

Apostolic and Prophetic Foundations

by Art Katz

The church stands in great need of apostolic and prophetic foundations, which can only be established through men who have received their calling and commission from God.

Scripture: Exodus 20:21, Exodus 24:12, Exodus 32:1, Exodus 32:6, Exodus 34:15-20, Psalm 65:4, Ephesians 2:20, Revelation 2:2

Topics: "Prophetic Foundations", "Apostolic Leadership"

Description

Art Katz emphasizes the urgent need for apostolic and prophetic foundations in the church as it faces unprecedented challenges and uncertainties. He reflects on the fading enthusiasm of past movements and the necessity for true leaders who have communed with God, like Moses on the mountain, to guide the church. Katz warns against self-appointed leaders who lack divine commissioning and stresses the importance of a genuine fear of God that comes from deep communion with Him. He calls for a new generation of leaders who can navigate the tension between the glory of God and the failures of His people, ultimately desiring to see God's glory manifested in the church. The sermon serves as a clarion call for authentic spiritual leadership rooted in divine revelation.

Transcript

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.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/apostolic-and-prophetic-foundations/>

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