

WHAT IS A NEW TESTAMENT APOSTLE?

INTRODUCTION

Apostolos - (Greek)- our word is a transliteration of this one. Literally it means, "one sent forth." In the New Testament it has four references: 1) the Lord, 2) certain "messengers," 3) the Twelve, 4) Paul.

I. The Lord

- A. Heb. 3:1 - referred to as "The Apostle."
- B. Jn. 17:3 - sent by God.

II. Certain "messengers" sent to work with a specific church. Could refer to anyone sent on a spiritual mission. Examples:

- 1) Barnabas - Acts 14:14,
- 2) Apollos - I Cor. 4:6,9,
- 3) Epaphroditus - (messenger) Phil. 2:25
- 4) James, the Lord's brother - I Cor. 15:7.

III. The Twelve and Paul

- A. Most common use in the N.T. (approx. 80 times) referring specifically to either the Twelve or Paul.
- B. With further examination we will find out the following things about these men:
 - 1) they were apostles for life,
 - 2) they had no territory restrictions,
 - 3) they had authority concerning doctrine (religion) and life (day to day living).

IV. The Authority of the Twelve and Paul

- A. The authority given to Peter. (Mt. 16:19)
- B. Given to all the Twelve. (Mt. 18:18)
- C. The Great Commission. (Mt. 28:18-20) - this authority included the power to forgive sins. (Jn. 20:23)
- D. Paul claims the same authority. (1 Cor. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 10:8) Paul was equal to the Twelve, but he was not one of them.
 - a) He witnessed Christ's resurrection. (I Cor. 15:5,8)
 - b) He was appointed by the Lord to an Apostleship. (Acts 26:16-18)
 - c) The Twelve accepted Paul and his work. (Gal. 2:7-9)
 - d) Paul does not qualify to be one of the Twelve. (Acts 1:22)

V. The Five Tests of New Testament Apostleship

To qualify to be a New Testament Apostle, each of the following five tests must be passed with a perfect score.

TEST-1 Was the person called and commissioned by Christ?

- A. Was the person called and sent by Christ? (Jn. 15:16,18; see also Jn. 6:70; 13:18)
- B. Did the person receive his commission directly from Christ? (Gal. 1:6-12; already examined: Mt. 28:18-20 and Acts 26:16-18)

TEST-2 Is the person a complete witness of Jesus Christ?

- A. An eye and ear witness of Christ's words and deeds? (Acts 1:8, 21,22; Paul - 1 Cor. 9:1; 1 Cor. 15:1-9. John - 1 Jn. 1:1-3)
- B. An eyewitness of the resurrection.
 - 1) The Twelve see the risen Savior. (Jn. 20:19-28)
 - 2) Saul (Paul) is a witness. (Acts 9:3-8)

TEST -3 Has the man been led into all truth by the Holy Spirit?

Jesus indicates that the Spirit would speak through the Apostles. The Twelve - (Mt. 10:20; Jn. 16:7-14; see also Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 20:22) Paul - (1 Cor. 2:10-13; see also 1 Cor. 7:40)

TEST- 4 Does this person confirm his teaching with signs and miracles?

The N.T. Apostles did! Peter and John heal the lame man - (Acts 3:3; 5:12-16; Rom. 15:18,19; 2 Cor. 12:12)

TEST- 5 Are there any restrictions on this person's power?

The Twelve and Paul were sent into all the world! Paul - (Acts 26:16-18); The Twelve - (Mt. 28:16-20).

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