

Who are Apostles?

Many are calling themselves apostles in these days and mixed messages are being spoken forth.

The question being asked is
“How can I tell a true apostle?”

Apostles are appointed by the will of God

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Eph.1:1

“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father...) Gal.1:1

Jesus called the first apostles by name

“...He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” Luke 6:12-13

Today Jesus is again appointing apostles in His church according to

Ephesians 4:11 “He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.”

The apostle needs to be clear about the calling

“For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle-I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying ...” 1Tim.2:7

An illustration from the Old Testament, Ex.18:13-20

Many were coming to Moses (a type of the apostle) to have their minor disputes settled (v13-14).

Moses father-in-law advised him that this was not good (v17)

Moses needed to be released so the he could:

- “stand before God for the people” (v.19)
- take responsibility to “teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do” (v20)

The pattern in the New Testament, Acts 6:1-4

In the early church as the number of disciples increased, needs arose among the people.

The apostles said, “*It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables*” (v2)

The solution was that others be appointed “*over this business*” (v3)

Then the apostles could give themselves “*continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*” (v4)

The ministry of the apostle is one of

- Prayer - standing before God
- Ministry of the word – teaching

It is also for

- The equipping of the saints – showing the way to come to maturity
- Building up the body of Christ – training and equipping for the work of the ministry, so each part will function

Eph.4:12-16

What did the apostles teach?

1. *“The apostles’ doctrine”* Acts 2:42. *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matt.28:20)
2. They taught what they had received from Jesus, *“We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:20)
3. They taught Jesus as the Christ, *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”* (Acts 5:42)
4. They taught with boldness expecting God to confirm His word with accompanying signs, *“Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus”*
Acts 4:29-30

5. They taught the saints to endure in tribulation, *“strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God’* Acts 14:22.

An apostle must walk in faithfulness: Lu.16:10-12

- **Faithful in little** – *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”*
The one who is faithful in the little can **receive much**.

- **Faithful in finance** – *“If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches.”*
The one who is faithful with finance will **receive true spiritual riches** (not speaking of financial prosperity)

- **Faithful in what belongs to another** – *“If you have not*

been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”

The one who serves another man faithfully **will be given his own** in due course.

God has appointed apostles
“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers ...” 1Cor.12:28

- **Apostles are known by their fruit** (1Cor.9:2)
- **Apostles represent Jesus Christ to the whole church** (Matt. 10:40)
- **Apostles love and serve the whole church not a restricted network or denominated group** (2Cor.11:28)
- **Apostles generally have an international ministry** (Rom.1:5)

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