

# Apostolic Foundations (4 of 12)

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living with eschatological urgency and apostolic expectancy, and how this mindset affects our lives and our relationships with others.*

**Duration:** 58:45

**Scripture:** Acts 17:30

**Topics:** "Apostolic", "Eschatology", "Apostolic Faith"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes the urgency of apostolic faith and the necessity of living with an eschatological expectation, drawing parallels between Paul's encounter at Mars Hill and the contemporary church's need for a radical return to the core truths of the gospel. He highlights the importance of recognizing God's imminent return and the resurrection as central to Christian hope, urging believers to align their lives with this reality. Katz warns against the complacency that has crept into the church, advocating for a lifestyle that reflects the urgency of Christ's return and the moral implications of living in light of eternity.

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## Transcript

Precious God, we're extremely conscious of your great mercy toward us in these days, Lord. That your eye of pity has been upon us, Lord. That you've seen our frames and that you know that we're as dust, and that you've chosen a foolish thing by God to convey your word.

Thank you, Lord, for such mercies. May they continue, may they abound, Lord. We love your precious presence, and I just wait upon you now, my God, and how you'll be pleased to order things tonight, taking us all by surprise, my God.

We love you, we thank you, we're so privileged. Come and have your way among us, Lord. Let your word be an event in our lives, my God.

Change us. Possess this vessel for thy use now that we might hear your voice, and to you, my God, be every praise and honor and acknowledgement. In Jesus' name.

Out here, doesn't seem and have been for several weeks now. That's what I mean when I say I'm surprised. What used to be a one evening message is kind of burgeoning out to encompass week after week of speaking, and even tonight, again, I thought I was just going to bring the kind of conclusion to the last week's theme, but it will take remarkable grace and assistance to finish, and maybe we're not to, I

don't know.

Paul on Mars Hill, the supreme and ultimate encounter. How many are here for the first time tonight? Hold your hand up high. Bless you, thank you for coming.

I guess I would encourage you to get the tapes of the previous weeks where we've been going through this precious text and trying to suggest what it represents in the clash, the confrontation of ultimacies, ultimate man of God, apostolic man, and ultimate spirit of the world, the Stoics and the Epicureans, the philosophers who are always about hearing some new thing, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

It's a picture of the course toward which we ourselves are heading and intended, and therefore it's charged with remarkable instruction for us, and how Paul himself did not even know, never planned to be in such a place, and that too will characterize our life in the last days, and how much God is in inadvertent circumstance as much as he is in revelations that come by vision or by whatever means, that part of the whole apostolic mentality is to perceive the God who is in all things, and not to find ourselves surprised to be held over in the city in flight from persecution, waiting for our colleagues to catch up with us, and while there having our spirits grieved as we see the whole city being given over to idolatry, and therefore disputed he in the synagogues with the Jews, and in the

market daily with those who met with him, a chain of circumstances that unfold by God, that brings God's man to God's appointed place in God's time, supreme ultimate confrontation of the foolishness of God with the wisdom of men, and how Paul begins in such a startling way to shock and arrest the attention of men who are trifling with him, I perceive that in all things you're too superstitious, and I noticed your inscription to the unknown God, and him whom you ignorantly worship, I declare unto you, it sounds like a front, it sounds like braggadocio, like brazenness, like egotism, sounds like what it is, is ultimate apostolic meekness, a man just saying what is and what needs to be expressed in the authority that must come with words, because life and death is hanging in the balance, all

eternity is at stake in this once and for all confrontation, you say that's extreme way to perceive Paul at Mars Hill, no, that's the way in which all things should be perceived, even tomorrow at the office, and what seems to us ordinary and mundane is charged with eternal resonance, if we can but perceive apostolically by the eye of the spirit, you say living like that charges everything, why my God, you're always in a continual tension, eternity is ever present in every issue in the slightest word, why, who's sufficient for these things, what, you've been a Christian how long, and you're first asking that question now, to not have asked it until now is the statement of having lived beneath the faith, it should be continually upon our lips, continually registered in our trembling, who is

sufficient for these things, and when we hear the discourse of Paul, and I think I said in the first Wednesday night when I brought the Encyclopedia Britannica and read to you the consummate principles of Greek auditory that Paul hit them all mindlessly without having prepared or practiced, in presentation, argumentation, conclusion, Paul outdid them in the very things that they celebrated and he received it by the spirit on the spot, in the trust that is characteristic of such a man, and how in one or two statements, bang, he sums up the whole purpose for life and for being, the God who took one blood and made all men and established the bounds of their habitation that happily they might seek after God if they might find him, that the whole purpose of this human existence is to seek God

and to find him, why such insanity, such absolutizing of a single factor, hey how about all the rest of life and existence and reality, incidental, secondary, this is it, foremost, primary, to seek after God if happily we might be found with him, and to speak that with such an absoluteness that must have terrified these dilettantes, these philosophers, these casual men who lack a true sincerity about life itself, and need to understand the issues of life and eternity as it can only come to them by one who is established in these truths and lives them as a Paul, he could speak so absolutely because his life was the statement of what he was speaking, he didn't offer them opinions, but convictions for which he was willing to die having no assurance that he who ascended the mount would

likewise ever come down, you don't speak like that to the authorities on earth with that kind of challenge with any assurance that you're going to be patted on the back, you're more likely to have your head handed to you, but it's all the same, it's all the same whether you come down or not, if it were not so, the Holy Spirit in Acts 13 would not have said separate unto me, Paul and Barnabas for the work were unto Ad Colta, they were separated men unto him, not even unto the work, and therefore separated even from themselves, separated from their self-interest, separated even from their ministerial concern, let alone their paltry future, they were already as it were dead men abounding in the resurrection life and the wisdom that is conveyed by that life and is appropriate in every place

and in every time, whether it's a synagogue with the Jews or in Mars Hill with the Greeks, and God is calling us to that quality of life and that reality, astonishing, and then Paul concludes his discourse, truly these times of ignorance God overlooked in verse 30, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained, he has given assurance of this to all by raising him from the dead, and when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked while others said, we will hear you again on this matter, so Paul departed from among them, he had said what needed to be said, and he ended on an apocalyptic note, he ended with an eschatological urgency, and these are two words that need

to be restored to our vocabulary and to our use, I'm not saying them to get fancy, I'm saying them to remind you that both these things have been profoundly lost to the church in modern times, and last week I quoted one source or another in which the theologian said that the loss of this kind of apocalyptic urgency and expectancy has greatly enervated the church, I believe he said that we can still have an idea of the extraordinary power with which such eschatological convictions, eschatology is the Greek word meaning for the end things, he had convictions about the things that will come at the end, how many here believe that we are in the end times, do we really believe it, and do we have this sense of urgency, and are we expecting its imminent soon conclusion by an apocalyptic event of

a devastating final once and for all kind, namely the Lord's coming in judgments which will be a terror to the mockers and the blasphemers and all who have thumbed their nose at God and derided him when he shall come in awesome power and in splendor according to the scriptures and the expectancy of the saints throughout the millennia, that's powerful, it's powerful to have that kind of expectation, it communicates something, it brings a valence, a quotient, a dimension, a tremulous something, a vibrato of the spirit into your voice, into your walk, into your very face, into your very demeanor, your eye, without even saying something you're communicating eternity, you're living in the anticipation of it, you're bringing the eternal thing into time, what is future becomes now, what is holy

is brought into the mundane and into the ordinary, into the secular, it's not reserved for someday, that was a powerful church, because of their eschatological convictions that must have exercised in the lives of the

people who held them, to believe that one was living in the face of an end that might happen tomorrow and in any case very soon must have imparted a tremendous sense of urgency, responsibility, and vitality, the appointed time has grown very short, quote, surely a partial explanation of the amazing energy of the early Christian community is to be sought in its intense conviction of the approaching end, alack and alas, according to the theologians, that end was postponed, and so Paul and others like him were faced with the embarrassment of a failure to see the thing which they

were momentarily expecting, and then according to the theologians, all kinds of doctrinal and other adjustments had to be made with the subsequent loss of this eschatological and apocalyptic center to the gospel message, and there have been other accommodations, and the end result of which is the institutional kind of Christianity which prevails today in the best of all possible worlds, which we do not expect to end, but grow progressively better, so there are tremendous issues, consequences in whether the church can find a way back to this kind of expectancy and urgency, and I've marked a few quotations from a choice book that has come into my hands, I'm so impressed with it, I've written the theologian a letter telling him how astonished I was in the reading of his book, that this is

charged with such an apostolic vigor that you wonder that such a man can find a place in the halls of academe in the theological world, he must have a very special biography.

He writes, the impending return of Christ is made necessary by Paul's conviction about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Resurrection language is apocalyptic language, it receives its meaning from the apocalyptic hope in the resurrection of the dead, which will take place when all history finds its fulfillment in the manifestation of the apocalyptic glory of God. The resurrection of Christ can bear no other meaning than its anticipatory significance for the future resurrection of the dead. Now don't get scared, don't hit the panic button if you hear a few multi-syllable words, because this man is saying something that it behooves us to understand.

He's saying that the issue of the apocalyptic of God is the issue of resurrection, and that the issue of resurrection is the issue of the apocalyptic. Why? Because it began with the resurrection of Jesus. That being raised from the dead is a prefiguring, a foreshadowing of the same kind of power and the same kind of demonstration and the consummation by a return of what was begun in that being raised.

And that we who are living in that resurrection life and power already exhibit a foretaste of that which is to come. It's an anticipatory, it anticipates the significance of the future resurrection of the dead, because when he appears, those that are dead in Christ will rise first. All of the saints, all of the suffering, that which has not been vindicated to this day, the struggle, the sacrifice, those that are in the earth, in the sea, wherever, will rise first in the moment of his appearing.

And when we shall see him, we shall be like him. And those who have this hope in them purify themselves even as he is pure. I'm even willing to say that there's a direct correspondence between the increase of hanky-panky and fornication and the frequency of divorce and all of the other symptoms of the failing morality of the church with the absence of this kind of apocalyptic expectancy.

There's no other incentive given by which we shall hold ourselves blameless for the day of his appearing. That's not my phrase, it's Paul's. And I wish I had the ability, I wish I had the time, I only commend it to you and encourage you, to go through the letters of Paul and go through the apostolic writings and see that virtually in every mention of the day of the Lord, or the coming of the Lord, or this kind of expectancy,

there's also some kind of ethical or moral statement addressed to the saints, by which seeing these things, what manner of men ought ye to be in all holiness? There's a correlation, and God has given this to us as ultimate incentive to keep ourselves at a very time when the whole turbid, dark, vile, and filthy atmosphere of the world continues to degenerate and to suck us down and to call us with a siren call, come lie with me.

If we're going to be kept and to be pure as he is pure, it's in direct proportion to the fact that this hope of his coming is very alive in us. It's not just a correct doctrine to which we subscribe. That's the difference between institutional Christianity and apostolic reality.

That for one, it's in a sense something correct, but it does not affect their actual lifestyle. For the other, it is an abounding and powerful thing that affects the totality of their life and their being. And to go from the one to the other is exactly what God is about with us in these days.

Not only is the issue of resurrection involved, but the issue of the spirit, because he reminds us that the spirit is related to the future glory of God in the same manner that Christ is related to the future resurrection of the dead. In fact, the spirit is the agent of the future glory in the present. It's the first down payment or guarantee of the end time and thus the signal of its coming.

Hey, for all of my years in Charismatica, and there are many, and all of my years in Pentecostalism, I have never ever heard such a reference to the reason for the spirit being given as this. All I heard was it was going to pep up our meetings. It was going to renew our denomination.

Don't you want to spit that out for the vile kind of self-seeking consideration it is when the spirit is given as a guarantee, a token, a deposit, the earnest, the foretaste of something that's going to come, an awesome fullness for which we now have the down payment. I think there might be a lot more spirit-filled people than there presently are if the Holy Spirit could be commended to them in that connection rather than what it's going to do for our meetings or for our sickly denominations. So Paul's theology is related directly to the radical character of his imminent expectation.

That means at hand something just momentarily about to break into reality. And the theologians are almost universally concluded this is a massive error and this is the disappointment of the early church for which all kinds of accommodation have to be made, which I have never been believed or subscribed to. I don't believe that Paul was in error.

I don't believe that the early church erred in having this kind of imminent expectation. I believe rather that that kind of expectation, that dynamism, that tension of expectancy is the normative atmosphere in which God intends his church to live and to move and to have its being. You say, oh, but what about chronology? What about time? It didn't happen.

But praise God for the insight of this precious man. Maybe he'll be my doctoral father one day. And that is that he sees that the issue is not chronology, the issue is the character of God and his promise by his word.

The imminence of God's universal rule is grounded in a radical faith in an openness to the God of the promise and not in a historical determinism, as if the believer can live by speculative knowledge rather than by faith. All those characters who sat up on a roof waiting for April 1st, 1886 or whatever it was, which was going to be doomsday, and they had made all kinds of chronological calculations and speculations, and the day came and he didn't come, were moving on another base and having a kind of faith contrary to

Paul's. God does not call us to make chronological calculation.

The issue of the imminent coming of the Lord and the breaking in of this great apocalyptic event is not the issue of chronology, it's the issue of promise that he will come again in like manner as you saw him ascend. The issue is God's character, not man's chronology. And therefore, when your faith and hope is rooted in that, there is no disappointment.

There is an expectancy that is vital and alive. It's imminent, it expects. It is not, is it tomorrow or the next day or this has to happen first or that, or will it be the year 2000? It's living as if, as though.

And it's living. In fact, really living. In fact, maybe this is the release that will enable us at last to live apostolically as we ought.

Because let those who are married be as though they were not. For I adjure you that the time is short, and I would have you to be without distraction. You see how everything comes into Paul's consideration for the church based on his central view of this eschatological apocalyptic expectancy.

To live as though is true living. And you know what I think? I don't think our wives will be the worst for it. I don't think that they're going to be the victims of, as much as they are now, for our sitting before the TV to watch the football game or to be on the golf course.

I think as a matter of fact, in a way that I can't articulate, they're going to be the beneficiaries of a heightened and deepened and far more significant quality of relationship with men who so live that we have not yet entered that kind of realm of Christian marriage. Live as though. Handle the world as though.

As though you were not ruled by its fads and by its fashions. Paul was not embarrassed that there was a seeming delay. Then this fellow gets us into deeper water to show what is the consequence for the church.

If Paul's apocalyptic view is not held by us or not held in a true faith, the constant suppression by scholars of the literal claim of Paul's apocalyptic is for the Christian not simply a rejection of Paul's so-called primitive worldview, but to the contrary, the rejection of a central confessional and theological claim. In a word, the whole faith is affected adversely when you remove or diminish this central focus of Paul's total worldview. The truth claim of the apocalyptic gospel of Paul is in turn based on the historicity of the resurrection of Christ that evokes the hope for God's ultimate apocalyptic triumph.

Without Paul's apocalyptic, the theological truth claim of the gospel itself is jeopardized. As a matter of fact, we need to see that that is indeed what has already happened. The gospel, the message, the proclamation has lost its currency, lost its power, lost its penetration, because something central that binds together the whole of the view has been removed, namely this kind of imminent expectation of an end.

So we're not just talking now about the issue of a doctrine. Now we're talking about the issue of the whole gospel, which is radically affected by the omission of this one single central thing. When the apocalyptic future resurrection of the dead was rejected by the theologians, the apocalyptic meaning of the resurrection of Christ also had to be rejected.

And in the last analysis, the resurrection itself has to be rejected. There's like a chain of connectedness that once you begin with one thing and begin to doubt or disparage or discredit or remove, then the next thing that is affected by it also comes under the cloud of suspicion until finally the issue of resurrection

itself becomes sentimentalized or romanticized or removed. Or we continue to hold it technically and doctrinally, but we no longer believe it in the vital sense of that which affects our life.

And so both God's past act in Christ and his future act in the resurrection of the dead converge on Christian life in the present. For only God himself will be able to complete the work that he began in us, in Christ. The separation of the resurrection of Christ from the future resurrection of the dead at the parousia, that is the appearing of the Lord, not only denies the hope in a future resurrection, but also frequently brings with it a denial of the historicity, the reality, the truth of the resurrection of Christ itself.

And when that happens, we of all men are most to be pitied. When the resurrection is no longer vital, when it's no longer central, when I'm not even, I'm not talking now about the doctrine, however precious and important that is, but when, if we cannot subscribe to the doctrine, how then shall we appropriate the reality? And if we shall not appropriate the reality and see it as the very source of our being, how shall we confront the philosophers at Mars Hill? By what wisdom shall we face the daily requirements of our life? How shall we stand on the razor's edge at the end time? If not in the resurrection power, then in what? In our own well-meaning religious intention? In our own Lutheran correctness? You see what I mean? These are shabby, utterly inadequate in terms of the magnitude of the thing to which we are called at the end of the age. The issue of the resurrection is all, and what this writer is so stunningly showing is the connectedness between the issue of the apocalyptic, the expectation, and finally the issue of resurrection itself.

Indeed, both events stand or fall together. It's not easy to affirm the resurrection as a historical event of God's intervention and power and to deny the historical closure or completion event of the world as due to the same intervention and power. In other words, if you deny the power that raised Jesus from the dead, how can you expect the power by which the world is going to be penetrated in his second coming at the conclusion of all history? The one and the other is the same power.

Once you interpret the apocalyptic future in symbolic terms, so also the resurrection of Christ becomes symbolically watered down and finally dissipated away. The price of not affirming the historical character of the resurrection of Christ is the surrender of the conviction of God's direct eschatological intervention into the historical flow of life. It rejects the entrance of God into time and into history.

It rejects God in history, and to remove God from history is to remove God as God. And this was brought home to me in a paper that was returned to me last quarter when I wrote something about the issues of the holocaust and the judgment of God. And the professor wrote in the margin, Art, you're going out on a thin limb.

There'll be few who will join you there. I will not be among them. And I'm appending to this paper a Xerox page from a book that more properly describes my convictions.

And so I took it home and I looked at it and didn't speak to me very much. Tried to go to sleep, did not. One o'clock in the morning I gave it up.

I got out of bed and I picked it up again. I read his comments again. I read my paper again.

And then I read again the Xerox statement of which he was so fond. And I found out later that the author of it is one of the New Age commentators, one of the philosophers of the New Age, in which he says, since the crucifixion of Jesus, God has made himself impotent. He's powerless to intervene in history.

He looks down on mankind and he sees the calamitous things that men do to one another, but he is powerless to intervene or to affect any situation. Well, that's the way you extricate yourself from trying to think out the implications of where was God during the holocaust. Now, if you're not recognized, God is a God of judgment and a God of wrath as well as a God of mercy, and begin to squirm and work in a convoluted way to find a way to extricate yourself theologically and intellectually, what you finally do in the last analysis is not only to remove the God of history, but to remove God.

We're not talking about a light issue here. And that's why I'm so freely quoting tonight more than any previous night. This man says things too valuable to miss.

I want them recorded on the tape. We need to hear them and to ponder them because he's striking at the very issues of the heart of the faith itself. This is not a luxury item.

The issue of eschatological expectancy of the sense of an apocalyptic that's going to break into time and conclude time in history in the vindicating power and righteousness of God is not just a doctrine. It was at the heart of the primitive church of the early church's total view in Paul's. It was their power.

It was their urgency. It was their dynamism, and it has been lost to us and needs again to be restored. I heard myself quoting in prayer tonight that scripture in Acts 3, that Jesus himself is pent up in the heavens, waiting to come.

Can you sense the palpitation? His heart is breaking for his union with the saints, as well as once and for all to bring an end to every violent, filthy practice by which the image of God and man is being despoiled and caricatured in our age. In homosexuality, in every filth and licentiousness. He wants to come in splendor and authority to rule and to reign and to be with the saints whom he has prepared to rule and reign with him.

He's pent up, waiting for the restoration of all things, and I believe with all my heart tonight, if I can say in the authority of God, this is certainly one and one of the most significant of them. And if you'll hear me through tonight and not shut me off at 830, I'm going to come down to the brass tacks issue of what it's going to take to have this kind of restoration in the life of the church. Paul's apocalyptic only becomes a genuine possibility for us today when his emphasis on the radical transcendence and glory of God over all our reckonings and calculations is given its full weight.

Apocalyptic degenerates into speculative knowledge and predictions unless God's end time is seen within the context of his radical transcendence over history. For notwithstanding the signs of the times, whether they point to God's imminent coming or to God's delay, the one necessary and basic sign has been given to us in the death and resurrection of Christ, and this one sign determines the character of all future signs. Indeed, it determines the character of Christian hope itself.

Have you got hope tonight? Is there a hope of his coming? The historic hope of the early church was not its escape. It was his return in glory. They were hanging on and occupying until he came.

They were preparing a way for the king. They weren't feasting and burping their way, hoping that in the last moment with their guts hanging over their spiritual belts to be lifted up and to avoid calamitous things that would be coming upon the earth. They had another kind of hope, and a very different character of it affects everything.

What your hope is, in fact, will affect all the quality of your faith. Can you hope for the appearing of the Lord despite every appearance to the contrary? The world seems to go on as it is. For two thousand years the church has been waiting this appearing.

It doesn't seem to be the evidence of it. The church seems to be flabby and out of shape. This is happening and that is happening, the PLO and terrorism and every kind of stark and vile thing.

Can you hope in his appearing? If you don't, you'll not purify yourself as he is pure. And if you'll not hope for that appearing, how shall you hope for the appearing of the Lord after the ministry of the word is concluded tonight and we shall ask the Lord to touch bodies and meet broken hearts and to deliver from vexatious things if we cannot hope for an appearing. Is that the point? Our hope for God in the now is profoundly tied up and connected with our hope for him in the ultimate end.

And the one is no stronger than the other. It's the statement of what is the substance of our real faith. To have restored to us a hope for an expectancy for his coming in Perusia in that explosive breaking into history as the Lord of Glory is of the same hope by which we shall hope that he'll appear to us tonight to meet our needs as Redeemer, Healer and Deliverer.

It's all one apostolic expectancy and faith. Trust he says in his faithfulness ceases to be trust when it turns to chronological speculation. He talks about what has been the consequence of the loss of this kind of expectancy and faith.

A hope of one coming to vindicate his church. A sentimentalizing of the whole issue of resurrection and the end is an expectancy of an individual place in heaven for those who die. The cloud and the harp, a kind of innocuous eternal future that is individualistic and has no sense of God's coming in terms of the vindicating of his own name and the glorious purposes that are consummated by his appearing as it affects the world and the church.

That has been lost and in its place is just a kind of faint notion of what's for us as eternity meaning a place in heaven. I'm not deriding that, but it's a weak and inadequate substitute for the kind of powerful view that the church had at the first. There's a communal character of all God's people which refers to the vindication of the creation in the glory of God.

The issue of Jesus's coming is the issue of glory. The issue of all safely getting to heaven is the issue of our personal satisfaction or deliverance and we need to switch from the one to the other. The church that looked for his appearing is a church that was jealous for his glory that had it up to here with the fact that he was being defamed and blasphemed and being ridiculed, rejected.

And with this, and I don't have the time to develop it, is a way to understand how it is that the whole emphasis has shifted for us. We are not a pilgrim band looking and hastening the day of his appearing, but rather our values have become prosperity, comfort, excess, abundance and the like. He writes, we who as Christians wonder like the wandering Jew cannot and should not desire a permanent home in the present structures of this world.

If you're expecting a new heaven and a new earth, if you're expecting that the very elements are going to melt with a fervent heat, why then are you laying up treasure on the earth? Why then do you make plans and contemplate your retirement or send your kids to school in the hope of middle class success and prosperity and security when you say that you believe in the end time, the culminating event of which is his

apocalyptic coming and the bringing of a new heaven and a new earth where in dwelleth righteousness. See, we betray and reveal what we actually believe by where we invest our time, our energy, our funds. What he is really saying is that we believe this, we would more approximate a wandering people journeying, going on still, pilgrims, strangers and sojourners in the world.

Apocalyptic hope then compels an ethical seriousness because it is existentially impossible to believe in God's coming triumph and to claim his Holy Spirit without a lifestyle that conforms to that faith. And I hope and I'll repeat it again that a shaft with that statement has come into your heart with the realization that indeed these are the end times and one of the evidences is that Bible studies are no longer inexpensive. They require something, that there's got to be a congruence, a compatibility between what we profess to believe and to expect and the lifestyle that goes with it to continue to encourage our kids as I've said to education and preparation for a middle class success in a world that is will always be with us is a contradiction to an expectancy that imminently and soon he's coming to put an end to that very world and to the values of that world.

It's put up or shut up and the reason that the doctrine and the conviction has left us is altogether relative to what our lifestyle has become and the world does not believe us. And as I said last week is there anything more ludicrous and humorous even than the cartoons that we find in the popular magazines of some man with a beard carrying a doomsday sign saying repent for the end of the world has come. Ha ha ha.

What does it take to convert a smug laugh and a titter to one's face being blanched gray when someone speaks in apostolic conviction repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Paul says that he has fixed the day in which he will judge all men and as I asked last week what would be the effect on the world today if men really believed that. What would be the effect on the morality and the character of even non-believers if they sensed that indeed there is a day in which all men will be judged by that one whom he raised from the dead even Jesus Christ.

That has got to have salutary mediating effect on the unbridled license with which men are now presently conducting themselves in the world. He has fixed a day in which he will judge all men. What would be the effect if society believed that.

This is an urgency which the secular mind cannot grasp and which we of which we have been unable to persuade them. Even those who heard Paul and Marcel said and what will this babbler say. And when they heard of the resurrection coupled with the announcement that the one who is coming and has been resurrected from the dead is judged, their son said we will hear again of this matter and they never did but they will be held eternally accountable for what they did here.

Not that it was lengthy but that it was cogent, penetrating, total and authoritative. Not only in word but in the very reality that exuded from the life of him who spoke it who was already in eternity while he was yet in time because he had a citizenship in heaven. He saw the things that were invisible as being more cogent and more real than the things that are temporal and seen.

And it was so effectual for Paul that he counted his afflictions which were many and apostolic as momentary and light. Paul's eternal view mediated how he lived in the present and affected even the things which he felt. That's bringing eternity into time and until we reach that place and that conviction and that reality our words will be scorned, will be laughed at, will be impugned.

We will not be able to persuade men knowing the terror of God. It's one that takes eternity into consideration that believes men will be called into account and that even we will be called into account. For it says in 1 Corinthians 10 I believe that we will be judged for all that we have done in our body both good and bad.

And I said last week that Paul lived in the continual consciousness of God as judge. It wasn't a hangover. It wasn't a trip.

It wasn't a condemnation. It was a realistic appreciation of a God who is sovereign and all-seeing and Paul lived in the conscious awareness of that, really lived. That's why he didn't have to be monitored.

That's why he never fell into hanky panky. He lived in the knowledge of a judge and because he knew God as judge as well as God as savior he could commend both the wrath and the mercy of God to men upon whom it will certainly fall lest they repent. And this kind of view of eternity and its consequences brings a certain urgency into all human deliberation and compels men to make a decision for or against God.

Eternity is not just some kind of mindless category, a nondescript word. It's a palpitating, powerful sense of things which should already be more real with us than the things that are temporal and seen. You say ah but how do you go from one to the other? You've got to fight for it.

You've got to battle with your eyes. You've got to turn from the seer's catalog or whatever it is that continually draws you into things, into time, into place, into the paraphernalia and the accoutrements and the whole weightedness of the world that breeds the spirit, this is the best of all possible worlds and it will ever remain so. You've got to fight your way into the scriptures.

You've got to live in the reality of what is apostolically expressed there and make that the predicate and the foundation of your life and not what you see. Your sense of reality is not to be formed by Time magazine or Newsweek but the sense of judgment that is already working in the earth through cataclysm, through social breakdown, through PLO, through eruptions of volcanoes, through breakdowns of economy and failures which men do not see as coming from the hand of God because the church has not seen it. What are the foundations of our seeing? Do we mentally inhabit the world of the scriptures as the real world? Don't tell me that you're good at Bible studies.

Do we mentally inhabit the world of the scriptures as the real world? That's why I could say to that Jewish professor at New York University, the head of the department of philosophy and the rabbi and renowned expert on the Pauline scriptures who said, are you a Jew for Jesus? No. Are you an evangelical? No. Are you a charismatic? No.

Well, what are you? I said, I leap over all of these contemporary phenomena and my roots are with the apostles and the prophets. Boing! But I'll tell you, you have to fight for that place to come into the reality of the scriptures as if that constitutes the reality of your life. In that you live and move and have your being.

When every outward appearance is to the contrary. And even when you leave this room tonight, get into your cars, which is a piece of the technology of the world, and into your homes and into the streets and see the impressiveness of the world, already something is beginning to dissipate. Contend for the faith that was once and all for all given to the saints.

And because we have not contended for it, we have lost it. We have continued in our doctrinal correctness, but we have lost the palpitating reality that makes all the difference. We need to mentally,

existentially, actually inhabit the world with the scriptures as being the real world.

You say, ah, but that will make me strange. People will think me queer. I'm marching by another beat.

Exactly. We're strangers and pilgrims and sojourners in the earth. And if you're not strange and you don't look strange and you don't exhibit strangeness and you're not observed as being strange, something is amiss with the quality of the faith in which you walk.

It's guaranteed to make us strange if indeed we will believe it and make it the predicate of our reality. So, I'm over my time. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive good or evil according to what he has done in the body.

We shall all stand before this judgment seat of Christ, some of us joyously and expectantly, and some of us with misgiving and eternal shame. The judgment of God, God as judge, his coming as judge needs to be restored. Do you have that hope? I have so many scriptures that I could read.

Wow, Isaiah 13, and the day of the Lord. Paul didn't make this up. He didn't get this out of the air.

It was part of the Hebrew tradition of the faith. Wail for the day of the Lord is at hand. It will come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Therefore, all hands will be limp. Every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them.

They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth. They will be amazed at one another. Their face will be like flames.

Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with both wrath and fierce anger. To lay the land desolate, he will destroy its sinners. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be darkened, and it's going forth. The moon will not cause its light to shine. The same thing is echoed again in Joel, and that's the very text that the Spirit gave Peter on the day of Pentecost.

Repent, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved from this judgment, which they felt was imminent because they saw the foreshadowing of the foretaste of the token of the guarantee of what was to come by the Spirit that had fallen upon the church. I'll just take another minute or two. Please be patient.

I've quoted and referred to Joel. The earth quakes before them. The heavens tremble.

The sun and the moon grows dark. The stars diminish their brightness. The Lord gives voice before his army.

For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible. Who can endure it? Who can stand in the day of his appearing? And what have we been telling the saps around us? God has a plan for your life. Why don't you accept Jesus? Think of the benefits that will accrue to you.

Not that there are not benefits, but is that the basis for the proclamation of the gospel? Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. There's something coming that transcends history, transcends time. It's pent up in the heavens.

It's waiting now. It's at the door, and you can already see the first evidences in those who are already walking in kingdom truth and kingdom reality and kingdom light. It's at hand.

It's imminent. Repent, therefore. The great day of the Lord is near.

It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter. There the mighty men shall cry out.

That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. Zephaniah chapter 1, 14 and following. For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble, and the day which is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that will leave them neither root nor branch.

But to you who fear my name, the son of righteousness shall arise with healing at his wings, and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this, says the Lord of hosts. Malachi chapter 4. And I'll just end with one New Testament scripture verse to be found virtually in every book and in many places.

First Thessalonians chapter 3. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this day should overtake you as a thief.

How does Paul conclude that letter? Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, he who calls you as faithful, who also will do it. These things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the age have come. I want to pray that God will give us apostolic faith, that God will give us apostolic courage, that we'll be willing to forsake any aspect of our present lifestyle that militates against these truths, and bring our life, our style, and our being in conformity to the word.

Whatever sacrifice that requires, that we ourselves might be prepared for the day of His appearing, and be able to warn others cogently with power and with authority, because we are living what we believe. Let's pray. Precious God, we just invite you to disturb us and to confront us, even as Paul confronted the philosophers on Mars Hill.

We need also so to be confronted, for there has been a grievous falling away from your faith, from your covenant, from the expectancy of you, even the things which you spoke to us, my God, in the early part of this evening by your Spirit. Disturb us, my God, that we might disturb our world for Christ's sake, that we might bring the sense of eternity into time, and to warn men, lest the event overcome them and take them unawares. Be our longing, my God, may it not just be a biblical fact that we're waiting for, but your precious appearing.

May the fervency of the Spirit give us a longing in our hearts for the Holy One of Israel, whom we have worshipped not seeing. My God, may the cry Maranatha come again into the church, in the spirit of this longing, not as a technicality, not as an escape, not as a release from our burdens, from the weight of the responsibility, but because we long to see you, long to see you vindicated, long to see you glorified, long to see you as the King of the creation, which is rightly yours, and is now being produced and ruined by

men who are recklessly indifferent to the fact that you are its God and its Creator. Come, Lord Jesus, and Lord, come even tonight.

Give us an impartation of faith, as we shall expect that event as being at the door, imminent, soon to break in, that we might believe also and hope also in your appearing now for our bodily need, my God, for our deliverance, for our solace and our comfort by your Spirit and by your healing power. Lord, come, we thank you and praise you for your precious word and for the hope, my God, that you're inculcating in our hearts. Come tonight, Lord, you who have given us the token of the Spirit, the foretaste, the guarantee of what is to come.

By that Spirit, my God, even now, gloriously meet with your saints, touch us, we'll thank you and praise you and give you all honor and acknowledgement in Jesus' holy name and God's people said, Amen.

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