

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Apostleship? What and who, now?

Apostleship? What and who, now? - posted by calvaryelder, on: 2008/11/18 19:12

Hello, I;m new here. I tried a search, but didn't find what I was looking for. Could someone help me?

I was wondering ,what are the biblical requirements for apostleship, and what are the duties of an apostle? For instance, Matthias and Paul. Was Matthias a real apostle or was everyone mistaken? What does an apostle do that pastors/evangelists/prophets don't do?

Thanks!

Re: Apostleship? What and who, now? - posted by elected (), on: 2008/11/18 20:11

A broad definition of apostle that i found is:

"one who is sent on a mission, a commissioned representative of a congregation, a messenger for God, a person who has as the special task of founding and establishing churches."

Apostle comes from the greek word, "apostolos" meaning "someone sent out".

In the strict sense of the word apostles were the 12 disciples of Jesus, when Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus, the apostles filled the vacancy by electing Matthias by lot.

Since apostles are a gift of Christ to the church of God, Paul was an apostle to the gentiles as Peter was to the jews, and the apostleship of Paul was recognized by the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Timothy, Andronicus and Junia are called apostles in the bible.

In a secondary sense we use the word today for missionary, church planter for those who are called by God to preach the gospel, make disciples and plant churches.

Personally i believe that apostles with a small letter "a" can and should be in the church today, but honestly i don't think i have seen one. Many self claimed "apostles" today don't convince me at all of being authentic. Historically speaking people like John Wesley seem to have the marks of genuine apostleship in their ministry.

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2008/11/18 22:20

Here are some good resources -

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid3332>) Art Katz - Apostolic Commission

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid10783>) Art Katz - The Formation Of An Apostle

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid10782>) Art Katz - The Making Of An Apostle

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid10787>) Art Katz - An Apostolic Manifesto

Patrick
www.revivalarmy.com

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/11/18 23:05

From "The Normal Christian Church Life" by Watchman Nee

The Apostles

God is a God of works. Our Lord said, "My Father works even until now." He is the God "who works all things after the counsel of His will." But God does not do everything directly by Himself. He works through His servants. Among the servants of God the apostles are the most important ones.

The First Apostle

In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son into the world to do His work. He is known as the Christ of God, that is, "the Anointed One." The term "Son" relates to His Person; the name "Christ" relates to His office. He was the Son of God, but He was sent to be the Christ of God. "Christ" is the ministerial name of the Son of God. Our Lord did not come to the earth or to the Cross on His own initiative; He was anointed and set apart for the Work by God. He was not self-appointed, but sent. Frequently throughout the Gospel of John we find Him referring to God as "the One who sent Me." He took the place of a sent one. If that is true in the case of the Son of God, how much more should it apply to His servants? If even the Son was not expected to take any initiative in God's work, is it likely that we are expected to do so? The first principle to note in the work of God is that all His workers are sent ones. If there is no divine commission, there can be no divine work.

Scripture has a special name for a sent one, namely, an apostle. The meaning of the Greek word is "the sent one." The Lord Himself is the first Apostle because He is the first one specially sent of God; hence the Word refers to Him as "the Apostle" (Heb. 3:1).

The Twelve

While on earth, the Lord was all the time aware that His life in the flesh was limited, so that as He went about the work committed to Him by the Father, He prepared a group of men to continue it after His departure. These men were also termed apostles. They were not volunteers; they were sent ones. We cannot overemphasize this fact that all divine work is by commission, not by choice.

These apostles occupy a special place in the purpose of God, because they were with the Son of God while He lived in the flesh. They were not just called apostles, they were called "the Twelve Apostles." They occupied a special place in the Word and plan of God. Our Lord told Peter that one day they should "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk. 22:30). When Judas lost his office and God led the remaining eleven to choose one to make up the number, they cast lots and the lot fell upon Matthias, "and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles" (Acts 1:26). In the next chapter we find the Holy Spirit inspiring the writer of the Acts to say, "Peter, standing up with the eleven" (Acts 2:14), which shows that the Holy Spirit recognized Matthias to be one of the Twelve. The number of these apostles was fixed. God did not want more than twelve, nor would He have less. In the Book of Revelation we find that the ultimate position which they occupy is again a special one - "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14). Even in the new heaven and the new earth the Twelve enjoy a place of peculiar privilege, which is relegated to no other workers of God.

The Apostles in Scripture Days

The Lord Jesus has now gone, but the Spirit has come. The Holy Spirit is come to bear all responsibility for the work of God on earth. The Son was working for the Father; the Spirit is working for the Son. The Son came to accomplish the will of the Father; the Spirit has come to accomplish the will of the Son. The Son came to glorify the Father; the Spirit has come to glorify the Son. The Father then appointed Christ to be "the Apostle"; the Son while on earth appointed "the twelve" to be apostles. The Son has returned to the Father, and now the Spirit is on earth appointing other men to be apostles. The apostles appointed by the Holy Spirit cannot join the ranks of those appointed by the Son, but nonetheless they are apostles. The apostles we read of in the fourth chapter of Ephesians are clearly not the original twelve, for those were appointed when the Lord was still on earth, while these date their appointment to apostleship after the ascension of the Lord - they were the gifts of the Lord Jesus to His Church after His glorification. The twelve apostles then were the personal followers of the Lord Jesus, but the apostles now are ministers for the building up of the Body of Christ. We must differentiate clearly between the apostles who were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:22,26), and the apostles who are ministers for the edifying of the Body of Christ. It is evident, therefore, that God has other apostles beside the original twelve.

Immediately following the outpouring of the Spirit the twelve apostles carried on the work. Until the twelfth chapter of Acts they are seen as the chief workers, but with the opening of the thirteenth chapter we see the Holy Spirit beginning to manifest Himself as the Agent of Christ and the Lord of the Church. In that chapter we are told that in Antioch, when certain prophets and teachers were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2, Darby). Now is the time that the Spirit begins to send men forth. At this point two new workers were commissioned by the Holy Spirit.

After these two were sent out by the Spirit, how were they designated? When Barnabas and Paul were working in Iconium, "the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles" (Acts 14:4). The two sent forth in the previous chapter are in this chapter referred to as "apostles," and in the same chapter (Acts 14:14) the designation "the apostles" is used with reference to Paul and Barnabas, which proves conclusively that the two men commissioned by the Holy Spirit were also apostles. They were not among the twelve, but they were apostles.

Who then are apostles? Apostles are God's workmen, sent out by the Holy Spirit to do the work to which He has called them. The responsibility of the work is in their hands. Broadly speaking, all believers are responsible for the work of God, but apostles are a group of people specially set apart and bear a peculiar responsibility for its conduct.

We want to examine now the teaching of the scriptures as touching apostles. God appointed His Son to be "the Apostle"; Christ appointed His disciples to be "the Twelve Apostles"; and the Holy Spirit appointed a group of men (apart from the Twelve) to be the Body-building apostles. There are many belonging to this latter order chosen and sent forth by the Spirit of God. In 1 Cor. 4:9, we read: "God has set forth us the apostles last." To whom do the words "us the apostles" refer? The pronoun "us" implies that there was at least one other apostle besides the writer. If we study the context, we note that Apollos was with Paul when he wrote (1 Cor. 4:6), and Sosthenes was a joint writer with Paul of the epistle. It seems clear that the "us" here refers either to Apollos or to Sosthenes or to both. It follows then that either or both of these two must have been apostles.

Rom. 16:7: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles." The clause "who are of note among the apostles" does not mean that they were regarded as notable by the apostles, but rather that among the apostles they were notable ones. Here you have not only another two apostles, but another two notable apostles.

1 Ths. 2:6: "We might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ." The "we" here refers clearly to the writers of the Thessalonian letter, namely, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (1 Ths. 1:1), which indicates that Paul's two young fellow-workers were also apostles.

1 Cor. 15:5-7: "He was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve; after that, He was seen by about five hundred brethren at once; after that, He was seen by James; then by all the apostles." Besides the Twelve Apostles there was a group known as "all the apostles." It is obvious, then that apart from the Twelve there were other apostles.

Paul never claimed that he was the last apostle and that after him there were no others. Please read carefully what he said: "Last of all He was seen of me also...for I am least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." (1 Cor. 15:8,9). Notice how Paul used the words "last" and "least." He did not say that he was the last apostle, he only said

he was the least apostle. If he were the last there could be no more after him, but he was only the least.

In the Book of Revelation it is said of the Ephesian church: "You have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). It seems clear from this verse that the early churches expected to have other apostles apart from the original Twelve, because when the Book of Revelation was written John was the only survivor of the Twelve and by that time even Paul had already been martyred. If there were to be only twelve apostles, and John was the only one left, then no one would have been foolish enough to pose as an apostle and no one foolish enough to be deceived, and where would have been the need to try them?

The Meaning of Apostleship

Since the meaning of the word "apostle" is "the sent one," the meaning of apostleship is quite plain, namely, the office of the sent one. Apostles are not primarily men of special gifts, they are men of special commission. Many called of God are not as gifted as Paul, but if they have received a commission of God, they are just as truly apostles as he. The apostles were gifted men, but their apostleship was not based upon their gifts; it was based upon their commission. Of course, God will not send anyone who is unequipped, but equipment does not constitute apostleship. It is futile for anyone to assume the office of an apostle simply because he thinks he has the needed gifts or ability. It takes more than mere gift and ability to constitute men apostles; it takes God Himself, His will and His call. No man can attain to apostleship through natural or other qualifications; God must make him an apostle if he is ever to be one. "A man sent of God" should be the main characteristic of our entering upon His service and of all our subsequent movements.

Our Lord said, "The servant is not greater than his Lord: neither the apostle than He that sent him" (Jn. 13:16). Here we have a definition of the term "apostle." It implies being sent out - that is all, and that is everything. However good human intention may be, it can never take the place of divine commission. Today those who have been sent out by the Lord to preach the Gospel and to establish churches call themselves missionaries, not apostles, but the word "missionary" means the very same thing as "apostle," i.e. "the sent one." It is the Latin form of the Greek equivalent, "apostolos." Since the meaning of the two words is exactly the same, I fail to see the reason why the true sent ones of today prefer to call themselves "missionaries" rather than "apostles."

Apostles and the Ministry

"But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he says, Having ascended up on high, He has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men. But that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things; and He has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ." (Eph. 4:7-13, Darby)

There are many ministries connected with the service of God, but He chose a number of men for a special ministry - the ministry of the Word for the building up of the Body of Christ. Since that ministry is different from others, we refer to it as "the ministry." This ministry is entrusted to a group of people of whom the apostles are chief. It is neither a one-man ministry, nor an "all men" ministry, but a ministry based upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit and an experimental knowledge of the Lord.

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are our Lord's gifts to His Church to serve in the ministry. Strictly speaking, pastors and teachers are one gift, not two, because teaching and shepherding are closely related. In enumerating the gifts, apostles, prophets, and evangelists are all mentioned separately, while pastors and teachers are linked together. Further, the first three are each prefixed by the word "some," whereas the word "some" is attached to pastors and teachers unitedly, thus - "some apostles," "some prophets," "some evangelists," and "some pastors and teachers," not "some pastors and some teachers." The fact that the word "some" is used only four times in this list indicates that there are only four classes of persons in question. Pastors and teachers are two in one.

Pastoring and teaching may be regarded as one ministry, because those who teach must also shepherd, and those who shepherd must also teach. The two kinds of work are interrelated. Further, the word "pastor" as applied to any person is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but the word "teacher" is used on four other occasions. Nowhere in God's word do we find anyone referred to by name as a pastor. This confirms the fact that pastors and teachers are one class of men.

Teachers are men who have received the gift of teaching. This is not a miraculous gift but a gift of grace, which accounts for the fact of its being omitted from the list of miraculous gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10, and included in the list of the gifts of grace in Rom. 12. It is a gift of grace which enables its possessors to understand the teachings of God's Word and to discern His purposes, and thus equips them to instruct His people in doctrinal matters. In the church in Antioch there were several such persons thus equipped, Paul included. Teachers are individuals who have received the gift of teaching from Christ and have been given by the Lord to His Church for its upbuilding. The work of a teacher is to interpret to others the truths which have been revealed to him and to lead believers to an understanding of God's Word. Their sphere of work is mainly among the children of God, though at times they also teach the unsaved (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 4:2-18; 5:21,25,28,42). Their work is more one of interpretation than of revelation, whereas the work of the prophets is one of revelation more than of interpretation.

Evangelists are also our Lord's gift to His Church, but exactly what their personal gifts are we do not know. The Word of God does not speak of any evangelistic gift, but it does refer to Philip as being an evangelist (Acts 21:8), and Paul on one occasion encouraged Timothy to do the work of an evangelist and fill up the measure of his ministry (2 Tim. 4:5). Apart from the three occasions in Scripture, the noun "evangelist" is not found in Scripture, though we frequently meet the verb which is derived from the same root.

In the Word of God the place of prophets is more clearly defined than that of teachers and evangelists. Prophecy is mentioned among the gifts of grace (Rom. 12:6) and also among the miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12:10). God has set prophets in the Church universal (1 Cor. 12:28), but He has also given prophets for the ministry (Eph. 4:11). There is both the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet. Prophecy is both a gift of miracle and a gift of grace. The prophet is both a man set by God in His Church to occupy the prophetic office and a man given by the Lord to His Church for the ministry.

Of the classes of gifted men bestowed by the Lord upon His Church for its upbuilding, the apostles were quite different from the other three. They were specially commissioned of God to found churches through the preaching of the Gospel, to bring revelation from God to His people, to give decisions in matters pertaining to doctrine and government, and to edify the saints and distribute the gifts. Both spiritually and geographically their sphere is vast. That their position is superior to that of prophets and teachers is clear from the Word: "God has set some in the Church, first apostles..." (1 Cor. 12:28.)

It is important to note that apostleship is an office, not a gift. An office is that which one receives as the result of a commission; a gift that which one receives on the basis of grace. "I was appointed...an apostle" (1 Tim. 2:7). "I was appointed...an apostle" (2 Tim. 1:11). We see here that an apostle is commissioned. It is in this that he differs from the other three ministers, though he may have received the prophetic gift and thus be a prophet as well as an apostle.

An apostle may be a prophet or a teacher. Should he exercise his gift of prophecy or teaching in the local church, he does so in the capacity of a prophet or a teacher, but when he exercises his gifts in different places he does so in the capacity of an apostle. The implication of apostleship is being sent of God to exercise gifts of ministry in different places. It is immaterial to his office what personal gift an apostle has, but it is essential to his office that he be sent of God.

Nevertheless, apostles have personal gifts for their ministry. "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them to'" (Acts 13:1-2). These five men had the gifts of prophecy and teaching, a miraculous gift and a gift of grace. From that company of five two were sent by the Spirit to other parts, and three were left in Antioch. As we have already seen, the two sent out were thereafter called apostles. They received an apostolic commission. It was their gifts that qualified them to be prophets and teachers, but it was their commission that qualified them to be apostles. The three who remained in Antioch were still prophets and teachers, not apostles, simply because they had not been sent out by the Spirit. The gifts of all five were just the same, but two received a divine commission in addition to their gifts, and that qualified them for apostolic ministry.

Then why does the Word of God say, "He gave some apostles"? It is not a question here of apostleship being a gift given

n to an apostle, but a gift given to the Church; it is not a spiritual gift given to a man, but a gifted man given to the Church. Ephesians 4:11 does not say that the Lord gave an apostolic gift to any person, but that he gave men as apostles to His Church. The gifts referred to in this passage are not the gifts given to men personally, but the gifts given by the Lord to His Church, and the gifts mentioned here are gifted workers whom the Lord of the Church bestows upon His Church for its edification. The Head gives to the Church which is His Body certain men to serve the Body and build it up. We must distinguish between those gift given by the Spirit to individuals and those given by the Lord to His Church. The former are given to believers personally, the latter are given to believers corporately. The former are things and the latter are persons. "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another gifts of healings in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:10). This passage provides us with a list of all the gifts which the Holy Spirit gave to men, but it includes no apostolic gift. "And God hath set some in the church, firstly apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diverse kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28). The first passage enumerates the gifts given to individuals, the second enumerates the gifts given to the Church. In the former there is no mention of any apostolic gift; in the latter we find that "apostles" head the list of God's gifts to the Church. It is not that God has given His Church the gift of apostleship, but that He has given it men who are apostles; and He has not given the gifts of prophecy and teaching to His Church, but He has given it some men as prophets and some as teachers.

The difference between the apostles and the prophets and teachers is that the latter two represent both gifts given by the Spirit to individuals and at the same time gifts given by the Lord to His Church, but they do not represent any special personal gift of the Spirit.

"And God has set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12:28). What church is this? It comprises all the children of God, therefore it is the Church universal. In this Church God has set "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." In 1 Cor. 14:23 we read of "the whole church...assembled together." What church is this? Obviously the local church, for the Church universal cannot gather together in one locality. It is in this local church that the brethren exercised their spiritual gifts. One would have "a psalm," another "a teaching," another "a revelation," another "a tongue," and another "an interpretation" (1 Cor. 14:26), but more important than all these was the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:1). In Chapter 12 apostles took precedence over the other ministers, but in Chapter 14 prophets take the precedence. In the Church universal apostles are first, but in the local church prophets are first. How does it come about that prophets take first place in the local church, since in the universal Church they only occupy the second place? Because in the Church universal the question is not of personal gifts of the Spirit, but of God's gift of ministers to the Church, and of these, apostles rank first; but in the local church the question is one of personal gifts of the Spirit and of these, prophecy is chief, because it is most important. Let us remember that apostleship is not a personal gift.

The Sphere of their Work

The sphere of an apostle's work is quite different from that of the other three special ministers. That prophets and teachers exercise their gifts in the local church is seen from the statement, "There were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers." You can find prophets and teachers in the local church, but not apostles, because they have been called to minister in many different places, while the ministry of prophets and teachers is confined to one locality (1 Cor. 14:26,29).

As to evangelists, we do not know their special sphere, as very little is said of them in God's Word, but the story of Philip, the evangelist, throws some light on this class of ministers. Philip left his own locality and preached in Samaria, but although he did good work there, the Spirit did not fall upon any of his converts. It was not till the apostles came from Jerusalem and laid hands upon them that the Spirit was poured out. This seems to indicate that the local preaching of the Gospel is the work of an evangelist, but the universal preaching of the Gospel is the work of an apostle. This does not imply that the labors of an evangelist are necessarily confined to one place, but it does mean that that is their usual sphere.

The Evidence of Apostleship

Is there any evidence that one is really commissioned of God to be an apostle? In 1 Cor. 9:1-2, Paul states that apostleship has its credentials. "You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord," he writes, as if to say, "If God had not sent me to Corinth, then you would not be saved today, and there would be no church in your city." If God has called a man to be an apostle, it will be manifest in the fruit of his labors. Wherever you have the commission of God, there you have the authority of God; wherever you have the authority of God, there you have the power of God; and wherever you have the power of God, there you have spiritual fruits. The fruit of our labors proves the validity of our commission. And yet it must be noted that Paul's thought is not that apostleship implies numerous converts but that it represents spiritual values for the Lord, for He could never send anyone forth for a lesser purpose. The Lord is out for spiritual values, and the object of apostleship is to secure them. In this case the Corinthians represent these values. But did not Paul say here, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" Is it only those, then, who have seen the Lord Jesus in His resurrection manifestations who are qualified to become apostles? Follow carefully the trend of Paul's argument. In verse 1 he asks four questions: 1) "Am I not free?" 2) "Am I not an apostle?" 3) "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" 4) "Are you not my work in the Lord?"

Of the four questions asked by Paul, three relate to his person and one to his work. These three are on the same plane and are quite independent of one another. Paul was not arguing that because he was free and because he was an apostle, therefore he had seen the Lord; nor was he reasoning that because he was an apostle and because he had seen the Lord, therefore he was free. No more was he seeking to demonstrate that because he was free and had seen the Lord, therefore he was an apostle. The facts are he was free, he was an apostle, and he had seen the Lord. These facts had no essential connection one with the other, and it is absurd to connect them. It would be as reasonable to argue that Paul's apostleship was based upon his being free as that it was based upon his seeing the Lord. If he was not seeking to prove his apostleship from the fact of his freedom, no more was he seeking to prove it from his having seen the Lord. Apostleship is not based on having seen the Lord in His resurrection manifestations.

Then what is the meaning of 1 Cor. 15:5-9? "He was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve: After that, He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once; ...after that He was seen by James; then by all the apostles. And last of all He was seen by me also." The object of this passage is not to produce evidence of apostleship but evidence of the resurrection of the Lord. Paul is recording the different persons to whom the Lord appeared; he is not teaching what effect was produced upon these persons by His appearing. Cephas and James saw the Lord, but they were Cephas and James after they saw the Lord, just as they were Cephas and James before; they did not become Cephas and James by seeing Him. The same applies to the Twelve Apostles and the five hundred brethren. Seeing the Lord did not constitute them apostles. They were twelve apostles before they saw the Lord, and they were twelve apostles after they saw the Lord. The same argument applies in Paul's case. The facts were, he had seen the Lord, and he was the least of the apostles; but it was not seeing the Lord that constituted him the least of the apostles. The five hundred brethren were not apostles before they saw the Lord, nor were they after. Seeing the Lord in His resurrection manifestations did not constitute them apostles. They were simply "brethren" before, and they were simply "brethren" after. The Word of God nowhere teaches that seeing the Lord is the qualification for apostleship.

But apostleship has its credentials. In 2 Cor. 12:11-12, Paul writes, "In nothing am I behind the most eminent apostles...truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." There was abundant evidence of the genuineness of Paul's apostolic commission and the signs of an apostle will never be lacking where there is truly an apostolic call. From the above passage we infer that the evidence of apostleship lies in a twofold power - spiritual and miraculous. Endurance is the greatest proof of spiritual power, and it is one of the signs of an apostle. It is the ability to endure steadfastly under continuous pressure that tests the reality of an apostolic call. A true apostle needs to be "strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy" (Col. 1:11). Yes, it takes nothing short of "all power according to the might of His glory" to produce "all patience and longsuffering with joy." But the reality of Paul's apostleship was not only attested by his patient endurance under intense and prolonged pressure, it was evidenced also by the miraculous power he possessed. Miraculous power to change situations in the physical world is a necessary manifestation of our knowledge of God in the spiritual realm, and this applies not to heathen lands only but to every land. To profess to be sent ones of the omnipotent God, and yet stand helpless before situations that challenge His power, is a sad contradiction. Not all who can work wonders are apostles, for the gifts of healing and of miracle-working are given to members of the body (1 Cor. 12:28) who have no special commission, but miraculous as well as spiritual power is part of the equipment of all who have a true apostolic commission.

Re:, on: 2008/11/19 14:57

Quote:

-----what are the biblical requirements for apostleship

According to scripture the main requirement was that the Apostle had to be an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ before He ascended.

Kinda impossible to do today. Somehow we've decided that a church planter is an apostle, and a few other things make one an Apostle. I think there are many who do similar work as the Apostles did... but one today can not be an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Therefore, I have concluded that there are no Apostles like the ones we read about in the Word of God.

My experience has been that those who I have met who claim to be Apostles have an air of self-importance about them.

Krispy

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/11/19 15:33

KrispyKrittr wrote:

Quote:

According to scripture the main requirement was that the Apostle had to be an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ before He ascended.

Romans 1:1-6 (KJV)

1Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle**, separated unto the gospel of God,

2(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

5**By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:**

6**Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:**

7To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1-7 (NKJV)

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle**, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. **Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;**

To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8-)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/11/19 16:13

Quote:

KrispyKrittr wrote:

Quote:

-----what are the biblical requirements for apostleship

According to scripture the main requirement was that the Apostle had to be an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ before He ascended.

Kinda impossible to do today. Somehow we've decided that a church planter is an apostle, and a few other things make one an Apostle. I think there are many who do similar work as the Apostles did... but one today can not be an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Therefore, I have concluded that there are no Apostles like the ones we read about in the Word of God.

My experience has been that those who I have met who claim to be Apostles have an air of self-importance about them.

Krispy

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

I think he gives this calling just as any other, yes there are many false apostles, scripture warns, but just as there are false teachers does not mean there are not any real ones.

and how i understand the above passage, apostles is a part of the perfecting of the saints, and unless they already have entered that perfection, we still have a need. If we cancel apostles, then we should cancel teachers and prophets also :-)

Apostle or

Ἀπόστολος

apostolos

ap-os'-tol-os

From G649; a delegate; specifically an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ (Ἀπόστολος), (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

sent by God.

I think Art Katz defines very good in above messages what and who qualifies for being an apostle

Re:, on: 2008/11/19 16:27

Apostles were to bear witness to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. In order to do this, they had to have seen him after he was resurrected.

Luke 24:46-48 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And ye are witnesses of these things.*

When looking for someone to replace Judas, the one chosen had to be a witness unto the resurrection.

Acts 1:22 *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, **must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.***

Jesus told the apostles:

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

And that is exactly what they did.

Acts 4:33 *And with great power gave the apostles **witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus:** and great grace was upon them all.*

Paul the apostle, in defending his apostleship, appealed to the fact that he had seen Jesus after he had risen from the dead.

1 Corinthians 9:1 *Am I not an apostle? am I not free? **have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?** are not ye my work in the Lord?*

1 Corinthians 15:7-9 *After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

In order to be an apostle one has to have seen Jesus after he rose from the dead. Paul says that Jesus was seen last of all by him. He is the last one to see Jesus after his resurrection. Since no one since Paul has seen Jesus, no one since Paul can be an apostle. Therefore, there can be no apostles today.

I could go deeper into this, but I don't have time this afternoon. After having been a believer of modern day Apostles in the Charismatic Movement, and then rejecting the notion after much study... here are my four conclusions concerning this topic:

- 1) There are no apostles today because the apostles served as a foundation for the early church only.
- 2) There are no apostles today because they had to have seen Jesus after he rose from the dead. The apostles were to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ.
- 3) There are no apostles today because apostles had to be hand-picked by Jesus.
- 4) There are no apostles today because no one today has the miracle-working power of an apostle. (If someone says they do... prove it.)

This is my belief.

Now, many times people who plant churches are called "apostles". In that sense they are, but they are certainly not apostles in the sense that the original Apostles were. If this is what we are referring to, then they are the foundation of some local assembly. But the original Apostles were the foundation of the Church... the Body of Christ. They were the witnesses that the claims of the resurrection were true. Why? Because each of them were eye witnesses.

8-)

Krispy

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2008/11/19 16:42

Quote:

----- Since no one since Paul has seen Jesus, no one since Paul can be an apostle. Therefore, there can be no apostles today.

I think perhaps no one that you know of and as far as miracle-authority-power etc.. I have to question that statement too. Just because they don't promote themselves doesn't mean they don't exist, it just means that they are staying in a lowly place and exercise authority where they are and to the extent they fill they have been given. As with prophets, self proclaiming tv apostles are also a light thing I'm sure.

Basically men who are taught by the Lord, and have been sent by the Lord and have had a revelation of His resurrection, probably in some sort of christophany(sp?)

Re:, on: 2008/11/19 16:53

Quote:

----- I think perhaps no one that you know of and as far as miracle-authority-power etc.. I have to question that statement too.

I am not personally satisfied that anyone today is exercising the miracle working power of the Holy Spirit as did the Apostles. Now, I believe the Holy Spirit can move that way today... but for whatever reason known to God, I don't see that He is.

If anyone can demonstrate for me otherwise... I have an open mind, contrary to popular believe. :-)

Doesn't reduce God's power one bit, just means that isn't the game plan right now.

Krispy

Re: - posted by elected (), on: 2008/11/19 17:11

Scripture does not say that Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Timothy, Andronicus and Junia were 'an eye witness to the bodily resurrection of Christ before He ascended,' and yet in the scriptures they had an apostolic ministry. The post by AbideinHim of Watchmen Nee is a very good explanation about apostles. If somebody is commissioned by God to preach the gospel and make disciples and his apostleship is confirmed by signs and wonders and his ministry fruitful not only in winning souls for Christ but building up the body of Christ, then we have good evidence to believe that this man is a genuine apostle of the Church of God. Another thing I want to add is that a true apostle is a godly man who has spiritual power and authority, he appoints elders to local churches that the Holy Spirit has chosen, in another word he recognizes those spiritual local leaders appointed by the Holy Spirit and gives his consent.

The sad reality is that there have been too many self-claimed apostles in our days. They look like those super apostles in the Corinthian church or those fake apostles mentioned in the book of Revelation who not only fulfill the requirement of apostleship. The fact that there are too many counterfeit and spurious apostolic ministries going on, is not an indication that the genuine does not exist.

The truth is that many of us who are evangelicals have blindly accepted the theological conclusions of theologians who believe that apostles and prophets were only for the apostolic church and after the first century what we had left were evangelists, pastors and teachers. That's called cessational theology and they too believe that the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 ceased to be operational in the church after the Bible was complete. There is no evidence at all in the entire Bible that the supernatural or miraculous gifts of the Spirit were only for the apostolic church. Also in the history of the church there have been many men of God who have had the miraculous or supernatural gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12. So

Scripture and church history prove that miraculous gifts are for this age of grace.

Blessings
Redi

Re: - posted by elected (), on: 2008/11/19 17:29

Sorry misstyped it should be,

" They look like those super apostles in the corinthian church or those fake apostles mentioned in the book of revelation who do not fulfill the requirements of apostleship."

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/11/19 20:11

Quote:

"The truth is that many of us who are evangelicals have blindly accepted the theological conclusions of theologians who believe that apostles and prophets were only for the apostolic church and after the first century what we had left were evangelists, pastors and teachers. That's called cessational theology and they too believe that the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 ceased to be operational in the church after the bible was complete. There is no evidence at all in the entire bible that the supernatural or miraculous gifts of the Spirit were only for the apostolic church. Also in the history of the church there have been many men of God who have had the miraculous or supernatural gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12. Scripture and church history prove that miraculous gifts are for this age of grace."

The true apostles that are the "sent ones" are within the Church today, and they are not advertising the fact that they are apostles, but they are doing the work of an apostle. Many of them are missionaries, sent to other countries, building churches, and there are signs and wonders that follow their ministry.

We are warned in scripture that there would be much deception in the last days, and we will know them by their fruits. Jesus Christ is building His Church through His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. Their authority and commission is not from any man or any denomination but comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

Mike