



## The Twelve Apostles and Modern Day Claims for Apostleship (Part 2)

Last week, we noticed that there are modern day religious bodies that claim to have apostles on the earth today. We also noted the word "apostle" meant, "one sent." But then we also noticed that Jesus' apostles were a group of specially qualified individuals and that not just anyone could be part of that group. They were eye-witnesses to the life of Jesus and had to have been with Jesus during his earthly ministry. We didn't, however, discuss everything related to the Apostles and in this week's article, I hope to continue our study.

The twelve apostles of Jesus not only served as the leaders of the early church, they also were given special abilities by Jesus in order to carry the gospel to the whole of creation. We note that they were the first individuals who were baptized in the Holy Spirit according to Jesus' promise in Acts 1:4, 5. This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4 when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. That Jesus was the one who administered this baptism is clear from John's prophecy regarding the Messiah in Matthew 3:11 and parallels. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not administered by any other.

The apostles also had the unique ability to lay their hands on believers so that they could receive the ability to do miracles. In Acts 8, Philip went into Samaria preaching the gospel. Many believed because they saw the signs that Philip perform (Acts 8:6) and they were baptized (Acts 8:12). But they themselves could do no miracle until the apostles Peter and John came and laid their hands on them (Acts 8:14-17). Simon saw this phenomenon and rightly concluded that it was due to the laying on of hands that these miracles were happening. So he offered money for the ability. It wasn't the ability to do mira-

cles that he was after; it was the ability to lay his hands on someone else so that they might do miracles. This is clear in the words that Simon uses in Acts 8:19. But this ability wasn't for him, nor was it for anyone else. We know this because not even Philip could lay his hands on individuals so that they could receive the ability to do the miraculous. It was an ability unique to the apostles and when the apostles died, the ability to lay hands on others so that they might do the miraculous was also ended.

The apostles were also given the ability to do special signs which only they could demonstrate. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:12 "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." What were the signs of an apostle? Laying on hands was one, but there were more. Evidently, only the Apostles had the ability to do most or all of the miraculous gifts that God had provided for the early church. These miraculous gifts are listed in different places throughout scripture, but they included: prophesying, speaking in tongues, interpreting, special knowledge, special faith, revelation, special prayers, special songs, special wisdom, healing, miracles, and special discernment (see 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). These gifts were distributed among the brethren, but only the apostles, evidently, had all or most all of these special abilities.

Why did they have these abilities? What was their purpose? This takes us to Ephesians 4:11 and the question that started our entire study of apostles. Paul states in that verse, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," but notice that he gives the explanation for why these offices were created and why the gifts that

Jesus gave were given (Ephesians 4:7-9). Verse 12-15 say:

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

The purpose of the miracles was to establish the early church to the point where they could be self sustaining and be a full-grown entity that is capable of surviving without such miraculous aid. The "unity of the faith" was key to being able to accomplish this. Without the revelation of God's will for the church, they would not be able to continue to sustain themselves as God's church. Hence, the miraculous gifts were necessary to both reveal to God's people what God desired for them to do as well as to prove that the message that was spoken was, in fact, God's message (see Mark 16:20, John 20:30,31 and Hebrews 2:3, 4). There were others besides the apostles who could perform miraculous gifts, yes, but as we've noted the apostles were the unique distribution point from which these unique abilities were propagated. Without them, there could be no exercise of the miraculous.

The implication of this is that today we don't have apostles, at least, in the same sense that these men were specially chosen by Jesus for this

## The Twelve Apostles...(cont.)



“The work that the apostles were given to do was accomplished and that work stands before us today in the pages of the New Testament.”

particular function in the church. To have such an apostle would mean that they would have the same abilities as these apostles had and the one's who make such a modern day claim simply don't have those abilities. This isn't to say that one can't be an apostle in the ordinary sense of the word of one who has been sent for a particular job or mission. Certainly we can have apostles in that sense, but that's clearly not the same as the function and role that the twelve apostles fulfilled in the New Testament.

Moreover, there is no need to have modern day apostles in the same vein as the twelve. The work that the apostles were given to do was accomplished and that work stands before us today in the pages of the New Testament. One might argue and say that all other roles in Ephesians 4:11 wouldn't be necessary either. Such an argument doesn't hold true because it is the whole of the individuals in Ephesians 4:11 that were given to accomplish what God desired, not each individual role. Moreover, in saying such, one assumes that the role of the twelve apostles can only be fulfilled while they are alive. Such isn't the case. The apostles are still fulfilling the function that God gave them to do, even though they, as individuals, have passed on.

We still have apostles today in the sense that the influence of these men continues to live.

There are, however, other roles mentioned in this passage which require living individuals in order for these roles to continue to be fulfilled as God would have them. Individuals may still fulfill the role of pastor, teacher, and evangelist today without, of course, the direct aid of miraculous gifts. The bottom line is that just because some roles in Ephesians 4:11 are no longer miraculously filled today doesn't mean that other roles couldn't be filled in a non-miraculous way. Remember the various miraculous gifts that were listed from 1 Corinthians 12:8-10? Some of those gifts were knowledge, faith, interpreting, singing, and praying. Can those gifts be practiced today in a non-miraculous way? Absolutely they can, though some of those gifts were uniquely miraculous. So also in the roles that God designed for the church. Some of those roles were uniquely miraculous. Others, however, could be exercised either miraculously or non-miraculously. Hence, we ought not to conclude from Ephesians 4:11 that we must either have all of these roles today or none of them. The role of apostle was designed to end on earth, but have lasting consequences whereas other

roles were designed to continue on earth perpetually in the church.

Having studied the various different aspects of what it meant to be an apostle, one can truly understand why we don't have special apostles today like the twelve. Their role was important, necessary, consequential, yet fulfilled in the men that directly witnessed the life of Christ during His earthly ministry. Paul too was a witness of the resurrected Jesus' and received the gospel directly from Jesus according to Galatians 1:10-12. He was as much an apostle as the others in that regard and so he is no exception to the rule, but merely one who was "born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:28). But once again, the miraculous nature of his apostleship testifies as to its temporal nature. Today the influence of the twelve continues to live on, though, there is no apostolic succession. Their work abides and cannot be improved upon; we have everything we need revealed for us in scripture. Indeed, what would a so called modern day apostle do to improve upon their work? Let us be satisfied with the pattern God has left for the church and not seek to innovate based upon our own perceived inadequacies.

Kevin Cauley



### Bible Studies for the week of August 7th, 2005

- AM Sermon..... Where is God?
- Scripture Reading..... Acts 17:22-31
- PM Sermon..... The Book of Job
- Scripture Reading..... NA
- Sunday Class .....The Book of Matthew
- Wednesday Class..... TBA

### Kevin's Korner

**F**or my birthday last week, I got a new tent and so, naturally, we had to try it out. So, last Sunday night, we put the family in the car and drove up to Roaring River State Park in Missouri and camped out for a few nights. The Rollers came up to see us Monday night and John Gass and Deacon Doss stayed the course with us on the camp ground. I came in to town on Tuesday for work, but went back to the campground in the evening. We packed up Wednesday early and came back into town. The tent worked great, by the way and we had a good time while up there.

This past Wednesday afternoon, we loaded everyone back in the car and went to Joplin, MO. Jake King invited me to speak on their Vacation Bible School. It was a delight and a joy to be able to meet the brethren there and visit with them. The Ten Commandments was their

theme and I was privileged to speak on the topics, "Honor your father and mother" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The lessons were received very well by the brethren there and it was good to be able to enjoy their fellowship.

The copy machine didn't get fixed until Thursday and so I was not able to get the printing of last week's bulletin done before Wednesday night. So, if you need a bulletin from last week and didn't get one, please let me know and I will be happy to run a few copies for you. The copier repair man lives in Green Forest and so he gave me his number so that I could get a hold of him next time it goes out on the weekend. Hopefully that won't happen again.

Several have mentioned to me this week that we are now in the proverbial "dog days of Summer." It has been hot. The heat may feel a bit more

intense this year because we had such a mild and lovely summer last year. God, however, knows how to provide for His own and I trust that the sunshine that we are enjoying right now will prove beneficial to us in some way or another.

It's interesting that the one time you hear the disciples in the New Testament complaining about the weather, Jesus says, "Oh ye of little faith!" It is a great lesson to us to trust in God regardless of what comes our way. Whether hot, cold, too much rain or not enough, God is, thankfully, in control of things and He will provide according to His great power and wisdom. But when we stop and think about it, even in the worst types of situations, there is always some benefit to be found. God is good! I certainly wouldn't want to be in charge of the weather, would you?



"God is, thankfully, in control of things and He will provide according to His great power and wisdom"

### Records for the week of July 31st, 2005

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Sunday Bible Class .....   | 61        |
| Sunday AM Worship.....     | 80        |
| Sunday PM Worship.....     | 57        |
| Wednesday Night Study..... | 49        |
| Contribution.....          | \$2087.89 |
| Budget.....                | \$1662.00 |



# Praises, Prayers, and Proclamations

## Announcements

- We are thankful to God for this new Lord's Day. It is the day we honor His Son and the Love that He has shown us through Him. Let us worship in spirit and in truth!
- Please remember the following in prayer: Kathryn Davis, Cooper Doss, Debbie Duncan, Bryan Guess, Huggetta Hand, Maxine Havnick, Ruth Hill, Travis Jackson, Raymond Kimes, Jimmie Tucker, Billie Wylie, and Glenn Quigley.
- Please be sure to check the outreach board for your assignments.
- This afternoon there is a singing at Lone Star, MO. All are invited.
- The monthly elders and deacons meeting will be held to-night after services. If you have an item for discussion please see one of these men.
- Our weekly Bible study at the nursing home will recommence Thursday at 2:00. We are studying Mark.
- Men's breakfast will be next Saturday morning at 7:00 A.M. Please make your plans to attend.
- Our pantry item is: Green Beans.

### God's Salvation Plan

1. **Hear** the Gospel—Romans 10:17
2. **Believe** on the Lord & His Word—Mark 16:16; John 8:24
3. **Repent** of your sins—Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30
4. **Confess** Christ—Matthew 10:32,33; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9
5. **Be Baptized** for the remission of sins—Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Galatians 3:27
6. Live a **faithful**, dedicated life—Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-10

## Welcome!

Visit our web site: <http://www.the-churchofchrist.com>

## Family Times for Worship and Study

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Sunday Morning Bible Class: ..... | 9:30 AM  |
| Sunday Morning Worship: .....     | 10:20 AM |
| Sunday Evening Worship: .....     | 6:00 PM  |
| Ladies Bible Class: .....         | 10:30 AM |
| Wed. Evening Bible Class: .....   | 7:00 PM  |

## Serving Each Other

|                       | August 7th, 2005 | August 14th, 2005 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Sunday Morning</b> |                  |                   |
| Songs:                | Barrett Brown    | Ken Smith         |
| Preaching:            | Kevin Cauley     | Kevin Cauley      |
| Opening Prayer:       | Rusty Windle     | Bruce Foster      |
| Scripture Reading:    | Josh Doss        | Ray Duncan        |
| Lord's Table          | Dan Hand         | Ken Smith         |
|                       | George Eddings   | Glenn Williams    |
| (assist)              | Jerry Roller     | Brandon Foster    |
|                       | John Gass        | Josh Doss         |
| Closing Prayer        | Clay Bozarth     | George Eddings    |
| <b>Sunday Evening</b> |                  |                   |
| Songs:                | Bruce Foster     | Glenn Williams    |
| Preaching:            | Kevin Cauley     | Kevin Cauley      |
| Opening Prayer:       | Ken Smith        | Dale Pinkley      |
| Scripture Reading:    | Matthew Morrell  | Jerry Roller      |
| Lord's Table          | Dale Pinkley     | Rusty Windle      |
|                       | Brent Moore      | Jack Gentry       |
| Closing Prayer        | Ray Duncan       | Michael Morrell   |
| <b>Wednesday</b>      |                  |                   |
| Songs:                | Rusty Windle     | Kevin Cauley      |
| Opening Prayer:       | John Gass        | Clay Bozarth      |
| Invitation:           | Ken Smith        | Leon Duncan       |
| Closing Prayer:       | Bob Moore        | Glenn Quigley     |

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