

God Gave Apostles

May 12, 2019

Ephesians 4:8-12 ESV

8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?)

10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

- Verse 11 is neither an org chart, corporate hierarchy, nor job description.
- These titles are functional roles that are relational and interdependent.
- There is a difference between members of the Body of Christ who operate in a gift by the Holy Spirit and those who hold an office (not all who prophesy are prophets).
- Those who hold an office have an authority in the Church that those who operate in a gift don't have.

Acts 21:8-10 ESV

8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

- The description and function of verse 11 is all but lost in Christendom today. Biblically it still exists and is mandated by Scripture. Experientially, it is lost.
- Some reasons why the function of the five-fold ministry gifts are lost today:
 - The corruption of pride and selfish ambition in church leadership.

"Americans trust in faith leaders and pastors fell to a record low of 37%, ranking below multiple medical professions, teachers, and police and just above journalists." —Gallup 2018

- The doctrine of "cessationism."
- "Cessationism: The belief that tongues, and other special gifts enjoyed by believers in the early Christian movement faded early in the history of the church, and are thus not present today. The time of cessation is variously defined as the date of the completion of the last book of the Christian Scriptures or the death of the last Apostle. Antonym: Continuationism." —religioustolerance.org

APOSTLE (apostolos) *one sent with orders, delegate, ambassador, messenger*

- **SENT WITH ORDERS**

Matthew 10:1-8 ESV

1 And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

2 The names of the twelve apostles (apostolos) are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

- Luke 6:13 ...he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles (apostolos)...
- The disciples became apostles when they were sent on mission.

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,

6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

2 Corinthians 8:23 ESV

23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers (apostolos) of the churches, the glory of Christ.

Philippians 2:25-26 ESV

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger (apostolos) and minister to my need,

26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.

Acts 16:6-10 ESV

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- The apostles of God are under the authority of the Lord of the Church. They are not at "the top of the org chart" able to do whatever they want.

2 Corinthians 1:21 ESV

21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us.

- **REGIONAL MISSIONAL OVERSIGHT**

- An apostle is not as a pastor overseeing one church, but overseeing a region of many churches and their pastors.

Galatians 1:1-2 ESV

1 Paul, an apostle--not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead--

2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia...

- **SEPARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY**

1 Corinthians 1:17 ESV

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

- **DISCERNIBLE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Galatians 2:7-9 ESV

7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised

8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

1 John 2:26-27 ESV

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie--just as it has taught you, abide in him.

- **PROOF OF APOSTLESHIP**

Paul cited three proofs of apostleship:

- Transformed lives
- Miracles, signs, wonders
- Patient endurance of trials and persecutions

2 Corinthians 3:1-3 ESV

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you?

2 You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all.

3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 ESV

19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

20 For you are our glory and joy.

Acts 2:42-43 ESV

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the

prayers.

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Acts 4:33-35 ESV

33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold

35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

2 Corinthians 12:12 ESV

12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

2 Corinthians 11:5 ESV

5 Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.

2 Corinthians 11:23 ESV

23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;

27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

- **ESTABLISH DOCTRINE AND ORDER**

- There will never be Apostles like the original 12 plus Paul, those who personally saw and heard Jesus in person.

- Today's Church needs to pray desperately for a revival and restoration of the Apostolic Office.

Ephesians 2:20-21 ESV

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Revelation 21:10 ESV

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God...

Revelation 21:14 ESV

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Acts 15:5-6 ESV Acts 15:22-29 ESV