

What Are Apostles, and Do We Have Apostles Today? (Acts 1:12-26+)

Because we have left the Book of Luke and are now in Acts, the position of Apostle becomes very important and very prevalent. We need to understand what apostles are, and whether they exist today.

What Are Apostles?

Some denominations say they have apostles. Some cults have apostles. Some call missionaries modern-day apostles. So what are apostles? The words from which the term apostle come from are a good place to start.

- *apostello* (verb), which occurs 132x in the New Testament, means to send out with a commission, send with authority, send for a purpose. One is being sent out with something to do which is assigned by the one sending.
- *apostolos* (noun), which occurs 80x in the New Testament, then, is someone sent with a commission, sent with authority, sent for a purpose.

1. Apostles Were Chosen Directly by Jesus

Mk 3:14a Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,

Acts 1:2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

Gal 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

1 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

2. Apostles Were Chosen by Jesus to Be With Him

Mk 3:14b Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him...

3. Apostles Were Chosen by Jesus to Preach

Mk 3:14c Then He appointed twelve, that ...He might send them out to preach,

1 Tim 2:7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle-- I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying-- a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

4. Apostles Were Given (Limited) Miraculous Powers to Help Others

Matt 10:1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

2 Cor 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

5. Apostles Were Taught and Trained Directly by Jesus

Gospels – The Twelve

2 Cor 12:1-17 – Paul

6. Apostles and (NT) Prophets are the Foundation of the Church

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,

7. Apostles Received Direct Revelation from God (after Pentecost)

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Eph 3:5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

2 Pet. 3:2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

8. Apostles Were the Highest Human Authority in the Church

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

9. Apostles Oversaw or Initiated Many Activities in the Early Church

Acts 4:37 having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

Acts 6:1-7 Initiating Deacons

Acts 15:1-22 Resolving Doctrinal Questions

10. Apostles Observed the Resurrected Jesus

1 Cor 15:7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

Acts 9:3-5 As he [Saul/Paul] journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

11. Apostles Suffered Greatly

Lk 11:49 "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,'

1 Cor. 4:9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

12. Apostles Had a Right to Financial / Material Support

1 Thes 2:6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Other Usages

- 2 Cor. 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. (cf. Rev 2:2)
- Phil. 2:25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; (cf. 2 Cor 8:23)
- Heb. 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,