

**SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY #27:
Pneumatology, Part 5
Gifts of the Spirit, Part 2: *Apostleship*
Ephesians 4:11-16
Grace Community Church
Kingston, Tennessee
Wednesday, July 31, 2019**

1. INTRODUCTION:

- a. The study of **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** can be a confusing study (concerning their existence, functionality and number of).
- b. Passages of scripture which refer to the spiritual gifts:
 - i. Romans 12:3-8
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30
 - iii. Ephesians 4:11-16

2. TEXT: Ephesians 4:11-16, (11) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (13) till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (14) that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, (15) but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—(16) from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- a. In this passage, the gifts are listed in order of importance to the Church
- b. Some commentaries list 5 gifts in this passage, some 4 (combine pastor-teacher).
 - i. **TEACHER** refers to the **DUTY** of the person endowed with the gift.
 - ii. **PASTOR** denotes the **CARE** with which a **TEACHER** is to minister.
 - 1. The Greek word translated as **PASTOR** is the word for **SHEPHERD**

3. APOSTLE

- a. “The first and foremost of all the endowments of the Spirit is that of apostleship.”¹
- b. The word APOSTLE comes from the Greek word *apostelos*, which is derived from the Greek verb *apostello*
- i. *apo* is a preposition which means FROM
 - ii. *stello* is a verb when means TO SEND
 - iii. So, *apostello* literally means TO SEND FROM
 - iv. The noun form of that verb means ONE SENT FORTH
 - v. The word *apostelos* was an ordinary household word in NT days meaning MESSENGER.
 1. In Heb. 3:1, Christ is called THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION
- c. The word APOSTLE is used in two ways in the NT:
- i. TECHNICAL/LIMITED SENSE—as used for the 12 Apostles
 - ii. GENERAL SENSE—of ones who are sent forth as messengers who are dispatched with the Gospel message
- d. APOSTLESHIP IN THE TECHNICAL/LIMITED SENSE:
- i. Luke 6:13, “And when it was day, He called His disciples to [Himself]; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles”
 - ii. Some other men besides the original disciples are called APOSTLES in the NT:
 1. Romans 1:1, “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated to the gospel of God”
 2. Galatians 1:19, “But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”
 - iii. In Acts 1:23, the 11 faithful Apostles urged the early church to choose from two men, Joseph and Matthias, someone to replace Judas. Matthias was chosen as the 12th Apostle.
 1. Mathias is not mentioned by name outside of Acts 1

¹ W. A. Criswell, *The Baptism, Filling and Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, p. 60.

2. There is a passing reference to him in Acts 6:2.
 3. Nothing is known about Mathias either before or after Acts 2.
 4. Some commentaries think the Apostles prematurely chose Mathias, because God later appointed Paul as an Apostle.
- iv. To me, the strongest evidence for excluding Mathias from the SPECIFIC office of apostle is twofold:
1. #1: The fact that Scripture refers to there being only 12 apostles
 - a. Revelation 21:14, “Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”
 2. #2: Paul was DEFINITELY called by God to be an apostle
 - a. Ephesians 1:1, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”
 - b. #1: DUTIES OF AN APOSTLE (TECHNICAL/LIMITED SENSE): They laid the foundation for the church
 - i. Eph. 2:19-20, (19) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,
 - ii. What does it mean that the apostles laid the foundation of the church?
 - iii. Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - iv. During His earthly ministry, Christ told His disciples that when it was necessary, His Spirit would particularly endue them with an ability to formulate divine doctrine
 1. John 14:26, ““But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.””

2. John 16:13, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

c. #2 DUTY OF THE ORIGINAL 12 APOSTLES was to deal with the weightier issues of church doctrine and polity in the early days of the fledgling church.

i. EX: the issue of circumcision

1. The Apostles convened a synod in order to discern God’s will on this issue.
2. Acts 15:2-6, (2) Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. (3) So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. (4) And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. (5) But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." (6) Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.
3. Acts 15:23, “They wrote this [letter] by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.”
4. Acts 15:28-29, (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: (29) that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

d. #3 DUTY OF THE ORIGINAL 12 APOSTLES: work miracles

- i. Acts 2:43, “Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”**
- ii. Acts 5:12, “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.”**
- iii. Miracles were signs from God denoting His approval of the Apostles and the message they proclaimed.**

1. 2 Corinthians 12:12, “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

2. Heb. 2:3-4, (3) how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him [i.e., the apostles], (4) God also bearing witness [of their Apostleship and doctrine] both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

e. #4 DUTY OF THE ORIGINAL 12 APOSTLES: to oversee the expansion of the Church

- i. Acts 8:1, “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.”**
- ii. Acts 8:14, “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them”**
- iii. Acts 9:27, “But Barnabas took him and brought [him] to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had**

spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”

iv. Acts 9:32, “Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all [parts of the country], that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.”

f. #5 DUTY OF THE ORIGINAL 12 APOSTLES: in the future, they will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

i. Lk. 22:29-30, (29) "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, (30) "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

v. The TECHNICAL/LIMITED APOSTLES had no successors

1. Scripture says that there were only 12 TECHNICAL/LIMITED APOSTLES (Rev. 21:14)

Rev 2:2, says that anyone now claiming to be an Apostle is a liar, “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars....”

e. APOSTLESHIP IN THE GENERAL SENSE:

i. The Greek word *apostolos* was used in NT times for a MESSENGER

1. Rm. 16:7, “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.”

2. 2 Cor. 8:23, “If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers (Gk. *apostolos*) of the churches, the glory of Christ.”

3. Acts 14:14, “But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out....”

4. Gal. 1:19, “But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.”

ii. Today, the spiritual gift of APOSTLESHIP is NOT a divine appointment to the OFFICE of foundation-builder for the Church, but rather to the task of being a special emissary/messenger for Christ.

1. The word APOSTLE is a Greek word which is derived from the Greek verb TO SEND.
2. The Latin word which is rooted in the Latin verb TO SEND is MISSIONARY.
3. Modern day MISSIONARIES fulfill the GENERAL usage of the word APOSTLE.

iii. COMPARING MISSIONARY TO APOSTLE:

1. #1: the missionary call involves being SENT, not CALLED.
2. #2: the missionary gift involves working oneself out of a job.
3. #3: the missionary gift involves working transculturally.
4. #4: the missionary gift involves church-planting.

a. The apostle Paul epitomized this principle

- i. Romans 15:20, “And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation”
- ii. 1 Corinthians 3:10, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.”

4. CONCLUSION: