

ARE MISSIONARIES APOSTLES?

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ARE MISSIONARIES APOSTLES?

Introduction

The Bible is a supernatural book. It declares God's supernatural intervention in both human history and in the lives of individual people. His supernatural intervention always has a purpose that ultimately glorifies Him.

The God of the Bible created and loves people. Amazingly, though He constantly sustains His creation (Col. 1:17), He is intimately involved in individual lives.

Even so, humans largely resist His love; some even deny His existence. The Bible accounts for mankind's shocking rebellion against the loving God in its opening chapters. Sin is the culprit. Sin entered the human race when the first woman, Eve, and the first man, her husband Adam, rebelled against God (Gen. 3). Since the first sin, all people sin and are sinners. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).¹

Though all people sin, God loves all people. The Bible declares that God's love motivated Him to execute a plan to redeem those who turn from their sin and trust in Him. Because of God's redemptive work, children of wrath can become children of God.

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and

¹All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New King James Version.

were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), . . . For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Eph. 2:1-5, 8-9).

God first chose a people, the children of Israel, through whom He would execute His plan of redemption. He made covenants with the Israelites, promising them a land and a personal, intimate relationship with Him. The Bible records six specific covenants: the Noahic covenant (Gen. 9:1-18); the Mosaic covenant (Ex. 20:1-31:18); the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:15:17); the Palestinian covenant (Deut. 28-30); the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-16; 1 Chron. 17:3-15); and the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).²

Of the six Biblical covenants, only the Mosaic was conditional (i.e., binding on both parties for its fulfillment). The other five were unconditional (i.e., binding on the one who made the covenant—God—although certain responses were placed on the recipients to receive the blessings of the covenant).³

One other detail was extremely significant. Covenants were ratified by a blood sacrifice. “Ratification is the ceremony at which the provisions and stipulations of the covenant become legally binding. Covenants . . . were enacted on the basis of a formal oath, often accompanied by a blood ceremony, indicating that the sworn relationship is a bond in blood.”⁴

In the covenants God promised to send a redeemer through the bloodline of the children of Israel, specifically through the tribe of Judah and family of David. The redeemer,

²Rick Bowman, “The Covenants,” in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, gen. ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 73.

³*Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁴Rodney Decker, “Theology of the New Covenant,” in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, gen. ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1996), 279.

however, would not redeem Israel alone. Rather, through them, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The redeemer would redeem people out of every tribe, nation, and people.

The Old Testament declares God's redemptive plan. The New Testament reveals how His plan was executed. The promised redeemer came to earth. He was Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Messiah. Jesus Christ was not just a man. He was more than a king, a prophet, or a priest. He was God in the flesh, the God/man. He was God's perfect Prophet, Priest, and King.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin into the tribe of Judah and the family of King David. He lived a sinless life, taught God's Word, and worked miracles to declare His deity and confirm the validity of His words. He was rejected and condemned by the Jewish officials, crucified by the Romans, and buried by His followers. But that was not the end of His story. On the third day after His death and burial, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He was "declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

The New Covenant

Jesus Christ's death was not an agonizing defeat of God's redemptive plan. It was a thrilling victory. Jesus' death ratified the new covenant.⁵ The writer of Hebrews states:

For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies:

"You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

And inasmuch as *He was* not *made priest* without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

"The LORD has sworn and will not relent,

⁵Ibid.

‘You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant (Heb. 7:14-22).

The “better covenant” (Heb. 7:22) is the new covenant. Rodney Decker explains:

Jesus’ mediatorship and high priesthood is based on the new covenant (Heb. 8:6). Since both of these ministries are currently in force, it would seem to require that the covenant on which they are based is also in force. Hebrews 9:12-28 draws explicit contrasts with the old covenant, showing that Jesus’ present ministry is superior because it is based on the new covenant. Note the explicit mention of Jesus’ death, the shedding of blood, and particularly the phrase “the blood of the covenant” (esp. 9:18-20). This key phrase (also found in Matt. 26:28 and parallels) argues strongly for ratification at the Cross due to the parallel with the ratification of the old covenant in Exodus 24:8. The parallel is clearly implied in the synoptic accounts; it is explicitly stated in Hebrews.⁶

Only one Old Testament passage uses the phrase, new covenant. Jeremiah prophesies:

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer. 31:31-34).

Larry Pettegrew describes the new covenant as one of God’s unconditional covenants with the nation of Israel. He notes, “Jeremiah prophesies that even though the nation had broken the Mosaic covenant and would be soon carried off into the Babylonian captivity, God would one day establish a ‘new covenant’ with the nation.”⁷

Even though only one Old Testament passage uses the phrase new covenant, it is revealed under other names: “everlasting covenant” (Jer. 32:40); “new heart” and “new spirit”

⁶Ibid.

⁷Larry D. Pettegrew, *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 28-29.

(Ezek. 11:19; 36:26); “covenant of peace” (34:25); “my covenant” (16:60-63). “Actually, the Old Testament prophetic books are saturated with information about the new covenant.”⁸

The new covenant promised future blessings to “the house of Israel” and “the house of Judah” (Jer. 31:31). As noted above, however, New Testament believers receive spiritual blessings and benefits through the new covenant. Pettegrew notes six provisions in the new covenant.

1. Transformation through a new heart.
2. Final forgiveness of sins.
3. God’s consummation of His relationship with Israel.
4. Physical and material blessings on Israel.
5. The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
6. God’s law inside the believer.⁹

The “coming days” prophesied by Jeremiah finally came. Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection accomplished all that was necessary for the new covenant to go into effect. A giant step was taken toward the completion of God’s eschatological program. But how were people to learn about God’s loving plan? How were they to know they could receive the blessings of the new covenant? Once again, God chose a people through whom He would work.

Jesus Christ chose twelve disciples during His earthly ministry. He named them “apostles” (Luke 6:13) and personally trained them for approximately three years. After His death and resurrection He appeared to them and commissioned them to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). The command is known as the Great

⁸Ibid., 29.

⁹Ibid., 29-31.

Commission. It includes His promise to be with His followers always. Having made the promise, Jesus ascended into heaven.

Luke preserved our Lord's promise and described His departure. Jesus said:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:8-9).

God did not leave the proclamation of the new covenant in incompetent hands. Jesus promised both His spiritual presence and power as His disciples fulfilled their commission.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem, as instructed (Acts 1:4), to await the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled 120 believers while they waited in an upper room in Jerusalem. Luke recorded the historic event.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:1-11).

The new covenant, having been ratified by Jesus Christ's substitutionary death, went into effect on the day of Pentecost.¹⁰ From that moment on, those who receive Jesus Christ as

¹⁰Ibid., 35.

Lord and Savior, whether Jew or Gentile, participate in the spiritual benefits of the new covenant.¹¹

Of the 120 believers filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, God anointed the apostles as special witnesses of Jesus Christ's resurrection. The Holy Spirit empowered them to work miracles to confirm the validity of their witness. Some of the apostles and their close associates were also inspired to write the New Testament books. Pettegrew suggested the New Testament could appropriately be called a new covenant document.¹²

The day of Pentecost, described in Acts 2, was the birthday of the church.¹³ The sound of wind, the tongues of fire, and the believers' praise to God in previously unlearned languages were like supernatural fireworks introducing the New Testament church to the world.

To clarify, the author believes the New Testament recognizes both the universal church (Eph. 1:22-23) and local churches (1 Cor. 1:2).¹⁴ The universal church includes all people in all nations who have genuinely repented of their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 1:12; 14:6; Acts 20:21; Rom. 10:9-13; Eph. 2:8-10). R. C. Sproul observes:

Several images are used in the Bible to describe the Church: the Body of Christ, the elect, the house of God, the saints. One of the most meaningful expressions the Bible uses is "the people of God," the *laos theon*.

The Church, then, is people. Rome once declared, "Where the bishop is, there is the Church." The Reformation declared, "Where the people of God are, there is the Church—the Church under the Lordship of Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit."

¹¹Ibid., 37.

¹²Ibid., 35.

¹³The author is aware some wish to push the birthday of the church back to Matt. 16:18. The author sees our Lord's promise, "I will build My church," as a prophecy which began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and continues to be fulfilled today.

¹⁴The universal church is sometimes called the invisible church. The local church is sometimes called the visible church.

The Church is not a building; it is not the clergy; it is not an abstract institution—it is the people of God.¹⁵

The people of God who unite under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Word of God in a locality can form a visible, local church. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith, a Baptist confession published in 1833, described a local church as “a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.”¹⁶

The apostles held a unique place in the founding of the universal church. In fact, the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). Local New Testament churches are God’s earthly organizations through which the blessings of the new covenant are proclaimed to the people of the world. Our Lord Jesus therefore promised, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

Once the new covenant was in effect, God made sure the good news was spread to all nations. Initially, one of the apostles, Paul, was gifted and called to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8). He is also known as the first missionary. He and his missionary associates were used to establish a church planting movement among the Gentiles. Although the Bible does not indicate it, church tradition says some of the other apostles were missionaries as well.¹⁷

¹⁵R. C. Sproul, *In the Presence of God* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999), 122.

¹⁶R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Being Baptist Means Conviction,” in *Why I Am A Baptist*, ed. Tom J. Nettles and Russell D. Moore (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 64.

¹⁷Don Richardson, “The Hidden Message of ‘Acts,’” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, rev. ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1992), A:119. Don Richardson writes, “Various traditions quoted by early church fathers and other sources indicate . . . the apostle John extended the apostle Paul’s ministry in Asia Minor and died in the region of Smyrna and Ephesus. The apostle Peter extended his ministry into the Gentile world as far as Rome and was crucified upside down by pagan Romans in that city. Thomas, tradition says, allowed the bottom line of the Great commission to lead him into India. . . . Andrew reportedly traveled

(continued...)

Missionaries, Gifts, and Apostles

Today, God continues His work of spreading the blessings of the new covenant to people of all nations, tribes, and tongues. His presence and His power are with Christian missionaries as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. Indigenous, local, New Testament churches continue to be established in every nation on earth.

Missionaries were a significant part of the new covenant ministry of fulfilling the Great Commission in the first century A.D.; they continue to be vital to the ministry in the twenty-first century. Even so, the New Testament does not use the word missionary. Why? Some have suggested the answer is found in the apostles. They believe the New Testament apostles were missionaries, and accordingly, modern-day missionaries are apostles.

The suggestion that missionaries are modern-day apostles may be an assumption rather than a Biblical truth. Churches and Christians interested in Biblical, global ministry outreach are therefore forced to consider three questions. First, were the New Testament apostles cross-cultural missionaries? Second, are cross-cultural missionaries modern-day apostles? Third, has the Holy Spirit continued to give the gift of apostleship since the time of the New Testament apostles? To answer these questions, three terms need clarification. We must define spiritual gift, apostle or apostleship, and missionary. This we will do as the discussion unfolds below.

Spiritual Gifts Defined

Spiritual gifts must not be confused with natural talents, abilities, or skills. Rather, the Bible speaks of a spiritual gift as something sovereignly given to each believer, and only to

¹⁷(...continued)

north of the Black Sea among the wild tribes of Scythia—forefathers of the modern Russian people. Other apostles apparently penetrated Ethiopia, North Africa, Syria and perhaps southern Arabia.”

believers, by the Holy Spirit. After listing nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul stated, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (v. 11). Unbelievers have natural talents, skills, and abilities. Only Christians have spiritual gifts.

The author has defined a spiritual gift as follows. “A spiritual gift is a capacity for ministry given to all believers by God’s grace at their new birth, which enables them to take their place in the body of Christ as functioning members.”¹⁸ The definition included seven significant points.

First, a spiritual gift is a capacity. That is, the one who receives a gift has the potential of being able to do a certain ministry; but only the potential. Gifts do not automatically function. One either uses or refuses to use his gift or gifts.

Second, a spiritual gift is also a capacity for ministry, which points to the purpose of spiritual gifts. Though gifts do bring personal benefits, they are chiefly for the good of the body of Christ, not for personal glory or gratification. “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Cor. 12:7).

Third, gifts are given to all believers. No believer is ungifted. “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one . . .” (1 Cor. 12:7; see also 1 Peter 4:10). J. W. MacGorman wrote, “Paul taught that each Christian was given some manifestation of the Spirit. In God’s family of grace none is left out. Everyone is important. Each has been gifted to accomplish some necessary ministry.”¹⁹

¹⁸Timothy Keith Christian, “A Pastor and Church Using Spiritual Gifts to Focus Ministry” (D. Min. project, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993), 5.

¹⁹J. W. MacGorman, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974), 31.

Fourth, God gives the gifts. Christians do not select their gift or gifts. “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). Kenneth Hemphill elaborates:

You should notice that in verse 11 Paul stated that the same Spirit has empowered all these gifts “distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” . . . The emphasis falls on the sovereignty of the Giver and reminds us that the possession of any one of the gifts cannot be used as an argument that one individual is more spiritual than another.²⁰

Fifth, God’s gifts are given by grace. They are neither earned nor deserved. Such is the emphasis of the Greek word most often used for spiritual gifts: *χαρισμα*. D. A. Carson wrote, “In the New Testament, the term is found sixteen times in the Pauline writings, and once in Peter (1 Peter 4:10). Clearly cognate with *charis* (grace), at its simplest it refers to something grace has bestowed, a ‘grace-gift’ if you will.”²¹

Sixth, each believer receives his spiritual gift at his new birth.²² Though the Bible does not state when gifts are given, the assumption seems well founded. Paul addressed the believers at Corinth as all being gifted. He did not say some have spiritual gifts now and others will receive them later. He said, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one . . .” (1 Cor. 12:7).

Seventh, spiritual gifts empower all believers to become functioning members of the body of Christ. “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” (Rom. 12:4-5).

²⁰Kenneth S. Hemphill, *Spiritual Gifts Empowering the New Testament Church* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 62.

²¹D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 19.

²²William McRae, *Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 35-36.

A spiritual gift is a capacity for ministry given to each believer by God's grace at his new birth, which enables him to take his place in the body of Christ as a functioning member. The clarification of the definition of a spiritual gift brings us back to the three questions above. First, were the New Testament apostles cross-cultural missionaries? Second, are cross-cultural missionaries modern-day apostles? And, third, has the Holy Spirit continued to give the gift of apostleship since the time of the New Testament apostles?

Is Apostleship a Gift?

The third question made an assumption. It assumed "apostleship" was one of the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Not all agree with the assumption.

Jack Deere, for example, states, "In the New Testament an apostle is not a spiritual gift but a person who had a divinely given commission and ministry."²³ C. Samuel Storms agrees. "But is apostleship a spiritual gift?"²⁴ he asks. "Exhorters exhort, teachers teach, healers heal, those who have the gift of faith exercise extraordinary faith, and so on. But how does an 'apostle' (noun) 'apostle' (verb)?"²⁵

Robert L. Saucy, in contrast, believes apostleship is a spiritual gift. He notes:

Since no gift of "apostleship" is listed among the spiritual gifts, some have argued that the apostles did not have any special "spiritual gift." They simply exercised a combination of other listed gifts, such as prophecy and teaching. If such is the case, then, the cessation of apostles did not involve the termination of any spiritual gifts. The manner in which the apostles are mentioned in the discussion of spiritual gifts, however, suggests that their ministry was something more than simply a combination of other gifts. They are listed along with "prophets" and "teachers," who all agree were individuals who regularly

²³Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1993), 242.

²⁴C. Samuel Storms, "A Third Wave Response to Robert L. Saucy," in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, gen. ed. Wayne A. Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 156.

²⁵*Ibid.*

exercised the corresponding gifts of prophecy and teaching (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11). Even as prophets and teachers were such by corresponding spiritual gifts that they exercised, so were apostles. . . . Thus, while the apostles exercised various gifts common to others (such as prophecy and teaching), they were also endowed with a unique spiritual gift that enabled them to minister as apostles.²⁶

The writer agrees with Saucy and others that apostleship was a genuine spiritual gift. Paul emphasizes the diversity of spiritual gifts given to the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. To illustrate his point he lists eight of the gifts. “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” (v. 28).

The first three are gifted people, ranked “first . . . second . . . third.” “Apostles” are ranked first in the list. Gordon D. Fee suggests the ranking indicates “one has precedence over the other in the founding and building up of the local assembly.”²⁷

Paul also speaks of gifted men given to the body of Christ “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). Once again, “apostles” is placed at the head of the list. “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (v. 11). Charles Hodge noted:

Every office necessarily supposes the corresponding gift. . . . Man may appoint men to offices for which they have not the necessary gifts, but God never does, any more than he ordains the foot to see or the hand to hear. If any man, therefore, claims to be an apostle, or prophet, or worker of miracles, without the corresponding gift, he is a false pretender.²⁸

²⁶Robert L. Saucy, “An Open But Cautious View,” in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, gen. ed. Wayne A. Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 101-102.

²⁷Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, gen. ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 620.

²⁸Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the first Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 262.

The apostles were chosen and gifted by Jesus Christ. The author has defined “apostles” as “a unique group of men chosen by Christ to be witnesses of His resurrection. As such, they were empowered to work miracles which confirmed the authority of their words and writings.”²⁹ Their spiritual gift of “apostle” or “apostleship” enabled them to accomplish their God-given ministry and mission. Reasons for the writer’s definition are given below.

The word ἀποστολῆς, translated “apostleship,” is used four times in the New Testament. Luke uses it once. Paul uses it three times. None of the uses are in the passages discussing spiritual gifts, but as will be shown, they are significant texts.

Consider Luke’s mention of apostleship in the book of Acts. The 120 believers gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem sought God’s direction in choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot. They prayed, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship (ἀποστολῆς) from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:24-25). The context indicates the “ministry and apostleship” was chiefly being a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (v. 22).

Paul’s first use of the word was in Romans 1:5. He said, “Through Him [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship (ἀποστολήν) for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.” Some scholars suggest the “we”³⁰ in Romans 1:5 indicates “apostleship” is used in a broader, less official sense, describing “anyone whom God has sent with the message of salvation.”³¹ Others, with whom the writer agrees, see “we” as a reference to “Paul and the other apostles. . . . Many take ‘we’ as an editorial ‘we,’ but Paul, in writing to a church that others had

²⁹Christian, 175-176.

³⁰ἐλάβομεν, second aorist indicative first person plural verb, translated “we have received” in the NKJV.

³¹John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), 1691.

founded, would have been sensitive to the fact that he was not alone in ministering to the Gentiles.”³²

Since Paul was not one of the original twelve, he often defended his own apostleship. To his spiritual children in Corinth he wrote, “If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship (ἀποστολῆς) in the Lord” (1 Cor. 9:2). To the Galatians he added, “For He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship (ἀποστολήν) to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:8).

Ἀποστολῆς, used in Acts 1:25 and 1 Corinthians 9:2, is the genitive singular form of the noun ἀποστολή. Ἀποστολήν, used in Romans 1:5 and Galatians 2:8, is the accusative singular. True, ἀποστολή is the feminine form of ἀπόστολος, but it is more. It has a separate lexical listing, translated “apostleship; mission.”³³ Kittle noted, “In all cases it clearly refers to the office of the ἀπόστολος of Jesus, technically conceived and discharged.”³⁴

The masculine form, ἀπόστολος, seems to emphasize the office they held. The feminine form, ἀποστολή, seems to emphasize the work they performed.

The apostolic mission, in the writer’s understanding, was performed via the gift of apostleship, making the apostles themselves gifts to the church. As Paul declared, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12). The men and their ministries were dependent on God’s gift.

³²Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 63.

³³Barclay M. Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: German Bible Society, 1993), s.v. “ἀποστολή.”

³⁴Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), s.v. “ἀποστολή.”

Are Missionaries Apostles?

Most evangelical writers who discuss the gift of apostleship recognize the uniqueness of the New Testament apostles. Some also speak of the gift in a secondary, unofficial sense.

For example, according to Leslie B. Flynn, the gift can be understood in two ways.

Did the gift [of apostle] die out? Or is it a continuing gift today?

Perhaps the answer is “yes” to both questions, if *apostle* has a two-fold aspect. In its restricted usage, the office has finished; in its broader phase, the gift still functions. Officially, the apostolate ended with the apostles; unofficially, the apostolic gift persists to our day as the missionary gift.³⁵

R. Wayne Jones agrees with Flynn’s deduction. He summarizes, “The apostle Paul used the term *apostle* both in a restricted, official sense and in a broader, unofficial sense. . . . The word *apostle* means ‘one sent.’ Paul used the term in its larger sense to mean ‘messenger’ or ‘missionary.’”³⁶

Ray C. Stedman and Rick Yohn held a similar view with a slightly different twist. Flynn and Jones emphasized the cross-cultural element of missionary work. Stedman and Yohn simply emphasized beginning new works, whether cross-cultural or not. Stedman declared:

The apostolic gift is still being given today, though in a secondary sense. There is no new truth to be added to the Scriptures, but the body of truth which we have is to be taken by those who have an apostolic gift and imparted to new churches wherever they may begin. It is part of the apostolic gift to start new churches. We call those who do this ‘pioneer missionaries’ today.”³⁷

Yohn agreed, adding that a pastor who has “the compulsion to be a ‘church planter.’ . . . should seriously consider the possibility that he may have the gift of apostle.”³⁸ Yohn did not limit apostleship to ordained ministers nor to church planting, however. He taught that the gift

³⁵Leslie B. Flynn, *Nineteen Gifts of the Spirit* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1974), 39.

³⁶R. Wayne Jones, *Using Spiritual Gifts* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985), 34.

³⁷Ray C. Stedman, *Body Life* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1972), 74.

³⁸Rick Yohn, *Discover Your Spiritual Gift and Use It* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1974), 53-54.

also included laymen who either start churches or any other kind of new ministry, including literature, radio, or television ministries.³⁹

Flynn, Jones, Steadman, and Yohn based their understanding of the gift of apostle on the definition of an apostle as “one sent,” and, in part, upon the example of the missionary work of the apostle Paul as a transcultural church planter.⁴⁰ They recognized the uniqueness of the first century apostles, but viewed the missionary element as a secondary function of post-New Testament apostleship.

Though Flynn, Jones, Steadman, and Yohn do not specifically give a definition of a missionary, they imply one. They indicate a missionary is one sent by God to evangelize and plant churches in a culture other than his own. The writer’s agrees with the general definition. He would add one phrase, however. *A missionary is one sent by God “and the church” to evangelize and plant churches in a culture other than his own.* The writer strongly disagrees, however, with equating missionaries with apostles. A so called “secondary apostle” is simply not an apostle. He does not meet the Scriptural qualifications of an apostle.

C. Peter Wagner, in contrast, teaches that God gave a missionary gift distinguishable from the gift of apostle.⁴¹ “The gift of missionary,” he writes, “is the special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.”⁴² Wagner notes:

Hardly any book on spiritual gifts discusses it [the missionary gift] or even acknowledges it as a gift. One reason for this might be that it is not as explicitly described as a spiritual gift

³⁹Ibid., 54.

⁴⁰Flynn, 43-47; Jones, 34; Steadman, 74; Yohn, 52-53.

⁴¹C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1979), 207.

⁴²Ibid., 205.

in the Bible as most of the others, although it appears in a biblical passage that is clear enough once it is explained.⁴³

Wagner does not reveal the Scripture to which he refers. In fact, in his discussion of the missionary gift he gives no Biblical support. Instead, he makes some sociological observations.

People with the gift of missionary not only enjoy coming into contact with other cultures, they go through a second process of socialization called “acculturation.” They enjoy the challenge of living in another culture while cutting ties with their first culture on a long-term basis. . . . They learn the language more rapidly than those without the gift. They quickly pick up slang words, tones of voice, and body language not described in textbooks. They feel at home with people of the second culture. And, most of all, they are eventually accepted by the others as “one of us.”⁴⁴

Wagner moves from the missionary gift to discuss apostles. He identifies the gift of apostle as being present “in the person whom God has given especially to pastors and church leaders.”⁴⁵ Wagner continues:

He is the one to whom pastors and church leaders can go for counsel and help. He is a peacemaker, a troubleshooter and a problem solver. He can make demands that may sound autocratic but which are gladly accepted by Christian people because they recognize his gift and the authority it carries with it. He has the overall picture in focus and is not restricted in vision to the problems of one local church.⁴⁶

Wagner does not consider modern-day apostles as secondary to the first century apostles, nor does he list any Biblical qualifications. He believes “the biblical evidence strongly supports the continuity of the gift. . . . The original 12 apostles have a unique place in Christian

⁴³Ibid., 204.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 208.

⁴⁶Ibid.

history and they will be commemorated permanently in the New Jerusalem (see Rev. 21:14), but they were not the only apostles.”⁴⁷

Wagner went so far as to name five modern-day apostles, all of whom led churches in phenomenal growth. He explains, “This growth is due substantially to the apostolic gift that God has given [them] . . . just as surely as the growth of the churches in first century Asia Minor were due to Paul’s apostolic gift.”⁴⁸

Interestingly, Wagner’s understanding of apostleship explained in *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, published in 1979, was the foundation for the belief he embraced by 2000. In an interview with the “Generals of Intercession Newsletter,” published January/February 2000, Wagner states:

Apostles are anointed by God to set the things of the body of Christ and the kingdom of God in order. For them to accomplish that, and for the rest of the church to accept their work, they need an incredible amount of authority. But that authority can only be an authority that God gives—not self-produced.⁴⁹

Wagner claims an “incredible amount of God-given authority” for himself. He organized “The Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders,” which he describes as “a peer-level group of prophets, now under my apostolic leadership.”⁵⁰ He also declares himself to be “the presiding apostle” of the “International Coalition of Apostles.”⁵¹ He notes:

I have the advantage of being a horizontal apostle, and a horizontal apostle is one who can bring together vertical apostles, whereas it is very difficult for vertical apostles to call other vertical apostles together (note: vertical apostles are leaders of apostolic networks, whereas

⁴⁷Ibid., 207.

⁴⁸Ibid., 210.

⁴⁹C. Peter Wagner, “Joining Forces Blazing Trails,” interview by Cindy Jacobs. *Generals of Intercession Newsletter* (Jan./Feb. 2000, accessed 29 August 2002); available from <http://www.harvestnet.org/reports/aboutWagnerapostles.htm>; Internet.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

horizontal apostles are graced by God to give apostolic leadership and direction to certain spheres of the body of Christ as a whole).⁵²

Wagner believes it is vital for Christians and churches to recognize modern-day apostles and prophets. In fact, he believe the future blessing of God on the church depends on it. He states:

I think one of the hindrances to God's sending the revival we've been praying for has been that the government of the church has not been properly in place. And now that the government of the church is coming into place, we are already seeing God trusting the body of Christ with things we were totally unaware of previous to this. Once the government comes into place, then God can do what he wants with the body of Christ, and one of the things most of us agree on is that He wants to send the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we would call the worldwide revival. So my commitment for the rest of my career is to use the gift God has given me to help the development of the worldwide New Apostolic Reformation. And this (linking of apostles and prophets) is an essential part!⁵³

Flynn, Jones, Steadman, and Yohn's considerations are interesting. The writer characterizes Wagner's statements as shocking. But whether interesting or shocking, one must ask, does the New Testament supported such claims? Were there, as Wagner claimed, apostles beyond the original twelve? Did the gift of apostleship remain in the church in the primary, official sense? If not, did it continue to our day in a secondary sense of cross-cultural missionary work, church planting, or beginning new ministries?

The Transitional Nature of the New Testament Period

The transitional nature of the New Testament period is an often overlooked element in the study of spiritual gifts in general, and the gift of apostleship in particular. Many have assumed all the historical, supernatural events of the New Testament are normative for all of

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

church history.⁵⁴ “The New Testament,” some say, “is not a record of what happened in one generation, but it is a blueprint of what should happen in every generation until Jesus comes.”⁵⁵

A Hermeneutical Principle

Demanding that all historical events be accepted as normative for all of church history mistreats, rather than honors, the historical literature of the New Testament. Richard Melick notes an important hermeneutical principle for determining which parts of a historical narrative are intended to be normative for all times, and which are mere “details that help paint the landscape.”⁵⁶

Like the other forms of writing, historical writing has its own problems of interpretation. The basic one is: What is purely descriptive and what is normative? Most abuses of historical literature occur at this point. Some people try to make what is a description of historical events a normative pattern. That is, they *confuse description with command*. . . .

A general rule of thumb in historical interpretation is that *if the Scripture does not teach that the events are universal they are not*. That means, for example, that the writer of Acts does not expect Pentecost to be repeated any more than he expects the shipwreck at Malta to be repeated. He handled them both the same way. Even though one is the direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the other is not, neither event is reported as normative for the church [emphasis added].⁵⁷

Unless one properly approaches the book of Acts, he will misinterpret individual passages as well as misunderstand how to apply the Bible to daily life. Because Acts is a historical, transitional book it contains many unique incidents which are not normative for Christians or churches today. Pettegrew observed, “Many doctrines and practices taught in the

⁵⁴Dennis and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 18-19; Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, rev. ed. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1980), 19-24; and C. Peter Wagner, *The Third Waved of the Holy Spirit* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1988), 19-24.

⁵⁵John MacArthur, Jr., *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 73.

⁵⁶Richard R. Melick, “The Hermeneutics of History: Interpreting the Book of Acts,” *Mid-America Theological Journal* 14 (Spring 1990): 102.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 100-05.

Epistles are, of course illustrated in the Acts for the example of modern-day Christians. But . . . we must not make the tragic spiritual and doctrinal mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles instead of experiencing the teaching of the apostles.⁵⁸

Robert Gromacki offered a helpful comment. He said:

Certain things happened in the early church which were only temporary in nature. They were never intended to become permanent patterns. Christians today do not worship God in a Jewish temple ([Acts] 2:46; 3:1). Christians need not sell everything they own in order to support the poor (4:32-37). Christians today are not struck dead instantaneously for lying (5:1-11). Prison doors are not opened supernaturally (5:19). Christians are not converted today through a direct revelation and appearance of Christ (9:1-19).⁵⁹

Transitions in Acts

The use of spiritual gifts described in both Acts and 1 Corinthians, it must be remembered, was during the transitional period of the New Testament era. Mal Couch observed seven transitions in the book of Acts.

The first was a *historical* transition. Acts moved early church history from the Gospels to the Epistles.⁶⁰ “The Gospels record the theological history of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, focusing primarily on His three-year public ministry, culminating with His death and resurrection. The Epistles develop the theological implications of Christ’s life and death.”⁶¹

Acts was also the bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles, giving the historical background for ten of Paul’s thirteen books.⁶²

⁵⁸Pettegrew, 117-118.

⁵⁹Robert Glenn Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), 95.

⁶⁰Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 18.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 19. “Romans (Acts 19:21-22); 1 and 2 Corinthians (Acts 18:1-16); Galatians (Acts 13:14-14:28); Ephesians and Colossians (Acts 19:1-20:35); Philippians (Acts 16:11-40); 1 and 2 thessalonians (Acts 17:1-9); and Philemon (Acts 18:22-23).”

The second transition was *religious*. Acts moved the gathering of believers from the synagogue and temple, prominent in the gospels, to a new entity—the church. The synagogue, temple, and church co-existed in Acts; but the former increasingly became a gathering place for unbelieving Jews, while the church became a gathering of believing Jews and Gentiles. The apostle Paul attended synagogue services whenever and wherever possible, but he did so primarily for the opportunity it afforded to proclaim the good news of the Messiah's substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection to the local Jewish population.⁶³ He used it as an opportunity to proclaim the passage of the old covenant and the dawning of the new.

Third, in Acts, *God's program transitioned from Israel to the Church*. The believing remnant of Israel was both a part of Israel and a part of the church. God's salvation program was being worked out through the church, the body of Jewish and Gentile believers.⁶⁴

The fourth observable transition in the book of Acts was *theological*. In the Gospels, Jesus Christ was physically present. In Acts, Jesus Christ ascended (Acts 1), the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2), and God is now present with His church in the person and power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, from whence He will come again at a time appointed by the Father. He now waits until His enemies will be made His footstool (Ps. 110:1).⁶⁵

The fifth transition was *pneumatological*. Since Pentecost the Spirit is not only *with* believers but *in* believers.⁶⁶

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Sixth, Acts records a *national* transition, from Jews to Gentiles.⁶⁷ At its birth, the church was populated by “Jews, proselytes (i.e., gentile converts to Judaism), and God-fearers (i.e., Gentiles who were sympathetic to Jews and Jewish monotheism, but who had not formally converted).”⁶⁸ So it continued through Acts 9. A pivotal event occurred in Acts 10. The Holy Spirit directed Peter to preach in the house of Cornelius. For the first time, uncircumcised Gentiles who were not Jewish proselytes entered the church. By the end of Acts, the church was well on its way to being predominately Gentile.⁶⁹

Finally, the seventh transition was *dispensational*. Acts records the church’s struggle and joy of learning to function under grace rather than under law.⁷⁰

The Purpose of the Transitional Period

Two key points can be observed about the purpose of the transitional period. It was both enlightening and evangelistic.

Enlightening

First, during the transitional period of the New Testament era the Old Testament saints were enlightened about the Messiah. God moved His people, Jews, proselytes, and God-fearers, from the old covenant into the new covenant era. John MacArthur summarizes, “In Acts we go from the synagogue to the church, from law to grace, from Old Testament saints to New Testament saints, from a body of Jewish believers to the body of the church made up of

⁶⁷Ibid., 20.

⁶⁸D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God’s Word*, vol. 1 (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998), July 30.

⁶⁹Couch, *A Bible Handbook*, 20.

⁷⁰Ibid., 20.

Jews and Gentiles, who are all one in Christ.”⁷¹ Couch noted that a transition period was necessary “to reach the Old Testament saints with the gospel.”⁷² He wrote:

“Old Testament saints” means those who were saved under the previous dispensation. It must be remembered that all those who were saved and still living before the cross did not suddenly lose their salvation after the cross until they accepted the death of Christ for their salvation.

As of Acts 2, the new content of faith for salvation were the three points of the gospel as explained by the apostle Paul: (1) Christ died for our sins; (2) He was buried, the evidence of His death; and, (3) He rose again on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). This is the content of the gospel, and this is what one must believe and trust to have salvation. However, that was not the content of faith prior to Acts 2. In the Gospels, we read of the apostles traveling throughout the land of Israel preaching the “gospel,” but the gospel in the Gospels is not the same content as found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The Gospels stress that Jesus is the Messianic King, in whom one must trust to receive salvation. It should be noted that Jesus did not clearly proclaimed His coming death to the apostles until Matthew 16:21. Yet even before that we find the apostles proclaiming the gospel. Obviously, the gospel they preached did not include the substitutionary death of Christ. When He finally told them about His death, not only did it take them by surprise but also they did not fully understand what He was saying.

How long did the transition last? One answer is that it lasted until all those died who were born and had come to faith under the law. But the transition may have been fading from Acts 23 on.⁷³

Someone may ask, “Why did it take an entire generation for the transitions to be completed?”⁷⁴ Pettegrew suggests six reasons.

First, there was a powerful resistance to change ingrained into the Jews of that time. The Jews . . . had great national pride in their religion. To modify the traditions of their faith would be like repudiating their nation and history.

Second, the leaders of the early church were reluctant to change. Peter, for example, had to have a divine push before he was willing to go to a Gentile’s house (Acts 10). Later, he was more timid than he should have been in his contacts with Gentiles, and the apostle Paul was forced to rebuke him (Gal. 2).

Third, many Old Testament saints were alive at the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. It was necessary to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to these people to bring them into the benefits of the new order. . . .

⁷¹MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 85.

⁷²Couch, *A Bible Handbook*, 20.

⁷³Ibid., 20.

⁷⁴Pettegrew, 116.

Fourth, because the means of communication were so much slower than today, it took time for the pertinent information to spread across the known world, especially for the Jews (e.g., Act 19). . . .

Fifth, the believers did not have the New Testament letters and treatises to explain the events. . . .

Sixth, the nation of Israel had decided that Jesus was an impostor. Consequently, the Israelites had to be show that they were wrong. This result was accomplished through the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thus, an epoch was needed when the apostles were working miracles, and the Holy Spirit was evidencing the truth of their message with supernatural signs.⁷⁵

The transitional period was a time when the Old Testament saints were enlightened.

They were already true believers. What they believed was true, but it was incomplete. Apollos is a good example.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24-26).

Apollos was an Old Testament saint. What he believed was true, just incomplete.

Aquila and Priscilla simply filled in the missing pieces of his faith. Pettegrew observed:

The disciples, like the Old Testament saints and like Christians today, were saved by grace through faith. As Ryrie has well stated, “The basis of salvation is always the death of Christ; the means is always faith; the object is always God (though man’s understanding of God before and after the incarnation is obviously different); but the content of faith depends on the particular revelation God was pleased to give at a certain time.” Therefore the disciples did not have to be “resaved,” or to be saved in some other way after the death of Christ. They were already believers in Christ.⁷⁶

Evangelistic

Second, the transitional period of the New Testament era was evangelistic.

Unbelieving Jews and Gentiles were converted in large numbers as God worked miraculously

⁷⁵Ibid., 116-117.

⁷⁶Ibid., 78.

through the apostles, and their close associates, to confirm their proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The transitional period was a time when God revealed His new way of working. God taught the Jews that He was no longer working through the Levitical priesthood and the Old Testament law. He was now working through His new covenant of grace (Gal. 3-4).

In the transitional period of the New Testament era, God confirmed to the Jews that the Messiah, promised in the Old Testament, had come. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), proclaimed God's truth (Deut. 18:15), worked miracles (Isa. 35:5-6), was crucified (Ps. 22, especially v. 16; Isa. 53:5; Zech. 12:10), buried (Isa. 53:9), and raised from the dead (Isa. 53:10) on the third day, was indeed the Messiah.

Accepting the facts listed above took some time for the Jewish people. Tragically, most were never willing to recognize and receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

The intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and even nationalistic struggle faced by Jewish people in New Testament times was unprecedented. The Old Testament laws, sacrificial system, ceremonies, and feasts were truly revealed and commanded by God. Were the Jews to suddenly turn their backs on the faith revealed to their fathers and practiced from their childhood? How could they be sure Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah and not an impostor? Did He fulfill all the Messianic prophecies? If so, why did many of the priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees reject Him? Could their religious leaders possibly be wrong?

Many first century Jews wondered, "Should I receive Jesus Christ, or should I look for another Messiah?" Even some who believed struggled with such questions during His earthly ministry. "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his

disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’” (Matt. 11:2-3). The questions were difficult and serious.

Saul of Tarsus’s attitude toward Jesus Christ was likely representative of the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and nationalistic struggles of many first century Jews. D. A. Carson describes Saul’s perspective.

For him, the notion of a crucified Messiah was a contradiction in terms. Messiahs rule, they triumph, they win. The Law insists that those who hang on a tree are cursed by God. Surely, therefore, the insistence that Jesus is the Messiah is not only stupid, but verges on the blasphemous. It might lead to political insurrection: the fledgling church was growing, and might become a dangerous block. It had to be stopped; indeed, what was needed was a man of courage . . . like Phinehas who averted the wrath of God by his decisive action against the perverters of truth and probity (Num. 25 . . .), someone who really understood the implications of these wretched delusions and who saw where they would lead.⁷⁷

Saul recognized “the fundamental incompatibility between the old order and the new,”⁷⁸ and determined to be a man like Phinehas. When Stephen was stoned “he expressed his agreement with Stephen’s death sentence as publicly as possible by guarding the executioners clothes.”⁷⁹ “And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’” (Acts 7:48b-49). F. F. Bruce notes, “It has been suggested further that he [Saul] acted as *praeco* or herald, charged with proclaiming that the convicted person was about to be executed for the specified offense.”⁸⁰

Righteous indignation and holy fervor motivated Saul to make “havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison” (Acts 8:3).

⁷⁷Carson, July 22.

⁷⁸F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, gen. ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 161.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 161.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

Therefore, just prior to his conversion, he was “still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,” and he “went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

Paul’s struggle before his conversion was likely representative of many of his countrymen. Therefore, a transitional period was needed to evangelize the Jews and enlighten the Old Testament saints.

God was gracious, patient, and thorough in confirming His New Testament revelations. He did so during the transitional period of the New Testament era.

The Gift of Apostleship

The gift of apostleship is closely tied to the transitional nature of the New Testament era.⁸¹ In fact, to overlook the transitional period is to overlook one of the key factors in understanding the gift and ministry of the apostles. Those who do not recognize this concept inevitably conclude apostles continue to operate in the church in some form.

The writer does not believe the continuation of apostleship is supported by Scripture. Rather, he believes the apostles were a particular group of men, unique to the first century A.D. The gift has not continued to function in the church in either a primary or a secondary sense. Seven conclusions, drawn from the New Testament evidence, convinced the writer of the uniqueness of the apostles.

First, the apostles were a restricted and carefully guarded group.⁸² The writers of the synoptic gospels carefully specified Jesus Christ’s personal call of the “twelve” (Matt. 10:1-

⁸¹MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 85.

⁸²Thomas R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1983), 67.

4; Mark 3:14-19; 6:7-13; Luke 6:13-16; 9:1-10). Luke 6:13 stated that the “twelve” were chosen from among His disciples. Both Matthew and Luke noted that Christ identified the twelve as “apostles.”

Matthew, Mark, and Luke agreed. The twelve apostles were given “power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1). The miracle-working power given to the apostles was closely associated with their commission to preach (Mark 6:12-13). Luke noted that when Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, “the twelve apostles” were with Him (Luke 22:14).

The fourth gospel did not list the names of the apostles. John quoted Jesus’ reference to them as “the twelve” (John 6:70-71). Apparently, by the time the book was written, late in the first century, the twelve apostles were so widely known, naming them was unnecessary.

After Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, the remaining eleven apostles, along with other followers of the Lord, met together in Jerusalem. That meeting followed a forty day period during which the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ gave “commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:2-3). To be sure no one misunderstood who the apostles were, the remaining eleven apostles were named in Acts 1:13.

During the Jerusalem gathering, 120 disciples (v. 15), including the eleven apostles, chose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. Peter explained that a successor needed to be chosen for “Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus,” (v. 16) because “he was numbered with us [the apostles] and obtained a part in this ministry” (v. 17).

A replacement for Judas Iscariot was proposed. “And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias” (v. 23). They prayed for the Lord’s

will to be shown, “And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:24-26). Emphasis was again placed on the fact that the apostles were a restricted and carefully guarded group.

The question has been raised as to whether or not the disciples were too hasty in choosing a successor for Judas. Was it God’s intention that Paul be the successor? Were the actions taken in Acts 1 against God’s will?

Charles Ryrie believes the disciples did God’s will. As proof he points to Acts 2:14 which describes “Peter, standing with the eleven” to preach on the Day of Pentecost. Peter and “the eleven” again make twelve apostles.⁸³ This is supported by Acts 6:2 where the disciples were called together by “the twelve” to solve a church problem. The twelve had to have included Matthias, for Paul was not converted until Acts 9.

Paul, though not Judas’ replacement, certainly was an apostle. His apostolic ministry was directed to the Gentiles, just as Peter and other apostles directed their ministries toward the Jews (Gal. 2:8-9).

Eight men (other than the original twelve), have been called apostles.⁸⁴ It seems certain that Matthias, Paul, Barnabas, (Acts 14:4, 14) and James (Gal. 1:19) were recognized as apostles. More doubtful are Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6), Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7).

Allowing the possibility of four or even eight apostles beyond the original twelve does not swing the door open for an unlimited number of modern-day apostles. The apostles were a restricted and carefully guarded group. Even Paul went to great lengths to defend his apostleship

⁸³Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1961), 16.

⁸⁴Flynn, 40-41.

(1 Cor. 9:1-6; Gal. 1:11-2:10). Second Corinthians 11:13 and Revelation 2:2 warned the churches to beware of “false apostles.”

“Apostle” was not a title given freely by the New Testament church. Rather, the apostles were a restricted and carefully guarded group.

Second, the apostles were eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter’s statement in Acts 1:22 leads one to this conclusion. The successor of Judas Iscariot was to “become a witness with us [the eleven apostles] of His resurrection” (Acts 1:22).

The candidates had to meet two qualifications. They had to be men who accompanied the apostles during the entire earthly ministry of Jesus and they had to have seen the resurrected Lord. “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22).

Being a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a primary part of an apostle’s ministry. Thomas Edgar declares:

There are other passages . . . stating that the apostles were witnesses of the resurrection. Acts 1:1-14 states this. The apostles whom Jesus chose (verse 2) were “the twelve” (verse 13). They were given indisputable proof of Jesus’ resurrection (verse 3) and were assigned to be witnesses of Jesus (verse 8). It is clear from the apostles’ sermons in Acts and other passages that the witness was primarily to His resurrection. In Acts 5:17-32 the apostles (verse 18) were questioned by the authorities. They answered that they were witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation (verses 29-32). Peter stated in Acts 10:39-42 that the resurrected Christ appeared “not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. And He charged us to preach unto the people and to testify.” Peter apparently referred to the charge of Acts 1:8. Acts 13:31 presents the same idea. Acts 24:15-21 indicates that the resurrection was a central theme to the Apostle Paul’s message (cf. Acts 26:6-8,16).⁸⁵

As the apostles gave bold and powerful witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, thousands of people were saved. A brief survey of Acts shows the fast and phenomenal growth

⁸⁵Edgar, 48-49.

of the number of believers in the first three decades of the New Testament church.⁸⁶ Their numbers grew from 120 (1:15), to 3000 (2:41), to 5000 (4:4). The Lord added new believers to the church daily (2:47), added multitudes (5:14), then “multiplied” them “greatly” (6:7). The multiplying number of disciples of Jesus Christ soon spread into surrounding areas. As they went, not only were believers multiplied, the number of churches also multiplied (Acts 9:31; 16:5).

The amazing growth of the New Testament church did not go unchallenged. In the days following Pentecost, the apostles Peter and John went to the temple to pray. Outside the temple courtyard, at the Beautiful Gate, they encountered a man who had been lame from birth. The beggar asked for money; Peter had something far better to offer. He said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” Peter took the man by the right hand, lifted him up, and God heal him (Acts 3:1-7).

The healed man leaped up and walked into the temple. His excitement would not allow him to remain silent and still. He began walking and leaping and praising God. The man and the undeniable miracle naturally attracted the attention of a crowd of curious people. Peter used the opportunity to tell them the man had been healed through the power of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, then called them to repentance and faith (Act 3:8-26).

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening (4:1-3).

The Sadducees were among those “greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” John Polhill writes, “The Sadducees’

⁸⁶Ryrie, 8-9.

annoyance at Peter and John's witness to the resurrection was not so much theological as political."⁸⁷ Warren Wiersbe's position seems more appropriate:

We would expect the Sadducees to oppose the message because they did not believe in the resurrection of the human body (Acts 23:6-8). Peter's fearless declaration that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead ran contrary to their religious beliefs. If the common people questioned the theology of their spiritual leaders, it could undermine the authority of the whole Jewish council. Instead of honestly examining the evidence, the leaders arrested the Apostles and kept them in custody over night, intending to try them the next day.⁸⁸

No doubt the apostles' arrest had political overtones, but even the politics was rooted in the theological issue. The apostles were detained for their witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even so, when Peter stood before the Sanhedrin to explain their actions, he used the opportunity to testify of the resurrection (Acts 4:8-12).

Later that day, since no crime had been committed, Peter and John were released with a warning to never again speak in the name of Jesus. Immediately they went to their companions to report what had happened. Together they prayed for boldness to preach the word, and power to perform signs and wonders (Acts 4:13-31). God answered, for "with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (v. 33).

Third, the apostles were empowered to work miracles. When the apostles proclaimed the resurrection, God confirmed their words by working miracles through them.⁸⁹ Their miracle working power gave new believers confidence in the apostle's teaching. The 3,000 who believed and were baptized on the day of Pentecost, "continued steadfastly in the

⁸⁷John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 139.

⁸⁸Warren W. Wiersbe, *Acts*, in vol. 1 of *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), 414.

⁸⁹MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 82.

apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles”(Acts 2:42-43).

The close relationship between the apostles’ witness and miracles is shown when Peter testified before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4). He confirmed that the crippled man at the temple gate was healed “by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, . . . whom God raised from the dead” (v. 10). The Jewish council could not deny the miracle because the healed man stood before them (v. 14). Interestingly, the council did not command the apostles to stop performing miracles. Rather, they ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus. The miracle made the apostles’ testimony undeniable (vv. 16-17), but miracles are insignificant apart from the testimony about the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

The continued growth of the church in Jerusalem was closely associated with the apostles’ witness and miracles. “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people” (Acts 5:12). The result was that “believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (v. 14).

The apostle Paul’s effectiveness in spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles was partially a result of the miracles God worked through him. His works made his words believable. “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, by word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:18-19).

Paul, however, did not teach that Christians must work miracles to confirm their testimonies. On the contrary, God’s miracles, performed through Paul, were a proof of his

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

The writer of Hebrews speaks of the salvation which was first “spoken by the Lord” [Jesus Christ’s personal revelation], and was “confirmed to us by those who heard him” [the apostles] (Heb. 2:3). We are not to neglect this salvation because God confirmed its validity by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (v. 4). Wiersbe stated, “The phrase ‘signs and wonders’ is found eleven times in the New Testament. Here it refers to the miracles that witnessed to the Word and gave confirmation that it was true. These miracles were performed by the Apostles (see Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:43).”⁹⁰ MacArthur adds:

The power to perform miracles was given specifically and exclusively to the apostles and their closest associates. Jesus’ simple promise to the twelve is recorded in Matthew 10:1: “Having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.” As the spirit was given and the church age began, the apostles continued to manifest those two supernatural gifts. In fact, the apostles were so associated with such miracles that Paul reminded the believers at Corinth that “the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles” (2 Cor. 12:12).

Miracle powers, then, were limited in scope and restricted to apostles only. They were not given to the average Christian (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4), though some who were commissioned by an apostle shared in the ministry of miraculous gifts (such as Philip; Acts 8:6-7).⁹¹

The miracles of the apostles confirmed the message they preached. The same is said of the miracles of our Lord. His miracles were a part of His Messianic credentials. He said, “If you don’t believe what I say, look at what I do. My works confirm that what I say is true” (John 2:11,23; 3:2; 5:36; 10:24-25; 37-38 and 20:30-31).

⁹⁰Warren W. Wiersbe, *Hebrews*, in vol. 2 of *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), 282.

⁹¹John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 200.

Interestingly, the miracle-working power of the apostles was unlimited at first: “they were all healed” (Acts 5:16). But as time went by, God used them to work fewer miracles. Paul himself was not healed of a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7), even though he prayed in faith that it might be removed (v. 8). Toward the end of his life Paul advised Timothy, “Use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23). He even left “Trophimus . . . in Miletus sick” (2 Tim. 4:20). Surely he would have healed these dear ones if he had been able.⁹²

MacArthur insists, “The miracles of the apostolic age were not to be the pattern for succeeding generations of Christians.”⁹³ God empowered the apostles to work miracles to confirm their witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, the apostles were the authoritative representatives of Jesus Christ in the New Testament church. Apostle was transliterated from the Greek word ἀποστολος, meaning a messenger, an ambassador, a representative, one sent out. It occurs more than eighty times in the Greek New Testament. The main idea was of one sent to men as a representative of Christ. An apostle being sent out had nothing to do with geographical travel.⁹⁴

“As representatives of Christ,” states Edgar, “the apostles had great authority in the early church. This authority was evident not only by authoritative statements and actions but also by the need for the apostles to lay hands on specific groups of unique converts, such as those in Samaria.”⁹⁵

⁹²Ibid., 125-26.

⁹³Ibid., 126.

⁹⁴Edgar, 47.

⁹⁵Ibid., 64.

Examples of the apostles' authoritative position in the New Testament church are obvious in Acts. Two examples seem sufficient. The first example is the phrase, "the apostles' feet." When believers gave money or goods to assist their needy brothers and sisters, the offerings were laid at "the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:35, 37).

Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land and gave part of the money to help the needy. They lied, saying they had given it all. Again, the money was laid "at the apostles' feet" (Acts 5:2). Obviously, laying something at the apostles' feet was a way of declaring a thing was given to God,⁹⁶ for Peter rebuked Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit (v. 3), which is lying to God (v. 4). Peter did not claim to be God, but simply to be God's representative.

A second example of the authority of the apostles is in Acts 15. When a dispute arose on the mission field between Jewish believers and Gentile converts, the believers went back to Jerusalem to the apostles to settle the dispute (vv. 1-6). Clearly, the apostles were recognized as the authoritative representatives of Christ in the early church.

Fifth, the apostles were entrusted with the New Testament revelation. The believers "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). Every book in the New Testament was accepted into the canon of Scripture based, in part, on its being written by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle.⁹⁷

Paul's vigorous defense of his apostleship was not a personal recognition campaign. He defended his apostleship so that his teaching would not be rejected and so that his writings would be received for what they were: the Word of God.

⁹⁶Polhill, 153.

⁹⁷MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 24.

In all his New Testament epistles, except Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon, Paul identified himself as an apostle. By so introducing himself, acceptance of His epistles as the Word of God was expected. The apostle Peter supported Paul's claim, equating his epistles with "the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:15-16), and the commands of the apostles with the writings of the Old Testament prophets (3:2). Ephesians 3:5 and Hebrews 2:3-4 refer to the revelations given to the apostles. Notice also Jude 17: "Remember the words, which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostles were entrusted with the New Testament revelation.

Sixth, the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the church. Ephesians 2:20 declares the church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." MacArthur states:

The foundation of the apostles and prophets refers to the divine revelation that they taught, which in its written form is the New Testament. Because the Greek genitive case appears to be used in the subjective sense, signifying the originating agency, the meaning is not that the **apostles and prophets** were themselves the **foundation**--though in a certain sense they were--but that they laid the foundation. Paul spoke of himself as a "wise master builder" who "laid a foundation" and went on to say, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:10-11; cf. Rom. 15:20). These are New Testament **prophets**, as indicated by the facts that they are listed after **the apostles** and are part of the building of the church of Jesus Christ (cf. 3:5; 4:11). Their unique function was to authoritatively [sic] speak the word of God to the church in the years before the New Testament canon was complete. The fact that they are identified with the foundation reveals that they were limited to that formative period. As 4:11 shows, they completed their work and gave way to evangelists, and . . . pastors and teachers."⁹⁸
[Emphasis in original]

Finally, the apostles were not necessarily missionaries. As stated above, several writers believe the gift of apostle continues in our day as a gift that empowers certain believers

⁹⁸John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 82.

for cross-cultural mission work. Their interpretation of the gift focused on the meaning of the word apostle as “one sent,” and the example of the missionary work of the apostle Paul.⁹⁹

Certainly, Paul was a cross-cultural missionary and church planter, but such cannot be said for all of the apostles. When persecution began to scatter the believers out of Jerusalem, “those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). The reference is to the evangelistic work of the believers who scattered, not to the work of the apostles. On the contrary, Acts 8:1 states, “they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” Edgar writes:

The initial outward thrust of Christianity was carried by Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:5-40) rather than by an apostle. Even Peter’s journey, described in Acts 9:32-43, was largely to previously reached areas, since believers were already in Lydda and Joppa. Although Philip initially reached the Samaritans, the Spirit was not received until the apostles came and laid hands on the Samaritan believers, thereby demonstrating that the authority of the apostles and Christ was connected with this new thrust.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

The apostles were given to the first century church to establish it during the transitional period of the New Testament. First, the apostles were a restricted and carefully guarded group. They were with Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry and saw Him after His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9). Paul was the exception. He was not with Jesus during His earthly ministry, but he did see the resurrected Lord. That is why he said, “And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8).

Second, the apostles were eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ’s resurrection (Acts 5:29-32). His resurrection confirmed that the new covenant, ratified by His death, was in effect. The sins

⁹⁹Flynn, 39.

¹⁰⁰Edgar, 49-50.

of all who receive Jesus Christ by faith are forgiven and they are assured of the gift of eternal life. The apostles were the primary witnesses confirming the reality of the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Third, the apostles were empowered to work miracles (2 Cor. 12:12). Their miracles confirmed the reality of their witness of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Fourth, the apostles were the authoritative representatives of Jesus Christ in the New Testament church. As such, fifth, they were entrusted with the New Testament revelation. God used some of the apostles and their close associates to write the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, making them, sixth, along with the prophets, the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20). Today the church is being built upon that foundation, and Jesus Christ is "the chief cornerstone."

Seventh, the apostles were not necessarily missionaries. The apostle Paul certainly was. Church tradition says some of the other apostles were cross-cultural missionaries as well. However, Scripture does not indicate missionary work was associated with apostleship. The opposite is true, in fact. The initial outward thrust of Christianity from Jerusalem and Israel was carried out by believers other than the apostles (Acts 8:1, 4).

Finally, we return to answer this paper's three initial questions. Were the New Testament apostles cross-cultural missionaries? The New Testament evidence seems conclusive to the author. The apostles were not necessarily cross-cultural missionaries or church planters. Missionary work may have been a calling and ministry for one or more of the apostles, but it was not necessarily essential to the gift of apostleship.

Are cross-cultural missionaries modern-day apostles? Definitely not. Cross-cultural missionaries are vital to the continued proclamation of the new covenant gospel. Missionaries, however, do not have, and must not claim, apostolic authority over the churches they found.

Churches, including new churches on mission fields, must submit to the authority of God's Word. They must not submit to the directives of a self-proclaimed apostle, no matter whether he claims to be a horizontal or vertical apostle. Such apostles are "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13). The church must beware, not submit.

Has the Holy Spirit continued to give the gift of apostleship since the time of the New Testament apostles? No. After the purpose of the apostles was completed the gift was no longer needed. No new revelations are being given. The Bible is the authoritative witness of Jesus Christ's resurrection today. The requirement of having seen the resurrected Lord alone precludes anyone from becoming an apostle, for Paul stated he was the last to see the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:8).¹⁰¹ Furthermore, a so called "secondary apostle" is not an apostle. Therefore, the Biblical evidence indicates the gift of apostleship is no longer available or needed.

¹⁰¹Edgar, 268.

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