

20 Things To Know About Apostles Today

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Introduction:

This short booklet is a summary of John Alley's "The Apostolic Revelation." I have summarised his book into this booklet on his behalf to help with the advance of the Kingdom of God. The purpose of this book was for the many thousands of people we meet who cannot afford big books or don't have the time or ability to read large books.

For many pastors in Asia and Africa, a regular book of 200 pages and worth about \$20 is beyond their budget and also the bandwidth of a small Internet café. Hence the summary. The summary is cheap and quick to download, and all the same material is also completely free of charge on our ministry website www.peace.org.au

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I hope you find this short book inspiring and that the Holy Spirit is at work in you as you read it.

Many Regards
David Alley

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1 - The Church is Changing.

The whole Church in the whole world is changing. Five hundred years ago the Church was mostly Roman Catholic and Orthodox varieties. Nobody had personal bibles, not even most ministers. Knowledge of the Scriptures was limited. People believed you had to work to earn salvation by doing rituals and saying certain prayers. People thought that priests were special people who connected us to God. Through the Reformation and many events since, the Church has changed and continues to change. Here are some of the things that have changed over the last 500 years:

- Publishing and printing brought the Bible to common people.
- Education meant people could read the Bible.
- We realised that salvation was a gift and not earned.
- There was a restoration of understanding about Baptism.
- The Gospel became evangelical again - we realised it was something you could choose to accept.
- John Wesley and the Methodists helped us learn to read our Bibles and pray daily.
- William Carey, the Moravians, and others helped us realise we must take the gospel to all nations, and many did.
- In the 1950's God started restoring the ministry of Evangelists and he did it Big time with Billy Graham and others.
- In the 1960's we saw a decade of focus on Pastors and pastoral care and shepherding of God's people.
- In the 1970's the invention of the cassette recorder coincided with many Teachers bringing light to God's word and teaching us much about faith, authority in prayer, deliverance, walking with Christ, and how to hear His voice.
- In the 1980's people started realising that Prophets were supposed to be a part of Church life and the Prophetic began to open up to the Body of Christ.
- In the 1990's people also started realising that Apostles were for today too.
- As this process went along we all realised that we are ALL priests and all can come to God to minister to others, and not only **can** we, but we are supposed to **do** that.

The Change Has Not Stopped

The Bible says that God wants the Church to come to complete maturity. Even the early apostles urged the believers to "go onto better things." As profoundly wonderful as the early church was, we are supposed to become a great "latter house" with glory better than a "former house."

God **has not stopped** reforming his church, and here are some of the changes to come:

- Apostles will take their place in the Church - they'll get their authority back.
- We will learn how to spot false Apostles and Prophets.
- The Body of Christ will become relational and move on from being institutional.
- Believers will learn to love each other in a way that has never happened before.
- City Wide Elderships will be restored to the Body of Christ.
- Regular church people will become Ministers - become an Apostolic People
- Fathering and Sonship will be restored to God's people.

Some of the changes listed above have already started, and for some there is tremendous resistance from tradition, people with power and from the evil one. However, as the future advances, God's people will learn to love, learn to walk in relationships, the old formal ways will fall aside, and apostles will be accepted. True elderships will be restored and after all of this, power will return to the Church. The power always follows the relationship and the love being in order.

2 – The Return of Apostles.

There are those in the Body of Christ who have doubts about whether there should even be apostles at all, or whether they only existed in the past. The Bible is very clear that Apostles belong in the Body of Christ and have a significant role to play. In fact Jesus is restoring Apostles to the Church

Ephesians 4:11-13 says, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

The Bible is clear that there are gifts given to the church and that these includes the gift of the apostle. Verse 7 of Ephesians says that these gifts were given when Jesus ascended. *"When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."* This tells us that this is not talking about the 12 apostles appointed when Jesus was in His ministry but about something else... gifts given to the Body of Christ.

The same passage also says that these gifts are given **until...** *"we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."* The maturity that this passage speaks of has not yet been realised, and so the gift of Apostles is still needed.

The Return of the Apostles

So now that you know we are supposed to have apostles, and that God intends them as gifts for the Body, we should realise that God is restoring them and that they are returning.

In the past, great men of God may have possessed these gifts but because the Body of Christ did not accept or understand these gifts, they were not recognised as such. However today we are learning to recognise that these gifts are real and we are beginning to see them in the Body. Some people are hearing the call of God to become apostles and strive to live for Him however He calls and however He chooses.

We are used to seeing, hearing and talking about pastors, teachers, and evangelists, yet in the Bible there is only 1 mentioned pastor (Jesus, the Good Shepherd) and a handful of mentioned evangelists. However in the Bible there are over 3 dozen apostles mentioned. We think that in the world today there are hundreds if not thousands of people called by Christ to be apostles.

The apostles are returning.

3 – Why We Need Apostles.

Have you ever heard someone say that "*the Apostles did their job, they wrote the Scriptures for us and now we don't need them anymore.*" They use Scriptures like "*the foundation of the church is built on apostles and prophets*" (Eph 2:20) and they reason that this means that the Scriptures were written by Apostles (New Testament) and Prophets (Old Testament) and now we have the Scriptures we don't need Apostles or Prophets.

If you have heard this line of thinking before, then you should stop and think about it a little more.

If Apostles were only needed for the writing of Scripture, then what about the apostles that didn't write any Scripture? What about the New Testament Prophets that lived after the writing of the Old Testament and were a part of New Testament life? The fact is that Apostles and Prophets ARE foundational to the Church in the world NOW, they are needed and they have a part to play. In 1 Corinthians 12 we see a great passage on the Body of Christ and the Part of the Apostle in the Body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 *"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many."*

1 Corinthians 12:21 *"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'"* This passage shows us that we cannot say that Apostles do not belong to the Body.

1 Corinthians 12:27-29 *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?"*

So We Need Apostles, But Why?

Here are some reasons why we need Apostles in the Body of Christ, and without them, the Body is not complete and the Kingdom of God cannot properly do what God has commissioned us to do:

- God Appointed Them. (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- To Equip Believers To Serve. (Ephesians 4:12)
- To Help Build Up the Body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12)
- To Bring the Body of Christ to Maturity. (Ephesians 4:13)
- To Bring Believers to Unity (Ephesians 4:13)
- To Have Authority. (Mark 3:15, 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10)
- To Be Fathers. (1 Corinthians 4:14-16)
- Teaching and Instructing. (Acts 2:42-43)
- Appointing Elders in Churches (Citywide Elderships). (1 Timothy 5:17-20, Titus 1:5-6, Acts 14:23)
- Government in the Church. (2 Corinthians 13:10, Philemon 8-9, 2 Corinthians 10:8)
- Provides Spiritual Covering. (This point is detailed well in Chapter 7 of "The Apostolic Revelation")

If you take the time to look at the examples of Paul exercising his apostolic authority in Scripture, and search for the word "command," you can see that he took his role of Apostle seriously. He was in charge of many Churches across many cities and he brought order, covering, care, insight, teaching, revelation, prayer, guidance, and in addition many more things. It's obvious that Apostles belong, they have a place in the Body, and we need them.

4 – Who Are Some Modern Day Apostles?

When most people read the Bible they see it through religious eyes and this taints the ability to see things sometimes. The Pharisees knew their Scriptures well but didn't recognise the Messiah when He came. Today many people have such a glorified image of "The Apostle" that they might never recognise an apostle when he comes or ministers.

First let us examine the Bible Apostles:

- They were committed followers of Christ.
- They sometimes struggled to pray even in important times (Garden of Gethsemane)
- They loved Jesus and gave their whole lives.
- But they also fled and ran away at Calvary to save their own lives.
- They fought and argued a lot between themselves.
- But they also learned how to love and taught others to love.
- They had great faith at times.
- At other times Jesus rebuked them for little faith.
- Peter chopped off someone's ear with a sword, and denied Christ.
- Peter also was filled with the Holy Spirit and was prominent on the Day of Pentecost.
- They were forgiven much and forgave much.
- In Summary - they were very HUMAN but they had grace and a calling from God.

If you are looking for a spiritual super man hero apostle, you will probably not recognise him. If however you are looking for a human, called of God, given apostolic grace and willing to serve and obey, even though at times making some mistakes but ultimately following God wholeheartedly, then you may have found an apostle.

Apostles do sometimes work miracles and see amazing prayers answered, but many times they also just work hard, as best they know how with God's grace, to do what they know God is saying to do.

Apostles Today

Today there are many people in the world who say and think that they are apostles. This is increasing as times goes on. Not all of these people are apostles and ultimately they will need to be tested to see if they are. Some people are ministers for Christ and because they have a big ministry they have just assumed they are an apostle and so have taken the title. Some others have been given the title because of the denomination they are in. Others think that because they plant churches (like Paul the Apostle) that they must be an apostle and so have taken the title. Some people are in a position of influence over many churches and assume that because of this they must be an apostle. Some people also just like titles and think it sounds good and love to call themselves Apostle.

Most of the people mentioned above will be "False Apostles" in a nice way. They are mistaken about their role and in reality they do have a part to play in God's kingdom, but they are not apostles. However Satan will also sow into the "field of God" false Apostles who are in reality not believers at all. These men are "False Brothers" and must be recognised or they could do great damage.

Then, in addition to all those claiming to be Apostles, there are genuine apostles too. We believe there are more than we realise, and that God is raising up apostles in many places because they are needed. These are people called by Christ, they have recognised the call and declared themselves to be apostles, they have been tested by God's people and accepted as such and they have a place and a role to perform. True apostles are increasing today. My father John Alley is one of these and there are others.

Today in the world there are a number of organisations that attempt to gather apostles together for relationship and support. These organisations are able to validate the ministry of people, but not necessarily substantiate the apostolic call of God in individual's lives, and therefore there are quite possibly people in these organisations who think they are

apostles but are not. In any case. The International Coalition of Apostles is one such organisation with several hundred members.

5 – The Difference between Modern and Bible Day Apostles.

Before we talk about the Apostles, there are some obvious differences between "Bible Times" and today. These differences are cultural, technological, and practical as well as the fact that the early church had more grace and power than we typically experience today. Reading the book of Acts makes us feel that we have far to go in becoming like the early Church, and yet the Bible is clear that "*the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former. (Haggai 2:9)*" The Bible also tells us that when Jesus conducted His first miracle in Cana by turning water into wine, he brought out the best wine last. The wedding host said "*Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now. (John 2:10)*"

God likes to do His best things last. He doesn't start with His best thing and then do His second best until finally all He has are less good things as it goes along. The point here is that the Body of Christ in the world today is supposed to supercede and surpass the Church in the book of Acts. This we have not yet done, and will need apostles to help us get there.

At this point in church history, God is restoring apostles, but as of yet they don't have their full authority. Many people don't fully understand apostles, and those who do know that they have been called to be an apostle, may not even understand it completely themselves. There is much to learn, and a journey still to take. In fact this is a journey that the whole Church in the whole world is taking.

So What Are The Differences?

- Modern day apostles do not yet have the freedom and the authority that Biblical Apostles had, but they are supposed to.
- Modern day apostles don't really govern churches today, but they will eventually take this place.
- Modern day apostles are yet to really find their place in the Body of Christ.
- Modern day apostles may not "seem" like their Biblical counterparts because the everyday life aspect of Biblical apostles is not mentioned much in scripture. The Biblical Apostles often seem more "super" than modern day apostles.
- Many modern day "apostles" have not been tested to be apostles and some of them in fact aren't apostles at all.
- Modern Day apostles have conveniences available to them that their Biblical counterparts didn't have such as technology, world travel and common languages.

There are some similarities between Biblical and Modern day apostles too. They should both be walking with Christ, knowing the mind of the Lord, and being willing to serve and go wherever directed. The apostle is the "sent one" (apostolos in Greek) which means to be sent - an ambassador for Christ. Christ should still command His apostles and they should still listen.

Though times may change, languages may change, clothes may change and technology changes too, one thing should remain. This is the heart of God in the apostle. The apostle should be gentle, humble, and obedient to Christ. The apostle should love and teach the believers how to love too.

6 – What Are Apostles Like? - The Nature of Apostles.

If we are able to accept that apostles may do varying things, and have a variety of personality types (like the 12 apostles did) - there are some qualities which all apostles have. This is the nature of the apostle. These qualities are not skills, talents, abilities, or giftings, but character traits and qualities of the heart.

Here are some qualities you will find in apostles:

- A Different Spirit
- Willingness to Suffer
- Servants of the Church
- Recipients of Apostolic Grace
- Gentle
- Great Love
- A Heart to Discipline
- Humility
- Patience
- Trustworthiness
- Undivided Loyalty to Christ

You can see from this list that it has nothing to do with how charismatic a person is, or what great leadership skills they may have developed, or whether they have a mind for big business. God is looking for someone who has a certain kind of heart. Apostles are not born, they are called and then made as they suffer, and obey, and follow Christ regardless of difficulty. It is through the years that they become the kind of people God wants them to be.

God is not calling people based on their talents, otherwise some of the world's most talented unbelieving people would be serving Christ. God is looking for people of character and some of these He calls to be apostles. He then trains them over many years to become as He requires. Jesus took his own 12 disciples on a fast-tracked 3 year intensive, and then backed it up with visual demonstrations of His resurrection and the day of Pentecost to make these men how they should be. For most other apostles, the process takes much longer, but still requires yieldedness and a moving of the Spirit in lives. The Apostle Paul, even after a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, still spent 14 years in the desert being moulded by Christ into the apostle he was to become.

If a big ministry, success with money, business interests, charismatic leadership, prophetic gifting or other giftings, or big influence were the character and nature of an apostle, then a LOT of people would be apostles.

When the time came for Samuel to anoint a king for Israel from the sons of Jesse, he was directed by the Lord to ignore the 7 handsome older brothers and instead choose David to be King. God was looking at the heart. This is how God selects apostles.

7 – Qualifications to Be an Apostle

The Bible has lists of qualifications for both elders and deacons, but although the qualifications for apostles are not listed all in one place, they are still there in Scripture. There is a reason for this.

In the Bible elders were appointed by apostles and so Paul wrote to Timothy telling him what requirements the elders needed to have before they were selected. With deacons, these were appointed by leadership too and so Paul wrote specifying the qualifications to

be a deacon. However apostles are called by Christ, appointed by Christ and must declare themselves to be an apostle. It is after this that they should be tested to see if they really are an apostle. So the character of an apostle, the fruit of an apostle's life and their devotion and love to Christ and the believers will testify that their call is correct.

Three Basic Qualifications

In **Mark 3:14-15** it says, "*He appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with him, that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.*" This passage gives us 3 basic qualifications as a starting place for apostles. Firstly they must be people who are close to Christ, secondly they must be completely obedient and willing to be "sent ones," and thirdly they will have authority to do Christ's work.

Other Qualifications

The above 3 qualifications are not the only qualifications an apostle needs because other believers can also meet these requirements. Here some additional qualifications needed:

- Submission to Christ - not a law unto themselves. (Philippians 2:5-8)
- Willingness to suffer for Christ. (Colossians 1:24-29)
- Holiness. (2 Corinthians 1:12)
- Sincerity. (2 Corinthians 1:12)
- Grace on their lives. (2 Corinthians 1:12)

In addition to these points, earlier we have also discussed the nature of the apostle, and these qualities dovetail and overlap significantly. Apostles should be people who love wholeheartedly, who care for the whole Body of Christ (not just their own interests), who have a heart for the poor, the widow and orphans, who have a sacrificial life, and much more like this. Jesus said "You will know them by their fruit."

If you are reading this list thinking "I wonder if I am an Apostle?" then quite possibly you are not an Apostle. However if God has called you to be an Apostle and you are wanting to learn and grow into what God requires of you, these qualifications and qualities will help to guide your heart into that place.

If you are wondering if an apostle must see Jesus, then keep reading.

8 – Must An Apostle See Jesus?

The short and simple answer is no. However a lot of believers do think that for someone to be an apostle they must have personally seen Jesus. Let me explain how they think this, and why the answer is actually different.

This idea of personally seeing Jesus comes from a couple of Scriptures which at face value seem to indicate this. **Acts 1:21-22** discusses the selecting of the 12th apostle to replace Judas and says that, "*one of these must become a witness with us.*" People therefore think that an apostle must personally have witnessed or seen Jesus to qualify. Also in **1 Corinthians 9:1** Paul says when defending or qualifying himself that, "*Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?*" Quickly reading this passage can make us think that to be an apostle you must have seen the Lord.

Explanation of those Passages

The passage in Acts was a passage that was not talking about every apostle, but just one. They were looking to replace Judas and this was a particular role specifically needing a

certain kind of person. In the Bible Jesus appointed 12 apostles, but later on when he ascended (Eph 4:7) he gave gifts to the Body of Christ, which included the gift of apostles. (Eph 4:11) The Bible is clear that we need apostles and there would be a number of them, however the 12 Apostles were specifically needed for a certain task which included the founding of the Church. Of this it was said that Judas' replacement (Matthias) must be a witness with us.

This passage is not saying that to be an apostle each person must be a witness because later in the Scriptures other apostles are mentioned who were from other places and were not personal witnesses of Christ's death and resurrection. Examples of apostles who were not even Jewish are Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7) and also Timothy and Silas (1 Thess 2:6 mentioned indirectly).

Next in 1 Corinthians 9:1, Paul is giving a list of reasons of his suitability - he is making a defence of himself to others who have attacked him. He uses various arguments including the facts that he saw the Lord and was also an apostle. There is no linking of the two points but rather just stating a list of reasons. Paul is not an apostle because he saw the Lord, rather he saw the Lord, and he was also an apostle.

It does seem that many apostles do have close encounters with Christ. Today it is the same with apostles too and God calls, equips and trains people to do His will wherever and however He wants. So we are not saying apostles haven't seen Christ, but we are explaining that God can call them without appearing to them. In the end, it will be the way that Christ wants to do it.

#9 – Can a Woman be an Apostle?

"There is no limit to the height to which a woman may aspire in service to Christ" - John Alley

This question can be a difficult question for people, and is certainly an emotive one. We believe that this question has a very positive answer that will satisfy most people, and it certainly satisfies the many men and women we know and are in relationship with. This question however has been much more comprehensively addressed and well explained in the book "The Apostolic Revelation" by John Alley. Any serious consideration of this question should include a thorough reading of Chapter 6 of this book.

The Position of Women in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, as a rule, all anointing for ministry was for men. Men had all the leadership, men had all the authority and all of the anointings. Men were placed in all of the offices — all the kings were men (i.e. there was no anointed queen), all the priests were men, and generally all the prophets. In the main, God's dealings were exclusively with men, and leadership was always upon men, unless God made an exception. And there were a few exceptions in the Old Testament, notably Deborah the Judge and Miriam the Prophetess (Moses' Sister).

So in the Old Testament the pattern was all anointed leaders were men — **unless** God made an exception.

At the end of the Old Testament however was a prophecy with a promise of things to come. *"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."* **(Joel 2: 28-29)**. This promise showed that a day was coming where women would be included.

The New Testament

In the New Testament, all anointings are for men and women equally, unless again, God makes an exception. Everything in the church is for both men and women, unless God makes an exception — and it so happens that there are some apparent exceptions. But of those exceptions, which we will discuss in a moment, God can also make exceptions. Just as the Lord made exceptions to His general method in the Old Testament, He is as free and well able to make exceptions to the usual rule of the New Testament.

There are a few apparent exceptions mentioned in the New Testament, and these are eldership and apostleship. These two points are discussed in further detail in the book.

So in the New Testament generally all anointings and giftings are available to women, with the exceptions of eldership and apostleship

Exceptions to the Exception

In just the same way that God made a few exceptions in the Old Testament and allowed certain women to take positions of significance and leadership, so God can also make "exceptions to his exceptions" in New Testament times and today. So there remains the possibility, although very rare that a woman could be an apostle if the Lord Christ so determined that He needed that.

In Scripture in Romans there is mention of an apostle called Junias. It is unclear if this is a man or a woman as this name has been used for both. This is the only possible reference to a woman being an apostle in Scripture. Perhaps this ambiguity just leaves the door open for God to do whatever He wants when it is needed.

#10 – How Many Apostles Are Mentioned in the Bible?

A lot of people have tried to answer this question before, and a Google search shows partial lists. However here is what I believe to be a comprehensive list of apostles taken with scripture references from the New Testament.

Jesus is our first Apostle. Then we have the 12 disciples who became apostles. In addition to the 12 original apostles there were at least 12 more. Judas was replaced by Matthias and those 12 were the "Apostles of the Lamb."

The other apostles were Paul, Barnabas and James (the Lord's brothers) and some Greek (non Jewish) apostles Apollos, Epaphroditus, Andronicus, Junias, Silas and Timothy. There were also 2 other unnamed apostles. This brings the total to 25 confirmed apostles in Scripture.

However after these 25 we have some other possibilities with some of the writers of Scripture plus Titus and also in 1 Corinthians 15:7 it mentions "all the apostles" allowing room for other unnamed apostles. There are 5 other named possibles plus other unnamed possibles.

In some versions of the Bible the word "messenger" or similar is used rather than apostle. However in the Greek the word apostolos appears with these references.

Here is the confirmed list:

- Jesus Christ (Hebrews 3:1)
- Simon Peter (Matt. 10:2)
- Andrew (Matt. 10:2)
- James the son of Zebedee (Matt. 10:2)
- John (Matt. 10:2)
- Philip (Matt. 10:3)

- Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3)
- Thomas (Matt. 10:3)
- Matthew (Matt. 10:3)
- James the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3)
- Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3), or Judas the son of James (Luke 6:16)
- Simon the Zealot (Matt. 10:4)
- Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10:4)
- Matthias (Acts 1:26)
- Paul (Gal. 1:1)
- Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:5-6, Acts 14:4, 14)
- Andronicas (Rom. 16:7)
- Junias (Rom. 16:7)
- James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19)
- Silas (Silvanus) (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:6)
- Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:6)
- Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25) - The word apostolos does not appear in most English translations but does appear in the Greek, Strong's word 652, Apostolos.
- Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6-9 & 1 Corinthians 3:22)
- 2 Unnamed Apostles (2 Corinthians 8:23) - in many English versions it says messenger, but in Greek, Apostolos.

Possible Other Apostles

- Jude the Brother of Jesus is considered a possibility. He was considered an apostle by early believers and church patriarchs. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_of_Jude)
- Mark and Luke. Some early Church Fathers considered them to be apostles as they had authored Scripture.
- The writer of Hebrews may have been an apostle.
- Titus. Very similar in position and role to Timothy who was an apostle.
- Possible other unnamed apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7)

If you include the 25 confirmed apostles in Scripture, plus the 5 named possible apostles you have a total of 30, notwithstanding the Scripture referring to "all the apostles."

#11 – Apostles and Spiritual Covering

The word 'covering' is not new around the church. We have all heard references to spiritual covering, like: - "Who is your spiritual covering?", "What is your spiritual covering?", or "You should be under covering," etc.

Generally this expressed the need for everyone to be a member of a church. The pastor of that church (or the church itself) was seen as your spiritual covering. To say you were 'under covering' meant that you 'belonged' somewhere in the Body of Christ, and by belonging to a specific church this provided you with your bona fides as a Christian. This meant you were not independent, you were submitted and accountable, you had a shepherd (someone who watched over your soul, someone who could presumably correct you if you were deceived or went wrong) and because of that you would be seen as a genuine Christian. Thus you were seen as being "under covering."

Covering is a Great Deal More Than That

Covering is in fact more than that, and occupies another dimension entirely. Under true covering, spiritual power is flowing and is at work because something appointed by Christ is in place. A spiritual covering is a spiritual force field which helps bring in good things

(blessings) and keep out bad things (protection). The life and power is provided by those anointings of Christ that flow through apostles, directly or indirectly.

The covering of Christ is vested in *certain men* (i.e. specific individuals). God has always done things this way and there are many Scriptural examples. Adam was a covering for the entire human race and when he fell, we all fell. Abraham was a covering to us and because of his standing as the Father of Faith, we are children of Abraham and we inherit blessing because of him. Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles and a Father to us all. We have inherited much good and blessing because of Paul. The Bible has many examples of men whose lives were a covering to others and through them God was able to bless and protect His people.

If we would have the full measure of the blessing of Christ, we need to have in place the relationships appointed by Christ that are a covering for us. By this we see that our lives are affected by other people. Our lives are impacted by those who are over us in the Lord whether we like this concept or not.

In churches where there is an anointed leader and unity amongst the supporting leadership, there is always a certain level of covering and protection. This kind of leadership which seeks to follow Christ and work together always provides a good place for people to grow in Christ, to serve, to be blessed and to find what God has planned.

However there is a level of covering that is even above this - an apostolic covering. When we are in proper relationship directly or indirectly with the apostle's that God has placed over us, we find that this brings covering, blessing, protection, and a spiritual dynamic of good that we may not even understand. This apostolic covering is the covering of Christ.

You can read more detail about this in "[How Does Apostolic Covering Work?](#)" - and cover this concept in depth in Chapter 7 of "The Apostolic Revelation" book.

#12 – How Does Apostolic covering Work?

The life of one person has always affected many. Spiritual covering is a grace or anointing on a person, more specifically an apostle or leader appointed by Christ. This is an in-depth topic and is covered comprehensively in chapter 7 of "The Apostolic Revelation."

In the Old Testament **Adam** was the "Father" to the human race. What Adam did affected us all. When Adam fell into sin, the consequences of it were tragic. The life of one affected many. Adam was a covering that became faulty.

As a result of Adam's faulty covering, **Christ** came as the second Adam and because of His righteous life and obedience to Christ became a restoration to us of God's goodness. The life of one affects the many who place their trust in Him. Christ becomes a covering to us who place our lives under His covering.

More Examples

Moses was called as one man to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt. It could not have been anyone else but had to be Moses. He was given anointing to lead and provided for them a covering. Moses was a Father to them. In Hebrews it says that all were "*baptised into Moses*" which sounds a bit strange, but emphasises how God was using one man as a covering to His people.

Abraham was the father of many nations and through Christ he becomes our father. We inherit the blessings of God given to Abraham. Here is a very strong example of covering as an anointing and means of blessing and grace if we are under the covering. Here is an example of one man providing covering and blessing to many.

As we go through the Bible we see more and more examples of how God used just one man (or occasionally a woman) as a covering for His people. It is God's way of doing

things. King David was the "*Shepherd of Israel*." Apostle Paul was the "*Apostle to the Gentiles*" and a "*Father in Christ*" whereas Peter was the "*Apostle to the Jews*" and Christ said that Peter was a rock on which He was going to build the church. Peter is a Father to all of us in the Church.

The Nature of Covering

Apostolic covering is in reality the covering of Christ. It is something provided by God to His people and He uses apostles to provide it. Through this covering there is grace and blessing provided to God's people and in addition there is protection, accountability and belonging too. To benefit from the covering of Christ we need to have hearts given to our leaders. The best example is of King David having given his heart to Saul who was the leader before him. The giving of the heart is a choice to serve and to care for your leader. When the heart is given and you are in right relationship then the gate opens for the channel of blessing to flow because you are under covering.

All believers must be in right relationship, and also, all ministries and ministers must also be submitted and under the covering of Christ. Otherwise the covering is patchy and is the covering of men, or not a covering at all.

13 – Elderships in the New Testament.

Christians everywhere agree that there is only one Church and that all believers must walk together in unity, but in reality that is not the case in the majority of locations. In a typical location there will be a variety of denominational congregations, one or two non-denominational congregations, a few house churches and a bunch of non affiliated believers, plus heaps of unbelievers. In each congregation will be a separate set of elderships (or group of deacons) and they have no relationship with each other.

However in the Scriptures we see passages like this, "*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.*" Titus 1:5-6. There are many passages like this that deal with the Church (big C) on a town by town or city by city basis. In the book of Revelation Christ wrote letters to churches... the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Philadelphia and so on. In the mind of Christ, there is only one Church in each location.

Because so many believers today think it's normal for the church to be fragmented they have never considered that in fact the elderships and the leadership structures we have may not be Biblical. However, if there is only one church in each location (according to the Bible), then there would also only be one eldership (local church leadership) in each location too.

The Scriptures are full of references to "the apostles and the elders". If you read Acts 15, you'll see this phrase a number of times. Biblically the elders are the leaders of the Church in a given location. In a city there might be many ministries (local congregations) and many other works of Christ but there will only be a handful of elders, and these will be selected from amongst the five-fold ministers already in the city.

Once we understand this concept, then the many things the Bible has to say about elders are now understood in a completely different light. We are not talking about a few slightly more spiritual men and women in a local congregation who volunteer their time for leadership, and who may rotate every 3 years, or serve in this role because of a vote. We are talking about men called by Christ to lifelong ministry, selected because of their dedication and qualifications (according to Timothy), appointed by apostles and called to walk in love with the other elders to lead the whole Church in their city. We are talking about something quite different to anything we have seen or experienced in our lifetimes.

The main point to make here is that this is something we haven't witnessed yet, but as apostles are restored, we will see some amazing changes in the Body of Christ as it moves from institutional (denominational/organisational) to relationship-based structure. The years ahead are going to be radical and exciting for Christians. Your job is to pray - pray for right relationship for leaders, pray for the restoration of apostles, pray for the unity of the Body of Christ in your city.

Chapter 8 of the Apostolic Revelation is an in-depth study of elderships in the New Testament and is necessary for proper understanding of this subject.

14 – Apostles are Spiritual Fathers.

In the previous summary we learned [what a spiritual father is](#). With this information, and combined with our knowledge of [spiritual covering](#), we can now come to see that apostles are actually spiritual fathers, to us who have faith.

God appointed "fathers" throughout Scripture and history for all sorts of reasons. Abraham is the "Father of many nations", Adam is the "Father of the human race", Jacob is the "Father of Israel", Paul is the "Father to the Gentiles" and the Bible says became a "Father to us all". God uses certain called and anointed men and individuals for the role of fathering. Apostles are also spiritual fathers in the Body of Christ because they are needed for this, and because through this, Christ wants to bless and strengthen the Church.

When a child has no parents, there are certain things that child will never receive, even from other adults. A father imparts to a child identity, courage, security, discipline and blessing. When fathers (apostles) are missing from the Body of Christ the Body is also missing identity, blessing, and many of the things which Christ intends it to have. Even Christ himself in His perfection received words of encouragement and identity from His Father in Heaven, "*This is my son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased.*" We need fathers in the Body of Christ to strengthen, give identity, and be a source of blessing and covering that helps the Church become what it needs to become.

In Ephesians 4 we see that the role of apostles is to mature the Church, and therefore as fathers they are able to do this. The following Biblical description of the apostolic ministry comes alive for us when we are more informed of the importance of the father's role. "*As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children... For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God...*" - 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7, 11-12

At the end of the Old Testament there was a final word that said that the Prophet Elijah was coming to "*turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers*" or else there would be a curse. As we see apostles restored to the Body of Christ, we are seeing the return of fathering and the nature of relational Christianity. We will find that as the heart comes back into these relationships there will be great victory for the Kingdom. It will be the way it was always intended.

15 – What is a Spiritual Father?

"From the beginning God had revealed Himself to be a personal God, but more amazing is this; when Christ came in the flesh as the great revelation of God, He revealed God to be God in Father and Son." - The Apostolic Revelation, Chapter 9.

God is a Father to a Son and also a Son to a Father - the nature of God is revealed to us in this dynamic relationship. Why would we be surprised at all if the Body of Christ were also

to have these kinds of fathering and sonship relationships throughout it. In fact they do, and the Bible is also full of these examples and this language. Once you notice it, you find it everywhere.

Father and Sonship Examples

- "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing." - **John 5:19**
- "Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us" - **John 17:20**
- "I became your father through the gospel" - Apostle Paul, **1 Corinthians 4:15**
- "To bring many sons to glory" - **Hebrews 2:10**
- "This is my beloved Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased." - **Matt 3:17**
- "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." - **Malachi 4:5-6**
- "I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending you Timothy, my son whom I love." - **1 Corinthians 4:16**
- "To Titus, my true son in our common faith" - **Titus 1:4**
- "You are no longer a slave, but a son" - **Galatians 4:7**
- "You received the Spirit of Sonship" - **Romans 8:15**
- If you want more examples just do a few searches in your Bible software for the words father and son - and you'll find more Scripture references.

A Difference in Thinking

If you have paid attention when you've read the Bible, you'll have noticed that many references to being a son are not all talking about being "sons of God". It's true that we are brothers of Christ and as such adopted as sons, but so many references mention sons and fathers in reference to each other. The Bible is open about our relationships to each other that are significant and important. If we claim to love God but don't love each other our love is nothing and meaningless. It is our relationships with each other that are the fruit of our relationship with Christ.

So sonship is not only toward God, but toward leaders (fathers) over us in the Lord. A spiritual father is more than just a "godparent." A spiritual father is someone who cares for us, who imparts to us love, identity, spiritual covering, who prays for us, and is concerned for our well being. In return we love, honour, serve, and care. We give selflessly to make our spiritual fathers work easy and receive covering from them and grace and the blessing of Christ.

A spiritual father is someone God has placed in our lives for our spiritual well being. We should submit to them, give our hearts and serve and honour them. In return God will bring good to us through them. They are a source of life to us through Christ.

For more detail you will need to read Chapter 9 of "The Apostolic Revelation."

16 – Do Apostles Make Mistakes?

All apostles are human, and all humans make mistakes. This doesn't give apostles a license to sin. All believers must guard the heart and the mind and strive to walk before Christ and with each other in integrity. All believers must be on the watch against false motives, wrong attitudes, and choose submission, service, and love.

Do fathers make mistakes? Yes, even the best dads do. This doesn't disqualify them from being a father, or even from being a good father. It certainly does not change a family's

need to have such a father, and to continue to receive the love and leadership of such a father. Neither does it remove the love of all the members of the family for the father. Not in a good family. Usually mistakes honestly dealt with will draw a family closer together and result in increased closeness. In a good family this should happen.

In the family of God mistakes can and will happen. In this way we all learn and we maintain our love and dependence on each other. Mistakes are not a bad thing if they are dealt with properly with a right spirit. This will help bring the whole Church to maturity.

Biblical Examples

The Scripture has many examples of times when genuine apostles made mistakes, or pursued things which were a dead end, or spoke their own thoughts rather than the Lord's.

- "*When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong...*" - **Galatians 2:11**

- "*Forgive me this wrong*" - **Paul - 2 Corinthians 12:13**

The Bible has other examples showing the humanity of apostles, like when Paul was when writing Scripture and speaking his own opinions using the words like "in my judgement" when talking about marriage. Another example is found in Acts 15:7-10 where it speaks of how Paul tried to cross the border of Mysia to enter Bithynia to preach the gospel but the Holy Spirit wouldn't allow them. Later that night he had a vision of a man from Macedonia calling them. In this passage Paul felt to do a certain thing but wasn't aware of the Lord's will until it was later revealed. Sometimes apostles (and all believers) will think God wants a certain thing but be mistaken.

Clearly genuine apostles do make mistakes and are fallible, but that doesn't negate the fact that they are called and have a grace from God for certain tasks. Nobody expects pastors or evangelists or teachers to be infallible, and so neither are apostles or prophets. All are called by God, given grace, and anointed and still have to walk with Christ in humility to fulfil their call.

Sometimes, however, there are people who claim to be apostles, but have serious error in their lives. For these situations the Bible has very clear directions for how to deal with people who are "false apostles" or people who have fallen into serious sin.

17 – What is a False Apostle?

There are never false or counterfeits unless there is the genuine. Nobody produces a \$99 note because it would immediately be recognised as a fake. So because there are genuine apostles, the evil one attempts to produce fakes in an attempt to thwart the work of God. The church must accept, honour, and follow true apostles, yet at the same time be discerning, so as to guard against and reject the false apostle.

The early church, it seemed, knew they were supposed to test, or assess, the claims of apostles so as to guard against false ministry. It was common in the early church to receive travelling ministers, and communication was not what it is today. Jesus commended the Ephesian church for testing and rejecting false apostles (Revelation 2:2), and Paul remonstrated with the Corinthian church for failing to do so, after having been deceived by boastful men with false motives. (2 Corinthians 11:13)

At the same time, it would be a grave mistake to assume that false apostles are as prevalent as true and genuine apostles of Christ. This is simply not so, and the New Testament gives us a right and healthy perspective. Biblical references that honour apostles abound, whereas false apostles are referred to in the two places which have already been quoted in the previous paragraph. There is far more mention of false

prophets, false teachers, false brothers and even false Christ's than there are of false apostles. Perhaps this is to do with the nature of the ministry of apostles. The fact remains that the enemy will attempt to counterfeit every aspect of the life of the church, each ministry anointing, and the teaching of the truth itself.

A false apostle is someone who claims to have apostolic ministry, claims to be called of God as an apostle and claims leadership and government over God's people, but they are not genuinely called. They may be misled and sincerely believe they are called when they aren't, but they are still believers. Other false apostles are simply false brethren sown into the church by the evil one.

Today in the world there are many people who are now thinking that they are apostles and claiming the role for themselves. However as time progresses and we come into a greater understanding of what it means to be an apostle according to God's definition, many of these people will realise, or others will realise, that they are not apostles. This would not make them false brethren but just misinformed. However as understanding comes, God will order the Body of Christ, and His people will all take their places. We will become better at knowing what apostles are, and what they do, and it will become easier to test and [know the true from the false](#). The best way to know the false is to be well acquainted with the real thing, and the false will never fool you.

18 – How to Know a False Apostle?

On a previous page we described [what a false apostle is](#), so how can you tell the difference between the false and the genuine? There are only 2 references to false apostles in the entire bible and given so, it would be a mistake to assume that there are far more false apostles than genuine. If we think there are more false than true, then we would be seeing false even in the true. Instead we must become well acquainted with the genuine so that the fake will be easy to notice. However what signs should we look for in discerning the false from the true.

Paul describes false apostles in 2 Corinthians 11 by saying that:

- They commend themselves and boast beyond proper limits.
- They lead believers astray from pure and sincere devotion to Christ.
- They preach another Jesus and a different gospel
- They create the impression that they are "super" apostles.
- They look for opportunity to be considered equal with true apostles.
- They are deceitful
- They are servants of Satan and will be judged.
- They push themselves forward, even to the point of abuse and control.

There are 2 passages in the New Testament with serious warnings about false leadership in the church. From these passages we can glean information about what to consider and watch for in testing for false apostolic ministry. These passages are Jude 3-16 and 2 Peter 2.

Characteristics of False Leaders

There are a number of characteristics defined by Scripture, in particular by Jude and Peter, as being typical of false leadership. These are:

- Corruption in the heart - false motives such as envy, rivalry, greed, and other selfish motives.
- Quick to claim leadership for themselves and equally quick to find fault and exclude others. They are defined by Jude as grumblers and fault-finders and Peter said they were bold and arrogant.

- Motivated by self interest rather than love of Christ and the brethren and this is the "way of Balaam." They use boasting and flattery to establish themselves and achieve their ends.
- They despise authority, so they will oppose apostles who they seek to undermine. They will themselves be unsubmitted to true spiritual leadership that God has appointed.
- They are under serious judgement and will be repaid with "harm" for what they have done. "Their end will be what their actions deserve", "their destruction has not been sleeping", and "for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."

Ultimately Christ said that "it is by their fruit you shall know them" and so we recognise that God has given genuine apostles to the Body, and that grace flows from their lives to us as a result of their calling and anointing. The false apostle however does not produce fruit and the Body of Christ as it becomes familiar with the real, will learn to recognise the false.

19 – Everyone is Apostolic – Being an Apostolic People.

The Body of Christ is made up on many parts, and although most people are not apostles, all the people are supposed to be apostolic. There are certain qualities that should be in all believers, common to them and working through them that give them apostolic life and character. Everyone should be apostolic in nature, but what exactly does this mean?

In Psalm 32:8-9 it says "*Do not be like the horse or mule, which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.*" The word of significance here is "understanding" because this is what Scripture says we must have. God is looking for a group of people, it could be 50, or it could be 200 that He can place understanding on, which is an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and then they will have one heart and one mind to do the will of God. This would be an example of an apostolic people. There are two such examples in Scripture. The first is the early church who were "*of one heart and mind*" and we are aware of the power of influence of their lives. The second example was in Israel in the days of King David when "*the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the Lord.*"

The majority of believers do not have understanding of the Lord's ways or will and lack power. The majority of sermons do little good, but when God gives the spirit of understanding to a group of people, they become one in heart and mind. This is the anointing that was poured out on the day of Pentecost on the early church. This anointing of understanding is supposed to be on all believers and should make us to be an apostolic people.

What is an Apostolic People

An apostolic people or group is not just a group that has apostles, rather it is a group that has certain qualities, such as:

- Understanding of God's will and a desire to do it
- Unity between believers - absence of competition and striving
- Community - willingness to work together and honour each other.
- Admiration of each other - believers like each other.
- One heart and mind.
- Clothed with Christ's authority
- Submission to authority
- Faith and the fear of the Lord
- Willingness to accept responsibility

- Prayer and the willingness to pray

And there are also some very specific apostolic qualities such as:

- Willingness to go - to be sent at any time.
- God shows them things - the direction to go
- Willingness to suffer, to be patient in hardship
- Undivided loyalty to Christ
- Surrender to Christ

Apostolic Christianity is an experience of walking with Christ, where for each believer these things are real, tangible, and personal to their faith. Each believer experiences the dealings of God, as intimately and as personally as Abraham and Paul did. Anything less, or anything else, is not the apostolic faith, but only religion.

Believers who are apostolic in nature will walk in humility, be teachable, and submitted. They will honour leaders and walk in faithfulness in relationships rather than just for convenience or to get ahead. These believers will be accountable, transparent, open and honest, and will love from the heart. They will lay down their lives for each other. They will not be a democracy but will be a community. They will be a people who although they have rights will not cling to them.

As you can see, the Church has not yet become an apostolic people, but we are supposed to be. As Christ restores apostles, the church will begin to get back its apostolic nature and we will become mature, not lacking anything. The future is going to be quite different to what we have been used to.

20 – List of Apostolic Doctrine – Apostolic Beliefs.

Listed below are a number of significant things we believe the Bible says about apostles. This is not a creed, and neither is it necessarily comprehensive. This is not to be confused with any list of apostolic doctrines as listed by any number of apostolic denominational churches. When we speak here of apostolic doctrine we are not talking denominationally, but simply rather in terms of New Testament life and what the Bible has to say.

- Jesus initially appointed 12 apostles - Apostles of the Lamb.
- Later Jesus appointed additional apostles and continues to appoint them - Ascension Apostles.
- There are 25 apostles mentioned in Scripture including Christ himself.
- Apostles are 5 fold ministers called by Christ with certain tasks to perform.
- Apostles and prophets are the foundations of the Church and Christ is the cornerstone.
- Apostles help to build lives together - they teach the Church how to love.
- Apostles are needed until the Church is completely mature.
- To be an apostle you must be called of Christ, and go through times of testing and maturing.
- An apostle does not necessarily have to see Christ physically or have witnessed the resurrection.
- Typically, apostles are men, the Bible is ambiguous about the possibility of women apostles. God is free to do what He wants.
- Apostles provide spiritual covering to God's people - which is a covering of grace, an anointing.
- Apostles are fathers to God's people.
- Apostles are Sent Ones - and the people of God are supposed to be apostolic in nature as well.
- Apostles are human and can make mistakes.

- Sometimes false apostles arise and we must learn how to recognise them.
- To recognise a false apostle, we must be very familiar with the genuine.
- The hallmark of a genuine apostle is gentleness.
- Apostles are not necessarily church planters.
- Fame, fortune or charisma are not necessarily apostolic qualities or to be desired for such.
- Apostles seek to be servants.
- Apostles are acquainted with suffering.

In "The Apostolic Revelation" all of the above beliefs are well expounded. If you have any questions, please contact us via our website at www.peace.org.au - we would love to hear from you.