

APOSTLESHIP

What is apostleship? – comes from the Greek word *‘apostello’* meaning ‘set apart’ or ‘to send out’, ‘send on a mission’

Apostleship is the word *‘apostole’* meaning ‘commission’ or ‘apostolate’.

This word signifies

- A sending
- A mission
- A commission

What is the commission?

Jesus gave the commission to the apostles in **Matthew 28:18-20**.

v.18 Jesus has all authority – the whole commission comes out of the authority of Jesus

v.19 go – being sent

make disciples – committed followers

of all nations – all ethnic groups
baptise – in His Name

v.20 teach – all things in the word

this is discipleship
Jesus is with us as we do this!

FOUR MENTIONS OF ‘APOSTLESHIP’ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1) A Specific Call

Acts 1:25 *“to take part in this ministry and apostleship ...”*. This is in the

context of **verses 15-26** where Peter is led by the Spirit to fulfil Scripture by appointing a replacement for Judas. There could only ever be 12 apostles of the Lamb (**Revelation 21:14**)

The specific qualifications to be an apostle of the Lamb were:

- One who had been with Jesus
- From His baptism to His ascension
- Had been an eyewitness of His resurrection

Matthias was chosen and *“**he was numbered with the eleven**”* (**Acts 1:26**).

This was a specific calling to be an apostle of the Lamb.

What do we learn?

- Apostles are called by God, not self-appointed (**Eph.1:1; Gal.1:1**)
- Jesus in His ascension *“**gave some to be apostles ...**”* (**Eph.4:11**)
- Paul and Barnabas were set apart for apostolic ministry under the direction of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 13:2-3**)

2) It is to Nations

Romans 1:5 *“Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith among all nations for His name**”*

This is a commission to the church (**Rom.1:6**), not a specific person → a corporate apostleship!

We have received:

- Grace – the enabling power of God
- Apostleship – the commission that comes with authority to make disciples
- For obedience – Greek *‘hupakoe’* signifies *attentive hearing, to listen with compliant submission, assent and agreement*
- To the faith – faith comes by hearing (**Romans 10:17**)
- Among all nations – ethnic groups
- For His name – the name of Jesus

What do we learn?

- The church has received grace and the commission to go into the nations preaching and teaching Jesus the Christ (see **Acts 9:15**)
- As the nations/people groups hear and receive the word preached, they will come to obedience of the faith.

3) There will be Fruit

1 Corinthians 9:2 *“If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord”.*

Paul is speaking to the church that he established in Corinth. He is saying that while there may be others who do not receive him as their apostle, these believers in Corinth have received him as their apostle.

The church in Corinth was the proof, or seal [certification], of Paul’s apostleship.

What do we learn?

- i. An apostle is only an apostle to those who receive them.
- ii. There is no doubt that there are apostles, and that part of the work of an apostle is to establish the church
- iii. An apostle will have fruit – an apostolic base, saints who are the living proof of the work of the apostle.
- iv. It is in the base that disciples are made, being trained to go out in ministry. See the example of Paul in Ephesus, **Acts 19:9-10**.

4) There is a Sphere of Ministry

Galatians 2:8 *“(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles).”*

This is in the context of Paul in a council with the leading apostles in Jerusalem.

v.7 *“the gospel for the uncircumcised”* had been committed to Paul
“the gospel for the circumcised” had been committed to Peter

- There was a sphere of ministry for Peter and for Paul
- Each had grace to function in their particular sphere
- There was recognition of the grace and commission on Paul to reach the Gentiles
- There was agreement, and a mutual sending into the work of the ministry

v.9 *“and when James, Cephas and John ... perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised”*

What do we learn?

- i. Apostles can have a specific sphere of ministry
- ii. There is grace available to function in the sphere they have been given
- iii. The sphere of ministry can grow and increase

In Summary

Defining an apostle – how do we know someone is an apostle?

1. *The apostle will be able to confess a clear calling from Jesus to be an apostle*
2. *They will have nations in their heart. It is rare to find an apostle who hasn’t got nations in their heart*
3. *An apostle needs to establish a base; a sending body. There will be fruit of the apostles’ ministry*
4. *An apostle will know the sphere of ministry they are delegated to function in by Jesus*