his rule is his glory so notice that the kings of the earth set

themselves and the rulers take counsel together is this some play on words some unnecessary verbiage what do they call it, redundancy kings and rulers the kings are the visible magistrates on the earth the rulers in my opinion are the invisible principalities and powers that manipulate and operate through them I can go off into a whole dissertation on the principalities and powers that the Lord revealed to me by the happenstance of a fractured kneecap where I took a terrible spill having baptized about 12 Lutherans in a YMCA pool in Austin, Minnesota and on my way to the locker my feet shoot out from me and I'm in a moment of time frozen I'm in the air with my bat in my hand and I said what are you doing here cats and boom, I came down on my knee with such a crunch that I thought faith,

you know, I'll believe God's made of faith and power, but the next day my knee was like a football and the brothers insisted I go to a hospital and I had a Jewish orthopedic surgeon looking at the x-rays he said you haven't just fractured your knee, he said you have smashed it, it needs an operation, it's got to be wired together I said well, go do it he said well we can't do it until Thursday I said no, Wednesday I've got to be up north the Lord is giving us a property he said who?

Jewish man and as he had his hand on my knee his eyes grew large and he felt he said I'm feeling the pieces are coming into place he said if I could just put your knee in a cast you wouldn't need an operation I said do it, so there I was that evening with my foot in a cast, in bed, I had to stay overnight elevated, and the nurse coming in with a hypodermic ready to give me a sedative and I said uh-uh, I don't need that I don't want any drug I'm not in such intense pain that I can't bear this this is only an inconvenience and so she stormed out indignantly and came back with a pill I said you don't understand, I'm not afraid of needles I've been in the U.S.

Army, both my arms were punctured as we walked through a cordon of men lined up with bent needles and let us have it from both sides, I've watched men fall over and have metals on their chest in a dead faint at the sight of needles I'm not afraid of being pricked, you don't understand I don't want to take a drug that's going to stupefy my senses I can bear this minor pain she was furious and the last thing I remember, two nurses and two doctors in my doorway foaming at the mouth, fulminating over my refusal to receive a sedative to be sedated, and I realized that I was unconsciously touching a great principle by which the world lives its life namely, the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure this is one of the premises by which the world lives is the fearful flight from pain and

from suffering and that I could bear this modicum of pain, it wasn't all that grievous but I had touched something in the medical fraternity what I had touched was a premise by which the principalities and powers that inhabit institutions actually rule and bring their influence it was a challenge to them of an uncommon kind and they could not bear it then the Lord began to open to me and to see that in all institutions that primarily in institutions of government of society, of industry commerce, trade, culture, religion these powers of darkness have their principal sway and that's where they become the rulers of this present age and they take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed they do not want to submit to that authority they don't want to lose their privileged

and uncontested place which will be a loss the moment that the government of God is established in the place that he has chosen through the nation that he will restore through the church that will aid and facilitate that restoration, even at sacrifice and the willingness in itself to bear the sacrifice and the

suffering and maybe even the martyrdom, the loss of life and in that willingness itself is exhibiting another wisdom that defeats the powers the issue of Israel the restoration of Israel is the whole contest between darkness and light between two princes, two forms of rule two authorities, two wisdoms that's why in Ephesians 3.10 we're told that God has created all things in order that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated through the church, what is

that wisdom? it's the wisdom that's willing to suffer pain it's willing to bear even the loss of its own life in the fulfillment of purposes that are greater than itself that which has to do with the glory of an invisible God that will enable him through that sacrifice and Israel's restoration to take his rightful throne and rule over his own creation that the knowledge of God might cover the earth as the waters cover the seas and the glory of the Lord will be known to all nations and that the historic rebellion will once and for all be ended and his righteousness will prevail in the earth that's a wisdom that the powers of the air despise, that the church has got to exhibit but will not unless it understands what is at stake here when we say thy kingdom come we're talking about much more

than just some personal subjective inward thing or even something in our own immediate fellowship we're talking about the large issue of the restoration of the establishment of the rule of God through the nation and people whom he has chosen and its principal city because he has made a promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 a covenantal promise that is an echo of that which was spoken to Abraham of whom Paul says in Romans 4 that Abraham was called to be the heir of the world h-e-i-r that he would bless all the families of the earth, makes him the heir of the world that there was a significance to Abraham's call as it touches all nations all the families of the earth it's not only an issue that God must win an end that he must obtain but the means to that end has got to be in keeping with the

character of God and the thing that he chooses because the issue is ultimately a cosmic struggle between powers of darkness and light that is being waged at a moral level that's why the issue of Jerusalem is critical not because it's a great center or the hill of Zion that we read here I've set my king on my holy hill or why that?

Because that hill is a pimple it's really not more than a hill why not some Olympian mount that is 30,000 feet up and is unscalable and really in keeping with the prestige and honor of a God who will set his kingdom, the locus of it on the highest mount to be found anywhere the mountain of the Lord in Isaiah chapter 2 that will exceed all other mountains and hills is not illustrious because of its height but because of its character it's exalted above the hills but because it's chosen there's a reason why this is a shoestring operation why we're not a glass cathedral there's something that's requisite even about physical facilities that have to be in keeping with the character of God Jesus born in a stable the Davidic army raised up in a cave the locus of God's eternal rule from a pimple

of a hill in a city of Jerusalem that you wouldn't look twice at rather than Geneva or New York or some other illustrious place you have to understand the moral content of this struggle because the powers can only be defeated on a moral ground contrary to themselves that's why if you turn to Psalm 8 you'll see where we come in, in verse 2 beginning from the beginning see how the Psalms always have the largest context for God the earth, the nations the earth is the Lord's and the nations they love are those that dwell in them the Psalmist always understood the great sovereignty of God the large sense of things out of the mouths you have set your glory above the heavens out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded it says here, a bulwark because of your foes to silence the enemy

and the avenger somebody read that out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained strength because of your enemies that you may silence the enemy and the avenger he's going to stop the mouth of the enemy because you know what the enemy says? only prestige, only power, only credentials do you realize we have a whole system in society that is predicated upon credentials you know what I had to do to get this master's degree sweat and agonize and be confronted and humiliated and stretched out that there was some issue over this piece of paper and when I came to the graduation ceremony I began to understand how central that whole thing was with institutions why men will labor for four years, six years to obtain a degree, a doctorate the initials after their names, it's the name of the

game you're not going to succeed, you're not going to make a livelihood you're not going to have a security, an affluence and a comfort unless you've got the credentials unless you've got the diploma, you've got to serve your time you've got to take the subjects that are nonsensical because it's a system predicated on credentials awards, prestige what do they call it in the middle ages? the craft guilds, there's a guild the academicians are not going to let you into their guild unless they approve your thesis, unless you're one of the boys it's a whole directive thing that in the end is a conspiracy against life notice that the government of God is not predicated on credentials religious systems, yes you have a title and it's on your door you're the bishop or whatever you're the

president, secretary general but in the kingdom of God, in the church it's not the credential that counts but the anointing it's the authority that is the expression of something internal wrought in God that has to do with a personal history and a relationship and something tested and evident to God's people it's not because a man has passed through a seminary that he's authorized, see what I mean? the system of God is not predicated on credentials religious systems, yes you have a title and it's on your door you're the bishop or whatever you're the president, secretary general but in the kingdom of God, in the church it's not the credential that counts but the anointing it's the authority that is the expression of something internal wrought in God that has to do with a personal history

and a relationship and something tested and evident to God's people it's not because a man has passed through a seminary that he's authorized, see what I mean? the system of God rests on the spirit the system of men on credentials and on requirements that have to do with prestige and accomplishment based on power that's why God says through the mouths of infants and sucklings I have perfected praise to stop the mouth of the avenger and the enemy because his wisdom is contrary to that he says this is not going to work, your church is a farce your church is a bunch of slapdash characters who are the dregs of society who have no credential, no qualification and they're going to be the instruments of the bringing in of the kingdom there's something here that's a great issue it's a moral issue

and it's the issue of kingdoms in contention and value systems and a great cosmic drama and that's what we're involved in the same reason that he has chosen us because we're foolish because we're weak, because we have no distinction because for all effects and purposes we're his children what did the prophets say when they were called?

I'm a child, I cannot speak, that's why you were called if you were eloquent and had credentials I would not have chosen you and Paul who had eloquence said I will not condescend to it I don't want your faith won on the basis of my eloquence but on the basis of God and so I'm forfeiting it, I'm not operating out of it I'll stutter and stammer but let it be the spirit of God speaking that you might be won and not some human exercise this is a great issue Israel is chosen not for its stature not for its prestige, not for its accomplishment but because of its weakness and even the elevation of his son to occupy the throne of

David on the holy hill of Zion had to wait for the humbling of his son through death at the cross and says this day I have declared the decree thou art my son, now

you're qualified to rule and reign with me what day was that? it's not the day of his birth, it was the day of his resurrection when he had submitted to the humiliation of God and had gone down God raised him up all the way to the right hand of Paul and so is our authority also predicated on exactly the same thing we have it only in the measure that we have been willing to go down then God will exalt us to the place of authority and rule and reign with him so let's take a little break let me breathe a little prayer for the spirit of the kingdom this is more than nuts and bolts issue of authority and rule, it is that but it's rule in keeping with the wisdom and the spirit of God the emphasis on that which is weak has nothing in itself that is distinctive and that even the presentation

about the kingdom has got to come in weakness that's why I've been up since 3 o'clock this morning that I should not succeed on the basis of having all my marbles together and my wits clear but rather in weakness and in emptiness the Lord himself must bring forth the spirit, the reality and the truth of it because this is absolutely critical for the church of the last days, it's the wineskin it's the mindset, it's the framework of understanding that will affect everything so Lord, we thank you that the last thing that was spoken and sung in our prayer this morning was thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and we thank you for your kingdom Lord that it's not an airy theoretical abstraction but a viable, real, cogent issue of rule which is sanity, which is health which is the

preservation of life, it's the end of violence and rape and madness it's justice and equity if only you can perform it because you have no vested interest to serve you're not ambitious for yourself, you're beside yourself for their sake so Lord thy kingdom come, may it come first with us if it doesn't come with us, how shall there be an increase of your peace and of your government if it doesn't begin with us and so Lord, search us, is our government upon your shoulder are we here because you have directed us or our own curiosity so your kingdom come my God we bless you for the anticipation of it the very anticipation is itself one of the viable elements that brings to our faith a structure, a dynamic, an expectancy that affects everything oh precious God, perform something today through

the setting forth of this great theme for ourselves and those who are beyond us through these tapes we'll hear of it also, let that faith come my God through that hearing that will facilitate expedite, bring that kingdom to pass we thank you and give you praise for the privilege of our participation in Yeshua's holy name, amen what would have escaped us have been only practical matters but when you see through the lens of the kingdom every issue has a heightened significance and calls for a response and a behavior that the world would look upon as being utterly foolish and contradictory against your own self-interest but it's that very ability to decide against your own self-interest that glorifies God and defeats the powers of the very locality where that issue is and I was just thinking

to offer as another illustration an episode that I had some years ago that pertained to this school two brothers wanted to come from Africa one black, one white and the American consulate official would not give them a visa and contended against them and called me up 5 o'clock in the morning to say that he thought that they would use the occasion to remain in this country though that was not their intention, no and I was too tired to argue, oh really Aaron? okay, well then don't give it to them, and I hung up and afterwards the Lord began to just challenge me that this man was going beyond the legal and moral right that he had as an official in government, that there was an issue of government here that was going beyond the parameters that God would consider moral and legal, and so I sat

down I wrote him a letter, I said you're going beyond I recognize government and I respect government and I respect authority, but you are exceeding what God has prescribed for being morally and legally right, you're no longer acting officially, you're acting officiously and it means to be officious it's to take the occasion of your office and to exceed it in some personal way without justification and I said you are opposing the movement of God's servants to be in the place of his intention by being officious not acting righteously in your office and I sent that letter, I first sent it to the brothers to give to him because I knew that it would infuriate him and in the break here I learned of another instance where the powers of the air acting through men over an issue of breastfeeding

were furious whenever you see fury and anger you know that the powers of darkness are being gored that's the way that they will express themselves and indeed I said to these brothers, if you give him this letter you'll be permanently shot down, you've got to take that risk but there's an issue here of righteousness and rule that needs to come to his attention so I'll leave it to you for what you're willing to do they brought him the letter and they said there was a Christian woman the secretary of the office and the man exploded with anger and fury that I was speaking in the authority as a believer and saying that you're exceeding the province that is right for you and going beyond it and therefore offending against the God who has established government, you're impeding the God who has

established limits for government and though he burst into a fury the next thing that happened was they got their visas and they came, and their coming at least for one of those two brothers, is instrumental to this day he's a significant man in Zambia in his own country, seeking to establish a kingdom reality and community, so his coming was very critical and it was released by what we were really talking to was not the official so much as the rulers as well as the magistrate to say you're going beyond God's limitation and this is unrighteous and not moral and we are asserting the reality of God's intention for rule and saying you must not exceed it as a believer acting in that authority and that brought the release so once you put on these glasses it's remarkable how issues that would

otherwise be passed over take on a remarkable significance and need to be addressed in the light of the reality that underlies reality that is not known by men who are just operating at the surface of the technical or secular level there's an ultimate issue behind all issues and it's the issue of rule, the issue of the kingdom the issue of righteousness, and we have a right and authority to act on that basis and call men to be observant of it even when they are not believers and God will honor that with the authority which is his and bring about release so Reggie has to leave at 11 I think that I have shot my bolt and got out what I felt needed to be expressed this morning, we can kind of glean through that any issues or thoughts that come up that we want to go back and examine, the

scriptures were sometimes hurriedly touched, I want just to take a few minutes to finish on Psalm 2 I have declared the decree not to pass over Psalm 2 lightly because it's one of the most profound statements of the vehement bitterness and opposition of the powers of darkness exercised through government and nations against God against his anointed, let us burst their bonds of sunder and cast their courts from us they despise the rule of God, even though they will allow some kind of nominal condescension to opening sessions of congress with prayer they do not want God's rule but he who sits in the heavens laughs and the Lord holds them in derision he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury his own response to their rebellion is not light and he's going to judge the

nations in that anger, and it's going to be a fearful judgment, and then the statement I've set my king on Zion, my holy hill and then the king himself seems to be speaking from verse 7, I will tell of the decree of

the Lord, he said to me, you are my son today I have begotten you, ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession, you shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel now therefore kings be wise and be warned the rulers of the earth serve the Lord with fear and so on so evidently the issue of sonship is the issue of authority but what is the issue of sonship before that authority is bestowed by God by decree, God has made an announcement and the son is asserting that decree as the authorization

of his authority to sit on that holy hill in Zion what is the day, today, the Lord has said he's established a decree, thou art my son what day was that, what day is that not only for Jesus, but for any of us if we are going to move in kingdom or authority as sons, in what day will we hear the decree for ourselves, see there's a pattern here that's what I don't want us to miss, this is not just however profound in its meaning for Jesus, but in its application for all of us as the sons of God, who are given the right to exercise the authority of the father in the province and area where he's called us to be influential and to exercise it even here on the earth in our localities how does the issue of sonship and authority become established, this day today I've declared the decree, has it

come for you when will it come, what will be the issue by which it comes what was the issue for Jesus by which it came so I would direct you to Romans chapter 1, where I believe God answers that question in the very first verses after Paul introduces himself as a servant of Jesus Christ called the apostle, according concerning his son who was descended from David notice the mentality of the apostle it's the very same as the prophets as Isaiah, it's the very same as the psalmist of who Jesus is as the son of David according to the flesh and by the way, do you notice how the detractors today try to negate this they talk about Zion in a derogatory way as if it's only a spiritual marker it has only a spiritual sense God is not interested in real estate God is not interested in any piece of

earth, any hill that's only a metaphor, that's only a designation it's the spiritual significance that counts God is interested in the specificity of the earth that he has chosen or there'll be no kingdom come yes it's spiritual, but it's spiritual because it's practical because it's natural, because there's a place that God has designated, that he has chosen the issue of God who chooses is the issue of God and every bit as much as he has chosen a nation a very literal physical nation natural with a national destiny so also has he chosen a piece of earth Jerusalem and the holy hill of Zion and if his son does not rule from that place, he does not rule his kingdom will not come, there'll be no divine rule except that it issues from that place because God has chosen it so one of the early

heresies of the church was a Gnosticism that was offended by physical limitations and requirements it wanted to just carry on a kind of a pseudo-ethereal spirituality in that kind of spectral realm and disliked the scandal of God's specificity you better not dislike that scandal but embrace it because we are part of that scandal that he has chosen us, specifically in our natural and earthly reality that God is the God who is clothed by that and that he inhabits and dwells in such sanctuaries and that in fact if he has not that earthly tabernacle which we are, his glory is not revealed he doesn't occupy space, he occupies tabernacles of an earthly kind we have this treasure in our what's the word, in our earthen vessel God is not impervious to the earth he's the creator of it and that the

glory of God cannot be seen outside of that context once you remove it, it becomes ethereal and without definition, it loses its value it's just a verbal trip, it becomes significant only in the earthly context there's a very literal Zion, a very literal Israel a very literal piece of earth a very literal son who comes of age and the decree is made that authorizes him to occupy that throne and then has given him the nations and the

heaven for his inheritance only on the day that God has declared the decree this is remarkable back to Romans chapter 1 of Jesus, the gospel of his son, descended from David according to flesh who was declared to be the son of God a decree came, Jesus was declared and that declaration is the authorization to occupy the holy hill of Zion as God's appointed king

whom he has set on that throne he was declared to be the son of God with power with authority that is according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead the key to the decree and the day of the decree was the day of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead his sonship was established in his what's the opposite of humiliation his exaltation from the death to which he had voluntarily given himself what does he say to his disciples in his resurrection body all authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth he never said that before, he said it in his ascended resurrection body, go ye therefore into all the earth and preach this gospel to every creature now you can go, I'm authorizing you in the authority that has been invested in me because the father has declared the

decree that my resurrection was the statement of the father's approval of my sacrifice of myself unto death it was not only my vindication it is my authorization and now I can occupy the throne and now I authorize you and now you can go and proclaim this message with all authority the issue of sonship is the issue of resurrection and the issue of resurrection is the issue of a willingness to suffer a humiliation unto death, probably not once but as many times as the Lord will require it and remember I said before, the world's authority rests on titles and credentials but the authority of the kingdom rests on anointing and on the maturity of sons in exact proportion as they have been willing to suffer the deaths to which God will submit them where do we find authority in the body I've seen

many men who posture to be apostles and they play they speak a good game, but I'm not impressed I don't get the corresponding sense of weight, of authority of density, of reality of God because they are men who have not submitted themselves to death, but have skirted around it the very fact that they flaunt their apostolic title in your face and expect you to be impressed with it is the avoidance of death itself and shows that there's a life very much ambitious unto itself and for itself that's playing at the game of apostolicity but has not the real and evident credential, God has not declared the decree and yet they're playing at it and they know how to play at it, they know how to quote Paul and how to extrapolate verses from Paul and apply them to church situations in crisis and need

as if they are the real thing so the false apostles is one of the phenomena of the last days how do we tell the difference between one who seems to have the vocabulary and throws his weight around and has a seeming kind of authority I remember one such guy came to us here in Ben Israel some years ago, he was already being touted as an apostle and one of our youngest brothers shot him down, it wasn't in some insulting way, but just in a question or two or a comment, it became clear that this young brother had more on the ball spiritually speaking than this man who professed to be apostolic and his the contrast between the two was clear, the air went out of the man he fizzled, the thing shriveled up and blew away because this young brother, wherever he was in God was in the place of

authenticity and the presumer had not authenticity and the contrast alone let the air out of this balloon.

Authority is a great question, particularly in the battle against the powers of the air, and so how was that obtained, the way Jesus obtained it he was declared a son, wasn't he a son from the beginning but in the Hebrew concept of adoption that even a son who is genetically born from a father is not yet a son who has received his inheritance until he has come of age and has displayed a character in keeping with the

responsibility to represent the father and to serve the father without usurping or taking for himself any aspect of the father's kingdom, Jesus displayed that, and only death can obtain it where are we safe from the ambition and usurping from God in the offices that we are given and to which we are called, except that the axe has really been laid to the root, who of us will not presume and usurp and take some advantage and some liberty from the office that we have to advance ourselves or to bring some kind of personal satisfaction so long as there's even an iota of such possibility we've not come to the place of adoption and the father knows when that place has come and it comes through death unto resurrection this day I've declared the decree, now you're safe to represent me I know that you'll never use your office in any way of self-aggrandizement the way men do in the world now I know that your interest for me is your only interest and your absolute interest that when I give you the heathen for your inheritance it will not be for your self-aggrandizement but for my glory as the father whose kingdom this is resurrection out of death is the key both for sonship and apostolic and prophetic authority in the kingdom of God you know that there's a three year interval when the Lord closed down Ben Israel after the first ten years of our life at a time when we were beginning to see daylight after much struggle and difficulty in community that's when the Lord shut us down, not when we were failing, when we were succeeding when we thought by every reckoning now the Lord would bless and endorse and we go on is the very time the Lord required for an abdication from the property we had to leave the property to vandals and to the elements for any, God did not say three years it turned to prove to be that but it could have been indefinitely and we might not ever have gotten it back we had to relinquish and let go I remember once in Israel we were at a fellowship that had Jewish and Arab believers and they were fighting over the issue of a menorah the seven branched Jewish candlestick that was on the platform the Arab believers were bitterly opposed to it they saw it as a Jewish symbol the Jewish believers were vehemently in support of it because they saw it as a symbolic biblical symbol and they were threatening to come apart over this menorah and so we listened to them we came out to the bus and we were going to go on and one of our tour members, a lady said she said the Lord gave me a word over the situation I said what is it?

She said relinquish relinquish, let go we had to relinquish Ben Israel whatever it was, whatever investment we had in it spiritually, emotionally, had to be let go unto death and we had to actually leave the property and abandon it and our IRS recognition and everything that pertained to it equally, without any assurance that would ever be a return as dear as it had become and for the sacrifice that had been invested as it happened three years later, I was among the first maybe the first to be brought back none of the other members of the community except a Mexican-American couple and we, for a year and a half in the house lived together and the primary purpose was intercession five o'clock every morning earlier if the Lord would waken us for the restoration of Ben Israel well in that period the buildings were beginning to suffer loss they had not been attended, the roofs were giving way you'll see if you walk the property, there's a skeleton of one trailer that only the basement remains it had so deteriorated because of the roofing being neglected that we finally had to tear it down when we did return well there's a young guy that was living in the neighborhood in a shack, with a pig and two dogs and he had been divorced and I'd been warned by people you don't want to touch this guy, he's a real character well, I needed someone to watch over the buildings and I could give him a place to live a few bucks to keep body and soul together help pay his child support payments and I wanted to give him a chance to have a better opportunity so we took this guy in and over the course of the next year and a half we acquired seven horses and leather, what do you call it, implements bridles and things for horses to do agricultural work in anticipation of a time when you cannot buy nor sell and you have to resort to God's way of agriculture and so we were accumulating some very valuable things well the day came when this brother became more and more difficult, problematical and the Lord had allowed me after many months of sabbatical silence to open my mouth again and to speak I

was away in Chicago on a ministry trip and this brother called me long distance I'm ready to leave, what shall I take?

I didn't know what to tell him, I thought, well, take half you've labored, but I paid every financial requirement for the horses and all the equipment and the brother who was with me said let him take what he thinks is right I said, well, take what you think is right, I thought to myself if he takes half, that would be very generous I came back after the trip he had taken all seven horses he took the oak boards upon which the horses stood and urinated he took the rope out of the barn that was there years before he ever came in which the bales of hay were lifted up he took every screw, nut, bolt he took every screwdriver, hammer and nail he stripped the place and he was helped by a Christian brother whom I know who never asked the question of, aren't you going too far? and helped him to

cart off a vehicle, the horses, the equipment everything, I came back to a stripped place and naturally when I saw the degree to which this guy had gone the resentment began to rise up and the Lord said, uh-uh, that's a no-no take your stripping with all joy so we had to taste this reality I don't think it'll be the last time either if we're not stripped materially, we'll be stripped in one way or another but our attitude to the stripping is the critical question and the powers of the earth are looking to see what our disposition and our response is so I think we can rightly anticipate well, what will save us from resentment and bitterness against those who are unfairly and unjustly taking their advantage against us Paul says, they took their stripping joyfully knowing that they had a

greater recompense in heaven they were eternally minded and they knew that in the principles of the kingdom there would be a recompense not just of an equal kind, but of a greater kind and of a kind that will not fade away long after these harnesses and leather things will deteriorate what God will give as an equivalent will be eternal in its reward and the knowing of that, the real knowing of that though it's invisible, distant, and beyond this life enables us to function in this life according to the mode of the kingdom of God that demonstrates another wisdom to the powers of the earth who were already enjoying and delight that, that, that, that, that, that, we really got you now you've been emptied out and all that you've invested and struggled on is lost, but when they see the

joyous receiving of the stripping they are the defeated ones so the next time you pray, thy kingdom come you had better know that what you're saying is thy resurrection come and if you're saying that, what you're saying is, thy death come you want to be a son of the kingdom I can't think of anything that is more offensive to God than vacuous, meaningless prayers that are insincere, that talk about the kingdom come as if it's some magical thing that will come as a luxury to pray thy kingdom come, or to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is to pray your death and maybe for that reason the kingdom is not coming and it's got to come progressively for of the increase of his rule of his government and of his peace, there's no end that increase has got to begin with us and it comes to the degree

that we say thy kingdom come because it not only has an eschatological expectancy it has an apocalyptic expectancy it knows that there's a judgment a devastation, both to Israel and to nations before that king comes or as he comes, he comes in judgment God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world so to pray for his kingdom is to welcome that judgment however painful, and wherever it's needful well, is there anything that any of us here possesses that we're unwilling to relinquish? not only in terms of material things homes and possessions, but name honor, reputation, hope for the future hope for future employment, hope for ministry is there anything that you're unwilling to let go? that's the issue of the kingdom you know what I think would be a fit conclusion for this

morning? how singing the prayer our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name, thy will be done thy kingdom come, in earth this earth, this piece of earth this locale, as in heaven may the Lord have a church that really believes that desires that, willing for that and to know to pray that kingdom come means our death and our resurrection so you think on that what is there that you might be unwilling to relinquish? anything marriage, family, children, possession fame, name, God's waiting for sons the issue of the kingdom is the issue of sons thank you Lord our Father

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