

# Apostles and Prophets

The word Apostle means 'sent one', from the Greek word 'Apostolos'. Now if they were sent, they must have been sent by someone; and that someone was Jesus. Their whole purpose and being was that they were sent to introduce the Gospel to the world, and that happened like this:-

The Apostle had the unparalleled ministry of introducing the Gospel to the rest of the world, and for that they were uniquely equipped with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit - something that no-one else ever has before or since. This is the ultimate test of a true apostle, and no-one today can truly claim this office. Their purpose was to be the foundation, and begin the church age (Eph.2:20.)

In the days of Yeshua (Jesus), the Pharisees were the God given authority with the Sanhedrin, ruling for them from the Temple in Jerusalem. This is acknowledged in Deut.17:8-12 and by Yeshua in Matthew 23.3. However, because of the constant hypocrisy of some of its members, Yeshua, Son of the Living God, discredited their authority on earth in order to give it to another (Matthew 21:43). The others to which it was given was Peter, James and John (Matthew 16:18-19). However ultimate authority belongs to Yeshua only (Matthew 23.8-10) The keys of the kingdom were the authoritative administration of salvation from on high, as prophesied by Isaiah 22:22-25.

In Isaiah 22:22 the prophet speaks of the keys of the house of David being transferred to Yeshua, also prior to that in 1 Chronicles 9:26-27, there were four chief porters among the Levites that lodged around the house of God, because the charge was upon them to look after the four gates in the walls of Jerusalem, and to open them every morning. Therefore, in like manner, the keys to enter the Kingdom of Heaven were given to Peter James and John. The fourth key was given to Rabbi Sha'ul of Tarsus, who himself states in 1 Cor.15.8, that he was one born out of time.

The keys of the kingdom which were given to Peter and the apostles were part of the authority given by Yeshua, along with the ability to bind and loose in Matthew 16.18-19. Binding and loosing are things which have to do with salvation, and not, as many Pentecostals and Charismatics would have us believe, a means of disposing of evil spirits. It is merely the power of God working effectively to usher people into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is also the reason why Rabbi Sha'ul states in Romans 1:16. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God for **SALVATION**, for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek or Gentile" (KJV)

The system that God has in place was begun by the apostles and prophets, since then these two ministries have now been made obsolete, contrary to popular belief. Their only purpose in God was first that their ministry should be seen as authentic, and second that they should release the power of God unto the indigenous people, and then on a wider scale to the Gentiles. The evidence for this is found in Ephesians 2:20:-

"And are built upon the foundation of apostles and

prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-  
stone in whom all the building fitly framed together  
groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."

This scripture in Ephesians clearly shows the plan of God for the church. Anyone who knows anything about buildings in those days knows that first the corner-stone goes in place, then the beginning of the other walls both left and right form the foundations. Once the foundations are in, there is no more necessary use for more foundations, for the building continues to be built without them as the main support is the chief corner-stone. So it is with the church. There is no longer the need for either apostles or prophets, the church will continue to be built on their foundation, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Now the church is the Body of Christ, and entrance into this body is only possible by means of Spirit Baptism. This is a ministry that the Holy Spirit empowers only in relation to the church in the church age. Once the church is complete and raptured, he will no longer be performing the work of Spirit Baptism, for He baptised no-one in either the Old Testament (Tanach) or in the gospels. Once the church is removed from the earth, the ministry of Spirit Baptism will cease and be no more, neither in the Tribulation nor in the Millennial Kingdom, for Spirit Baptism did not begin until Acts 2.

It is true to say that every believer, without exception, is part of the Body of Christ, and he/she was baptised into that body when they were born again (1Cor.12:13), furthermore Ephesians 3:5 records that this is the only Spirit Baptism which the Bible talks about, and where it is true that all believers have at least one gift to enhance the church, there is no reason to suppose that that gift is speaking in tongues in every case, as is also specified in 1 Cor.12:29-31.

Spirit Baptism in the book of Acts raises something of a problem in the cases where it appears the Spirit Baptism is delayed. This seems to contradict the doctrine of the epistles which state that every believer is baptised by the Spirit the moment he believes. It is therefore necessary to study the problem of delay of Spirit baptism in Acts chapters 2, 8, 10, 19.

For us to clearly understand why there was a delay, we must study each chapter individually on its own merits, but the bottom line is authentication. The apostles needed to prove, especially to the Jews, that this was "The Promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49.), that Yeshua (Jesus) had said would come and that they would receive.

## **Acts 2**

In discussing the delays spoken of earlier between regeneration and Spirit baptism, We begin with Acts 2. In Acts 2 we have the account of the Holy Spirit falling on the twelve and not the hundred and twenty, as has been previously taught in some circles. This is born out in Acts 2.7, where it mentions only the Galileans had only received, also in Acts 2:14 only Peter and the eleven are mentioned. Peter has the predominance here, as he was given the keys of the Kingdom (Matthew 15:17-19), and he was given authority to open the door to the Kingdom of Heaven. Furthermore his was the answer to many prayers prayed in

the upper room for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4). Those prayers were answered in Acts 2:1-4 as stated in Acts 2:33. The reason therefore for the delay was one of waiting on the promise of the Father. The initial results were

1) The Jews from the Diaspora were able to hear the Gospel in their own language (Acts 2:8-11.).

2) They fell under the conviction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37.1)

3) The conversion of three thousand souls (Acts 2.41.).

The culmination of all this is that it was here that the Holy Spirit began his ministry, and it was here that the apostles, and Peter in particular who was the keeper of the Keys of the Kingdom, opened the door to the Jews once and for all.

## **Acts 8**

In this chapter it is clear it was the turn of the Samaritans to have the door opened to the Kingdom of Heaven. The Samaritans were a people who were very antagonistic toward the Jews, having set up a rival religious system. They had their own equivalent of the Mosaic Law, which deleted anything to do with Jerusalem; they also had a temple on Mount Gerizim to compete with the Temple in Jerusalem. Into this situation, Philip, one of the deacons, in Acts 6, was sent to preach with the result of many Samaritans being saved. In the light of the rival system which the Samaritans had set up, the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to investigate the authenticity of the Samaritan experiences. It became clear that the regeneration of the Samaritans was genuine, however they had not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit until Peter and John had ministered the "laying on of hands" (Acts 8:17.). The Holy Spirit had therefore waited for Peter to open the door to the Samaritans. From then on, like the Jews before them, every Samaritan who believed would receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at regeneration.

The result of these events was authentication, for since The Samaritans had put their trust in a rival system, it was necessary for them to come under apostolic authority and to live in the Truth.

## **Acts 10**

In this third incident the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was received by Cornelius and his household. It is noteworthy that this is the third category of people ministered to. The reason for this was that in those days there were three main groups of people, Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles. As the first two had already been admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven, now it was the turn of the Gentiles. It was necessary for Peter who had the keys of the Kingdom to personally come to admit these Gentiles. At this point Paul, who had received faith in Acts 9, had not yet received his apostleship, for the Holy Spirit would, in Acts 13. send him out to be the apostle to the Gentiles. There was no need for Peter to lay hands on the Gentiles as with the Samaritans, for there was no danger of them setting up a rival church. Therefore the Holy Spirit Baptism came to them directly, and this also showed the apostles and the Jerusalem church, had been released into the Kingdom. It also paved the way for Paul's ministry.

## **Acts 19**

In this final incident in Acts 19, the recipients of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit were the Jews of the Diaspora (Ephesians). These Ephesians were the disciples of John the Baptist, who did not know that Messiah had come in the flesh, and that his name was Yeshua (Jesus). Their only experience to date was the baptism of John. They had received John's baptism at the early part of his ministry, and then left to return to Ephesus, after which John had identified Jesus as Messiah.

However, by this time Paul had received his commission as an apostle, and it was Paul who met them and filled them in with necessary details. Then Paul asked 'Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?' First they had to be baptised in water for Christian/Messianic baptism is different than John's baptism. This act showed that they believed in the one of whom John the Baptist prophesied. Then Paul ministered the laying on of hands, and they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Again the laying on of hands was done for authentication, for this would prevent them from setting up a rival church in the name of John the Baptist. Although some of these believers in Acts 8,10,19 had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then spoke in tongues, there is no evidence to suggest that this would become a general trend. Also, the book of Acts is a transitional book, for it transcends the dispensation of law to enter the dispensation of grace, and with it came a different ministry for the Holy Spirit as through Peter and the apostles the door is opened to the necessary people groups; first Jews, then Samaritans, then Gentiles and then the disciples of John the Baptist. There is no record of any of this happening again to these people groups. The Biblical norm now-a-days is that when a believer is regenerated and believes, he is immediately baptised in the Holy Spirit at regeneration, and thus there is no more need for apostles. Similarly there is no more need for prophets, for now in the Spirit we have the gift of prophecy to edify the church.