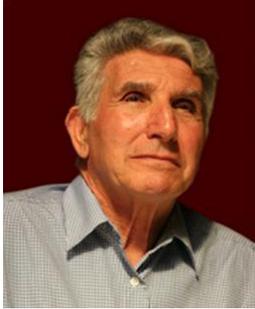


# **Apostolic - Prophetic Messages**

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## **Apostolic and Prophetic Foundations**

*Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction" (Exodus 24:12).*

As we enter a decade of enormous challenge, uncertainty and shaking, I am assured that the church stands in great need of prophetic and apostolic foundations with men of that calling giving directive voices. How many of us have recognized that we have come to the end of our charismatic, pentecostal and evangelical tethers? Do we have a sense that there is a further dimension which eclipses all that we have known and had hoped in, but we do not know how to identify, or even find it? I wonder how much this expresses the heart of God's people today. My impression is of an organic, swelling cry rising up to heaven from the earth for a real, personally transcendent and significant Christianity that is not and cannot be found or experienced in anything less than that which is truly apostolic and prophetic. Yesterday's charismatic enthusiasm is fading, now that the novelty is past, and our inner man is increasingly smitten by the hollowness of our once titillating choruses and spiritual catch-phrases. But where is that which is authentically apostolic? How can its messengers be identified? And how is it to be obtained?

This much is certain, if we are to make of that reality what we have made of the more recent subjects of discipleship, the Body of Christ, authority-submission, power evangelism, church growth, etc., it will be the cruelest delusion of all. God save us from yet another word-game, from institutionalizing or systematizing that which is apostolic and holy. Already, numbers of men, who have a penchant for traveling and a brusque ability to "set things in order", are publicly advertising themselves as apostles or prophets. Many of these are likely self-appointed amateurs, crude apprentices appropriating Scriptures and holy things but whom the head of the church has not sent! Surely the things that are apocalyptic are at the door. The church shall soon again be commended for having tried them "which say that they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars" (Revelation 2:2).

What we must pray for, seek, and wait upon, then, are apostolic and prophetic men, whose understanding and commission has come from God, who like Moses, the archetypal "master-builder" before them are the meekest of men upon the face of the earth. They have received the essence and knowledge of God in communion with Him upon the mount to which they have been sovereignly summoned. They would not dare to presume to ascend themselves: "How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You to dwell in Your courts" (Psalm 65:4).

The whole weight of things is rightly upon God, for if we miss this essential thing, every reckoning must thereafter be askew, and we will build upon man rather than God which would be a doomed "foundation" indeed! In a word, there are none upon whom the realization of God's total sovereignty is more incumbent than those called to be the foundation of the church, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20).

Moses was commanded by God to "be there" on the Mount. What a hint at the totality of being: mind, soul, body and spirit, in communion with a total God totally! Surely the church

is nothing if it misses this, and how shall we understand this foundational requisite except we see it in men who have ascended in such manner? This is the very genius of true apostolic "church" which cannot be communicated as mere principle, a technique or a method, but only by example, by those who are in that "mountain-top" communion.

The increasing role-call of ministers falling to the sin of adultery and fornication is a testimony of men who have not that reverential fear of God, which would have been theirs if they had ascended this fearful, quaking mount! And what is apostolic and foundational, if not the imparting of the fear of God to men, a fear obtained in communion alone in the mount wreathed in fire? How many of the convivial, man-pleasing kind can bear the pain of total separation, not only from Egypt, but also from the tribes of Israel, the seventy elders, Aaron and his sons, and even their closest Joshua, to wait alone in the thick cloud for the seventh day's call into the presence of God alone?

"And the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Exodus 20:21). For we who are the products of so glib and easy an age there is much here for us to understand. Six days in the thick cloud! The number of man, and all that is of man, brought into utter, total darkness and nullification! Those of you who have experienced the terror of fire know that the worst hellishness is the thickness of smoke by which one is left fearfully and completely disoriented, even in the place of greatest familiarity and self-knowledge. So must we be emptied of every brittle thing we know, however correct, if we are to receive on a seventh day of Sabbath rest the thing that God gives as revelation: "the "apostolic" law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

And what then awaits the apostle/prophet/priest below? An impatient and itchy mob dancing nakedly about their own golden-calf religion justified by: "as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out...we know not what has become of him" (Exodus 32:1). My suspicion is that Christendom has not wanted to know! It prefers its idolatrous religion of convenience to that of true apostolic religion, which flows out from a life lived by the sterner requirements. And the final test of what is genuinely apostolic is the authority that unhesitatingly commands false idols to be pulverized to powder, and compels the people to drink of their error. Waxing hot in anger (Exodus 34:15-20) is the prerogative available only to the meek! No expertise or bombast of human personality will suffice here, but only the authority that is with those whose faces are suffused with the glory obtained in His Presence.

One might well ask, who has a heart to come down to that scene as well as to go up? Would you be a foundational man, willing to suffer the heartbreak of unspeakable disappointment with God's people as well as the joy of His ineffable glory? In the very same moment that the holy, first commandments were given on the top of the mount: "You shall have no other gods before Me; you shall not make for yourselves any graven image", there was the vilest offense against it being performed below!

Who has the moral and spiritual stamina to lead such a multitude? The alternatives are stark: "a holy nation" or a people, mindless and sensual, "eating and drinking and rising up to play!" (Exodus 32:6). Facing such alternatives, the deepest heart of the apostle/prophet must burn with the cry, "Show me now Thy glory." And once having glimpsed this glory, he will be satisfied with nothing less than seeing it made manifest in the world through this

same people. May this decade see the coming forth of such men that there might be such a church.

## **An Apostolic Manifesto**

In this late hour, the church needs to consider something that would constitute a plumb line from heaven, something to which we should align ourselves. I believe there is an apostolic distinctive that identifies the true church, and makes of it what has always been its characteristic from the beginning. No man can give a definitive and comprehensive summation of the whole genius of the word apostolic, but let this be a broad guideline and statement, so that it might enter our contemplation and change our conduct.

This outline will mean ultimate requirement for the church. If apprehended correctly, it will put us in a place of ultimate opposition, requiring ultimate sacrifice, because it has ultimate purpose in God. We will surely not attain to the reality that makes the church the church except by a conscious and willful choosing of these things. However strange and ambiguous some of the statements will be, may the spirit and essence of these truths go into our hearts and find their way into our understanding.

For a long time, there has been disquiet in my soul over the use of charismatic gifts in our churches. We have looked to the gifts to "renew" our denominations, or to uplift the saints, as if this is an accessory to our religious self-interest. There has certainly been much abuse and misuse, and we have therefore entirely missed the profound intention of God in the giving of His Spirit. I began to contemplate the context in which God intends the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, and from that first thought came this statement on the genius of an apostolic church.

The gifts and operation of the Spirit have got to be seen in the context of an apocalyptic and eschatological faith. By this, I mean a radical anticipation of an end, a consummation and a conclusion of the age, the coming of a King, the establishment of a Kingdom here on earth from a literal Jerusalem. Any body of believers that has laid hold of this faith, the only valid faith, will be marked by the powers of darkness as a people to be feared, resisted, and opposed. The powers will see them as a threat to their whole prevailing religious establishment and will ventilate their anger and spite against such a body. The operation and benefit of the Spirit, His instruction and guidance, will be a critical factor for a body that is experiencing opposition from these powers of darkness. They are compelled to take notice of any body that consciously and willfully understands, and takes to themselves, the purposes of God by which the age is to be concluded. This is a church that has moved past a mere succession of Sunday services or a Christianity that has to do with their own blessing and the benefit they receive. They consciously seek to be a body in which the ultimate and eternal purposes of God are to be fulfilled. The kind of opposition they will receive requires the wisdom and direction of God, which is given through the operation of His Spirit through gifts.

Such a body will find itself at odds with the world. It will be a sore thumb; it will be a band of pilgrims and sojourners in the earth who are remarkably free from the blandishments, the seductions and the inducements that are increasingly powerful in the world. They are in the world, but not of the world. They see the world for what it is: A system that is powerfully against the life of men, and that makes of men objects only of merchandise and commerce. The apostolic body touches the world only as it must, and that faintly and with reservation. It sees the world with its false values, and it consciously repudiates them and

does not lend itself to them. Therefore, to whatever degree that such a body is free from the influence of the world and its false values, it is already a harbinger and statement of a "Kingdom come." It is already a foretaste and foreshadowing of the great freedom that will be in the world when the King Himself reigns, where all that is false will be brought to nothing. To whatever degree the church enjoys that freedom now, it is capable of setting free those who are presently ensnared and enslaved by that system. It is able to emancipate and deliver the world's deceived victims, not just by its proclamation, though that is very important, but by its demonstration, by what it is in itself. Abiding in that remarkable freedom from the world, its values and all that is false, this kingdom reality will be a freeing experience for those in the world who will stumble upon it, because it reveals another alternative for them.

This reality cannot be obtained except in and through a body. The powers of the world—its darkness, wiles, and subtleties—require the entire body to be alert; they require the strength that comes from the prayer and counsel of those of a like mind who are joined in an endeavor of this kind. Such an integration of life will be profoundly resisted by the powers of darkness, but these same powers can only be defeated by another wisdom, a people who are free from their influence, and who recognize how nefarious and sinister the powers of the air are. That kind of walk cannot be obtained by individuals, independent of a body of like-minded saints who are willfully joined in such an undertaking. It is clear that this requires more than Sunday services and mid-week Bible studies. We will need a frequency of fellowship, a going "from house to house daily breaking bread" (Acts 2:46). We will need the counsel of others, and to be in the place where sin is recognized at its very inception because of the proximity to each other. It can only be a reality where there is an interaction and frequency of relationship and communion because you are joined with a conscious purpose.

It will not win the esteem of men, but we will not be "known" by the powers of darkness unless we refuse the esteem of men. The powers will know when that choice is made: "Jesus, we know and Paul, we know, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15) If we refuse this direction and call, we condemn ourselves to merely playing out our Christianity harmlessly and irrelevantly to the cosmic drama in which the church is set. That drama is the awareness that we are moving toward a climax that is at the door; a conclusion is imminent and a consummation is at hand. We know when we have entered into that true awareness when we no longer contemplate our retirement plans. We will no longer look upon our existence here as the "best of all possible worlds." The powers of darkness, who know that their time is short, will be all the more vehement and vicious in their opposition to those who have this kind of awareness. If we have no awareness of the end, then our present living is nullified and becomes a humdrum monotony without significance. This is what distinguishes a true, apostolic body.

An apostolic body is a sending body, because it has the only reality that God will entrust to be sent. It has something to communicate out of its own corporate life. Only then can the laying on of hands be performed in something that is more than ceremonial or "biblical" obligation. In sending, the sent ones take with them the dimension of that reality and authority.

The gifts of the Spirit are therefore an urgent provision in the midst of a sea of active hostility against them. The issue of authenticity is the issue of the truth of our consecration. When it is only a shallow series of mindless altar calls and a few crocodile tears, the powers of the air yawn in our face. They know when a true consecration has been made, where the life is laid down ultimately and totally before God. At the same time, such a consecrated people are living consciously and sacrificially as being the appointed salvific agents of God toward the people Israel at the end of the age.

This is intrinsic to apostolic comprehension of what the church is. The church that fits the description I have given will itself comprehend and recognize its calling toward the restoration of Israel in her last days' tribulation. It will certainly dismiss any thought that it is going to be raptured away at the time when its presence is most radically required, for its presence means salvation for Jews in their soon-coming "time of Jacob's trouble." This is not an appendage for the church; it is central and primary to the church's own consideration of itself and what its purposes are in God.

Knowing that there will be such a demand will also require a sacrificial lifestyle. Israel's restoration is the issue of the King and His Kingdom. God is not restoring them because they deserve a homeland after long centuries in the Diaspora, but their restoration is the coming of the King so that "law might go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of a Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3), a redeemed and restored nation. That is why the powers of darkness will be in such a fit and frenzy of opposition to anything that pertains to Jewish rescue, salvation, and redemption in the last days. The issue of Jewish restoration is the issue of the Kingdom of God, and the powers of darkness are the false usurping rulers of this world and do not want to relinquish and forsake that usurping activity, which they have enjoyed in an unchecked and uncontested way since ages millennia. It is the coming of the King as the One seated on the throne of David in the holy hill of Zion, with the redeemed and restored Israel that marks their end. We need to know this final drama, or we will not understand the frenzy and the rage that will be poured out upon Jews in the last days. The powers of darkness, in their corrupt and perverse wisdom, recognize that the only way to avert the threat of to their false rule is by annihilating the Jews, whose return would terminate them.

The "time of Jacob's trouble" that concludes the age and brings Israel's King and His rule over the nations will be a time of sifting and chastening. The church must recognize and accept the ultimate requirements of such a task and willfully adopt the coming times as central or primary to its whole purpose for being. We must consciously be aware and take hold of these tasks for ourselves, willfully. You do not come to this through a process of osmosis. We need to recognize what these last days mean as they pertain to the Jewish people, as well as the role and function of the church toward this people. In fact, the eternal destiny of men is determined by what we will do with the "least of these My brethren" (Mt. 25:40). The Jew will be "least" in those days. The most celebrated and prosperous of Jews, who are currently riding the crest of the world's wave, will find themselves with only a shirt on their backs and cast out into the nations in the most desolate and deprived condition.

We have to lay hold of this prophetic understanding, and then determine that we choose to be a factor in their deliverance in that time. That one choice, that one conscious deliberation, that one taking of that mandate to ourselves, has the potential to transfigure

the church. Every aspect of the faith is brought into a new kind of perception, a depth of awareness, and a new reality, once this central key is fitted into the church's consciousness as the primary purpose for its being. Anything that has to do with any subtlety of any anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic residue, of which we think we might be free, will be flushed to the surface. There is a flushing out, a depth and intensity of the work of God in the sanctification of the body. In Ezekiel 20, God tells Israel, "I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations, face to face. And there you will come into the bond of My covenant and under the rod of My authority."

Something happens to a remnant of Jews in the last days' final sifting that is the factor by which they return to Zion as the "redeemed of the Lord," with everlasting joy upon their heads and mourning and sighing fleeing away. There will be no return at all unless there is a church in the earth that already anticipates this and is preparing itself to be the salvific agent of God for this distressed people in a soon-coming time; for when it comes, it will come suddenly. This perspective needs to be central to our whole purpose and being. Therefore, we need the strategic direction of God, which is obtained through the operation of the Spirit through trusted members in the body, whose prophecies are not some kind of soulish exercise or drawing of attention to themselves, but a trusted expression of God's wisdom and will in a critical moment of decision. Can you see what we have been trafficking in? Most of are unable to discern whether a prophecy that we are hearing is of the Spirit or of man. That kind of dubious, hazy condition can no longer be tolerated in an hour that has come, where there is a deep seriousness of God needed in the church. For our purpose and call, we need to hear from God in critical moments through a word of prophecy, a tongue, an interpretation, or a word of wisdom. We need the operation of the gifts of the Spirit now, in the context that God has always intended. The church that obtains this hearing from God is the church that has consciously come to this serious place in Him, whose members have been tested and know each other, so that when a word comes forth, they know that it is not of man but of God.

It is no accident that such a fellowship's prayer and worship reflects the truth of this reality, because prayer and worship are not luxuries, but spiritual weapons. They are no more relevant or real than we ourselves are, no more significant than the truth of what we are in ourselves and before God. It is not a technique or methodology that is required, but an expression of a worship that issues from the experience of God's redemptive power in our lives, for we are in something earnest together. We are not ashamed to be dealt with, and when we receive such dealings from a brother or a sister, we are going to give expression in joy to the release and freedom that comes from the sanctifying work that has waited for this condition to be obtained. God will not meet us on our terms; He will not play our games. He waits for that which is true, real, and earnest, that which acknowledges sin, corruption, and need. Only then can we experience the grace of God. Our prayer is relative to the reality to which we have come, and that kind of prayer is powerful and moves heaven. It has moved out of a casual, conglomeration of saints, whose essential focus is on themselves, and whose spiritual egocentricity has never been broken. We can bring ego-centrism into the church as profoundly as we knew it in the world. All we have done is shifted the object. In the world, it was carnal pleasure and delight and material things. In the church, it is still ego and self: "How did you enjoy the meeting? What did you think of the speaker?" That self-focus is an inveterate power that can only be broken when we

ourselves are not the center of our own concern and preoccupation, but God and His purposes in the context that I am setting forth and calling apostolic.

This is not a naïve body, because it knows that the church is a place of suffering before it is a place of glory. Suffering is intrinsic to this kind of relationship. It is not because we intend to inflict each other or constitute a threat or an annoyance. It is the very nature of things, because the members of the body are in differing places of maturity and background. The thing that distinguishes the church I am describing is that it is willing for such a suffering. A body of this kind is eternity-conscious. Its conduct in this present moment is set in eternity, knowing that there is an issue of eternal judgment and eternal reward. It is very much aware that the Lord is coming, who will bring His rewards with Him and give to every man according to his work. It knows that it is living in the anticipation of eternity, and that it does not want to suffer an eternal chagrin and disappointment for living beneath the glory of God.

That kind of reality and that kind of life together not only affects the worship of such a body, but it also affects their discernment. Their discernment is much more acute, more able to sift and separate the kinds of things that beguile and trap Christians of a shallower kind. It discerns and recognizes the whole issue of the dark powers of the air and the necessity to wrestle against them. Wrestling is ultimate confrontation, and ultimate consecration alone defeats these powers. It is not merely the activity of individual saints, but a church that recognizes the configuration of powers that are above them and will do battle in the realm of spirit in a depth of prayer that is relative to its own reality.

The character of this body is tempered, disciplined and sacrificial. It is authentically submitted to authority resident in the body, which is identified by the anointing and call and not by ecclesiastical office, whether humanly or religiously obtained by credentials. The issue of authority is recognition, and the submission to such is critical to the whole character of a body of that kind. If we continue to be autonomous, self-willed individualities that will come on Sunday, but make our own decisions, plans, and programs and not even notify or ask, then the power of darkness do not take us seriously. They know when we are submitted to the Lord. If that submission is only superficial, if we have insulated ourselves from it, if there is something in us that does not want to come under an authority because we see its defect, then that body lacks the apostolic character that commands the respect and acknowledgment of the powers of darkness. We have got to take the risk of submission to authorities whose lives may well be lacking in one aspect or another. They will always continue to lack, except they be with us in the reality of a body, because the sheep as well as the shepherds are ministered to in the church. We have no excuse to withhold our submission to the authority that God has invested in the body through men.

The church is in the process of being restored to the environment that was at the first. Our Bible studies will no longer be an interesting use of Scripture for the delight and enjoyment of insight to revelatory things that come from it. They should be set in the context of urgency, as if they are epistles written for us, for we are living on the sharp edge of extremity in facing the last days' encounters and confrontations that the church knew in its first days. Bible study as a harmless mid-week occupation is the measure to which we have moved from the apostolic context and into something of a much lesser kind. When we will come back again to the realities that the church knew at the first, then the Word of God will

have cogency, power, penetration, and urgency. We will have moved from Bible study to instruction in the way of God and His purposes.

The body I am describing is a body that strives for the eternal reward and crown, and does not consider martyrdom a dreaded thing, but a privilege. I am anticipating that this age will end in the reality of martyrdom. The anticipation of martyrdom is not some far-fetched, romantic contemplation, but a realistic apprehension of what will likely be the consequence of this kind of consecration in the last days. The whole lifestyle of such a body is an outworking of this mindset. This kind of body must be truly set apart from the world in a radical way and maintain its consecration daily. It must be in a conscious continuum with the apostolic past. It must believe that there is a cloud of invisible witnesses over it, those who have suffered opposition even unto death for that which was not a reward in their own life, and who are not yet complete without us. This is definitive, apostolic thinking, understanding, believing and expecting!

## **Prophetic Reflections**

*A compilation of messages regarding the last days*

### **Prophetic Reflections for the Last Days**

*The following are some intimations, prophetically considered, that require sharing at this time:*

Concern about decaying environmental, economic and political conditions is moving the world toward global unification. Safety and self-interest will likely take precedence over ideological distinctions between nations, just as doctrinal differences between major church bodies will be eclipsed by the overriding interests of *peace and unity*. Historic principles, such as international law and the sovereignty of nations, will be sacrificed for the expedience of world order. Major powers will act summarily to maintain peace in their respective spheres of influence with the tacit approval of those who would formerly have opposed them on ideological grounds. The pragmatic urgencies of high-tech global economy will supersede ideology, allowing its rhetoric, but rendering its purposes as merely *ornamental* and not serious by those who wield power. Thus, with the possible exception of Israel and the Islamic powers, the stage is set for that global federation that constitutes the *beast* system.

The social character of the world, in its inexorably fallen state, will become more vile and filthy. Through appeals of the uttermost sophistication, both overt and subliminal, merchandise will be fashioned from the very souls of men (especially of children and youth) – corrupting if not absorbing or consuming all who do not consciously and sacrificially resist its power. An impatient, vacuous, inherently lawless, culturally illiterate, sensual world – frustrated and exasperated in its contention for what it cannot materially obtain – will give increasing vent to explosive anger and physical violence. Increasing calamity and disaster will give rise to looting, pillage, deepening chaos, and rape by the new *barbarians* (Chuck Colson's apt phrase) beyond society's ability to control. *Emergency powers*, setting aside due process of the law, will introduce a regimentation and curbing of traditional freedoms unknown and unacceptable to earlier generations. What is banal, lewd, and vulgar will be enshrined as desirable – values celebrated as *good* by the mass-cult of dark, witchy and degenerate media-blitz idols of entertainment. These glitzy non-persons will accrue robber-baron fortunes for themselves, as well as those who *package* them through the willing, exorbitant sacrifice of ecstatic, blasphemous, Christ-despising millions.

Paradoxically, society will be forced to abandon even what remains of Christian restraint, morality and propriety in its attempt to protect itself from the endemic evils of drugs, AIDS, venereal disease and teen pregnancies. As is already the case in Zurich, the city of the Swiss Reformers, free syringes, prophylactics and AIDS tests will be universally dispensed, in effect sanctioning the very evils being opposed! Such an implicit official endorsement of evil cannot take place without further compromising the very moral constituency of society, thereby ensuring the destitution and emptiness that moves multitudes to mindless experimentation, addiction and death.

Thus, global disillusionment and final dejection will be the portion of disappointed ideologues, (first in Marxism-socialism, and then democracy - *secular utopian dreams*) making them candidates for Christ or cults. The dreaded nihilism of despair that was the root of *Hitlerian-Naziism* of the 1930's will also be the breeding ground for the global totalitarianism of the end-times. The dissolution of contending ideologies and the unification of world economies will produce a blurring of national boundaries, which even now is resulting in a massive shifting and relocation of peoples. This will add to the fears and tensions of ethnicity and race among the unredeemed, but render to God through a transcendent globally-minded, non-parochial Church, the means to sift out and draw to Himself a remnant people from among all the nations. Many from among world Jewry will find themselves increasingly vexed and harassed among all nations, experiencing as the Gentiles in New Testament times, being *without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12).

This emerging true Church will finally grow sick of the *hype* and the banal predictability of a merely *phraseological* Christianity. It will seek the deeper reality of faith and relationship, counting the cost and increasingly taking on the visage of *pilgrim, stranger and sojourner in the earth*. Those that remain in conventional church situations, either impervious to the need or unwilling to pay the price, will settle under a deception of religious unreality, condemning as *heretics* and *agitators* those who cannot abide the same. Centrifugal forces will polarize Christendom ultimately toward two camps - *persecuted or persecutors* - reminiscent of the opposition of the Reformation churches to the Anabaptists of the 16th century! Finally, impeding *unities* will drive the *religio-political* kind to fury against that minority of the Spirit which will not subscribe to their ecumenical designs. So once again, and finally, a man will find his enemies to be those of his own household; yet, one's love for his enemies in response to opposition and persecution will be the distinguishing mark of this consummating, remnant-martyr Church. Such a response will be the possibility of those whose conscious, determined preparation and sanctification begins now.

The light of His countenance in such a separated people will be the very factor that brings upon them, as it did Stephen, the retribution and assault of those who hate the light and prefer darkness - from without but more so from within the *church*.

Radical *apostolicity* or *apostasy* will prove the only options during this polarization in the end-times. Neutrality or middle-of-the-road alternatives will be waste and void. We will be, finally and at last, compelled to be *saints*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, in an age when the only other option is to wear the mark of the Beast.

For those unable to buy or sell in the global world economy, Christian community of a creative, productive, life-sustaining kind, however much dreaded by many till now, will prove one of the few, if not only, viable alternatives for sanctity and life. For those *sons and daughters* who radically separate themselves, not to so much as even touch the unclean thing, the love of the Father, the actuality of God as Father, known by few, will become a sustaining power against insecurity or falling in all the tremulous pressures of the end (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Such a people, a saving-remnant dotting the globe, will constitute in themselves a living accusation against sin and evil. Their presence in an age where iniquity abounds will no longer be tolerated. They will, in many instances, provoke their own martyrdom, thus

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

## **What ought we to be about in God in the Last Days?**

There must be a cleaving to the prophetic word appropriate to the Last Days' purposes of God. At its heart is Israel's final redemption as obtained through a Church, alerted and prepared through such a word, for its own self-transfiguring and essential part in that restoration. This mandate, until now largely unseen, neglected or rejected, can be fulfilled only in the character and authority of true "sons" predicated, as they must be, upon the power of the resurrection life. The message of death to the self life must, of necessity, likewise itself go forth exclusively on these same terms; i.e. in persuasive resurrection power and truth, or the whole endeavor is contradicted and vain.

What is ultimately at stake in all this, and powerfully resisted, is the Lord's appearing as Deliverer and King. His Coming is inextricably joined to Israel's restoration, obtained after a yet future but final time of tribulation and dispersal through the nations (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 35; Jeremiah 30 and 31; Ezekiel 35, 36 and 37. This final, global sifting succeeds only as the demonstration of the mercy of God expressed through that of a self-sacrificing Church, extending itself to the Jew, at its peril, not regarding its own life as dear unto itself. The Lord's return brings in His millennial theocratic rule constituting the final defeat, through such a remnant Church, of the ages-long usurping principalities and powers bent furiously, at the end, upon Israel's annihilation. In so doing, the overcoming Church brings to completion the eternal purpose of God for itself (Ephesians 3:10), and is fitted now for its own part in His millennial rule and reign (Revelation 2:26; 3:21).

It is in this requirement of being Israel's "saviors" (Ezekiel 20:33f; Rev. 12:14; Matt. 25:35f), and in opposition to the final fury of Anti-Christ persecution, that an apostasy-avoiding remnant Church is brought at last to full apostolic and prophetic stature out of its till-then, characteristic shallowness and self-centeredness. A message of this kind, powerfully resisted and contested, must be brought against the opposition also of competing false apostolic and prophetic presumers promoting an alternative ecumenical "unity." These will likely be disposed to verbally "slay us" assuredly thinking they are doing *God* a service!

This global process of sifting, both of Israel and the Church, takes place principally in "the wilderness of the nations" (Ezekiel 20:35; Hosea 2:14; Amos 9:9). There, in the out-of-the-way, less frequented places, a people prepared by God, both spiritually and perhaps practically in life-sustaining, food-productive communities, are fitted for the sudden onrush and intrusion of a people in flight in their desperate and unkempt condition. There, through such a prepared people, is revealed the "face of God" to that remnant of Jews who survive the worldwide process of attrition. These return to Zion as the "redeemed of the Lord" to everlasting joy where "mourning and sighing will flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

In this manner, the Lord is released from a long, self-imposed confinement to be King over them (Acts 3:21) and hence all nations. The restored remnant, constituting then the

redeemed, saved nation, Israel, fulfill their irrevocable gift and calling (Romans 11:15, 29) to "bless all the families of the earth" (Genesis 12) as a "nation of priests and a light unto the world"! The Lord's sanctuary established in the midst of a people now made holy permits the "law to go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of [the rebuilt ruins of] Jerusalem" bringing millennial peace and blessedness to all the nations of the earth (Isaiah 2; Micah 4).

We need to proclaim this message to a yet unsuspecting Church in the nations whose affinity for Israel and the Jew is at best fitful and unformed; to call the Church to the requirements of a true apostolicity as being definite and normative, in a word, to a cruciform lifestyle borne out of jealousy for the glory of God (Ephesians 3:21; Romans 11:33-36) and their own eternal reward as participants in the rule and reign of the Kingdom proportionate to every suffering.

The purity, truth and power of that word will be entirely reflective of the degree that we ourselves are living consistently in the reality to which we, through our message, are inviting others. The premium will be upon the validity of our own personal and corporate character as it is daily tempered in the earnestness of "life together" by which also we have radically separated ourselves from anti-Christ dependencies to a life of faith and trust in the provision of God for ourselves. The message is validated and made urgent and penetrating to the degree that it is wrought out in our own life and experience.

Needless to say, we will be bitterly hated and opposed by the powers of darkness. Oppressing and depressing mind battles, demonically twisted communications and the compelling allegations of the "accuser of the brethren" will be the frequent experience of us all. Our prayer times together, the necessity to "speak the truth in love" and "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," are, for us, an urgent, daily requirement in which we, like all of us, too often fail.

## **True and False Prophets**

I trust that you share with me the increasing sense of importance that this subject bears. Up until now, I have borne with some patience and even amusement the number of those who currently label themselves "prophetic" and the popularity that this calling now enjoys, which has been contrary to my own experience. It seemed another one of those "fads" that sooner or later would fade away. Now though, it is hitting too close to home in the things jealously dear to my own heart that have to do with the maintaining of the dignity and meaning of the word "prophet" itself! After all, if we cheapen or lose the true office of prophet, what foundation have we, seeing that "the household of God...[is itself] built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

My own now bold proclamation in every place of an impending time of calamity for the state of Israel and Jews everywhere, as being a statement issuing authoritatively from an office rather than an opinion, demands a repudiation or a recognition of the seriousness of that office and those who profess to speak from it. For I believe that it is to those in the true office of prophet that the incisive interpretation of prophetic scripture is given. The question then of true or false has now become either the unnecessary disturbing of the church for

that which is already past or a life-or-death warning of that which is not only future but imminent.

How remarkably this parallels the experience of an earlier "prophet of doom," Jeremiah, who had not only to contend with the recalcitrance of the nation to heed his warning but the active opposition of those claiming also to be prophets! The cry of God through him against the false prophets in the classic diatribe of chapter 23 must have been an additional anguish for his already vexed soul. In a "thus saith the Lord of hosts," not employed as the device to sanctify what is only a human conjecture, but as one that punctuates the urgency of God's own heart, the people are warned "not to listen to the words of the prophets that prophesy to you; they are deluding you. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord" (v.16).

For even to listen is to be dulled and made more conducive to the soothing and seductive "It shall be well with you...no calamity shall come upon you" (v.17). Such men prophesy "the deceit of their own hearts...saying I have dreamed a dream...by their dreams which they tell one another...they make my people forget my Name" (vv.25-27). That is, in the lightness of their banter to which the name of the Lord is recklessly affixed, God is necessarily demeaned and diminished *as God*; for what God is in the totality of his Nature and character is implied and is intrinsic in His Name!

From whence this unspeakable audacity of those who though they were *not* sent, "yet they ran" (v.21)! "Senseless prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing", who have "envisioned falsehood and lying divination" and even in the depths of their own self-deception, "yet [even] wait for the fulfillment of their word" (Ezekiel 13:3-6) [of a peace that cannot and will not come] "saying to those who despise the Word of the Lord, it shall be well with you...no calamity shall come upon you" (Jeremiah 23:17)!

"For who has stood in the council of the Lord so as to see and hear His Word? Who has given heed to His Word so as to proclaim it?" (v.18). The very word "who" in the cry of this verse indicates not many, for the "council" of God implies the most intimate sense of God from which men of presumption and ambition are necessarily barred! God grounds the sanctity of His Name and His Word in the confines of *relationship* from which busy men have neither the time nor disposition to enter. Neither is it a place where one can come with the express purpose of finding a word. For to come for the expediency of the word alone is to come in the spirit of utility, which is to say, not to come *in the name of the Lord!* God must be sought, consistently, for His own sake and not for that which can be obtained from Him, even for "ministry"!

How shall men who have already profaned the sacred by invoking the name of the Lord as a catchword [to give an aura of credibility to their own conjectures] so much as even have the *disposition* for such a seeking? They are *false* in themselves and reflect an age that is false in itself in which many in the church have been infected and cannot tell the difference! As always in the last analysis of any issue, it is the Cross which is at stake! For to be "in the council of the Lord" requires that brokenness, that disposition to wait, that separation from the itch for fame and recognition, that willingness for the bearing of rejection, of misunderstanding, of necessary offense, that utterness toward God, that sending from a body willing to share in these sufferings the burden of the unique prophetic anguish, the

daily dying which is necessarily the history and condition of any man called to the holy task of prophet in this final generation.

Has ever our age stood in greater need of hearing the heart of God? O for *the* Word of the Lord when He *chooses* to give it. When it comes, I suspect, it will be to those who are in the practice of a daily and early communing, who do not make the issue of obtaining *anything* a condition for their devotion, who find His silences as holy as His speakings, paying homage to Him as God because He is God, and will therefore not withhold His Word when it comes, however painful its implications and its judgments, knowing that even the judgments of God are themselves a mercy! To them, like the ancient Hebrew prophets cited above, will the honor and privilege also be given to proclaim to Israel their restoration, and to the Church, His soon Coming, His Kingdom and His glory.

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