

# The Remnant People of God

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding eschatology and the role of the Church in fulfilling God's eternal purpose.*

**Duration:** 1:14:10

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:11, Isaiah 53:3, Matthew 5:17, John 19:11, Acts 5:41, Philippians 3:10, Revelation 12:12-17

**Topics:** "Remnant People of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses a faithful congregation and expresses gratitude for their presence. He mentions that these nights have been unusual and significant, as something important is being formed and birthed among them. The speaker emphasizes the need for a comprehensive worldview, one that takes into account eternity and aligns with God's perception of reality as stated in Scripture. He discusses the affliction faced by the righteous and the eventual overcoming of evil through God's direct intervention. The sermon concludes with the encouragement for believers to have a confident expectation of an eternal reward, which sustains them in times of oppression and persecution.

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## Transcript

I now would come into the holy place to look upon his face. I see such beauty there none other can compare. I come to you, O Lord, within the veil.

Now listen, smooth it out. Within the veil I now would come into the holy place to gaze upon his face. I see such beauty there none other can compare.

I come to you, O Lord, within the veil. One more time and sing it to him. Within the veil I now would come into the holy place to gaze upon his face.

I see such beauty there none other can compare. I come to you, O Lord, within the veil. Praise the Lord.

Hallelujah. May we see none other but you, Lord, tonight. May our eyes pierce through the veils of our own making and the veils of the earth to see the face of Jesus, have him enlarged in our hearts, and have that burning that is in us because of him intensified.

And Father, that when we leave here today, we'll know we've been in the holy place, touched by the Shekinah glory that beams from him. We ask you, Father, Jesus, amen. We just want to delight that we've had Aaron and Gary here tonight, and I'm asking Aaron Katz to come forward and minister the word.

Good evening, saints. Faithful constituency, night after night, your faces are now becoming familiar and dear, just when it's time to leave. So it takes that time to warm up to each other, and too bad now that we can't enjoy it, but perhaps the Lord will give us other occasions in the future.

These have been unusual nights, and just a sense in Gary and myself that there's something very auspicious about these days, not only for yourselves, but something that's being formed, hatched, birthed, in these days that will have its expression beyond you. So you are, so to speak, the womb for something of a kind, I think the Lord is wanting now to bring to segments of his body. And I have never spoken on the things that you've been hearing, with the exception of last night, but even last night was a rendering and a bringing forth of it in a new way.

So I appreciate your patience as you draw it out of God's heart, so to speak. And I'm going to do something unusual tonight to go back again to the theme that was struck at the first about apocalypse, these two words that have fallen out of the knowledge, the understanding, the experience, and the centrality that it should occupy in the conviction of true believers. Eschatology, or the things that are eschatological and apocalyptic.

You know, you're loathe to pronounce those words, I think people are thinking that you're wanting just to say something impressive. But they just happen to be ponderous words. One, the eschatological, eschaton, eschatology, the study of and the consideration of the things pertaining to the end.

And apocalypse is now something I'm going to share with you from a resource book. I've never done this before, but why shouldn't we have the advantage and share the things that we read that are so good that they should not just be confined to our own pleasure and benefit? A statement about the book of Revelation on Apocalypse in the Interpreter's Bible. So I want to pray, we've been praying through the day and looking forward to this night of conclusion, praying to the Alpha and the Omega of our faith.

Here's the beginning and the end of everything. And I found myself a few times today and even now in Daryl's office praying that as he was the beginning, he'll be also the end of these days, but this end tonight is a new beginning. Something new, something of a qualitative kind will be struck tonight that will have ongoing consequence to the day of eternity.

And if I'm deceived about that, please pray for my correction and adjustment, but it's not just a penchant or a disposition I have to believe largely from God, but a sense also of the brevity or the shortness of the time that demands large things if we are to be fitted and prepared for that which is shortly to come to pass. So Lord, with these words, we ask a blessing appropriate to what you have stirred in our own hearts to ask. If it's true that what Paul said, that of you and to you and through you are all things to whom be glory forever, I even believe that our prayers have their inspiration from you, that you yourself author in us the things that you want to be brought back into your own hearing.

And so Lord, give an answer to that which you've prompted in our prayer. We're not ambitious for ourselves. We're ambitious for you, for your glory, for your honor, for the consummation of this age to end the muck, the filth, the degradation of it, my God, the things that are despoiled and that have been made in your image, the fiendish delight that the powers of darkness take and controverting all that is holy and besmirching and bringing.

And so Lord, we await the kingdom that is holy. We look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. And we know, my God, that somehow it's pleased you in your own wisdom that

we should be a factor in hastening the day of your appearing.

Seeing these things, what manner of men ought we to be? Help us to take hold of that, my God, and desire it that we might become it by the grace that is given. Speak now, Lord, and bring your precious conclusion that is a new beginning. I will thank you and give you the praise in Jesus' holy name.

In God's people's stead. Amen. So, what is the meaning of this word apocalypse? Greek word may be defined as that the eschatological belief that the power of evil, which is now in control of this temporal and hopelessly evil age of human history in which the righteous are afflicted by his demonic and human agents is soon to be overcome and his evil rule ended by the direct intervention of God who thereupon will create an entirely new perfect and eternal age under his immediate control for the everlasting enjoyment of his righteous followers from among the living and the dead.

Phew. What a mouthful. I don't think there's a word in that that is not calculated to offend the sensibilities of modern men.

I mean, it is altogether a collection of such supernaturalisms that would make any humanist spit out his guts. It even has the ring of a God of sovereignty who chooses to elect, who somehow does not submit to our democratic mentality and who will be who he will be, who will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, will come when he will come, will rule when he will rule. I kind of like that.

So, that the power of evil, which is now in control of this temporal and hopelessly evil age. And I'll tell you that that conviction has fallen into disuse in the modern church because somehow that enlightenment concept of the world becoming progressively better is deeper in our gut than we know. Do you know that? We need to come back to the place of the apostolic fathers before the age of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment because they did not have that conviction that somehow the world was going to get better and better.

It is hopelessly and eradicably evil, will become degeneratively worse until there is no hope for its redemptive recovery, then will the judgment come. Sorry about that, but that's the nature of reality. And listen guys, I mean, we're called to be eminently real and that requires us to align ourselves with the God of all reality who himself is truth and who has stated his perception of things in the scripture that we need to recover.

The righteous are afflicted by his demonic and human agents but will soon be overcome, his evil rule will be overcome by the direct intervention of God. How sticky. I mean that he's going to make an appearance.

He's going to come in glory as the word of God. The sword shall proceed from his mouth. His eyes shall be ablaze with fire.

Men shall seek crevices and places in the rocks to hide for the fear of him who comes as the lion of God. And with his coming as the great creator that he is, he creates an entirely new, perfect and eternal age under his immediate control for the everlasting enjoyment of his righteous saints from among the living and the resurrected dead. The dead will rise at his appearing to rule and to reign with him.

And I know that it offends even other of our humanistic sensibilities that he might even appoint a particular place from which to rule like in the earth, like Jerusalem, you know, the actual literal city. I know we would much rather have the vague and, you know, more ethereal things that somehow that is only a term that denotes something spiritual. But if God chooses to be actual and that he is the Lord who has chosen

Jerusalem, who are we to say nay? So this opposition of two supernatural forces, this cosmic dualism, one under the control of Satan, which is of necessity evil, temporal, limited and irredeemable in its character.

All of the bleeding hearts that would like for Satan to get saved. Under his rule, this age has become progressively evil and corrupt until it has reached the very depths of evil and corruption can become no worse, so thoroughly permeated with evil that it must be replaced with a perfect world. The new Jerusalem, which has pre-existed in heaven, will come down from above.

The heavenly city, the one for which Abraham sought, who was a pilgrim, stranger and sojourner in the earth, and which you will be also if you take such speakings as this seriously. It's calculated to make you strange, not only to the earthlings but to the religious who have accommodated themselves to the world in which we cannot. Evil, especially in the form of the afflictions and sufferings of the righteous, God uses as a factor in the purging, training and perfecting of those being fitted to overcome and to obtain the character of sons so as to rule and reign in the ages to come.

I'll tell you what, dear saints, this makes suffering explicable. It's not some well-begun thing for which we wring our fingers and say, how come and why me? It is the very genius of God to take the most diabolical things that are intended for our harm and to use them for the eternal good. That if we are to be afflicted as the righteous in an age that is still in the last throes of demonic rule and that the fury of this antichrist and beast system will be directed against those who will not in any way bow or submit to it, who await another kingdom and another king, that the severity of what it is that we might have to go through will fit us eternally to rule and to reign with him.

I'm not hearing your delighted aye and amens. Hallelujah. It's precious.

It's very loved. And there's not a thing that can come upon the heads of his saints whose every hair is numbered that God in his providence and wisdom will not allow. He knows exactly what measure of things we need, no more, no less.

And we can say with the same certitude as the Lord before Pontius Pilate, you could do nothing except it were given you from above. And of course what was given from above was excruciating, but it purchased the salvation and the redemption of mankind forever and ever. You need to make a study of martyrdom.

You need to see how the saints whispered to each other before they went to the stake that when the flames burned the ropes, if you are not experiencing excruciating pain, but that there's a grace that has been given you, which is in the fellowship of his sufferings, raise your hand to us. And time after time after time, when those ropes burst under the heat of the burning pyre, the arms of these withering saints cruelly being eaten up by the flames went up in joyous acclamation that God was there. In all our afflictions, he is afflicted.

I can't think of anything more eternally melancholy that we should not have a crown to lay at his feet, that we lived it so safe and lived so circumspectly and so to it that we never allowed ourselves to come into that zone where we ourselves might in any way experience suffering, that we had not a crown to lay at his feet, which is the particular reward of those who do. Come on, saints. Let's line up with the eternal cloud of witnesses that is about us in this room, even tonight, who are not complete without us.

Let's disabuse ourselves of all of the noxious nonsense that has so permeated the Church of Jesus Christ in these recent decades about prosperity and that if Paul knew better, he need not ever have suffered.

Let's return to the faith once and for all, given the saints. So the righteous await, being faithful and loyal to their God, await his intervention and vindication, not lifting a finger to justify themselves nor defend themselves, nor to contest nor to contend for their physical lives or their well-being or their safety.

But they are not without hope, being assured that God, now transcended upon his throne in heaven, will come to their rescue, eagerly waiting the time he will intervene in their behalf, bringing vengeance and wrath in his judgment. What happened to the pre-tribulation rapture? The most phenomenal heresy ever foisted upon the Church, barely a century and a half old, of which the apostolic fathers would have wept had they known that it was going to become so sacrosanct that anyone who dares question it in modern times is considered heretical, that there would be a secret rapture that precedes the Lord's coming that would take his saints out from a place of suffering and trial. Encouraged by this ardent hope.

And if hope isn't ardent, is it really hope? Don't we have to do something to move from hope as a category, as a kind of doctrinal statement that we should espouse or to which we should subscribe as true, to the place where it becomes a life-sustaining thing as encouragement and power, where it becomes the blessed hope of the Church, because it is ardent, because we can pant after it, because it encourages us for what is to come as vindication when the Lord shall come in his glory. Do you have that hope? They that have this hope in them ardently purify themselves as he is pure. So encouraged by this ardent hope, they are able to overcome, to endure their sufferings, even the prospect of cruel death, with sublime patience and fortitude.

The very antithesis of the impatience of those about us who are freaking out when their carnal desires are in any way delayed in their gratification. The patience of the saints. To obtain it is no light thing.

It is this confident expectation with its prospect of glorious reward that sustains God's people in times of oppression, affliction, distress, and persecution. If we took a survey tonight, and we were all honest Indian, how many of us have ever considered the prospect of an eternal reward? Bonus from the boss, extra month's pay, hitting it on the stock market, yes, but eternal reward, no. And I'll tell you what, if you'll keep up like that, you're dangerously a candidate for falling.

There's not a thing wrong with anticipating an eternal reward. In fact, my saliva is running right now in that anticipation. Paul, who suffered a few things in his apostolic faith, counted them all, shipwrecks, beatings, rods, flagellations, five times, 39 strokes, as momentary and light in the light of the, how does he say it, the eternal weight of glory, which is his.

He actually saw that. And I'll tell you what, we will see it also if we break the power of the orbit that draws our eyeballs down to merchandise, to creaturely things, and learns to turn our sight increasingly up. I still remember the sublime experience of this precious pastor's wife in East Germany, one of the most remote and demonic-ridden sections of that country, still haunted by witches and all kinds of medieval stuff.

And every conversation with that woman, she was continually looking up. Her eyelashes were batting, she was continually looking up, touching her heart, looking up. I thought, my God, what is she seeing? And Stephen, when he was stoned, looked up and saw an open heaven, and Jesus at the right hand of God and the glory of God.

And seeing that, he said, Lord, as he was falling asleep, lay not this sin to their charge. Seeing is everything, saints. And we're not going to see the things that are invisible and eternal.

So the book of Revelation was directed toward those who by virtue of their persecution were in precarious situation and who experienced little difficulty in understanding and appreciating its message. Fancy that. Simple saints who have not had the advantages that we have enjoyed educationally and theologically had no difficulty at all with all of the abstruse and complex references in the book of Revelation.

It was perfectly evident to them what that meant. You know what I've always felt? We have taken a manual intended for people living on the sharp edge of apostolic extremity and made it a source of Bible study for comfortable middle-class saints, and in so doing have rendered it another book. You'll forgive my perverse prayers, but I've been praying for years now, Lord, bring the conditions that will make that book again what it was intended at the first to be, a manual for survival, for overcoming, and for rendering glory to God by obedience to its word.

God save us from Bible study mentality. They appreciated its message, its portrayal of the universe, of heaven and hell, of the present age, of the age to come, of the millennial consummation that commanded the attention of these believers as a total cosmic worldview. So what is your Weltanschauung tonight? That's a German word that means worldview.

Do you have a cosmic view or a dated contemporary 1980 charismatic perception of things? How grand is your vista? Do you take eternity into time? Do you place the immediate in the context of the ultimate? Do you understand the ultimate cosmic purposes of God, for which reason He has created all things, all things including Washington, D.C., let alone the planetary systems and the cycles of nature, in order that through the church the eternal purpose of God might be fulfilled, which is to demonstrate to the principalities and the powers of the air the manifold wisdom of God? How many of us are living in the conscious awareness of that purpose? I'll tell you what. If we were, it would change everything, that we have a purpose as the church, for which reason God has created all things. Our jobs, our careers are mere secondary enablements to keep body and soul together.

The purpose of our being is what we are corporately as the church, not as individual virtuosos, however impressive. Only the church as church can fulfill the eternal destiny, for which reason God has not thought it extravagant to create all things. And if we take that into our deepest consideration, central to every other thing, it will affect every other consideration and bring it into bright priority.

We'll live as saints. So the purpose of the book of Revelation was to sharpen the alternatives open to Christians of worshipping either Caesar or God, of being completely loyal to the state or wholly devoted to the Lord, making martyrdom so attractive with its eternal rewards and apostasy so fearful with its eternal punishments. I might read that tonight if I have time and you're patient.

If not, find it yourself in the book of Revelation. What is the eternal fate of those upon whom is found the mark of the beast? It's a punishment that beggars description, as against the reward of those who will resist that mark and be found with the mark of the Father in their foreheads, no matter what it will cost them in terms of denial, because the fury of hell will be directed against those who will not wear his mark. And as I said in the first speaking, for those of you who are not here, that it would be good for us to think that it's not going to be one final ultimate stamping, but rather the successive embossings of an invisible image increasingly deepened and heightened by every successive transaction in the world for convenience, for luxury and condescension to its spirit, until the day of the Lord and the light of his coming will reveal which mark in fact we actually bear.

If that's true, and it's well to think that it is, then we need to know that what happens now, what we're deciding now, how we're acting now, what titillates our hearts now, what we give ourselves to now is determining what we will ultimately and assuredly be. So what's the value of Revelation? In its own time, it had tremendous value in that it enabled persecuted Christians to withstand the might and power of the Roman Empire and supplied them with a dynamic to remain loyal and faithful to Christ. And they were a perpetual testimony, the undying courage and steadfastness of the pioneers of our religion in a desperate conflict with the forces of paganism and idolatry.

I'll tell you what, as I squint out through my peepholes in the places where God has brought me over the earth and the experiences and things, I remember one day just waking up one morning in London and just realizing, hey, I've got a global view. I have a view that nothing has changed, nothing, that the issues are ever and always timelessly the same, that the same issues of truth and justice and righteousness and faith that were the agenda of the saints of 2,000 years ago are yet also now the same, the same issues of righteousness and evil. Nothing has changed.

The form of it may have changed. It may have deepened, become more subtle, more covert, but the ultimate issues are the same. If they were in a desperate struggle then with the forces of paganism and idolatry, with what shall we be occupied in the final collision of the kingdoms of light and darkness at the end of the age, where idolatry now already has assumed such forms and such powers that actually has stolen the hearts of an entire generation and we don't even recognize them as idols.

Now for my message. See, I'm in eternity already. And my message tonight, and the first time I have ever spoken it, is on the remnant people of God.

I used that phrase in the very first speaking on Sunday morning, and I remember going on an overseas trip, the one before last, that the Lord gave me that word, remnant. And indeed, everywhere I went in the course of those days, and in fact every trip since, and I believe every activity since, has been essentially with God's remnant people. I think that's why we're here with you.

That he's not expending, Gary and me, on those who are wanting novelty or confirmation of their carnality or any such thing, but there's a select attention of God to those who are called to a remnant calling. And I want to try and identify that tonight because it needs to come clearly into our consciousness. Because I think that the church has lost, or has never had in modern times the sense of itself as a remnant people called into existence by God, guided by him and sustained by his power.

The very word remnant means a very minute fragment of something, only the smallest piece of a much larger whole. But the dearest thing that constitutes the whole. And we are on a collision course, if you heard me last night, with the remnant of Israel that God is going to sift, with that not one kernel shall fall to the ground as he proliferates and moves them, even through fury over the nations and the wilderness places of the earth.

And that we might have as an ultimate consummation one remnant finding another. Don't be impressed with numbers, folks. I know that that's our national mentality.

But it's really remarkable how far God will go to have one of a true kind. How many tens of thousands of eggs will a fish spawn? And how many of those will survive the initial processes of gestation to become little fingerlings? And of the thousands of those that cast shadows in the waters, how many of those go on to any kind of maturity? And it may well be of what was originally the casting of thousands and tens of

thousands of eggs, one will come to perfect maturity. And God does not consider that process extravagant.

A remnant of Israel will constitute in God's sight the nation, the restored nation. And the remnant church will constitute for God the true church. What is needed is to identify afresh what is the character of the remnant and what is its mission.

In the face of sweeping apostasy, the remnant holds fast to the biblical faith. This is a distinguishing character of the remnant church. However much it antagonizes others, in an age that is morally compromised and corrupt, it keeps its garments unsoiled.

So the two distinguishing factors of the remnant people is a spiritual purity that holds fast the word of God and a moral purity that does not allow its garments to become sullied and stained in all of the swirl and filth that is everywhere beckoningly inviting us. They have not only the testimony of Jesus but keep the commandments of God in an ultimately lawless age. And I know that the word commandment even makes us wince.

It has overtones of legalism, but this is what the scripture says. You can look it up for yourself at your own convenience in Revelations 12, 12, and 17, that the distinguishing characteristic of the remnant church is that they have not only the testimony of Jesus but they keep the commandments of God. And I never heard tell of when it was that the Ten Commandments had been dissolved, but I hear very little reference to them as an authentically binding and continuing fundamental requirement of God for his people.

Thou shalt not. And I know that the keeping of anything, whether it's the Sabbath or the commandments, and I don't want to throw you off your seat, but I'm aiming to become a Sabbath keeper, but not out of legalism but out of love. And I wonder in my untutored way, in my prophetically intuitive way, if this is what the scriptures are talking about when it calls for that the righteousness of the law shall be fulfilled, not that the law itself or its requirement be absolved but that it be fulfilled, not out of legal obligation, and I guess I got to, but out of a heart of love that wants to.

For the final end-time remnant church people of God will be those that have the testimony of Jesus and keep the commandments of God. For these reasons they incur the particular wrath of the dragon and experience his fury as persecution. But they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of the testimony, not loving their life unto the death.

That's not a piece of last-moment heroics. That's a resolve that is made well before your life is required. And I'll tell you what, it will change all your living until the day that your life is required, when you no longer count your life as dear unto yourself.

This is a distinguishing characteristic of the remnant church, and you can decide for it tonight. No coincidence that these identifying characteristics of the remnant church have become blurred in exactly the same proportion that the notion of what Babylon is has also become blurred. I'm a 25-year-old believer, and I can remember in the earlier years of my becoming a Christian that evangelicals and fundamentalists made no bones about who they thought Babylon to be.

Rome was the historic and agreed consensus of evangelicals throughout the ages until the advent of this present charismatic age. All of a sudden then, well, I won't say all of a sudden, but in the process of time, it became kind of embarrassing to make that reference. After all, there were Catholic charismatics, and the

Pope himself was acknowledging the Holy Spirit, and blah, blah, blah.

So we made fewer and fewer references to Babylon as Rome, this hur, this one that drinks the blood of the saints throughout all of the history of the church, this massive system, this inordinate religio-political power. And I'll tell you what they're saying. Gary and I were in Rome on the day that Gorbachev was visiting with the Pope.

We were completely ignored. Shows you how screwed up the world is and where the values are, huh? Later on, we read the account where Gorbachev, the head of the Marxist socialist world system, made Karl himself turn over in his grave when he called the Pope his holiness and acknowledged that Russia does indeed have deep spiritual needs. I'll tell you, if you didn't understand the portent of that communion between those men, you're asleep.

This is deadly in what it represents. When this merger takes place, we will have entered that system that will mark the days of our persecution. So isn't it interesting that as this has become blurred, that our identification as the remnant church has become blurred, and likewise as we will more courageously identify who in fact Babylon is, this mother of harlots, we will also in the same degree surprisingly have a greater clarification of who we are as the remnant church of God.

Can we really speak of a remnant without this concept of Babylon? And as a writer has said, do we need Babylon's approval for our self-esteem? Isn't heaven's approval what counts? Boy, I wish I had an extra 15 minutes just to tell you of the adventure that Gary and I passed through. As some foolish, charismatic segment of a national or international denomination chose to have me as a speaker and called themselves apostolic and prophetic. And God, well, they stopped me in the very first message.

And I thought that was the end. We would never go further. And after some collaboration and discussion among themselves, they consented to allow me to finish that night and then go on through those days.

And on the last day, not knowing what to speak in prayer with Gary and his wife on our knees in the hotel room, the Lord, we could hear the outline of that message in our own prayer. And it was a fearful word that when it came forth, you could hear the proverbial pin drop. For God was saying to this denomination, how is it that you were able so facilely to become bed partners with the very same religious power that hounded your fathers unto death? And will do you also when your relationship with them no longer serves their ecumenical purposes? Something like that.

So this little line about who needs Babylon's approval for our self-esteem if we have heavens is enormously important. For to be a member of a denominational group that has its origins in Anabaptist history and to become in modern times a kind of religious relic of no great consequence, like the Amish who don't wear buttons and have their quaint little horse carts, and all of a sudden to be invited to the highest echelons of ecumenical participation in the renewal movement is an intoxicating thing that few can resist who have not already come to the place of martyrdom. Whose esteem do you need if you have heavens? And so they have the testimony of Jesus.

The dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 12, 17. And what is this testimony? And here we are on new ground, and I'm submitting it to you to ponder it and to weigh it in your spirits.

Revelation 19, 10 defines it that this testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And I've never understood what that means. What does it mean that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy? What is the spirit of prophecy? Here I'm a man with a prophetic calling, and I myself don't know what the spirit of prophecy is.

I suspect that it's something more and perhaps even other than the ability to exercise the gift of prophecy. And I want to suggest tonight that it is the prophetic spirit. The spirit of prophecy is the prophetic spirit.

And what is the prophetic spirit? What is the constituency, the elements that make up that which is prophetic? Because last night I spoke a word that said that the church was the key to the restoration of Israel from the dead by a word that it will speak in prophetic power and authority, not as an informative word, but as a creative word, able to raise the dead to life. That God is wanting a church of a prophetic constituency, of an agreement, of a oneness of such a kind that they have one mind, one thought, one will, which is his, and that when that church speaks, who guards its mouth from frivolous and unnecessary speakings, will have not only a weight of authority with its word, but its word will constitute an event. We need really to listen now.

What is this prophetic spirit that distinguishes the remnant church, which is the spirit of prophecy, which is the spirit of Jesus? And I'm suggesting tonight, never having before spoken this, all time first, that it constitutes, that it is the very constituent elements of that which is prophetic and that to which we are called as a prophetic and apostolic body. That would include the authority and the presence expressive of God that was born by men like Moses and Elijah, and one which exudes the resonance of God as Jesus himself did in the flesh. You know there's authority in authority? There's that facetious pseudo-authority that comes by turning up the vibes and the amplifiers or taking on a certain kind of pontifical stature and thinking that by such voice and weightiness that the devils are going to be scared of you.

But there's an authority that is related to and is the expression of the presence of God himself, which was evident in the life of Moses, evident in the life of Elijah, evident in the lives of all of the holy apostles and the holy prophets of old, and needs to be evident in our lives also, for they were flesh and blood like as we. Such men are characterized by a burning intensity of jealousy for God that is uncompromising and single-eyed, that projects visibly the imminent sense of the ages to come. Without even having to talk about it, there's something about their demeanor, there's something about the way that they have made their face, their eyes, something resonates that implies that this life ain't it, that there's something beyond that is really the purpose of our existence, that God in fact has created from one blood all men and has established the bounds of their habitations that they might seek after him if happily they might be found of him, that the whole purpose of life on this earth for mankind is to be found of God, because the issues of eternity are established once and for all in time, and God will send a man who believes that, not just with his head, but it permeates his entire being, he exudes it up to Mars Hill to encounter that which is antithetical to that whole perspective, where he'll be scoffed and laughed at and sniggered at, but some will cleave unto him and believe, not unto his doctrine, unto him, because the man is the word, is his word, is the truth, it is made flesh.

I believe this is what the spirit of prophecy means in the prophetic spirit, that is the distinguishing characteristic of the remnant people of God. It's not a cheapie, and it's not to be obtained blithely and easily, any more than it was for Paul, Elijah, Moses, or anyone else who has ever exuded God and expressed his authority. Now this Moses, who was despised and sneered at and rejected, murmured against, could come down from the mount and see his people nakedly dancing around the calf, and throw

down the tablets of the law, and grind up that golden calf and make them drink it, and we have not so much as the record of a whimper or a murmur of complaint against that requirement is a testimony to the awesome authority with which he came down to men from God.

And I want to say, folks, it's the measure of the authority that will be required from us in all of the turbulence and the demand that will constitute the last days. It's not to be found by turning up the amplifiers or learning how to be ministerial and professional. It's only found in the presence of the God who is at the top of the burning mount and bids us come up and be there.

Such men see through the world and all of its pretensions and are unimpressed. How about you? I've spoken at the Pentagon. I was unimpressed.

I've been to world capitals. I'm unimpressed. This little Brooklyn boy just walks through places in the world but do not intimidate.

Let me get this right. We fasted and prayed for 10 days in our community up in northern Minnesota because I had been saying publicly that the church was born in waiting. And one day at the end of a service, some young believer comes up to me and says, Art, do you know of any church at fellowship anywhere in the world today that has waited 10 days on the Lord? Did you ever have somebody ask you a question that was more like a punch in the kishkus where you double over and gasp and the air goes out of you? And the Holy Ghost says, and how about your fellowship, Hachat? And I went back with that word to our community and I said, we need to wait on the Lord for 10 days.

We've never done it in all the years of our history. We've had three days, six days, five days, but 10 days. And what an extraordinary time that was.

First of all, we're going to wait until it was convenient. You know, when the phone would not be ringing off the hook and this would not be happening, you know that the time never came? We finally had to believe that the kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent take it by force. And we elders declared we're going to begin 10 days of fasting and prayer 24 hours around the clock.

And we elders were going to begin first. And I remember that we dozed off maybe within the first two hours. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

And the Lord showed us that to have prayer around the clock 24 hours a day by staggering the rotation with the different saints so that you find yourself up one day 3 o'clock in the morning, the next day 5, 6, 7, and over the course of 10 days, there's not one in the community with whom you've not prayed at some woe-begone misty hour of the early dawn where the great man of faith has a breath like a camel who has not eaten in seven and eight days and whose mind is just a dullness and is no longer able to muster up any kind of prayer that can be considered spiritual. I'll tell you when God has got us there, he's got us. I learned something from the 7th to the 10th day on my face on the floor before God that he is the creator and I'm only a piece of his creation, mere dust.

And how presumptuous for the dust that we are to think that we should determine when we're going to go overseas and in what country and we're going to go to Eastern Europe and we're going to do this and we've prayed a little bit about it. My God, how little of a sense of you do we actually have? How little do we have the sense of awe and the fear and the reverence of you that you deserve? How little have we been prostrate before you that we might find it? How much are we still in our own energy, our own sap, our own

virility, our own ability, thinking to do for God and have never waited to know him and to be sent by him? You know the first thing he said when those 10 days were over? You've been to Harvard Art and Yale and University of California, your alma mater, and you've been to Tübingen in Germany and Denmark and other places in the world. How about the local college there in Bemidji, 25 miles from you, in Podunk, 6,000 students, nothing to it, Lord, a snap.

Man, I've been in massive confrontations in Tübingen with Marxists where after it was over and we went in for a cup of coffee at the Mensa, the cafeteria, the head of the communist group there on the campus said, you're the most dangerous man that has ever come to this university. That moment right then, not only would the students have fallen prostrate before God but the faculty, the administrators and the buildings alike. The only catch was we had to drive 25 miles to get there.

And you know, the first part wasn't bad through the woods, God's creation, but when we came out into Bemidji itself and the buildings and the indications of the world and its architecture and its grandeur, which is not all that impressive in Bemidji, Minnesota, and the school itself with its buildings of communication and its fields, and you know what? My ardor began to decline. And by the time we finally got the microphones up out there in the misty drizzle out before the Student Union building, my voice was sounding like a little pipsqueak. It's so easy to be intimidated by the paraphernalia and the accoutrements of the world.

Its marvels, its edifices, its institutions, which God says are condemned to a burning. And how much we are intimidated to express what God would when we see these things. But the thing that distinguishes the remnant people is that they walk through the world and they're not impressed, let alone intimidated.

It's the testimony of Jesus, it's the spirit of prophecy, it's the prophetic spirit that brings the eternal to bear in the things that are temporal and sees what is immediate in the context of the ultimate. Or you say, a lot of these things that are immediate are just small things. You want to fight? What do you mean, small thing? Is that an apostolic statement? Is that a prophetic way to perceive reality? What is small for a saint in the kingdom of God that does not need to be considered in the light of eternity and the things which are ultimate? You've already bought a lie that you so much as distinguish small from great, secular from sacred, and make the kinds of distinctions that have virtually emasculated us as God's people.

Single-eyed, burning, fervent, eternally minded, seeing the immediate in the context of the ultimate, mindless about our own interests, so taken up completely as we are with the purposes of God. Jealous for his honor, for the glory of the Father. These are quintessentially what men of the spirit are.

Broken, weak, and utterly dependent upon him. If only God's people knew what is the condition of men like Gary and myself when we are required so often to stand before you. I don't care what it sounds like when it comes out.

I want you to know what it feels like when we're called up to come and stand by this holy desk. Bundles of weakness. Pitifully destitute.

Utterly foolish and bereft. Wondering what in heaven's name we're doing here. And what have we at all to say that could have any conceivable value.

Having no strength, feeling the actual limpness of our bodies, and at the same time sensing the magnitude of what God is wanting to transact that goes beyond the issue of mere message. It's a very strange

feeling. And I would love to see more of you brought into the reality of it that his strength might be made perfect in your weakness and not your college degrees and your own superb abilities.

And even to know how to forsake them and not to rest your weight upon them, willing to be foolish that his strength might be perfected. Not to rely on your wit and your ability in a confrontation, for example, with a Jew to whom you're witnessing because you don't want to be demoralized and made to look like the fool and so you're clever to think of anything that will give you some semblance of intellectual respectability. But how about if you just choke and splutter and gasp and if God be not God, you perish in humiliation if he'll not give you something to say from heaven.

If my Jews do not hear that word, they'll not be moved toward heaven. It waits upon a people who trust the God of heaven and will not speak four spiritual laws or add another one for Jews and rest comfortably on their ability to do something canned and prescribed that will save them the death of embarrassment or mortification of failure. I'll tell you what, if more men came to the pulpit with that kind of reckless casting themselves upon God in preaching, we'd be a different church.

For what is a prophet if he's not an inspired speaker who speaks for God with passionate urgency, sounding oracular warnings of things to come when there's not a cotton-picking shred of evidence so much as to indicate it, describing the destruction of Jerusalem while it's yet abounding in the eyes of many and saying that it'll be like a hut in a cucumber patch, that the city of righteousness has become a city of whores and murderers and that your silver has been turned to tin when men have no consciousness whatsoever that they're in any way in danger of those realities. The prophet sees it already as the accomplished fact and speaks out of that for warning. What a loathsome character these prophets must be.

How despicable. I bet they could even mess up a good meeting. They speak with passionate urgency, sounding oracular warnings of things not yet visible, bringing God's view to bear to the reticent and the unperceiving.

For a prophet is a seer, and he sees as God sees, not as we see. And he brings men God's thoughts, which are not men's thoughts, and he teaches God's ways, which are not men's ways. They are in themselves the foreshadowing and the intimation of the apocalypse before even its appearing.

They already bring with them. They not only trail clouds of glory, but they bring the sense and the intimation of that which is to come. No wonder that they suggest a judgment.

No wonder that their presence makes people uncomfortable, a sense that they're being seen through, that their compromises are being revealed. Imagine an entire people like this, a whole prophetic people like this, a whole remnant people like this. They need not be great in number, but however few.

What a presence for the living God at the end of the age, bringing God's view to bear to the reticent and the unperceiving who are in themselves the foreshadowing and the intimation of the thing to come, even requiring of men that which will save them from that judgment, because their word is unsparing inasmuch as they know the terror of God and persuade men. Through God's compassion, though they will be condemned as being harsh, by the unseeing. Their voice is a trump that calls.

A prophet is an inspired preacher whose preaching fingers apostasy identifies it and makes clear that that's what the church is in. Contrast it with the everlasting gospel and warns of the finality of judgment at

the Lord's soon coming return. A judgment that is irrevocable, that cannot be gainsayed, cannot be remedied, fixed, final, eternal judgment of God for which this generation needs to be warned by those who can come to them out of God's very presence, bringing the intimation of the thing to come even before the event that they might be saved from that judgment.

I don't think we have yet to begin what true apostolic and prophetic evangelism is. That is more than a hot shot slapping a pulpit. But men who know the terror of God and persuade.

Well, I'm coming to the end here. Who have a solemn message to speak to a world, to honor God and worship him in this very judgment hour, in the world's last hour, when it's now or never. A message that encapsulates the central concerns of scripture and is intended for the crisis of the age.

I don't know how to express this, but no matter what the subject is, that the truth of the essential, the truths of God are somehow radiated no matter what such a prophetic personality speaks. All of the counsel of God is encapsulated and expressed no matter what the particular statement that is being made. In an age of crisis, the prophet addresses ultimate questions, reveals the meaning and purpose of life in the context of that which is cosmic and eternal.

You know what, folks? We're not talking about individual virtuosos. We're talking about a people who can only attain to this in true corporateness. If ever we needed one another, and hasn't God said, exhort one another daily while it's yet today? Speak the truth in love? How shall we come to this without the interaction that God has called for his saints to experience as the church that will perfect us, that will identify our blind spots, that will bring us through exhortation or rebuke increasingly to the place where we can take on the stature and the character of what is being described tonight as becoming the remnant church? We need people who are supportive of us, who agree with us, who have the same disposition of mind and heart and will, and who are in sufficient and frequent relationship and intensity of life together so as to affect it.

A pox on Sunday Christianity with its midweek Bible studies, for it can never ever bring forth a people of this kind. We desperately need each other as the community of God, whether it's on a farm or an urban area, in the frequent, intimate, demanding interaction in truth and in love that is the very sanctifying process of God by which we might be made a remnant church. The world has duped us and is willing to give us tax concessions and other kinds of consideration.

So long as we'll continue this patsy game of mere Sunday Christianity punctuated by an occasional full gospel event or a conference. But don't move toward apostolic verity and a community of God's people in truth. For those that were together and for those who were together, great grace was upon them all.

It's a grace we have not experienced in our modern times and never will until we shall be all together. And with power gave the apostles testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I think that we have apostles who are ill-nourished and not receiving the inadequate empowering that can only come to them from the context of an apostolic body in its fullness where God's grace, the greater grace is given so that the power through them might be communicated to those who would otherwise be indifferent to the message of God.

There's a demand which compels us to community as true corporateness that I want to leave with you in these final words. God calls us to be a light in the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin, a world that needs to be warned, reprov'd, and counseled. And we as that church, the only agent given of God for that end, to that church God bestows his supreme regard that we might be the repairers of the breach and

the restorers of paths to walk in.

If I know anything, I know this, God has bestowed in these days through whatever the vessels that Gary and I are, his regard, his supreme regard. He's not sought to be fancy or to give us impressive messages or to bring the speakers into a place of particular admiration, but he has bestowed his supreme regard. He has spoken to us with a solemnity, an unsparingness, a truth as a father speaking to sons and daughters.

It constitutes, in my understanding, a call to be the remnant people of God in an age of degeneration and filth that will bring upon our heads the same censure, rebuke, opposition, persecution, martyrdom, and death as the remnant people who have preceded us and who are, even this night, invisibly present in this room. It's not for the many, it's for the few. The only radical alternatives at the end of the age, apostasy or apostolicity.

And it's a choice that we need to make and God is calling for it now. So I want us to bow before him. Who have heard him night after night, we owe him something.

It would be disrespect to go out and let his words dissipate with eating and going and having and getting and not have responded. So precious God, in an age that has given many invitations and altar calls and as a people who have responded too often, too frequently, too glibly, too lightly, have lost our sense of a momentous call when it comes, a yes, even now, the grace that we might understand that this is not a little piece of evangelical punctuation to end days of meetings. It's a solemn invitation, a transaction with God.

Of what must be freely given, a life that will no longer be considered as dear unto itself, that desires to stand for the God of its salvation, regardless of the reprisal and the consequence. It wants to be fitted by the grace after grace that God bestows to those who will be for him a remnant in an age of apostasy. If this is your intention tonight, you want to certify that before God, before witnesses, before the principalities and the powers of the air, I ask you to go down on your knees, where you are in the aisle up here at front, it doesn't matter.

Holy, holy, holy, solemn, eternal, transaction with our God that releases him to meet out in his wisdom and love and mercy what we need to be a people who will overcome and endure to the end. Look upon us tonight, my God. Record this site.

Register the names of every bowed saint in heaven. Write it in your archives and be released to be to them such a father, to bring to them such a measure of grace upon grace, of bestowed grace to be and to stand as a true people of God and to call others, my God, from perishing, to pluck brands from the burning, to fearlessly be your witnesses, to move unflinchingly in the world as your divine agents. Seal them, my God, bless them, meet them, touch them, heal them, loose them, break the fetters of earth and of the world and of the cares of this world and of secondary affections and alliances and all kinds of things, my God, that have rendered us virtually null and void for your kingdom.

Loose the powers of earth, that we not be among those who will dwell on the earth but a heavenly people. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Haunt us with your words. Deal with us in the night hours. Show us when we get home the things that need to be put away, be dispensed with as not needful, not necessary.

Make us trim and lean. Simplify our lives. Establish our priorities.

Grant us the love for each other and the grace and the appreciation for the church, my God, that you call us to be, to seek each other out, to go from house to house daily breaking bread. Seal this, my God. Let this be pivotal in the history of this fellowship.

Thank you and praise you for your high and holy calling in Christ Jesus. In his precious name we pray. Hallelujah.

Let's take some minutes to just speak out of our hearts something to God. You need to resolve something, to say something, to break the power of something. No greater opportunity than in the household of the faith.

Have the courage to sound it, to confess it, to bring it into the light, to be loosed from its debilitating power once and for all. Snap, crackle, pop, to be loosed to be God's remnant saint. Let's make our prayers short to the point redemptive.

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