

## REVIVAL NEWS

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\*\*\*\* AUGUST 2020 \*\*\*\* AUGUST 2020 \*\*\*\* AUGUST 2020 \*\*\*\*

# APOSTOLIC COMPANY

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For a number of years now we have been led of the Lord to call ourselves and those who relate with us, an **Apostolic Company**. There is no human organisational structure to this, nor is it a new denomination. It simply describes those who walk together in committed relationships having all received from Jesus Christ *“grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name”* (Rom.1:5).

## Jesus had a company of disciples

When Jesus had risen from the dead He found two disciples, not of the twelve, walking on the road to Emmaus. When he asked them to explain what had been happening they said, *“Yes, and certain women of our company...”* astonished them when they had given the report that Jesus’ body was not in the tomb (Lu.24:22). The brethren who related with and followed Jesus saw themselves as a company - they were the ones who kept company with Jesus.

## Being in Company with Jesus the Apostle

Apostolic Company begins when we receive a revelation of Jesus *“the Apostle...of our confession”* (Heb.3:1). By receiving Jesus as the Apostle, we begin to see the reality of the Father in Jesus and that as His children, He wants to train us and form us to be His own special people in the earth, growing us up to be a company of sons. The company of disciples was not a group of people that only related with each other by being a part of the same synagogue meeting every Sabbath. Jesus became their Father and taught them daily how to live in His ways. Jesus the Apostle and His brethren are the apostolic company.

## We are for signs and wonders

We are meant to be such a company of brethren as is said in Hebrews 2:11, 13b, *“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call us brethren...Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”* The brethren of Jesus are one with Him and are His children. They are continually being sanctified and set apart to His will.

Verse 13b is a quote from Isaiah where he prophesies, *“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples...Here am I and the children whom Yehovah [the LORD] has given Me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel”* (Is.8:16, 18). The “law” means the “instruction” or the “teaching”. The disciples who have Jesus as their Father are the ones in whom the teaching and instruction is sealed. Disciples are made by *“teaching them to observe all that I [Jesus] commanded you”* (Mt.28:20). The real signs and wonders that we should be

looking for are companies of brethren arising in the earth, in every nation, who are committed disciples and brethren of Jesus, the apostolic Father, and who have the teaching, *“the apostles’ doctrine”* (Acts2:42), sealed in their hearts and outworked in their lives.

### **The Army of the LORD**

God delivered us from the world to be an army that could inherit the promises of God in Christ (2Cor.1:20)! When God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt it says in **Exodus 6:26**, *“These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, ‘Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.”* Again in **chapter 7:4** it says, *“But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgements.”*

God’s army is His people. However, the generation of the children of Israel who came out of Egypt did not see themselves as such and did not inherit the land that God had chosen to give them. They were undisciplined and not willing to heed their Father’s voice and be trained. Much of the church today is even unaware that God has an inheritance for them in the earth and are therefore also undisciplined in applying themselves to be trained in the ways of God. The word “discipleship” shares the same root as the word “discipline”. The Word of God is to discipline us.

### **David’s Army – an example of apostolic company**

#### **David arising**

As David rose up as a mighty warrior in Israel under the leadership of Saul, it became obvious to all that God was with David and that he was the anointed (the Messiah) of God. Saul’s kingdom was to be ripped away from him because his heart was not to wholly follow the LORD. Saul was more worried about the circumstances around him than the Word of God, *“When I saw the people scattered from me...and that the Philistines gathered together...Therefore I felt compelled, offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God...now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart...”* (1Sam.13:11-14).

Saul’s kingdom typifies today the Church that still wants to do things their way and are not willing to fully submit to Jesus. They are God’s people, but they are more afraid of the people *scattering* than in trusting God’s Word. God is looking for a company of disciples who will have His heart for the nations, to be *obedient to the faith*.

When the people began to sing of David, *“Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul”* (1Sam18:12). David however continued to *“behave more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed”* (1Sam.18:30).

#### **A company gathers around the Anointed One**

David had to eventually escape persecution from the church of his day, *“David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father’s house heard, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress,*

*everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him” (1Sam22:1-2).*

This is the forming of apostolic company. David here typifies Jesus the Apostle and the apostles that Jesus is raising in these days. God is raising apostles again to lead the Church back to complete obedience to the Word Himself. Notice the ones who came out of Saul’s kingdom:

**i. everyone who was in distress**

Many in the church today are distressed. Distress happens when there is not a good shepherd to lead. Jesus said of the people of His day, *“when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary [harassed] and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matt.9:36).* Jesus’ answer was to raise up more workers for the harvest. This means to train and send apostles and disciples into the harvest. God is raising apostolic companies to be places where those in distress can find reality in Christ and be a people who are sent into God’s harvest.

**ii. everyone who was in debt**

Religious church systems keep brethren in debt – they are not released to go out and live for the kingdom. We are not to be indebted to the “church” as an institution. The Church is meant to be a place of freedom. Only slaves are indebted but *“if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (Jn8:36).* In apostolic company there are no debts *“except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom.13:8).*

In apostolic company we are called to build each other up for the purpose of all finding their gifts and full expression as a contributing member of the Body of Christ. *“We are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal.3:26).* There is no hierarchy but orderly submission into the Body that releases all the Body to grow *“with the increase that is from God” (Col.2:19b).*

**iii. everyone who was discontented**

Many today are finding apostolic companies because they are looking for more in their walk with God. Saul’s kingdom was only going so far yet God was wanting to take His people further. He needed someone like David who would be after His heart and willing to change, be corrected and inquire of the Lord for direction.

To walk in apostolic company is a commitment to keep growing and be willing to change and press on. It is a people who are not content to stay in the status quo but will be after all God’s purposes. David was a man who *“served his own generation by the will of God” (Acts13:36a).* The people who came to him wanted more.

The apostle Paul wanted to *“press on, that I may hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me...” (Phil.3:12b).* He then said, *“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind...” (Phil.3:15a).* The mature mind is to not be contented with remaining the same. The mature mind is the one who is willing to press on in company with brethren who are also of this mind.

This is the sort of people that formed the army led by David under the guidance of the LORD. These men learned to live in community, learned to wait for the Word of the LORD and allowed themselves to be trained and taught by their apostolic father, David. It was to these men that God finally gave the kingdom.

## **The Apostolic Company in the book of Acts**

### **One heart, one mind**

*“All who believed were together, and had all things in common...continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house...the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts2:44,46a,47b).* These disciples were *“continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts2:42a)* and therefore the life of Messiah Jesus was filling all of them and teaching them how to love one another.

This was a sign and a wonder to all Israel and the Lord was able to add to them daily as they welcomed the new believers into the midst of daily fellowship with Jesus. The reality of Jesus in the midst is to be tangible. They were one just as Jesus promised in **John17:20-21**. As long as they kept receiving the word of the apostles they remained one and the Lord added others into this fellowship of oneness which is *“fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn.1:3).*

### **Apostolic order in the company brought multiplication of fruit**

When trouble arose over the questions of widows the apostles did not try to take matters into their own hands but gave wise leadership calling on the whole Body to be involved in the solution, *“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts6:3).* The apostles knew their role in the company was to facilitate growth, not to rule over the brethren for the sake of their own glory. The apostolic company agrees with God’s order in the church, *“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...” (1Cor.12:28).*

The apostles knew that their role in the company was *“to give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts6:4).* All the brethren were pleased and chose seven men and the apostles were able to ordain them by the laying on of hands with the agreement of all the church. The result was further revival, *“Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts6:7).* Notice that the result was not “church growth” as such. It was multiplication of *disciples* and *obedience to the faith*. This is the result of *“grace and apostleship”* at work (**Rom.1:5**).

The emergence of apostolic companies: people coming out of “Saul’s kingdom” to be together in *“serving their generation by the will of God”*. These companies are committed, submitted and accountable in real Christ-centred relationships. They are active in doing the will of God and being obedient to the apostolic commission. When we are of one heart and

mind to do this together the ***“world will know that You [Father] have sent Me [Jesus], and have loved them as You have loved Me” (Jn.17:23b).***

You may not be an educated or worldly trained person but as you join with other brethren in true apostolic company, being in company with Jesus the Apostle, people will marvel, ***“and realize that you have been with Jesus” (Acts4:13).***

Apostolic Company is simply disciples of Jesus relating together, wanting to follow all He commanded, believing the Bible as it is written and desiring to see the Word outworked in our lives corporately. There are no restrictions to obeying Jesus and there are no boundaries. As companies arise all around the earth, being led by apostles in apostolic order, there will be multiplication of disciples. There will be sending communities with grace and apostleship being released to the Body to bring nations to obedience to the faith. It is time for ministers and believers everywhere to step out of the old wineskin we have called “church” and step into the new, being members of His Body, receiving apostles and walking as brethren in Jesus the Apostle’s company!