

Rebuilding the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

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Introduction: We cannot discard God's foundations and have fellowship with Him.

A. Where did the Lord *place the apostles before us?* (**Eph 2:20**)

Ephesians 2:20 ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the **apostles** and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,

1. Why are we told this? What if *we build on another foundation?*
2. The consequences of this neglect are all around us. *Whose voice do we really hear* – the writings of men or the delivered words of the apostles? (**1 Jn 4:5-6**)

1 John 4:5-6 ⁵ They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

B. While Jesus spoke many words, He wrote nothing. *How then does He speak to us?*

1. God worked a plan through Jesus to give us *a confirmed, written word*.
2. Fellowship with God comes through these words. (**Jn 6:63, 68; Acts 11:14**)

John 6:63 - "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

John 6:68 - But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Acts 11:13-14 ¹³ "And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴ 'who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

3. These words are *the only means* by which we can know and believe in Jesus. (**Jn 17:20**)

John 17:20 - " I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

3. Men in rebellion *seek other subjective ways* and lose any fellowship with God. (**Isa 50:10-11; Prov 3:5-7**)

Isaiah 50:10-11 - " 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. ¹¹ 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.

Proverbs 3:5-7 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

I. God's eternal plan involves delivered words

A. Jesus came to fulfill and teach God's plan *that was delivered to Him*. (**Jn 17:4-5**)

John 17:4-5 - "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

1. Jesus goal was *to glorify the Father*. How did He do this?

2. He was given a work that He accomplished. Everything He did pointed to God.

B. Jesus repeatedly pointed out that *He taught and did nothing of Himself*. (**Jn 17:6-8**)
John 17:6-8 - "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

1. Jesus would *only do* those things that He saw the Father do. Without instruction *He would do nothing!* (**Jn 5:19-20, 30**)

John 5:19-20 - Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

John 5:30 - "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me

2. Jesus wanted His followers to understand that the Father delivered his teaching to Jesus. He wanted others to *test the source of doctrine!* (**Jn 7:16-17**)

John 7:16-17 - Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*.

3. Jesus respect for the delivered words of God would lead him *only to act* when the Father gives instruction. Jesus would give these *same words* to us! (**Jn 8:28-32**)

John 8:28-32 - Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." ³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

4. Jesus said He and the Father will *"make our home"* (*fellowship*) with the one who abides like He did in these delivered words. (**Jn 14:21-24**)

John 14:21-24 - "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

C. The example set by Jesus was instilled in the apostles. (**Jn 17:14-19**)

John 17:14-19 - "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

1. The genuine *words of God will be hated* by the world.
2. How did Jesus "sanctify" Himself? He did it *in the passages we have read*. He emphasized and lived *staying within the words* that God delivered to Him.
3. Any study of the love of God found in this chapter is empty without a proper attitude towards the delivered words. It is more than a "narrative." (**Jn 17:26**)

John 17:26 - "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

II. How did Jesus prepare and present His apostles to His followers?

A. What is an apostle?

1. This is a name *Jesus chose* for them. (**Lk 6:13**)

Luke 6:13 - And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

Apostle - **1.** *a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders* **2.** Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitude of his adherents, to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God: - **Thayer's Lexicon**

2. The word apostle can also be used in a general way. (**Acts 14:14**)

Acts 14:14 - But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out

B. Jesus interacted with these men before He chose them. *He prayed all night* before He made His final choice. (**Lk 6:12; Mt 4:19-22**)

Luke 6:12 - Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Matthew 4:19-22 - Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him. ²¹ Going on from there, He

saw two other brothers, James *the son of* Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

1. He then *let His choices be known!* He is going to *work through these men.*
2. He trained them for over 3 years. Imagine men who *are trained personally by the creator of the universe!* (**Jn 15:27**)

John 15:27 - "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

C. Jesus's would "bind and loose" as Lord through these men. (**Mt 16:19; 18:18**)
Matthew 16:19 - "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 18:18 - "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

1. *Any implementation of Jesus as Lord* would include their work! (**Lk 6:46**)
Luke 6:46 - " But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

2. One's attitude towards the apostles *is the same* towards Christ. (**Jn 15:19-20**)
John 15:19-20 - "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

3. *Jesus wrote nothing* instead he chose these men to work through!

4. No sins would be forgiven *without their revelation!* (**Jn 20:21-23**)

John 20:21-23 - So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

III. How was the early church taught to handle the words delivered by the apostles?

A. Jesus worked by the Holy Spirit *through the apostles.* (**Jn 14:24-26**)
John 14:24-26 - "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. ²⁵ " These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

1. The Holy Spirit would give a perfect remembrance of what Jesus spoke to them.

2. The Holy Spirit would teach them *additional things* from Jesus. (**Jn 16:12-15**)
John 16:12-15 - "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.
¹³ "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

3. This message does not require ability, memory or study. (**Mt 10:19-20**)
Matthew 10:19-20 - "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; ²⁰ "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

4. Please understand the sobering and *powerful claims of inspiration!* (**Eph 3:5**)
B. Every Christian was to be taught the foundations God has given. (**Eph 4:4-6**)
Ephesians 4:4-6 - *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

1. Consider the "one faith!" This involves both *the words delivered through the apostles and our attitudes towards them.* (**1 Cor 4:6**)
1 Corinthians 4:6 - Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

2. These foundations are openly *being surrendered by many* in local churches.
3. In a local church if either the "one baptism" or the "one faith" is not taught and practiced then *one's fellowship with God is endangered.* (**2 Jn 9-11**)
2 John 1:9-11 ⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

C. The Apostles simply "handed down" what *they had received* from Jesus.
1. Pay attention when you see these words: "*tradition, delivered and received*"
(**1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3; Jude 3**)
1 Corinthians 11:2 - Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.
1 Corinthians 11:23 - For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;
1 Corinthians 15:3 - For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

2. There was a consistent teaching *to be applied to all local churches!* How have we received this instruction today? (**1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-37**)

1 Corinthians 4:17 - For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Corinthians 7:17 - But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 11:16 - But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

1 Corinthians 14:33-37 - For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. ³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. ³⁶ Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? ³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

2. To fail to obey this “tradition” delivered from the apostles is to *forsake Jesus Christ Himself*. (**2 Thess 3:3-4, 6, 12, 14**)

2 Thessalonians 3:3-4 - But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 - And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

3. When an epistle was given to one church it could then be given to other churches and *thus to all generations*. (**Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2**)

Colossians 4:16 - Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

1 Thessalonians 5:27 - I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

2 Peter 3:1-2 - Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

IV. One application of this foundation – Instrumental Music

A. How should we approach the Lord’s Supper? (**Mt 26:26-28**)

Matthew 26:28 ²⁸ "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

1. Does *the outward form matter*? Suppose we *substituted hamburger and coke* for the “fruit of the vine” and “bread?”
2. Could we use “bread” and “fruit of the vine” but add some peanut butter to it?

B. How should we praise God in our worship?

1. When God wanted instruments in the OT *He said so!* (**2 Chron 29:25-26**)

2 Chronicles 29:25-26 ²⁵ And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus *was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. ²⁶ The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

2. Why not look at *every verse in the New Covenant and see what God wants?*

(**Mt 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom 15:9; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Heb 2:12; Heb 13:15; Jas**

5:13)

Matthew 26:30 ³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Acts 16:25 ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Romans 15:9 ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name."

Ephesians 5:19 ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Colossians 3:16 ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Hebrews 2:12 ¹² saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

Hebrews 13:15 ¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.

James 5:13 ¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

3. This is an application of the foundation. *This takes time and maturity!*

4. Misunderstandings often arise because *the foundations are not present!*

Conclusion: Upon what is *the foundation of our heavenly abode* placed? (**Rev 21:14**)

Revelation 21:14 ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.