

POWER & AUTHORITY

In Luke 9, Jesus transitions in His ministry from people following Him as disciples, to people being called to go out and make disciples for Him. He sends out His twelve apostles to minister.

JESUS GAVE POWER - Luke records that Jesus "*called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.*" Jesus had selected these twelve as apostles in Luke 6, then spent considerable time teaching and training them for ministry.

In Luke 4-8, Jesus has been fulfilling prophecies about the Christ, and demonstrating that He is the Son of God come in the flesh to fulfill God's promises. He has been preaching the good news, delivering the captives from demons and diseases, teaching and preaching. He calmed a storm, delivered a demoniac, healed a woman and raised a girl back to life.

POWER OF APOSTLES - Jesus gives His own power to the twelve. He gives both ability and authority, both the power and the right to use the power. Jesus "*sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.*" They are like apprentices in a practicum, going out to do what they have learned. They are to do as the Master has done, with His power and authority.

In Jesus' announcement at the synagogue in Luke 4:16-21, He declared both His power and authority to preach and to deliver, as anointed by the Holy Spirit. This was the time of God's favor, as Jesus reverses the power and effect of the curse of sin that came in Genesis 3.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING - The twelve apostles had been selected from the larger group of disciples, the followers, the learners of Jesus the rabbi. The apostles were specifically "sent-out-ones" who will represent Jesus as they go forth on His mission, to accomplish His purposes.

"The apostles are given a dress rehearsal," notes RK Hughes, "a pre-Pentecost taste of miraculous ministering that would characterize their ministry after Jesus was ascended."

TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT - In Matthew 10, Jesus stipulates the apostles were to go to Jews only, not Samaritans or Gentiles, since their time would come later. The apostles were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, all things which Jesus had done, confirming Him as Christ.

Some scholars suggest this power of the Holy Spirit was only temporary, because they didn't seem to have it at the end of Luke 9, but they did in Luke 10, and later they were told to wait for the Holy Spirit to come to them in power for their apostolic ministry. This was a training time.

PREACHING OF APOSTLES - "Their mission was both prophetic and priestly," notes RC Sproul, "as Jesus confers His power and authority over demons and disease, and sends them to preach."

This was in keeping with what Jesus preached in Mark 1, "*proclaiming the gospel of God, saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand, repent and believe in the gospel.*" Hughes says the extraordinary powers of the apostles "were only handmaidens of the message" because as thrilling as it was to do great works, the greatest work was preaching the kingdom.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD - Hughes explains, "the grand truth is, the kingdom of God is the reign of God, the sovereignty of God. And the apostles were to preach how God reigns, and how men and women can come into God's kingdom, if they turned to Him in repentance and faith."

Jesus told Pharisees in Luke 17, "*the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, for the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.*" In Luke 4, Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom, and then in Luke 5-6 He issues a call to repentance: "*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*" His apostles will do the same on this mission in Luke 9.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY - The ultimate goal of apostolic authority was to produce the New Testament. Sproul notes, "Only those chosen and empowered by Christ Himself were apostles, established in one generation. The continuity of their authority lasts to this day in the fulfillment of their commission, to set down in writing their apostolic authority in the New Testament."

The words and teachings of the apostles was nothing less than the teaching of Christ. "We ought never to neglect the authority and power of the apostolic word," notes Sproul. This is the authority of Christ Himself, written down in the breathed-out words of the New Testament, which you can hold in your hand today. How do you avail yourself of Christ's life-changing words? ☐