

A SPEAKING GIFT
THE GIFT OF A P O S T L E S H I P -

Text I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

EXPLANATION

WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THIS GIFT?

- A. This gift was the original missionary gift. The word apostle means someone sent. It involved the Lord calling certain individuals, commissioning them, and confirming their ministry (Matt. 10:1, 5, 8).
- B. This gift involved preaching to people in different places and it required special God-given powers which confirmed and authenticated their message (II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4; Matt. 10:8).

Manytimes folks miss the point of the miracles in the Scriptures which both Jesus and His disciples did. The purpose of miracles which were done was to authenticate the messenger and his message (Jn. 7:21, 31; 14:11; 20:30, 31).

EXERCISE

II. HOW THIS GIFT WAS EXERCISED IN THE N.T.

- A. This gift was exercised first of all in a unique way by the 12 apostles and it was restricted in certain ways to them.
 - 1. Those with this gift had been with the Lord Jesus from the beginning (Acts 1:21, 22).
 - 2. Those with this gift had received a personal call and commission from the Lord Himself (Mark 3:13, 15).
 - 3. Those with this gift had the power to work miracles (Matt. 10:8; Mark 3:15; Acts 2:43).

4. Those with this gift were sent to the Jews to preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 10:6, 7). Their powers were to substantiate their message. They were to provide nothing for themselves as a testimony either for or against their brethren (Matt. 10:9, 14, 40, 42).
 5. Those with this gift were used by the Lord to lay the foundation for the church program. To the apostle Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven or the distinct privilege of opening the door of the gospel to the Jews (Acts 2:38-41) as well as the (Acts 10:44-48). It was upon this group that the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and to initiate the Church program on the day of Pentecost (Lk 24:49? Acts 1:2-4, 8; Eph. 2:19, 20).
 6. Those with this gift had the power to bestow the Holy Spirit upon believers by laying their hands upon them. Notice while Philip preached he was not an apostle and did not possess this power that the apostles possessed. (Acts 8:14-18). Once again this power was to confirm the message and here it related to the church program of including half-Jewish Samaritans in the body of Christ.
- B. This gift of apostleship or being sent as a missionary was extended to others in the N.T. but it differed from that which the original 12 possessed.
1. Notice others were called apostles who were not among the original twelve. Barnabas was called an apostle (Acts 14:14). So was James (Gal. 1:19), so was Paul (Rom. 1:1), Silvanus and Timothy (I Thess. 1:1; 2:6).
 2. Notice that the apostolic gift differed with these other apostles in both their message and their ministry. While the original 12 were sent to the Jews and laid the foundation for the church with their ministry, these other N.T. apostles preached the gospel of the grace of God and had a ministry of planting churches (I Cor. 9:1, 2).
 3. Notice that the ministry of the other apostles was confirmed in a similar way as the original 12 but that such miraculous powers ceased when the message of the church program had been authenticated (Acts 13:6-12; 14:8-10; 16:16-18; 19:11-20; 20:9-10; 28:1-6).

EXTENT

III. HOW THIS GIFT OPERATES AND APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALS IN OUR DAY.

- A. The apostolic gift has had a continuing aspect in those whom we refer to as missionaries in our day. These are God called and commissioned individuals who are given special abilities to go to other people and establish churches among them.
- B. There are three aspects involved in this gift today and all three of these things should be evidenced by those who have it.
 1. First of all a missionary is someone who is sent. He is not like a pastor who is called to a particular pastorate, rather he is someone who is sent out of and supported by a local church. He may not know to begin with where he is going but the Lord will lay a burden upon him to go out from where he is. Compare this in Paul and Barnabas' case (Acts 13:2-4).
 2. The second aspect involved in the missionary gift is the ability to transcend cultures or to serve in a different culture than your own. Only an individual with this gift will be able to adapt to such differences and do the Lord's work. Those without it will not get over the culture shock and will develop problems.
 3. Finally involved in the missionary gift is the goal of church-planting which is always associated with and dependent upon other gifts which an individual must have. In order to establish a church one must have another spirit gift such as teaching or evangelism. Going across the ocean doesn't make an individual a missionary. Nor does the ability to live among different people-there must be people won to Christ and churches planted.

ERROR

IV. WHAT IS FALSELY PROPAGATED CONCERNING THIS GIFT?

- A. Some claim to be apostolic successors with miraculous powers to do things like the apostles did (Acts 2:43). These fail to see that the miraculous power was to authenticate their witness. (II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4)
- B. This apostolic gift involved the unique ability to go to different people and preach and minister in

a way so that churches were established. It is evident that the miraculous powers associated with this gift ceased when the gospel message had been authenticated (II Tim. 4:20; Phil. 2:25-30). From this we may conclude that there is no such thing as apostolic succession and that there are no apostles today with miraculous powers. The message of the church program of the body in Christ has been confirmed (Heb. 2:3, 4).