

SENT-OUT ONES

In Luke 6:12-16, Jesus chose twelve of His disciples and named them apostles. This means "sent-out ones" who were chosen for His special mission. They were His delegates that we see in Scripture extending the ministry of Christ, after His ascension to heaven.

1- DELEGATED DOZEN - Jesus elected His apostles to "*be with Him and to be sent out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons*" (Mark 3:14, Matt 10:1-2). They proclaimed repentance, and healed the sick (Luke 9:1-6, Mark 6:12).

The apostles taught the growing church of disciples, devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 2:42-47, 6:3-4), doing signs and wonders to bring people to repentance and faith.

2- DIFFICULT CALLING - Apostles demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 2:4), were arrested and flogged (Acts 4:33), and called to tribulation and dishonor (1Cor 6:9). As followers of Jesus, their apostleship was "*unto death*" as was Christ's (Phil 2:8).

Luke 11:49 notes apostles and prophets were persecuted and killed. All of Jesus' twelve apostles except John endured a martyr's death, and their twelve names are written in heaven (Revelation 21:14) along with the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

3- SPEAKING & WRITING - Apostolic authority conveyed God's written and spoken word. "*Through Jesus Christ our Lord we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations*" (Rom 1:5, Acts 1:25, Gal 2:8, 1Cor 9:2). This was the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through them.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach and bring to remembrance the things that He spoke to them, because they were chosen and appointed to bear fruit that abides (John 14:26, 15:15-16, 16:13-14). Each book of the New Testament bears the authority of an apostle associated with it.

4- THE NEW TESTAMENT - The apostles ministered with the authority of Christ. "Peter equates the ministry of the Old Testament prophets with that of the New Testament apostles proclaiming the Word of God by the ministry of the Holy Spirit" notes BH Edwards. Important passages include 2Pet 1:16-21, 3:2,16, 1Cor 14:36-37, Eph 3:5.

The Scriptures are the written-down Word of God, the final authority for all believers, and we are not to go beyond what is written (1Cor 4:6). "The apostles had Christ's authority to found and govern the early church and to speak and write the words of God. The New Testament fulfills their authoritative teaching for the church," notes theologian WA Grudem.

5- APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY - Scripture uses "apostle" in a broad sense and in a technical sense. Of 79 times in the New Testament (27 in the Gospels), it refers primarily to the emissaries chosen by Jesus, three times to secondary messengers (Epaphroditus, Timothy, Titus, possibly Barnabas), twice to super-apostles and to false apostles, and once to Jesus Himself.

"*The household of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone*" (Eph 2:20). The result of the prophetic and apostolic ministry is the written Word of God that you hold in your hands today, and rely upon to know God and His Word, through Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

6- ARE YOU AN APOSTLE? - Scripture emphasizes the apostolic ministry of the Word, which many theologians believe ended with the completion of the New Testament, so there can be no apostles today in the sense as those chosen directly by Christ, who speak and write His words.

Humility also leaves such titles only for people mentioned in Scripture. But all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have been given His commission (Matt 28:18-20, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, 2Cor 5:14-6:2) and a different title. God entrusts believers in Christ with "*the message of reconciliation*" so that "*we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us.*"

7- ARE YOU AN AMBASSADOR? - Or are you absent without leave? "*See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord*" (Col 4:17). Like Paul and the apostles, you will bear Christ's fruit through obedience, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. You are the one who can reach people around you, if only you will trust and obey. Do so today! ☐