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Subject: Apostles and Prophets

Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 17 Aug 2008 20:00:51 GMT

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Because of some questions that were raised on another thread I'd like to start one on Prophets and Apostles. Who are they. What are they. How do we recognize them. How are they called to ministry etc. To me it is an interesting subject.

It seems every time you take a close look at the revivals over the last 2000 yrs you find a supernatural element. At least from what I have read. The reformers walked in the supernatural. Calvin Luther and Wesley did. Both John Knox and George Fox stood (at times at least) under a prophetic anointing.

St. Patrick of Ireland as well as his successors stood under a apostolic anointing. There is simply no other way to explain their authority success in evangelism and supernatural works.

Some time ago I did a study on this subject. The Lord gave me some understanding I had never really seen before and I'd like to share some of it here. I'm grouping Apostles and Prophets together and in most respects using the terms interchangeably for 3 reasons.

- 1/ Because both ministries are really senior leadership in the church
- 2/ Because both ministries walk in a supernatural element that really isn't common to the other ministries
- 3/ Because an apostle is a prophet ( see below) and both are called to the ministry in the same way.

I'm going to confine my remarks here to

- 1/ The reality of Apostles in the NT (everyone probably already knows but others may read it)
- 2/ What is a Prophet or Apostle
- 3/ How do they get called into that ministry

I hope others will comment as well. Surely I'm not the only one who has any wisdom on this subject. If you come across a good book on the subject or a webpage then post a link.

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets

Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 17 Aug 2008 20:01:54 GMT

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The reality of Apostles and Prophets

There was the 12 that Jesus called . Judas was replaced with Matthais. Weâ€™ll explain his call later.

Acts 14/14 Paul and Barnabas are both called Apostles

Rom 16/7 Andronicus and Junia are both called Apostles

Phil.2/25 Epaphroditus The Greek there for messenger is apostle.

11Cor 8/23 Titus and other unnamed men. Messenger is the Greek word apostle

1 Thess. 1/1 The epistle was written from Paul Silas Timothy. 2/6 refers to them (plural) as apostles

Gal.1/18-19 James the Lords bro. was an apostle

1 Cor. 4/6 with vs. 9 Apollos was an apostle

There is at least 20 apostles there so there was not just 12 (probably preaching to the converted here)

In my opinion these offices were very common in the early church. Not everyone had a worldwide ministry like Peter and Paul. Many were just 5/f ministers operating in a local setting. An apostle set over a group of churches. A prophet operated in a local church or a group of them. I think the office was very common.

There are many degrees of ministry and authority not all are Peter and Paul. The office of prophet was/is often combined with pastor/teacher. Freeman was a good eg of that. So was Ken Hagin as teacher/prophet (Iâ€™m aware of his problems but initially that is where he stood) In the case of a women (but not limited to) it could be combined with prophetess/ intercessor like Anna Luke 2/36-38. You do not have to be a widow/nun/ virgin Mary to be a prophetess.

I think these offices were very common in the early church. They are evident to any unbiased observer of history over the last 2000 yrs. In my opinion in these last days apostles and prophets are going to come to the church worldwide in the 10â€™s of 1000's. Including the faith message. And is there ever some straightening out for apostles to do among us. !!!

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets

Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 17 Aug 2008 20:03:40 GMT

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What is a Prophet Apostle ?

Prophet

There is a difference between how we as disciples prophecy and how a prophet prophecies. The difference is we prophecy by inspiration. They prophecy by revelation. Big difference. Ours is just a simple gift. Inspired to speak. Comfort encouragement exhortation. And no one ever got so

good at prophesying that they got promoted into being a prophet. They are totally different realms entirely. One is a gift of the spirit the other is a ministry office.

The prophet prophesies by revelation. There is an unveiling of the spiritual realm to a prophet. Oftentimes a prophet will see his revelation and stand in it.

Habakkuk 1/1 Nahum 1/1 Micah 1/1

The book of Daniel Zechariah Much of Isaiah The prophets stood in their revelations. Just read the prophets.

There is an uncovering of the spiritual realm to a prophet. Because God wants his people to know what is going on in the world and why. They foretell the future because God wants his people to understand what is coming. One reason for that is so they can prepare themselves Acts.

21/10-11. They uncover the past so we can see why people made mistakes and not repeat them.

They uncover truth so we have understanding of spiritual things. 1 Cor. 14/29-30

I'd like to say again that not all prophets have big ministries. Most just sit as part of a church.

## Apostles

An apostle is all 5 of the ministry gifts. You see this all through the book of Acts. They go into an area evangelize start a church sit as pastors and teach/shepherd stand as a prophet and bring revelation eventually stand as apostles and ordain ministry and other things

## 3 eggs of this

Timothy called an apostle in 1 & 11 Thess.

11 Tim 4/5 Do the "work" of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry.

Paul is saying to Tim here to fulfill the entire ministry you have been called to. Now that you have a big ministry going don't just sit back and enjoy the fruits of it. Minister the whole gift you have received as apostle.

## Silas

Acts 15/23 Silas is called a prophet. Yet in 1 Thess he is called an apostle. The simple answer is he was not functioning in the fullness of his office until he moved out in ministry with Paul

## John

Rev. 10/11 That is the office of a prophet and he is an apostle.

Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets  
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 17 Aug 2008 20:04:51 GMT  
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The calling into ministry of a Prophet/Apostle

They will receive a personal divine call from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Numbers 12/5-8

God here is contrasting the call of a prophet and his dealings with Moses who he dwelt with in a special way.

“œœ the Lord make myself known to him in a vision or a dream”œœ

I know of several men who have a call to these offices who sit under the faith message and they all got it the same way. Bro Freeman without explicitly pointing to himself was very definite about this as well. I know of other men not connected to the faith message who received a call this way. One was not even a minister just a (very) well known singer who died in a plane accident in the 70s.

If a man/women is a prophet/apostle the Lord will appear to them in a vision or dream. A personal call with personal instructions.

In the Bible not every prophet tells us how he got a call to the ministry. But in every single case without exception when they do tell us . . . This is how it came. A personal revelation and by that I mean face to face.

Ezekiel - the first chapters

Isaiah 6 /1-11

Jeremiah 1 the whole chap but look at vs. 9

1 Sam 3/21

Etc. etc.

1 Cor 9/1 Paul here is defending his apostolic office. One of the ways he proves it is by pointing to the fact he has seen Jesus.

That brings us to Matthias. Acts 2/15-26 he is not here getting set into office. He was already an apostle or they never would have picked him. What they were doing was picking a minister for a unique position. The man they chose had to be a witness to everything that happened from John the Baptist to Jesus resurrection. A personal eyewitness for a unique ministry. In my opinion he was probably one of the “œœministers”œœ (not disciples) sent out in Luke 10. At least some (maybe all) of them were apostles.

So why does the office come this way?

Because apostles and prophets stand in this realm anyway. They see stand in and participate in their revelations.

Because there is often personal instructions. Things they need to know. The extent of their responsibilities for eg.

Often it is a difficult ministry to fulfill and a great revelation anchors them. Look at Ezekiel for eg. A great call but also a very difficult ministry. Many of the prophets went through hard times. Often they stood with the entire nation against them. Or at least the leadership 11Chronicles 18 Micaiah stood alone against the King

Because a person is generally loyal to the one who calls him. Denominational board or did the church elect you? If you got a direct call from Jesus you will be loyal only to him

From what I have heard and read over the yrs men that stand in this office and got into it via a personal call believe this is the only way it comes.

If a man has a call to this ministry he got it by the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus and by that I mean face to face. I'd like to say again that in my opinion in these last days apostles and prophets are going to come to the church worldwide in the 10's of 1000's. Including the faith message.

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets

Posted by [william](#) on Mon, 18 Aug 2008 02:02:42 GMT

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Hey Hardbones, that was an excellent setting forth of the ministry of the apostles and prophets.

A few years ago I revisited the whole subject of ministry and gifts and came to some conclusions as well. I don't think it contradicts anything you've written (except maybe point 1 in your first note), but it doesn't conform to what I believed back in the 70s and 80s, at least in every detail.

I've posted something here in the Bible Issues section awhile back (I'm not online right now, but it may have been under the "Women in Ministry" thread) but I'll summarize here from memory.

There seems to be two types of ministry in the NT; the ruling type of ministry, and the service type of ministry which falls more under the category of exhortation, edification, the charisma gifts, etc..

I believe that all of the Eph 4:11 gifts, as well as those listed in 1Cor12, fall under the category of the second group. All of these gifts are given to us by God and the recipients of these gifts will give an accounting to God for the use and misuse of these gifts.

In my opinion, none of these gifts give the recipient authority to rule in the Church. That isn't to say that one given the apostolic gift might not eventually rule, or have authority toward those to whom he has been sent, but the call, commissioning, and sending out of the apostle, doesn't

automatically mean the person is somehow endowed with authority over any or all of the local churches. No one would doubt Paul's commissioning as an apostle, but he had no authority outside of the churches he established.

Even those who do have the episkopos type of ministry, the ones who are given the charge to rule--or ruling elders, have this authority only with reference to a particular local church, or, as in Paul's case, over the local assemblies that he himself established. Note the difference in the way Paul writes to those churches established under his ministry, and his letter to the Romans, for example.

Certainly the two types of ministry will overlap, and you see examples of this in the NT, but I do see a clear distinction made regarding these two types in that all are given diakonos gifts, but few are called to lead the assemblies in overseer type positions.

One might object by saying: "the Eph 4:11 mentions "pastors" so doesn't that imply an eldership/ruling authority as opposed to simply a ministry gift?" I would say no. Our modern-day understanding of "the pastor" as being the sole authority in the assembly isn't necessarily derived from the NT pattern. One who has a pastoral (pastor/teacher) type of ministry will most definitely be categorized as one who feeds the flock, but it doesn't follow that this gives him ruling elder status in the assembly.

Let's say that one has a pastor/teacher gift. If he travels to another location, does he lose his gift? No, because this is a ministry gift is given to him by God, and it isn't dependent upon whether or not he is a ruling elder in some church. The same thing can be said of all of the ministry type of gifts, including the charisma gifts of 1Cor12.

Okay guys, sharpen away!

Blessings,  
William

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets  
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Mon, 18 Aug 2008 22:17:07 GMT  
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I need to give that some thought. I think I will go find your original thread as well. Stay tuned !!!!

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets

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Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 24 Aug 2008 00:43:57 GMT  
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I'm going to get to your material William as soon as I have time. In the meantime I'm going to keep putting up my material on apostles/prophets

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Subject: Five Characteristics of Apostles  
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 24 Aug 2008 00:51:54 GMT  
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Five things that will characterize an Apostle

This is not meant to be exhaustive. Just material I have dug out of my studies

1/ He will have the fruits of the spirit operating to a marked degree. How can a man be useful to the Lord if he is always trying to get his own way or gets angry or impatient. All of us as disciples are to try to work at this in our lives but in the life and ministry of an apostle it is an absolute requirement. He simply wouldn't be able to fulfill his ministry without having the fruits worked into his life.

2/ Rom 15/19 11Cor 12/12 Mighty signs and wonders will characterize his ministry. An apostle will operate in all the gifts of the spirit. Not every day but in his ministry

3/ Rom 15/20 An apostle will not build on another mans work. I don't mean he will operate alone. He may like Paul be part of a team of ministers. He may preach in someone else's church occasionally. But his basic ministry is to be cutting edge. His gift is wasted if he labors in another mans field.

I see 2 basic areas for an apostle to minister. 1 is virgin territory where the gospel hasn't been preached before or not fruitfully. Apostles like prophets and intercessors deal with things in the heavens. They go into an area and usually with fasting and prayer cast out the spiritual rulers holding people in darkness. Then they evangelize the area and establish churches. Jesus called it casting out the strongman

The second is for God to send an apostle into an area (or church) to clean up messes. He does that by setting proper doctrine- ordaining ministry- dealing with the devil-getting rid of troublemakers- straightening out the confusion

The basic ministry of an apostle is not to build on another mans work. The nature of the ministry is to lead the way.

#### 4/ Patience

11Cor 6/4-5    11Cor. 12/12

This is not patience the fruit of the spirit. The Greek word is endurance

Now all of us as Xianâ€™s are to cultivate this in our life. So that we can patiently endure through our trials. We are to cultivate this so we can do Gods will in our life in spite of all opposition and circumstances.

In the ministry of an apostle it is something entirely different. There is so much supernatural in an apostles ministry that he has to have trials and tribulations to keep his feet on the ground. So he doesnâ€™t get lifted up with pride. Endurance as a sign gift of an apostle is a supernatural enabling so he can endure the trials and tribs needful for him to keep his feet on the ground and not get lifted up with pride.

1Cor 4/9-13

This is what Paulâ€™s thorn was. He had an abundance of trial because he had an abundance of revelation.

Endurance as a sign gift of an apostle is a supernatural enabling so he can endure through his trials and fulfill his ministry

#### 5/ Sincerity 11Cor.1/12

Over and over Paul said he ministered in sincerity.

This is a basic method of preaching Jesus

An evangelist takes the supernatural gifts & in the sincerity of his heart preaches the gospel & wins the lost. The gifts open the door so people look. Then they listen hear the sincerity in his life and open their heart. Not all get saved but they listen.

Peter says this to wives in 1Peter 3 then applies it to husbands. We can use it on our friends too.

The bible says you can preach to all around you without saying a word. Just in the sincerity of your heart obeying god.

And apostles have sincerity in spades

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets

Posted by [william](#) on Tue, 17 Mar 2009 22:23:01 GMT

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Hardbones,

Do you think that there is a distinction to be made between the original twelve and subsequent

apostles?

I'm not taking about the obvious distinctions like they were hand picked by Jesus and were with Him both before and after His resurrection... I'm thinking more about the nature of their apostleship verses those arising later... after the NT era.

Blessings,  
William

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets  
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Wed, 18 Mar 2009 23:20:47 GMT  
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No I don't. I think the original 12 (11 and then one added again) were a unique ministry in that in that they were witnesses to all of Jesus ministry. At least some of the 70 in Luke 10 were apostles (maybe all)

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Subject: Re: Five Characteristics of Apostles  
Posted by [jisamazed](#) on Sun, 22 Mar 2009 21:56:20 GMT  
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Hardbones wrote on Sat, 23 August 2008 19:51Five things that will characterize an Apostle

This is not meant to be exhaustive. Just material I have dug out of my studies

1/ He will have the fruits of the spirit operating to a marked degree. How can a man be useful to the Lord if he is always trying to get his own way or gets angry or impatient. All of us as disciples are to try to work at this in our lives but in the life and ministry of an apostle it is an absolute requirement. He simply wouldn't be able to fulfill his ministry without having the fruits worked into his life.

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And apostles have sincerity in spades

Hardbones, thanks for starting this thread. You have piqued my interest, and now I'm going to try to study this matter more thoroughly than I have in the past. I agree with most of what you are saying. It is ironic that, in spite of all of the teaching that has come out about the prophetic and apostolic, there is still a lot of confusion out there about it.

There is a danger in giving too much authority to apostles nowadays. Sometimes churches will put themselves under the "authority" of apostles, whether self-proclaimed or no, and lose the autonomous nature of their local assembly of believers. However, a fully-functioning, healthy group of believers does not need someone controlling them from the outside. To do so is to create a hierarchal, pyramid-style system of church authority in which an "apostle" controls a bunch of churches. In some cases, it is necessary for an apostles to exercise authority in a situation in which the church is out of control, like in II Corinthians. Paul planted that church, and he was the only one who could go in there and bring the needed correction. However, oftentimes Paul would ordain leadership in the churches that he established and leave the local leaders in charge. He advised them through letters and by visiting them again when he had the chance. But he did not have some heirarchal network under his "apostolic authority". The way we see it in our church, an apostle comes side-by-side with local churches and leaders and helps them to be more effective in their callings. An apostle does NOT lord it over any of them and subvert the ministry of the local pastor.

If local leadership in a church are starting to go astray and won't listen to the rest of the church, people in that church might call on a legitimate apostle to come and give them direction and intervene by speaking the Word of God into the situation. In most cases, the apostle does not have actual direct authority over the church.

Apostles were "sent ones" (literal meaning of the Greek term), and it was God who sent them through a local church such as Antioch or Jerusalem. I don't see any evidence of lone rangers who operated apart from some sort of "home church", for lack of a better term. They were sent to the unsaved or unlearned, preached the gospel and established churches. Evangelists preached the gospel to the unsaved as well, but they did not necessarily establish churches among the converted unless they had an apostolic calling.

Sometimes I think that we are focused more on these labels than the scripture writers were. There was a lot of overlap in the ministries of these various offices, and they did not always use the

same terms the same way every time. Different situations called for different actions to be taken, regardless of the label. There was a degree of flexibility both in the function of the church leaders as well as in church structure.

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Subject: Re: Apostles and Prophets  
Posted by [jisamazed](#) on Sun, 22 Mar 2009 22:05:15 GMT  
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Hardbones wrote on Wed, 18 March 2009 17:20No I don't. I think the original 12 (11 and then one added again) were a unique ministry in that in that they were witnesses to all of Jesus ministry. At least some of the 70 in Luke 10 were apostles (maybe all)

I agree. There were a lot of groups claiming to be Christian churches at that time, but they bought into gnosticism or were Judaised or other errors. People had to rely on apostles to state what were true churches and what were not, who were legitimate preachers, who were not, etc... Many books were held to be authoritative, and over time most of them were weeded out except for the 27 that we have as the NT. One way that people judged the genuineness of a book was by whether or not it had an apostolic stamp of authority. It had to have been written by an apostle or someone who had the apostles' approval to write (Luke). The early church leaders could tell the forgeries and non-apostolic books, of which there were many.

In this sense, the original apostles had a unique role in the church that subsequent apostles don't have. However, current apostles still need to be able to discern what is true and what is false and hold to original apostolic teaching.