

# An Apostolic Manifesto

by Art Katz

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*The apostolic manifesto is a call to the church to be the church in fact, recognizing its apostolic distinctives and living consciously and sacrificially in preparation for the end times.*

**Duration:** 53:38

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 20:37

**Topics:** "Manifesto"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker proclaims and explains the apostolic distinctive, which is a manifesto and proclamation of the word of God. The message emphasizes the importance of not just proclaiming the truth, but also demonstrating it through a body of believers who are free from the influences of the world. The speaker highlights the need for a corporate entity, rather than just individuals, to resist the powers of the world and live in the reality of God's kingdom. The sermon also emphasizes the significance of recognizing the cosmic drama of the church in these last days and not treating it as a mere fad or trend.

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## Transcript

Because this is not going to be a sermon. This is going to be a proclamation, a manifesto of the apostolic distinctive. It'll be over your head, it'll be confusing, it will employ language that is totally unfamiliar to you, it will be irrelevant to your present need, but it will also be a plumb line come down from heaven at a point of time in this city and in this place to which you will one day bend and align yourself.

So of all the things that could be spoken, the Lord has impressed me to speak this. I much prefer a biblical message where I would be speaking from a text, but this is not a text, this is a statement. It's entitled Thoughts Upon Rising that the Lord gave me in 98.

I think this is about the fifth time that he's had me to speak from it. So Lord, be with this mouth as you are with the ears of these children. We have asked largely of you, you know it, in the prayers that have preceded my God this moment, and we look now for your answer.

Indeed may it be a plumb line from heaven and something as I prayed earlier this morning that will not again be withdrawn, but remain as a permanent guideline to which my God we should align ourselves. So it's time Lord, we sense, for the church to be the church in fact, and so may you put before us the apostolic distinctives that make the church the church. No man can give a definitive and comprehensive summation of the whole genius of that word and of such a church, but let this be a broad guideline and a first

statement that will enter my God our thought, our contemplation, and our conduct.

And we thank and give you praise for this time now. Be with us in your wonderful grace to be the high priest and the apostle of our confession who is alone entitled to speak these things. We thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well this began with a consideration of the gifts of the Spirit which in our charismatic age I think have been abused or misused or misemployed and I was fishing for something to give expression to the disquiet that it has been in my soul all through the charismatic generation where they spoke about renewing denominations or uplifting the beings as if this is a kind of accessory to our religious self-interest and I thought it fell short of missed entirely the profound intention of God. So I began to contemplate what is the context in which God intends the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and from that first thought I wrote down in the in that early morning hour the statement that you're about to hear that the consideration of the gifts of the Spirit outside the context of an apostolic and eschatological faith which means a radical anticipation of an end.

A body or a church that knows it's moving toward a consummation. This is the requirement in which God I believe intended the operation of his Spirit because any body of believers that has laid hold of this eschatological faith that pertains to an end, a consummation, a conclusion, the end of the age, the coming of the King will be mocked before the powers of darkness as a body to be feared, to be resisted, to be opposed because it will see it as a threat to its whole prevailing religious establishment and will ventilate its anger and its spite against such a body so that the operation of the Spirit, the benefit of the Spirit, the instruction, the guidance will be a critical factor for a body that is experiencing opposition from the powers of darkness who recognize it as now formidable and a body to be opposed because they have consciously and willfully understood and have taken to themselves the purposes of God by which the age is to be concluded. They have moved from a mere succession of Sundays or a Christianity that has to do with their own blessing and the benefit that they receive and are consciously seeking to be a body in which the ultimate and eternal purposes of God are to be fulfilled.

That acknowledgement, that conscious choosing of a seeing of yourself in those purposes instantly mocks you as a body to be opposed. And that kind of opposition calls for and requires the wisdom of God, the direction of God that is given through the operation of His Spirit through gifts. Such a body will find itself also in disjunction from the world, a disjuncture.

It will be a sore thumb. It will not be of this world. It will be a band of pilgrims, strangers and sojourners in the earth who are remarkably, what shall I say, free from the blandishments and the inducements, even the seductions that are increasingly powerful in the world.

They're in the world, they're not of the world. Not only do they recognize that, but they see the world for what it is, as system, as powerful, as vicious, as calculated against the life of men that wants to suck it out and to make of men only an object of merchandise or commerce. It touches the world only as it must and then faintly and with reservation.

These things go together. So it sees the world in its systems and false values and consciously repudiates them, does not lend itself to them and to the degree therefore that such a body is free from the influence of the world, which is the outworking of the powers of the air that jerk and manipulate nations and whose false values have been inculcated in the world, that to the degree to which such a body is consciously free from those influences, it is already a harbinger and a statement of a kingdom come. It's already a

foretaste, a foreshadowing of the great freedom that will be in the world when the king himself reigns and all that is false has been brought to naught.

And to the degree that it enjoys that freedom, it's capable of setting free those who are presently ensnared, even enslaved by that system. So it's able to emancipate and to deliver the world's deceived victims, not just by its proclamation, important though that is, but by its demonstration, by what it is in itself, by its manifest freedom from the influences of the world. Men are aghast when they come in contact with such a body, and it has to be a body.

For an individual to give such witness is one thing, but for a corporate entity to abide in that remarkable freedom from the world, its values and all that is false, is a freeing experience for those who will stumble upon it, because it reveals another alternative, it reveals another reality, it reveals another kingdom already come to the degree in which you are enjoying and moving in this kind of reality, which by the way cannot be obtained except in and through a body, because the powers of the world and its darkness and its wiles and its subtlety requires the alertness of an entire body and the strength that comes from their prayer, their counsel, that begins to see if any one of its members is in any way trailing off or losing the kind of intentionality, the kind of conscious and willful walk before God that such freedom requires. We need the strength, the prayer, the encouragement, the counsel that will come from others of like mind and heart and spirit who are joined with us in an endeavor of this kind, for we will be profoundly resisted and constitute a threat of the kind that the powers of darkness have not experienced in all of the entire charismatic generation and all of the loud profession of taking cities through militant worship and all of the other shticklach and gimmicks and devices that the church has sought to employ that have availed nothing. It's not by some auditory feat, F-E-A-T, that the powers of the air are going to be intimidated let alone defeated, but by a demonstration of another wisdom.

A people who are free from their influence who recognize how nefarious and sinister the powers of the air are who prevail over every nation, over every city, over every locality. And we need that kind of walk cannot be obtained by individuals independent of a body of like-minded saints who are consciously and willfully joined in such an undertaking that clearly makes necessary something more than mere Sunday services, however good they may be. We will need a frequency of fellowship, a going again from house to house daily in breaking bread.

We will need the counsel of our brothers and we will need to be in a place where sin is recognized at its very inception because we have a proximity to each other and therefore we can see when a man's voice changes, as I've been mentioning to congregations, watch your pastors and when they become professional and their voices become studied and affected, you had better be warning them. If their voices are no longer natural and they're not sharing in a reality that we can appreciate and they had become somewhat studied self-conscious, they need at that very moment to be alerted by those who love them enough to do so in a love that can receive correction. Correction is the game of the game and that kind of thing cannot take place in a fellowship of isolated individualities that come together for the purposes of a service on a Sunday.

It can only be a reality where there's an interaction, a frequency of relationship, communion, because you are joined with a conscious purpose to be in that community where you are, an entity of another kind. Not so much that will win the esteem of men, but win the disfavor and opposition of the powers of darkness. So I've had to say in these recent weeks to third world ministers in the Philippines, Indonesia and elsewhere, better that you should be known by the powers of darkness than you should be esteemed by

men.

But you'll not be known by the powers of darkness unless you willingly refuse the esteem of men. And to say that to men who have come out of poverty and are enjoying a certain kind of status and dignity as ministers to forsake the esteem of men is a profound requirement of the cross to ministers of third world countries that would not be as demanding to men whose identity and security is not as critical in Western nations. You cannot enjoy both the esteem of men and the opposition of the powers.

We need to make a conscious choice and they'll know when that choice is made because Jesus they know and Paul they know, but the Church of Phoenix who? So if we refuse this direction you can see that this is already going to require something. This is going to be sacrificial. This is no Sunday matter.

If we refuse this we condemn ourselves for a mere charismatica and we're playing out our Christianity harmlessly and irrelevantly to the cosmic drama whose conclusion is imminent and near. That's redundant. Imminent means near.

But because I'm not sure that you know imminent, I'm saying near. And the theocratic consummation which is at hand. Here's where I lose you.

Here's where I have to lose you. Here's where it's recorded that you can hear and consider. What did he say? Here's what he said.

There's more compacted in this one statement than a dozen Sundays could illumine, but what are the alternatives? Harmless charismatica in a Christianity that is irrevocably played out without any conscious awareness of the cosmic drama in which the Church is set. What is that drama? It's the awareness that we're moving toward a climax, a conclusion that is imminent, that is at the door, it's near. These are indeed the last days and that should become for us a little pert and harmless invocation without a sense of the depth of awareness of what last days means.

We've already missed it and we've done that with everything. We've taken the holiest language and we have transmuted it into a commonplace rhetoric of a new fad, a new fancy, a new language as if the whole thing is to be verbally played out and we're missing the whole reality that God is wanting. May the last days be for us.

The last days. You say how how will we know when that's so? Well you'll no longer be contemplating your retirement. You'll no longer look upon this as the best of all possible worlds and that will go on interminably and whatever is wrong that will be rectified over a course of time.

You know that you're moving toward a climax and one in which the powers of darkness do not relish who know that their time is short and therefore are all the more vehement and vicious in their opposition to those who have this kind of consciousness and awareness of the end. Listen you dear saints. If we have no awareness of the end our present is nullified.

Our present is made a humdrum monotony without significance unless we know that this present is related to that end and because it's an end of an ultimate kind in which we shall be severely opposed at its climax perhaps even requiring martyrdom, the blood of the Saints under the altar. Therefore our present should be an anticipation and a preparation consciously toward that end. That distinguishes an apostolic body and I'd love to see it in this city where an apostolic body is a sending body because it has that of which should be sent.

Something to communicate. It has something that has been shaped and formed in the reality of its own corporate life which the world and the church in the world desperately needs and therefore there's a sending to communicate that reality of pain in that body by the laying on of hands so that they might be sent and in sending bring with them the dimension of that reality and that authority which is a whole way of perceiving things that is on time for the church. So the operation of the spirit and its gifts is given an urgent and seen as an urgent provision as to a besieged and militant presence in the midst of a sea of active hostility against it and whose end time task is urgent and invites rejection in the world and fierce opposition by the powers of darkness who recognize its authenticity as a real threat to themselves.

The issue of authenticity, the issue of reality that the powers of darkness alone are required to acknowledge is the issue of the truth of your consecration. If it's shallow, if it's a series of mindless alter calls and a few crocodile tears, they yawn in our face. They know when a consecration has been made, where the life is laid down ultimately and totally before God and that's the kind of thing that I'm seeing in these recent weeks of activity.

Men and women taking their shoes off, stayed New Zealanders and stretching themselves out before God and here am I. Whatever it requires, whatever the Lord demands, I'm making that total consecration and that alerts the powers that this is a body to be feared because such a people at the same time are living consciously and sacrificially as being the appointed salvific agents of God toward the people Israel. This isn't a little accidental overlay, this is intrinsic to apostolic comprehension of what the church is. That church that fits the description that I have so far been making will of itself come to and comprehend and recognize its calling toward the restoration of Israel in its last day's tribulation.

It will certainly dismiss any thought that it's going to be raptured away at the time when its presence is most radically required for its presence is salvational for Jews in the world in their last time of sifting called the time of Jacob's trouble. This is not an adjunct for the church, it is central primary to the church's own consideration of itself and what its purposes are in God. That's for the church worldwide.

Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, how much more Phoenix with such a substantial Jewish presence where you know that you're going to be thrown into some connection with this people in the shakings that are future. And so it requires a sacrificial lifestyle knowing that there will be such a demand because this Israel when restored is of course the issue of the king and the kingdom. God is not restoring them because they deserve a homeland after long centuries in diaspora, but their restoration is the coming of the king so that the law might go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of a Jerusalem of a redeemed and restored nation.

That's why the powers of darkness will be in such a fit of frenzy and opposition to anything that pertains to the Jewish rescue salvation and redemption in the last days aided by a church that is willing to give itself sacrificially toward that end. 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 millennial. It's the coming of the king as the one seated on the throne of David and the holy hill of Zion with a redeemed and restored Israel that marks their end.

We need to know that or we will not understand the frenzy and the rage that will be poured out upon Jews in the last days because the powers of darkness in their corrupt and perverse wisdom recognize that the only way to avert the threat to their false rule is by annihilating that people whose return would terminate

them. That's why you'll have to hear this on tape. So it'll be a time of sifting and chastening the time of Jacob's trouble that concludes the age and brings also Israel's king and his rule over the nations.

It recognizes and accepts the ultimacy of such a task and mandate which it has consciously and willfully adopted as central or primary to its whole purpose for being. See there's got to be a conscious awareness and a taking of these tasks to ourselves and the mandate willfully. You don't come to this through osmosis.

This is not something that's going to happen and fall upon us like a mist but a recognition that has to come of what these last days mean with as it pertains to the people Israel and what is the role and function of the church toward this people that that Jesus will measure as he determines the last the eternal destiny of men with regard to one question. What did you do with the least of these my brethren? That they are going to be least is without question that the most celebrated and prosperous and well-named and known Jews who are riding the crest of the world's wave will find themselves with only the shirt on their backs and cast out into the nations in the most desolate of deprived conditions. The least of these is brethren.

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 transfigures the church. I don't know how to tell you but every aspect of the faith is brought into a new kind of perception and a new depth of awareness and a new reality once this central key is fitted into the church's consciousness as this primary purpose for its being.

Anything that has to do with any subtlety of anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic residue for which we think we might be free will be flushed to the surface. That they should be the singular object of our concern and God's. What about us, the older brother who didn't come in to celebrate the return of the prodigal son? This has got to be played out in the church.

So there's a flushing out, there's a dealing, there's a depth, an intensity of the work of God in the body itself, in the sanctification because God says in Ezekiel 20 to 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 right of my authority. Something happens to a remnant of Jews in that last day's final sifting that is de facto by which they return to Zion as the redeemed of the Lord, everlasting joy upon their heads, mourning and sighing, fleeing away. And I'm saying this morning there'll be no return at all by any unless there's a church in the earth that already anticipates this and is preparing itself to be the salvific agent of God toward this distressed people in a soon coming time, for when it comes it will come suddenly, but that it will not find us unprepared both spiritually and physically.

Because it's central to the whole purpose for our being and needs therefore the strategic direction of God 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 critical moments of decision where even past success with God is no assurance of this moment. We need to come to a place where the Jehatsiels in our congregation can speak the word of the Lord in crisis moments, the battle is not yours but mine, say the Lord, go ye out against them tomorrow. And when the King Jehoshaphat and Judah heard this prophetic pronouncement they fell on their faces and worshiped the Lord as if this were the definitive and unquestioned statement of God, though it was only a prophecy being issued by a man, but it was a man known whose character was tested, who was in relationship, and therefore his word could be received as God's word.

Can you see that what we have been trafficking in and shallowly employing and are not even clear whether a prophecy that we're 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's a deep seriousness of God in the church for its purpose and call that needs to hear from God in crisis and critical moments through a word of prophecy, a tongue and interpretation, a word of wisdom, the operation of the gifts of the Spirit now in the context that God had always intended and which is now being obtained by the congregation that has consciously come to this serious place in him and has the relationships by which its members are tested and known of each other so that when a word comes forth we know that it's not of man but of God. No accident that such a fellowship that its prayer and its worship reflects and expresses the truth of this reality because prayer and worship are not luxuries but our spiritual weapons and 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. So it's not a technique or a 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 and when we're not ashamed to be dealt with and when we receive such dealings that will come from a brother or a sister or the depths and the intensity of God's working when we're a body of this kind, you're going to give expression in joy to the release and the freedom that comes from the sanctifying work that has waited for this condition to be obtained because God will not meet us on our terms.

He'll not play our game. He waits for that which is true, that which is real, that which is earnest, that which acknowledges sin, corruption, and need. Then we experience the grace.

Then we give praise and express worship. Then our prayer is relative to the reality to which we have come and that kind of prayer is powerful and moves heaven. For it has moved out of a casual conglomerate of saints who essential focus had been upon themselves and whose spiritual egocentricity had never been broken.

Oh, I know that's a fancy statement, but we can bring egocentrism into the church as profoundly as we knew it in the world. All we have done is to shift the object. In the world it was carnal pleasure, the light material things, but in the church it is still ego, it is still self, it is how did you enjoy the meeting, what did you think of the speaker, how did you like, how did you, you, you, like, like, like.

That 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'm setting forth today that I'm calling apostolic. From this casual conglomeration of individualities into such a body that has come to this kind of chosen identification knowing that it brings sacrifice, which means suffering, because it's not a naive body. It knows that the church is a place of suffering before it's a place of glory, and anybody who's had anything to do with Ben Israel over these 26 years or any other comparable community knows that suffering is intrinsic to this kind of relationship.

It's not because we intend to molest each other or to constitute a threat or or an annoyance, but just the very nature of things in the what is caught up in a body in different places of maturity, background, in the intensity of that life must necessarily express itself in a way that will bring a suffering before it will bring a glory. And the thing that distinguishes the church of the kind that I'm describing is that it's willing for such a suffering. Even on this trip I've prayed for more than one who had been burned in community in some earlier time in the 1970s when the novelty of community was circulating and invariably ended with disaster and pain, loss, and all of the other kinds of things, and I'm saying to them what the cross will be for you in the last days is a willingness to go back to that same configuration and context in which you suffered at the

first and make yourself vulnerable again for exactly the same injury by which you have only recently been healed or still are reeling.

Are you willing to go back into a context that you know is going to be painful and difficult? Shelly will remember, June, myself, occasions in our history in Ben Israel when we had to come into a meeting where the atmosphere was so charged and so tense and unresolved conflict that we were assured that it was finally the end of the community. But we went into the meeting. You stopped breathing, but you went in expecting the worst.

What could possibly come out of this? It was hopeless and so charged with tension and misunderstanding and the way Saints misconstrue each other. It's remarkable the subjectivities of the Saints and how emphatic and sure they are about the rightness of the way in which they see and perceive, and you have to bear that. And the remarkable thing is, though you walk into meetings like that holding your breath, knowing that you're not even going to be able to breathe under such pressure and tension, two hours later or three, you're not walking out of the meeting, you're floating out.

Something has happened of a transcendent kind. It had to be transcendent because the issues were so complex, so knotted, so beyond any ability religiously to solve, that unless there was a transcendent answer from God, we were at an end. But because we were willing for the crisis of such ultimate things, we came out in a transcendent place where your feet were not even on the ground, and you don't return to where you were before the crisis.

You move on in the new quality of life and understanding and relationship that has been obtained through the crisis. This is Church Saints, and we've seen to it that we are sufficiently insulated from such possibilities and are content with mere Sunday attendance. Well, you can choose that, but you'll be eternally embarrassed, if you will.

You will have forfeited the eternal glory. You will have forfeited eternal reward, because the body of this kind is eternally conscious that its conduct in this present moment is set in eternity, and that there's an issue of eternal judgment, eternal reward. It's very much aware that there's a Lord coming who will bring his rewards with him and give to every man according to his work.

We know that we're living in the anticipation of eternity, and the thing that will shame us and goad us to be willing for the sacrifice and pain of being true saints is the knowledge that we don't want to suffer an eternal chagrin, an eternal disappointment that we have lived beneath the glory of God and have chosen a mode of Christian life and experience that is comfortable, does not threaten, and does not test. Because eternity, the issue of eternity, is part of the consciousness of such a body. It will act in a way, sacrificially, in a way that others would not be willing to experience.

So, its intercessions, like its prayer and its worship, are authentic and are a travail of the spirit, because it measures and is the statement of the truth of its own life together. And that kind of reality and that kind of life together not only affects the worship of such a body, the praise of such a body, the intercession of such a body, but the discernment of such a body. It's much more acute in its discernments.

It's much more able to sift and to separate the kinds of things that beguile or trap Christians who are more shallow and naive. And it discerns and recognizes the whole issue of the powers of the air and the necessity to wrestle against them who are the rulers of this world's darkness in the very locality where they are. Paul says in Ephesians 6, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and

powers of the air, the ruling powers of this world's darkness.

It's a we that wrestles. Wrestle is ultimate confrontation, ultimate battle, ultimate giving of yourself in a spiritual way that defeats them. But there's a we that has to perform it.

It's not the conduct or the activity of individual virtue or so 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. And we've had two breakthroughs in this way at Ben Israel that will forever remain in my memory from our proximity to the Indian tribe, the Chippewa, having their annual powwow, and we came to our morning prayer meeting hung over with a sense of depression, which if I were living by myself, I would have thought, this is me, this is Katz, this is the temperamental Jew, this is the one given to moose. But when you see the entire body is experiencing a sense of oppression, you know that there's something working in the air that is beyond the issue of your personal temperament.

And then you gather yourself together and gird your loins and do battle against that presence. And in that time of intense prayer that you would have thought, had you walked into it, this is an insane asylum, people are batting at the head, people are prostrate, exercise in every posture of battle together. I saw the face of the enemy at first leering down upon us with contempt, as if to say, oh, Ben Israel, they're nothing, they're full of, they're ridden with problems.

But as the truth of the prayer, the depth and the intensity and the corporateness of this prayer went up, that expression on that face changed from contempt to fear. Those lips began to tremble, that entity backed off, and we were pursuing, and that thing broke in panic and ran at the truth of what was coming forth. Because the only thing that the powers of the air are required to see, to acknowledge, is authenticity, reality, the truth of God in the church.

Jesus they know for that reason, and Paul they know for that reason, and for that reason they'll know us also, if we have come in for that reason, corporately and together or not at all. Got the idea? So, the character of this body is tempered, disciplined, sacrificial, as I have mentioned. It is authentically and unfeignedly submitted to authority resident in the body, which is identified by anointing and call and not by ecclesiastical office or humanly or religiously ordained, obtained credentials.

The issue of authority, its 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 who will come for Sunday, but make our own decisions, our own plans, our own programs, and not even notify or ask, what do you feel about this, am I taking this leave, is this a critical time, how do you, do I have a blessing, do you sense? The powers of darkness will know to what degree we are submitted to the Lord. And if that submission is only superficial, if we have insulated ourselves from it, if there's something in us that does not want to come under an authority because we see its defect, which will always be present, that will never find an authority that is free of it, then that body lacks the apostolic character that commands the respect and the acknowledgment of the powers of darkness.

We've got to take the risk of a submission even into authorities whose lives we see are lacking in one aspect or another, and in fact always will continue to lack, except they be with us in the reality of a body by which not only are the sheep ministered to in their need, but also the shepherds. We have no excuse to withhold our submission to the authority that God has invested in the body through men. And it's an authority that is expressed through an anointing, through call, and as I've said, not through a religious ordination obtained by ecclesiastical credentials that necessarily establishes that.

The true measure and test of whether we have come to the reality to which God is calling us is the attitude of our own children toward it. Do the kids themselves sense that what we are about as adults is worthy not only of their attention but of their participation? Or are they only hanging onto our skirts out of a necessity that we require of them? In a word, have we come to a place where the reality that we have generated consistently has impressed them as being worthy of their own participation and it's not just an adult culture that we enjoy almost at their expense? We can tell the degree to which this reality has come by looking at our teenagers and seeing to what degree they are impressed. That's why we have to feed them programs and various other alternatives in some way to hold them in some kind of relationship because the reality that God intends that would have brought their participation has not been provided because we're unwilling for the totality of the consecration that such a body requires.

Our children are showing us in their displeasure, in their irritation, do I have to go? That we have not met God's measure and had no intention of doing so. The children recognize and respect and reflect the reality and urgency of the participation of the family in the endeavors that to which they have given themselves because the body is imbued with an apostolic and cosmic understanding. The German word Weltanschauung, it has a worldview, it has a perception of the reality of which it sees itself as a significant part and considers everything in the light of this reality and of eternity as I've already mentioned so much as if it should be necessary it would take its strippings with joy.

Paul speaks in Hebrews 10 of those who took their stripping with joy knowing in themselves that they had a recompense in heaven of a greater kind.

You can be assured that if we make a determination of this kind we're likely to experience stripping of one kind or another as has been already my experience up at the farm when the brother whom I entrusted the property taking him out of a hut with a pig and two dogs and giving him a roof and a place by which we had acquired in a year and a half seven horses and leather harnesses and equipment that could be used in agriculture without the necessity for diesel equipment or fuel was altogether removed in one fell swoop when I came back from the trip after he had called me to say I'm leaving what should I take I thought well you came with nothing you've labored but maybe we'll take half of what we have accumulated the brother with me says let him take what he thinks is right I said take what

you think is right I came home to find every horse gone every vehicle gone every tool gone not a nut a bolt a screw plier screwdriver even the rope that had pulled the hay up to the loft for 40 years before this brother came he took that also and the boards upon which the horses stood and urinated he took those also in a word we were stripped and the remarkable thing is he was helped by local believers to cart all these things out in fact there's a brother in the room today whose brother was one who helped I'm completely oblivious that this guy was taking more than could be his do when I saw that we had been stripped upon my return the thing that welled up in me was an instant anger and resentment in which God says that's a no no take your strippings with joy knowing in yourself this is

not casual knowledge creedal knowledge doctor knowledge this is internal existential awareness and a reality of heaven and its rewards that make our present losses momentary and light this will characterize a fellowship of this kind and God will allow us to be tested in the area of possessions reputation of the various kinds of things in which we can find ourselves stripped this doesn't sound very much like the context of the apostolic scriptures themselves in the book of Acts yes we're being restored to that environment that was at the first which means that our Bible studies will now no longer be an interesting use of scripture for the enjoyment and the delight of insight the revelatory things that come from it that we

enjoy hearing but that the Bible studies henceforth will be moved

into an realm of urgency as if they are epistles written for us who are living on the sharp edge of extremity and facing the last days encounters and confrontations that the church knew in its first days Bible study as a harmless weekday occupation is the measure to the which we have moved from the apostolic context and into something of another kind when we will come back again to the realities that the church knew at the first the epistles the Word of God will have for us a cogency and a power and a penetration and an urgency that they do not presently have we will have moved from Bible study to instruction in the way of those who are on the cutting edge of God's last days purpose this is everything I'm putting before you is initial choice it needs to be made willful taken upon

ourselves with joy because it strives for the eternal reward and crown and does not even consider martyrdom a dread thing but a privilege can you imagine even invoking the word martyrdom in June of 2001 in Phoenix Arizona you might as well have invented some play on syllables a nonsense word as to speak the word martyrdom in this present society life and time and yet dear Saints if this age does not end in that reality I will be the most deceived of all men if I myself shall find my life ending in a bed rather in a climactic violent conclusion I will be utterly astonished and amazed I think that 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 there

are already men speaking about a war within the body of Christ between the blue and the gray the blue being those that are heavenly minded and see every revival coming down the pike from Toronto to anywhere as being the now work of God but those who are anyway critical or dubious and do not give themselves in totality instantly are considered the gray they are the cerebral they're their ones who function out of their minds rather than their spirits and as one writer has suggested such a conflict at the Civil War between blue and gray will take place itself in the church listen dear Saints they'll come a time when they will kill us and claim they're I'm hearing such threats now so the whole lifestyle of such a body is the outworking of this mindset has the resonance of such a consecration

such a decision as one that has already been made and is constantly consistently maintained it's a it's in a conscious continuum with the apostolic past it believes that there's a cloud of invisible witnesses over it as I have prayed even for this morning okay can you humor me that I'm so naive that I would believe and have called for and asked God to have over us this morning a cloud of invisible witnesses those who have been in this locality or in this state or in this America or who have suffered opposition fiercely physically even unto death for that which was not a reward in their own life and I'm not yet complete without us this isn't romanticism this is definitive apostolic thinking understanding believing and expecting because it's not mere observers that the invisible cloud of

witnesses are not idly looking upon us with a curiosity to see what we will do they are actually bringing I believe a dimension from the eschatological side that the eternal future already into our affairs they are a presence they bring something as much as intercessors and the church that is on line with God who needs the employment of all of God's precious provision will frequently if not consistently be calling for and asking the presence of an invisible cloud of witnesses over that will bring an exertion of something from the eschatological side that will move us on to the conclusion for without which they themselves are not made perfect see either deliberations like this off the wall and you're losing reality or it is uttermost reality take your pick I'm saying that this is

definitive reality and God is waiting for church that will desire and choose it thank you my God well more than can be said but that's enough for now so I want to pray for the the plumb line that has come down through this word and the determination of those who are hearing it to choose it and to bring a consecration appropriate to its fulfillment it's clear even to the dullest saint and to the most immature naive and young that the kind of thing that has been outlined here means ultimate requirement put you in a place of ultimate opposition requires ultimate sacrifice because it has ultimate purpose and ultimate mandate and ultimate calling so what I'm praying that your word will not go forth void that it will not be vain that it will not be dismissed as a Sunday morning's curiosity as

some kind of aimless rambling of a hypothetical kind that is interesting to hear but does not make any requirement I'm praying Lord it will make a requirement surely we shall not attain to the reality that makes the church the church and Israel salvific agent except by a conscious willful choosing of these things and so I pray blessing my God upon this body that it has pleased you to drop a word of this kind here and however strange or ambiguous some of the statements have been made that cannot be instantly understood let the spirit my God of those truths go in to their heart and find its way to their understanding and to their yielding their consecration they're saying yes Lord we bless you my God for the privilege of being such a presence in the earth in these last days surely

everything about it is at odds with the environment everywhere about us in this Arizona of all the places my God in which a soul can be produced and beguiled in which we can be lulled into areas of comfort and resignation it's this place this will take before conscious willful choosing it will choose its reality it will say we will steep our eyeballs not on the beauty that surround us physically in this world but in what is spoken in the scripture as being definitive and certainly the truth of the last days and the conclusion of the earth of the age and we want to be prepared for that so we bless you Lord precious God on high Lord my God transact with the people whose yes you have obtained that you can bring forth those things that will shape its corporate life and make the powers of the

air who have so long prevailed over this Phoenix over this Jewish community over the state over this nation uncontested to sit up take notice to be alarmed to tremble to oppose this very reality be triumphant my God through that people we pray we thank you give you praise for the privilege of it in Jesus name

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