

Apostles True or False?

By George Davis and Michael Clark

True apostles are not called and made by men, they are birthed and transformed by God. Nothing reveals a counterfeit as effectively as the genuine article. It is an issue of the organic versus the synthetic, the real opposed to the knock-off. ...Who is doing the transforming, God or men? If it is God, the apostle is true, but if it is men, these apostles are Satan's ministers. From what we have seen so far, today's apostolic reformation more resembles Horatio Alger's self-made man than the birthing of true apostles. True apostles are God-birthed, not self-transformed. They are born from above, not made by the hands and wills of men.

In chapter two of the book of Revelation, Jesus is walking in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands, which represented the churches of Asia Minor. Among the few positive things that He said to them are the following words to the church at Ephesus, "...*you tried those pretending to be apostles, and are not, and have found them liars*" (Revelation 2:2). The trial of those who pretended to be apostles is listed among the positive actions of the Ephesian Church, which pleased the Lord. We are fully aware that we are living in a day when many of God's children fail to understand the difference between testing and judgment, discernment and criticism, and view all speech and writing of a negative nature as critical and destructive. This has led to a general *no-speak* climate enforced by those in control that resists reform and allows unchecked deception. We are commanded to prove (*dokimazo - to test, examine, scrutinize*) the genuineness of all things and hold fast to what is good. (See 1Thessalonians 5:21). It is in *this* spirit that we write the following article.

In certain circles today, a great emphasis is placed on the restoration of the "office of apostle." We believe this has led to an unwholesome preoccupation by power hungry men and women seeking to corral the saints of God in a sheepfold that does not belong to the Good Shepherd. As a result, you cannot kick over an ecclesiastical rock without finding an "apostle" under it. At first this seemed rather

innocuous because those claiming this title were a scattered few, but lately this inordinate ambition has risen like a ziggurat on the plains of Shinar.

You can never underestimate the resolve of ambitious men. When people set their minds to a thing, and become one around a central ambition, "nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen 11:6). This preoccupation with the restoration of apostles has resulted in a network of so-called apostles and a "presiding apostle" sitting over them in kingly regalia. Under the name of *biblical apostleship*, these men have created a new Romanism. They move in both secular and religious power, "mapping" an empire tantamount to global papalism, issuing their own versions of the papal bulls called memorandums. These men set themselves over the people of God by the frequent use of honorific titles and extravagant ministry names. Although they claim that their actions are *biblical*, there is little scriptural evidence to support them.

We do find one passage that aptly describes the driving force behind this new apostolic reformation. It is found in 2 Corinthians 11:13 where the apostle Paul wrote:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, **transforming themselves** (3345 *metaschematizo--self-transformation*) into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is **transformed** (*self-transformed*) into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be **transformed** as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Who is doing the transforming, God or men? If it is God, the apostle is true, but if it is men, these apostles are Satan's ministers. From what we have seen so far, today's apostolic reformation more resembles Horatio Alger's self-made man than the birthing of true apostles. True apostles are God-birthed, not self-transformed. They are born from above, not made by the hands and wills of men.

Not to long ago, I (Michael) went to one of these big name conferences where these self-made men and women presided. The worst sort of pride and lust for power permeated not only the elevated leaders, but went out from them and saturated the crowd that gathered to worship at their feet! The unspoken message from the stage for three days was, "If you give us power and honor, you will receive power and honor from us as well!" We are convinced that these *self-transformed* "apostles"

who come as messengers of light are deceiving thousands. For the sake of God's children we can no longer keep silent!

True apostles are not called and made by men, they are birthed and transformed by God. Nothing reveals a counterfeit as effectively as the genuine article. It is an issue of the organic versus the synthetic, the real opposed to the knock-off. Let us first look at the calling of a genuine apostle, whose birth and preparation was unlike anything known by most of today's so-called apostles.

"One Born Out of Due Season"

We see in Paul an example of the birth of a genuine apostle. Paul spoke of this birth in 1 Corinthians 15:8-10.

"Then last of all He (the risen Lord Jesus) was seen by me also, **as by one born out of due time**. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but **I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**" (NKJV)

Note here that Paul attributed who he was and what he did to the transforming grace of God. He was indeed God's workmanship born in travail and crisis. Paul spoke of his calling in Galatians chapter one. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)" (Galatians 1:1). Paul's election was not of men. What does this mean? The Greek word for *of* here is *apo* [575], which should more correctly be translated *from*. Paul's calling did not come from man. Neither did it originate with or was it sustained by or through man. It was not the result of years of working his way up through a religious hierarchy, accumulating degrees and finally receiving the recognition due him. Paul's calling and ministry were heavenly in their conception, inception and fruition. From beginning to end, Paul was what he was by the grace of God. Paul was not a self-made man. Those days were over for him when he forsook his past as one of the religious vanguard of Jerusalem in favor of *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. Even the gospel that he preached was not formulated or pre-approved by man. It was not developed in a church conclave. In fact, it was not well received by many religious men and therefore brought him into constant conflict

with those who did not know the true meaning of the precious gospel that he preached.

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after (*kata* -down from, through out, according to) man. For I neither received it of (*para-*with, from, by, near) man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12)

The gospel that Paul preached did not come down (*kata*) through an approved religious agency. He didn't receive it through association with men. He was not near men when he received it. Paul went out of his way to deny all human involvement regarding his calling and ministry. If his calling and gospel were not purely divine and untainted by ecclesiastical persuasion and ambition, then his ministry could not be purely from heaven. Paul did not seek the approval of men. In fact he saw searching for man's approval as a disqualifying factor, clearly stating that if he sought the approval of men he could not be the servant of Christ. (See Galatians 1:10). He received his Gospel first hand by the revelation of Jesus Christ. How then did God birth and equip this "one born of due season"? How did God transform a Pharisee by the name of Saul into Paul?

From Saul to Paul

In Hebrew culture the changing of the name represented a change of character and station. Names were also prophetic, foretelling your destiny. We see this name changing by the hand of God throughout the scriptures. In the early chapters of Acts, we are introduced to Saul of Tarsus, an ambitious young Pharisee who guarded the cloaks of those who were stoning Stephen and consented to his death. The name Saul means *desired*. We know that King Saul of the Old Testament was desired and chosen by the people because he met the outward standard of greatness. This standard was not God's standard of leadership, but pagan through and through. Saul was the son of Kish, who descended from Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor.

This son of Kish was "an impressive young man; and there was not among the children of Israel a better (*towb*) person than he. From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (1Samuel 9:2).

In what way was Saul *better*? He was *towb* [02896] good, "pleasant, agreeable to the senses." He appealed to the soulish nature of fallen man. When Eve look upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she "[saw that the tree \[was\] good \(Heb. *towb*\) for food.](#)" In physical stature Saul was taller than any one else in Israel and quite handsome. He was striking in personal appearance. From a purely human perspective Saul was the perfect male, gifted with great potential and charisma for leadership. Let's not forget that Israel had requested a king like those of all the nations ([1 Samuel 8:5](#)). This is exactly why Saul appealed to them. He fulfilled the lusts of their hearts perfectly.

Now back to Saul of Tarsus.

Saul of Tarsus had a "little-man complex" that may have motivated him to do spectacular things and do whatever was necessary to excel above his peers. From all appearances he was trying to live up to his namesake, King Saul. From what we know of his pre-conversion days, he was very ambitious. His persecution of the church was to further his career as a Pharisee. Saul of Tarsus was a man on the make, climbing, excelling. He worked hard to reach the top of the religious ladder, overcoming great obstacles along the way. The greatest obstacle of all was his weak outward stature and his speech, which some referred to as contemptible (see [2 Corinthians 10:7](#)).

In chapter thirteen, verse nine of the book of Acts, something life-changing happened to Saul of Tarsus. By this time, even his name was changed from Saul to Paul. The name Paul or *Paulus* means *small* or *little*. Are you catching the drift here? Something happened to Saul that ended his striving to be head and shoulders above the rest. The old Saul-life had passed away and a new name had been assumed that matched his God given character and calling. A new nature and destiny had transformed the man who had struck fear in the hearts of believers, who now preached "[the faith which once he destroyed](#)" ([Galatians 1: 23](#)).

How had such a radical transformation occurred? What would cause an ambitious man to count his life-pursuit and his perfect religious credentials as *dung*? What would cause such a man to join the very ones he had persecuted? How was Saul transformed into Paul? The amazing story is recorded in Acts chapters nine through

thirteen. Understanding this portion of scripture is key to understanding the birth of an apostle and also discerning the true from the false.

In chapter nine we find Saul in his quest for greatness, doing the very thing that would give his religious career the boost it needed. "[Breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord](#)," he went to the high priest, to request a letter of permission to go to Damascus and bring believers bound to Jerusalem ([Acts 9:1-2](#)).

A funny thing happened to Saul on his way to the top. He was knocked off his religious horse on his religious posterior by a blinding light. After being properly introduced to Jesus Christ as *Lord*, he was led blind to Damascus. Unbeknownst to Saul, God was speaking to a dear saint named Ananias, telling him that Saul was a chosen messenger. The Lord said to Ananias, "[Go your way, for he is my chosen vessel to bear my name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake](#)" ([Act 9:15-16](#)).

Here is the rub. We all want to stand before nations and kings and preach the gospel to them, but no one wants to suffer. How many times have we heard the verse parroted, "[A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men](#)" ([Proverbs 18:16, NKJV](#))? Have you ever considered the condition God's gifted ones were in when they were brought before the kings of this earth? Some were flogged, starved, and even beheaded as they were presented to these great men of the world system. This could explain why there are so few *true* apostles today. For this call -- the call of an apostle--IS a call to suffering and that suffering is preparatory and necessary to the work. I (George) told my son, who has recently been going through a severe trial, "Pressure creates the diamond." His answer, though quite candid, is very relevant here. "Yes, but how long do I have to be a chunk of coal?"

I am sure there are many with this call on their lives who feel this very way. We also have called out, "How much longer, Lord?" But take heart and know that true apostles are born through such travail and suffering. The sufferings of this present hour are not to be compared with the greater weight of glory that lies just beyond the cross.

We see this clearly borne out as Saul's story continues. Ananias found Saul, embraced him as a brother, prayed for him and God healed his blindness. Because of his newfound zeal for Christ and his effective preaching in the local synagogue,

the Jews set guards at the city gates to take and kill him. Thus his suffering began. The other disciples heard of this plot and lowered Saul down through the city wall in a basket and he escaped to Jerusalem. There, the disciples at first distrusted Saul and later found him too hot to handle. Yes, as soon as Saul hit the city gates he was stirring up trouble again. He preached boldly in the name of the Lord and disputed against the Grecian Jews, who also wanted to kill him.

When the brothers discovered the intentions of the religious Jews, they brought Saul down to Caesarea, and sent him off by ship to Tarsus (Act 9:30). And then "the assemblies throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, and were built up" (9:31). Perhaps it is not fair to say that the reason for the unrest in the Jerusalem Church was Saul's white-hot zeal, but Luke did think it necessary to record the calm after his departure. Saul's suffering continued as his zeal for preaching the gospel far outweighed any desire he had for a life of Christian enjoyment. His passion for the lost was greater than his desire for his own comfort and safety. Saul stirred the religious pot in Jerusalem. This would not be the last time he would do so. Things were just beginning to calm down after the trouble that Stephen stirred up when he challenged the high council of Jerusalem, and here came another radical. Saul cannot even find consolation in the community of believers. His zeal separated him from them as well.

God had separated him unto Christ from his mother's womb, separated him from the "Jews' religion" (Galatians 1:12-13), and now he was still being separated, but now unto Christ alone. When God sets you apart, He REALLY sets you apart! Jesus was insuring that man would have nothing to do with the birthing and transforming of this apostle, nor would men influence the gospel that he would preach. Where was Saul to go? He was initially sent away to his hometown, Tarsus, but it is clear from his own account of this time of preparation that this is not the whole story. Where did he go? In Acts, Paul completely disappears from the scene for a long period of time.

Here is his own account:

For you have heard of my way of living in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the assembly of God, and ravaged it. I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of my own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good

pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, **to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him** among the Gentiles, **I didn't immediately confer with flesh and blood**, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but **I went away into Arabia**.

The Wilderness

After Paul's conversion he did not confer with flesh and blood but instead went into Arabia. The area called *Arabia* or *Arab* extends into the Great Syrian Desert. Where is the first place that God led Saul, to prepare him for this great call on his life? The Spirit lead him into the wilderness. Where else would Jesus prepare a chosen vessel? The one common thread that we find in the lives of those God separates unto Himself to do His will is an extensive time of wilderness that kills everything of their old natures and places the kingdom of heaven in their hearts. The stripping process of the wilderness is what makes a true apostle impermeable to the things of men and devoted to the things of God. We don't know much about what happened during this period of Paul's life, but we do know that God had His way with him and made him ready for the work that was ahead in building HIS kingdom.

Before Paul returned to Damascus, Christ had been formed in Him. Today many want the power, the title and the authority that Paul had, but few are willing to be tested and proven in their own wilderness period. Few are willing to let God strip them down to nothing and then raise them up in the character of His own Son. Most think that they can use the strength of their natural man to do "the work of God." To this we emphatically say, "NOT!"

Isaiah prophesied of this dichotomy when he said,

Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness And has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD And rely upon his God. Look, all you who kindle a fire, Who encircle yourselves with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled--This you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment. (Isaiah 50:10-11, NKJV).

Apostle Paul continues,

Then I returned to Damascus. Then **after three years** I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days. But of the other apostles I saw no one, except James, the Lord's brother. Now about the things which I write to you, behold, before God, I'm not lying. Then I came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. I was still unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea which were in Christ, but they only heard: "He who once persecuted us now preaches the faith that he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God in me. . . Then **after a period of fourteen years** I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me." (Galatians 1:13-2:1).

It was more than seventeen years before Paul went up to Jerusalem to resolve the Antioch conflict. True apostles are not born overnight.

During this fourteen-year period (2:1), Barnabas, at the bidding of the assembly at Jerusalem, went to see if the reports of the vital Gentile church at Antioch were true. Obviously those apostles who sat in comfortable popularity in Jerusalem did not start that work, or they would have known about it. The Antioch Church that Barnabas witnessed was a great source of rejoicing to him, and we have no record of him reporting back to Jerusalem. Who was the first one that Barnabas thought of when he found this glorious Antioch Church that had mysteriously sprung up? He remembered Saul and his burden for the Gentiles, and without so much as a by your leave from the Jerusalem apostles, Barnabas straightway set out for Tarsus to find Saul.

When Barnabas found Saul he told him about this anomaly at Antioch. They returned together and stayed there at the Antioch Church, teaching the believers for the following year (see Acts 11:22-26).

The Final Stages of an Apostle's Birth

It was while Saul was there at Antioch that another great transformation occurred in his life and ministry. Let's read the account in its entirety to see the final stages of the birthing of an apostle.

And in Antioch some among the existing church were prophets and teachers. (such as Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch) and **Saul**. As **they ministered to**

the Lord and fasted, the **Holy Spirit said**, So, then, **separate Barnabas and Saul to Me** for the work to which I have called them. Then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, **THEY LET THEM GO** (*to set free, to let go, dismiss, to detain no longer*). Then these indeed **sent out by the Holy Spirit** went down to Seleucia. And from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they announced the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John as an assistant. And when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain conjurer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-jesus; who was with the proconsul of the country, Sergius **Paulus**, a prudent man. He **called for Barnabas and Saul** and asked to hear the Word of God. But **Elymas the conjurer** (for so his name is, if translated) **withstood them**, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. **Then Saul (who is also Paul), FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**, set his eyes on him and said, O son of the Devil, full of all deceit and all craftiness, enemy of all righteousness, will you not stop perverting the right ways of *the Lord*? And now, behold, *the hand of the Lord is on you*. And you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a while. And immediately a mist and a darkness fell on him, and he went about seeking *some to lead him by the hand*. Then, seeing the thing happening, the proconsul believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. And **Paul and those around him** sailed from Paphos and came to Perga of Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem. (Act 13:1-13 MKJV)

Note the transition here. It all began with a prayer meeting where prophets and teachers, including Barnabas and Saul, were ministering to the Lord and fasting. It is noteworthy that in the long list of those attending this meeting, Saul is mentioned last. The one who excelled beyond his peers in the Jews' religion was now last in the *ekklesia* of God. God had him right where he wanted him. Also, when Barnabas and Saul are mentioned together, Barnabas is mentioned first.

As they ministered to the Lord the Holy Spirit spoke a word of separation, "**SEPARATE Barnabas and Saul to Me. . .**" Consider for a moment the true nature of this separation. This was a call that severed all human attachments, a call to let *them* go, a call to be set aside BY and UNTO the Spirit of God alone. It was a call to be filled, led and empowered solely by God's Spirit. Something was about to change! Before this time Barnabas and Saul had not been fully SEPARATED by the Spirit unto the work. They had taught and preached the gospel in previous days but something was about to change! Saul had performed no miracles before this time

that we know of. Again we see Saul being separated, first unto the Holy Spirit and then unto the work. Then after more fasting and prayer they laid hands on them and let *them* go.

Please hear us! These brothers were not sent out by the church; they were **sent out by the Holy Spirit!** They were led out. All that was required of the other brothers in that meeting was to LET THEM GO! That's exactly what they did. They prayed and laid hands on them and let them go. They did not send them forth. They simply set them free to be fully led by God's Spirit--to raise their sails and to be directed by HIS Wind (see [John 3:8](#)).

Only God knows all the hidden ties that His children put upon each other, if only the expectation that they should faithfully fill a pew every Sunday morning. God's call on other believers is really none of our affair. Before their Master they will stand or fall. To believe otherwise is to assume a lording-over posture rather than one of caring and obedience. No matter how much we love each other and desire to be together, we must hold all relationships loosely, understanding that the Holy Spirit still SEPARATES believers unto Himself. We are always called to be ministers to God before we are set forth to minister unto men. On judgment day we will answer to Him, not mere mortals. Do you remember Jesus' words to Peter, who was excessively curious about John's calling? *"If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you? You follow me"* ([John 21:22](#)).

Barnabas and Saul sailed to Paphos, where they met a conjurer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who hindered them in any way he could. Note Barnabas is still mentioned before Saul here. Finally, in verse nine, Saul (who *is* also Paul), FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, pronounced blindness upon this "son of the Devil," who afterwards had to be led about by the hand for a season. As a result the proconsul was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord and believed!

In verse 13 we read these pivotal words. *"And Paul and those around him sailed from Paphos and came to Perga of Pamphylia."* Hallelujah! Saul is dead! Paul is born!

Now it is "Paul and those around him." When King Saul was little in his own eyes, God could use him. So it was here. Saul of Tarsus had grown into his new name. Paul--Paulus--small or little. The wilderness had done its work. God gives grace to

the humble and resists the proud. Here we see something said of Paul that was never said of him before. Paul, "FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT." There is no doubt that in the past he had been full of zeal, but now, having been fully separated unto the Spirit, he was FULL OF THE SPIRIT and power. As the prophet Zechariah prophesied, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6, NKJV). The way up is down and the way down is up. As Paul's life indicates, the preparation to be an apostle first consists of an emptying and stripping of the old Saul-life (Philippians 3:4-8) and then a filling of the Spirit.

Now that we have witnessed the birthing of a true apostle, let's compare it to the apostolic network that is appearing center-stage, cheered on by many in Christendom today.

"New Apostolic Reformation"

One of the defining differences between Paul and many of the so-called apostles of today is that Paul *decreased*. By contrast, these men and women who flaunt their titles and positions are ever on the *increase*. Another big difference is that Paul preached Christ, while these are ever preaching their apostleship. Paul wrote, "**For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake**" (2 Corinthians 4:5). In contrast, all the books by today's rising stars are written in defense of their supposed ministries. Their sole preoccupation is the resurgence of apostles in the church and the restoration of apostolic authority. To our knowledge, only those who view *themselves* as apostles have written such books. This is a clear conflict of interest since they preach themselves!

Paul warns us that the identifying mark of false apostles is *masquerading*. "**For such men are deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ**" (2 Corinthians 11:13). If you are not a true apostle, it requires constant posing and posturing to convince others that you are. This may explain the need to make up new and extravagant ministry titles almost daily. They want us to think they are as important as they think they are.

They clearly state that victory in "spiritual warfare" is dependent upon them "going into an area and doing spiritual battle with territorial spirits." One of these so-called apostles wrote,

"These evil prince spirits will be defeated little by little, and they will be eventually dethroned by the warfare of the Church. In contrast, a man who is an apostle and submitted to Christ will now reign spiritually over that locality in place of the displaced evil prince spirit . . . As these evil prince angels are defeated one by one, Satan's control over the world is seriously weakened. Finally, in unified global spiritual warfare, the last apostles and the Church will confront Satan himself."

Talk about visions of grandeur! We thought that the angels of God were the ones who throw Satan into the lake of fire at God's appointed time. It was this kind of insanity that Jude warned against when he wrote:

In the same way these dreamers make the flesh unclean, having no respect for authorities, and say evil of rulers. Now when Michael, one of the chief angels, was fighting against the Evil One for the body of Moses, fearing to make use of violent words against him, he only said, May the Lord be your judge. But these men say evil about such things as they have no knowledge of; and the things of which they have natural knowledge, like beasts without reason, are the cause of their destruction. (Jude 1:8-10, BBE).

These presumptuous men also believe that the restoration of "the office of the apostle" is key to "releasing finances" for the church. In their own minds, these men see themselves as the answer to all the needs of the church. A few have even dared to place themselves at the top of the apostolic heap.

After the 9 -11 attacks one of these "apostles," who refers to himself as the "Presiding Apostle," gives us a glimpse into the megalomania of these poor self-deluded men and women.

"In our roles as apostolic leaders of the International Coalition of Apostles, both John Doe (not his real name) and I have written initial apostolic declarations. This is mine, and John Doe's will be attached to it in the same communication . . . I habitually read a chapter of the Bible before each day begins. On September 11, I read 2 Kings 18 before I had heard that we were in a national crisis. Naturally my reading for September 12, after I knew about it, was 2 Kings 19. This is the story of Hezekiah. In 18 he went on a spiritual offensive and wiped out idolatry from Judah. The devil did not like this, so he

sent Sennacherib of Assyria against him with a threat, which I liken to the destruction of the twin towers. As I prayed for my personal role in this crisis, I came to 2 Kings 19 recording Hezekiah's reaction. Hezekiah inquired of the Lord, then sent for the Lord's word through Isaiah the prophet. He was aware that "God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Only when he had received the word of the Lord through Isaiah did Hezekiah go back before the Lord and make his **kingly declaration**. I saw that the Lord wanted me to postpone any declaration about the twin towers war until word had come in from the prophets. The word, at least a preliminary word, has now come in from the prophets (we have received over 1,000 emails), so I am ready to write this memorandum."

Does this man actually envision himself as a king, making a kingly declaration?

He continues,

"I imagine that numbers of other apostles, besides John Doe (not his real name) and me, will be doing the same thing. Who knows? Maybe some day we will be able to collate them in order to agree on what the Spirit is saying to the churches. . .the Strategic Prayer Network, the Observatory, Generals of Intercession, the International Coalition of Apostles, the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders, the Jericho Center and other vital units."

Thank you, commander and chief! Did you notice how they gravitate to the titles that this world system employs--titles like Strategic, Network, Generals, Coalition, Center and units? One of these men spoke of an ever increasing ascendancy of titles as the emphasis changed from the ministry of pastors to teachers, from teachers to evangelists, from evangelists to prophets and from prophets to apostles over the last five decades. When I heard this, I (Michael) thought, what title will they clamor after next, the title of Jesus Christ the King? After reading the memorandum above, this does not seem to be so far out of reach. There is nothing so blinding as pride. In contrast, the words of Paul come to mind,

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who

appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:1-6, NKJV).

The one who builds the house gets the glory. We ask you, "What house are these men building and who is getting the glory?" The answer is all too obvious.

These self-appointed kingdom builders also charge exorbitant prices to get in to their meetings, often over \$300 per seat. They make merchandise of the unsuspecting people of God. Other than the Bible, *the Didache* is among the oldest Christian documents. It was written about 150 AD. In it we find the following instructions.

Now about the envoys (apostles) and prophets, do just as according to the tenet of the good message. Now each envoy who comes to you, accept as *you would* the Lord. But he will not remain for one day. Now if there is need, also the next *day*. But if he remains for three, he is a false prophet.

Now when the envoy departs, he should take nothing except bread until he lodges. But if he should ask for money, he is a false prophet.

The Signs of an Apostle

The scriptures clearly state that there are signs that prove whether or not a person is "one sent." Paul's ministry was questioned by the Corinthian *ekklesia*. He wrote them and reminded them that "the signs of an apostle" had accompanied his ministry. The article "the" in "the signs of an apostle" implies that in the first century *ekklesia*, it was common knowledge that these signs would confirm the ministry of those who were truly sent. These signs were miracles, wonders, and works of power (*dunamis*).

Truly **the signs of an apostle were wrought among you** in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. (2Corinthians 12:12)

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, **I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.** (Romans 15:19)

When Paul preached the gospel, it was fully preached "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." We ask all who think they are apostles today, Are you sure? Do the signs of an apostle bear witness of your ministry? Are you truly a "sent one"? This is clearly the only true test of an apostle. If these signs are absent, you are not an apostle. Sorry!

If you cannot say with all sincerity, "**by the grace of God I am what I am,**" and if the words "**I labored more abundantly . . . yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me**" do not describe your ministry, you had better rethink your calling. You had better seek God and ask Him to try your heart to see if your apostleship is man-made or God birthed--driven by ambition or grace. There is nothing to lose except your illusions. If you discover that you are not an apostle and that you were duped by your own heart-ambitions, you have not lost anything, but have gained the truth. God knows whether the driving force behind our so-called ministries comes from a desire to be first or love for Him and His people. "*For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart*" (Hebrews 4:12).

The time when God winked at this kind of foolishness is over. You can not run a con on God. If you persist in this game you will loose. Paul was warning of this when he wrote,

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, NKJV).

In our years in institutional Christianity, we have witnessed the christianization of every ambition known to man. Let's get honest with ourselves, dear saints, and allow God's two-edged sword to pierce and divide between our soulish ambitions

and what is birthed of God's Spirit in our lives. The flesh cannot mysteriously be transubstantiated into something spiritual. No, what is born of the flesh IS now and always will be flesh and shall not glory in His presence. The heart is desperately wicked and always tries to put the best face on the flesh. Only God is able to discern and expose its thoughts and intentions. So as living sacrifices, let us put ourselves on the altar before our Great High Priest that our inward thoughts can be laid bare and known to us. Better to find out now than later!

We Leave You with this Simple Exhortation

God is setting us apart so that we are no longer our own. Our minds are no longer ours either. The God who makes all things new is working to form the mind of Christ in us.

Part of God's work in us is to bring us to see that in our flesh dwells no good thing. There is nothing redeemable there. Many people who call themselves "Christian" today are reinventing themselves to avoid the work of the personal cross of Christ, the Cross that requires death to their ambitions. When Peter said to Jesus, "[Lord spare yourself...](#)" Jesus' reply was to the point, "[Get behind me Satan, for you do not desire the things of God, but rather the things of men.](#)" He was speaking to the antichrist spirit within Peter. It is a harsh reality that the temple where the antichrist sits is the very temple of God, those who profess to be Jesus' followers. It was true then and it is even truer today. John wrote:

[Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They **went out from** us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. \(1 John 2:18-19, NKJV\).](#)

"Went out from" - Greek - exerchomai - 2a) to go out of an assembly, i.e. forsake it, 2b) to come forth from physically, arise from, to be born of, 2c) to go forth from one's power, escape from it in safety, 2d) to come forth (from privacy) into the world, before the public (of those who by novelty of opinion attract attention).

The antichrist spirit rises up above others ("little children") in order to attract attention to itself.

Now consider Paul's warning to the Ephesians,

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. (Acts 20:29-31, NKJV).

This constant tendency to come out from the humble brethren and raise yourself up, to draw attention to yourself and build a following is the most perverse and yet the most common form of the man of sin. The son of perdition "opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). It is evident that the falling away was well underway by the time the last of the early apostles died, even though there was some effort to counter the rising tide of hierarchy. "You will not exalt yourself, nor will you give *over-boldness* to your soul. Your soul will not cling with the high people, but you will conduct yourself with the just and lowly ones" (*Didache*).

Most of what is parading around in much pomp and circumstance as the "apostolic and prophetic movement" these days is antichrist to the core. These men and women who rise up over the saints of God have been duped and are not modeling the lowliness of Jesus Christ in the slightest degree. As we read their writings we see many chapters about their ministries and their right to rule over the people of God, but very little about Jesus. Maybe it takes being outside the camp, bearing His reproach for a few years, before you finally get eyes that can see what is going on in Christendom. We are praying that something as truly new as heaven itself comes forth rather than a rehash of the old Roman system with Biblical titles to cover its shame

God bless you as you follow the Lamb wherever He leads!