

# Birthing the Authentic

by Art Katz

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*The birth of Jesus is the ultimate paradigm of authenticity, demonstrating God's willingness to come to earth in a humble and vulnerable way.*

**Duration:** 39:10

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:6, Luke 2:8-9, Luke 2:25-38, John 1:1

**Topics:** "Authenticity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of waiting for the consolation of Israel, as demonstrated by Simeon and Anna. The consolation referred to is the authentic gift from God, which is brought about through the process of birth, including suffering and inconvenience. The shepherds, despite their lowly vocation, were the first to receive the angelic pronouncement of the significance of the birth of Jesus. Anna, a prophetess, also recognized the importance of this birth and spoke of it to those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem. The speaker challenges the audience to be willing to go through trials and contractions in order to be a vessel through which God can bring forth His purposes, rather than seeking an easy and comfortable path.

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## Transcript

Tonight, Lord, an unction of an uncommon kind, for I trust what will be an uncommon word. Something that needs to be birthed. Something on the phenomenon of birth itself.

So come, my God, I'm willing to bear the spasms and the contractions, so long as you will bring forth that precious thing that is in your own heart and ordain for this night, for every good and perfect thing must come down from above, from the Father of lights, in whom is no shadow, no variableness of turning. And God's people who agreed said, Amen. You can turn to Luke, chapter 2, and we're going to examine the birth of Jesus, though this is not the Christmas season, and examine it in what sense, in the sense that this is the ultimate paradigm.

This is the once and for all pattern of what it means to bring into the earth from above, that which is perfect, that which is authentic, and therefore every subsequent thing that will ever come into the earth must, in some degree, bear a correspondence to the pattern of things that attended to the birth of Jesus. Following me so far? So reading from chapter 2, beginning with verse 6, And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for

them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you was born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is to come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present them to the Lord.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the spirit into the temple.

And when the parents brought in the child, Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now let thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary, his mother, behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

And there was one Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with her husbands seven years from her virginity. She was a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Amen. How is the sound? Is it natural, normal, not too loud? Are you sure? And the lighting is okay? You're not distracted? And the air conditioning is set just right? Okay.

Would you say turn up the heat? You know, God himself was not exempted from the necessity for the process of birth in his own coming. How do we assume that anything that is of the character of God, the quality and the importance should not have a like advent? That there's a pattern here that it behooves us to examine. That's not just once and for all.

It's critical for every advent of authenticity, particularly in the area of which I'm especially jealous, that which is apostolic and prophetic. Because as you'll hear tomorrow in the afternoon, when I'll be more particular, I'm very concerned for pseudo apostolic and prophetic developments taking place in our country. It seems to be the latest thing.

And evidently, these who are merchandising in it have not heeded my caution. Of course, they don't even know of my existence, let alone of my exhortation that they should leave these two words alone. Traffic in whatever you will, church growth, power evangelism, any of the current fads, go and have a ball.

But do not touch these two sacred words. They are the foundation of the church. And if they suffer injury and slight, if they are only the facsimile thereof and not the thing in itself, we will be a terribly denuded church.

So how does the prophetic and apostolic phenomenon find its place in the earth? Exactly, in my opinion, in the way that the Lord himself found his entree through the phenomenon of birth, through the travail of birth, which is a process of death. It's organic, bloody, messy, but the Lord himself was not exempt from it. So when we read that she brought forth her firstborn son, however sparse that statement is, you ladies especially know that it was accompanied by pain, by suffering, by contractions, by all of the organic, what's the word, exercise, the tremendous requirement of bringing into being that which was not.

And that it came in the days that were accomplished that she should be delivered, which is to say that the things birthed of God cannot be extradited, facilitated, or hastened by man. They come in God's own time and God's express way. And we need to be jealous for that, or we will find ourselves applauding anything that seems to have a degree of quality and significance to it, even though far from being organic and brought into being by God, it is the exercise of men who are impatient and want to produce the equivalent thing themselves.

So that it was born in the days that were accomplished, brought forth in all of the organic difficulties of blood and travail that brings forth a new life, almost like a process of life out of death, where the womb is something like a tomb, out of which the new thing is created or brought forth or resurrected, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the end. So I want to say tonight, in my own observation, and understanding that anything that has this advent in God from above through birth, will experience this same inhospitality in the world. There never will be room for it in the end.

There never will be a place of accommodation in which it will be received. It will never be applauded and congratulated, spoken well of, received by those who are running the inn and somehow find that that kind of a birth and that kind of an advent is incompatible with their interests. That it's wrapped in rags, swaddling clothes or rags, is not just some inadvertent thing that Mary and Joseph found at hand, it's a

necessary thing.

Not swaddled in satin, swaddled in rags, laid in a manger, born in a stable, has all the earmarks of the essential requirement of God himself in his own wisdom, in bringing from heaven to earth that which is authentic and real and cannot be counterfeited nor duplicated. The Lord was the first, but he is the pattern and the paradigm of every subsequent thing that comes down from above must be accompanied or be brought in by travail of birth. And that clue includes tonight's own speaking.

Oh, you dear souls who have never yet ever been in the place that I find myself now can hardly know what I'm talking about, what it means to wait until you're called on, never quite having spoken something like this before, sensing that a moment for its time has come, that it must be delivered and then entering in to the delivery by the process of the speaking itself, word for word, phrase by phrase, without a script. It's an awkward, jerking kind of a thing, much more smooth if we were producing something religious or human. But if it's holy, if its time has come, there's no other way for its inception except through the willing process of spasms and contractions of speech for which I'm trusting and have already asked the Lord that somewhere in Idaho or Colorado or Minnesota where I'm from or South Carolina, where I know their intercessors or anywhere in the world where the Lord can by his spirit stir those saints to travail in prayer for the bringing forth of this word.

I have asked it. That would be a remarkable presumption and a request to be made of God if the issue is only a message. But what if it's an event? What if it's a word whose time has come? What if God himself is short in patience with the kinds of impertinence that is daily now being conducted by men who freely allow themselves to be labeled apostles and prophets and who raise up phenomenal institutions of 5.5 million dollar prayer centers and all of the other apparatus of religion and prestige and pot and pump and seem to be calling the shots and speaking as if they in fact represent the authentic thing that must alone come down from above? What if the church itself has been too soft, too shallow, too eager to hear of some scintillating and new thing, supposing that it senses that there's a want of something of an apostolic and prophetic kind and will be too quick to run to those who are quick to give us the equivalent.

Maybe we're not as patient as Anna and Simeon. Maybe like unlike them, we are not waiting for the consolation of Israel and therefore we're much more easily satisfied because what we want is a bit of excitement, some added dimension, some seeming increment of stature or substance because it bears the language of that which is apostolic and prophetic. Therefore, you'll get what you're impatiently wanting and it'll turn to ashes in your mouth.

It will be sawdust, hay, wood and stubble. I so appreciate Simeon and Anna waiting for the consolation of Israel. What that consolation is, has got to be that which is authentically given of God in the moment appointed by him and the means by which he alone will provide it, namely the paroxysms and suffering and inconvenience of the process of birth.

That shepherds were the first to learn of this, I think is perfectly in keeping with the whole pattern indicated in this chapter because they watched their flocks by night. They abided in the field and watched their flocks by night. However lowly the vocation of shepherding is, God honors this integrity and faithfulness to be to the flock what such men were and they received the first angelic pronouncement of the significance of this birth in of all places that city which was the least of all the cities of Judah.

Did you know that? O thou Bethlehem, though you be least among the thousands of the cities of Judah, yet shall he come forth unto me, who is to be ruler in all Israel, whose goings forth are from old and from

everlasting. Put this into your spiritual pipe that this one who was born bloodied and out of the enormous strain, the apoplexy, the convulsions of birth is the one whose goings forth are from old and from everlasting. Coming into life as the authentic expression of very God himself through the blood, the mouths, the fuss of the paroxys of birth itself.

How then should we expect anything that's authentic and from God to have an origin in any way less or other than this? If the ancient of days was willing for it, whose goings forth are from old and from everlasting, why should we be so quick and impatient to be on the spot and want this and that? And now and anyone who claims and has the gift of God and knows how to put it together organizationally, we're quick to run and to think that that is the thing in itself. Oh, for the spirit of Simeon, who will not be consoled by anything other than that which is authentically of God and comes down from above perfect through the process of birth. Even our speakings and our messages.

Well, I like it that God chose the city of David. Bethlehem, the house of bread. Everything is so fraught with precious symbolism that of all the cities and places, this least of all the cities is the city of David and the house of bread and the bread of life was born into that despicable and nothing place.

And I think he looks for the advent of everything that pertains to his apostolic and prophetic heart in exactly the same way. And therefore, I'm thrilled for this setting tonight. Hey, this is great.

Why don't we do this more often? More sawdust, less impressive architecture, a pox on the air conditioning systems. As a matter of fact, on all systems, this is organic. So what's the what's the alternative to that which is organic, that which is programmatic, that which is robotic, that which is engineered, that which is humanly contrived, organic.

Is there a synonym for that? Somebody help me. Organic is alive. Yes.

Out from the life of God, palpitating and pulsating. It's the real thing that cannot be cannot find a facsimile. You cannot make anything like unto it.

And it's interesting that the name Antichrist, who is already finding a seat in the temple, which is the church and being worshipped as God by those who don't know any better and are quick to receive any phenomenon that gives the appearance of power or of God. That the word Antichrist means not only against, but like as can you tell the real thing? Can you wait for the real thing? Anna and Simeon did, and they were extraordinarily blessed and privileged. Well, this birth has got to do with great joy, which shall be to all people and to glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

Well, there's so much that can be said, and I'm just finding my way through. But if God, if the angels punctuate this birth with that statement and begin with the priority, glory to God in the highest, and then after that, the next consideration is peace on earth. And after that, goodwill toward men.

That, in my simple understanding, ought to be the order and priority of our every concern in our conduct and service toward God. Number one, glory to God in the highest. Number two, peace on earth.

Number three, goodwill toward men, because if you miss the first, there is no other benefit for men or for the earth or for the world. Glory to God in the highest. And if we have a jealousy for that glory, we will not be willing for any substitute that is programmatic, robotic, mechanical, or any other kind of thing, but that which is organic birth and given of God through convulsions, through trial, through all of the exercise of the kind of thing in the bringing forth.

Are you willing to be such a body and that something should issue from you through contractions and spasms? Or do you want no stoop, no fuss, no bother? Easy come, easy go in keeping with the tenor of the age. It'll look like it'll sound like it'll have the same vocabulary. They'll say apostolic prophetic, but will not be the thing in itself.

And we will be wanting for the true foundation. So on verse 21, when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named the angel before he was conceived in the womb. What should we say of this? Not only must there be a holy birth, but there must be a holy circumcision sometimes after.

And there's got to be a willing cutting and further blood, a pain, a suffering. How my wife blanched when my first son was born in Denmark and Copenhagen, where the practice of circumcision was relatively unknown and just reserved for syphilitic children of syphilitic parents or having the potential of some kind of venereal disease. But it was unknown even hygienically as circumcision has been accepted by us in that way, let alone any spiritual significance.

So my dear gentile wife, never having heard of this, when I requested that my son be circumcised, actually went livid. She went purple in her face that any knife should cut the tender flesh of her newly born son. So vehement was her opposition that my son never was circumcised.

And I don't know what he lost by that, but I know that any work of God, anything that comes in which we are involved in the process of birth must also again be submitted to the knife and to cutting. If we avoid that, if we're not willing for that, we have not the complete thing sanctified and prepared for the Lord's use. It's painful.

And I think it's for that reason, among others, that Simeon, when he blessed them, said unto Mary, his mother, behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be spoken against. You can believe that, that anything that comes down from God is not going to be readily accepted. That even the religious, maybe especially the religious, will have the greatest opposition to it.

And that those that were involved in the process of birth and brought it forth are not themselves immune from the pain that has to be born when a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And something is going to issue from us in the body of Christ in the last days. If something is going to come and have its origin and be brought forth in point of time through our contractions and our spasms and our willingness for its cutting and bleeding, or it's not an authentic circumcision, we also will have to suffer what Mary did, pierced through your own soul also.

So the woman through whom this birthing came makes herself a candidate for a special quality of pain in that which was issued from her. And maybe it's for that reason, instinctively and intuitively, we prefer things that are contrived and made of men that have the correct labels and so we are saved from the involvement of ourselves and the pain to ourselves that will come by the thing issuing out from our own body and our own life. We don't want something that is going to be spoken against in which we have had any kind of creative or organic involvement.

How is it that in all my travels in these 37 years, and particularly the last 30 or so, that my greatest opposition and difficulty is not with mainline Christians or Charismatics or their from time to time Pentecostals. The greatest friction and the lack of reception or recognition of fraternity is from those who purport to be either Apostles or Prophets. You would have thought that there would be the greatest

acceptance and intuitive recognition and fraternal relationship, but no, strangely there, I find men's hackles rising and irritation and opposition, and I think it's got to do with what is said here.

It's got to do with the rising again and the falling of many in Israel. What is more offensive to those who purport to be either Apostolic and Prophetic than a confrontation with that which is to some measure authentically the thing that they purport to represent and to be, and the Prophetic thing will always be offensive, always suffer real recognition, always be less attractive than the flashy counterfeit that seems really to have it much more together, showy and fulfilling what people expect to find in those who have such a title and will win many adherents and followers. I think the true thing will always be unwelcomed in the end.

There never will be a place for it. It will always be swathed in rags. It will never have multi-million dollar facilities to verify or to establish it.

It will always be the thing that is offensive and from which people would more likely to recoil than to be attracted. Well, we can believe that in this time of the birth of Jesus, there was much messianic expectation and any number of candidates were available for those who were zealous and religious and expectant, and they could find someone to whom they could relate themselves as a fulfillment of the messianic expectation. But not so Anna and Simeon.

They could not be consoled by anything other than the real thing. And isn't it remarkable that Simeon should be able to identify the babe as being the Christ? How many babes were there being circumcised in that day and in the temple? How should he instantly know and take up unto himself in such an embrace of acceptance this babe and know that he has seen the salvation of God? I think it has to do with waiting with some kind of integrity that cannot be pacified or satisfied with something less or other than what God himself gives. Were you the first in your neighborhood to know about the body of Christ or power evangelism or church growth? Or how quickly did you latch on to the current fad or phrase and become quite glib in it? As for myself, I was the last one in my neighborhood to understand what the body of Christ meant.

And there's something in the way that I'm constructed by God that will not receive it merely because it is now current or in vogue. The body of Christ is a mystery. The body of Christ is a glory.

And God forbid that we should be satisfied with some verbal equivalent of that phenomenon and think that by our ability to mouth it, we have it. How did you learn it, Art? By the same wife who refused to allow my son to be circumcised. My Danish wife, the Gentile of the Gentiles, married to this Hebrew of the Hebrews.

An impossible mix, patently incompatible, not on some points, on all points. I didn't want to be a racist and say that there's something in Jews that can be identified racially or genetically, but my wife has persuaded me that that's true. To find, what shall I say, not just a working agreement, to find some fulfillment of the mystery of the body, that is the reconciliation and the amalgam of differences that are uniquely and awkwardly unfitted to be one with such a wife and such a husband was bloody, took painful contractions and spasms.

I don't know we've attained to it yet, but I'll tell you that I have a much greater respect for the genius of the church as the body of Christ because of the organic difficulty through which I have had to prevail with her in order to obtain it. Are you following me, saints? We need to pray for a Simeon and Anna spirit to be birthed in the church that is in this country too glib, too facile, too anxious, too much wanting it now. This is

the instant generation, quick, easy, facile, let's have it.

And the holy things, dear saints, have got to come in the moment of time of God's own birthing. If you're jealous with the great words, apostolic and prophetic, and you ought to be, you need to travail in birth for the bringing forth of that which is authentic, for the church was built on that foundation. And if we're quick to accept something of a lesser or dubious kind, merely because it bears the titles, then the church will suffer in its choice.

So, dear Anna, who happened in that instant in verse 38 to come, also recognize what was in that child, in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord and spoke of him to all them that look for redemption in Jerusalem. You know what I suspect? There weren't all that many. But as many as them were, to them she spoke of the advent of this child.

This authentic thing that had come down from above in the moment of time when the days were accomplished that it should be delivered and brought forth that which is real, authentic, incorruptible, because every good and perfect thing comes down from above, from the father of lights in whom is no shadow or variableness of turning. The birth of Jesus is the advent of authenticity itself. And if you want a synonym for apostolic, it is what is authentic.

It is the thing in itself. It's not some clever man with a degree of expertise who can resolve church problems or quote Paul or find an application and has a certain facility of an administrative kind. An apostle or a prophet are the thing in themselves through and through.

There's a history. There's a travail. There's a long dealing with God.

There's a hiddenness in an obscurity. It's precious, worth waiting for, worth praying for, worth prevailing for. For it is the issue of the church itself and not only of the church, but of Israel.

Because we read that Simeon said, mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, like the light in the Gentiles. That's the church and the glory of thy people, Israel. It's Israel's glory.

And Israel is waiting for it unbeknownst to themselves, the showing forth of that which is authentically from their God. Not some slapdash church that has its good formulas or is praying for the peace of Jerusalem in a 60 second exercise, but the real thing. The light that lightens the Gentiles is the glory of the people, Israel.

And until they see that glory, I'm not expecting their salvation. There's something great at stake here. Not just the church, but Israel herself.

And maybe our eagerness to accept and believe and hope for the present state of Israel as being the fulfillment of God's intention and glory is an indication of how shallow, impatient and quick we are to receive the substitute and not to look for and expect the authentic and the real thing. I don't think we have seen the authentic Israel of God yet. And the paroxysms and pains through which the present state is passing is something of the phenomenon of birth out of which will come the enduring thing.

We mustn't be quick to applaud that which does not yet reflect God's glory. And that glory waits on the light that first issues from the Gentiles, the church. So may our light be a true light.

May our church have true foundations. May our apostles be apostles. May our prophets be prophets.

May we be willing for rags rather than for satin. May we be willing for stables like this rather than multimillion dollar facilities with programs and expertise and banks of computers and all of the electronic and robotic kinds of things.

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