

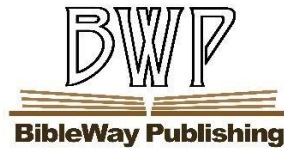
SERVANTS



IN THE KINGDOM

by Randolph Dunn

God's Sowers of the Gospel



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God's Sowers of the Gospel

Christ desires for the gospel message to be proclaimed to all mankind. On Pentecost, His eyewitnesses, the apostles, were the first proclaimers of the Gospel.

"But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 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!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Cor 12:18-26)

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (Rom 12:3-8)

"'Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men,' He went up, what is it except that he also went down first to the lower parts of the earth? He who went down is the same also who went up far above all the heavens, that He may fill all things — and He gave some [as] apostles, and some [as] prophets, and some [as] proclaimers of good news, and some [as] shepherds and teachers, unto the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministration, for a building up of the body of the Christ." YLT (Eph 4:10-13)

*"He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, **to prepare God's 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." NIV (Eph 4:10-13)*

Comment:

- The word "some" was from the Greek word *toús* meaning separated from.
- To be apostles "and" prophets "and" proclaimers (evangelists in some translations) with the word "and" being translated from the Greek word *dé* meaning to distinguish the difference between (apostles, prophets and evangelists)
- To be pastors and teachers with the word "and" being translated from the Greek word *kai* meaning to combine. Here *kai* connects pastors with teachers. — that is pastors who teach or teaching pastors.

Since *de* separates, while *kai* connects, then pastors are connected with teachers but separated from the work of the apostles, prophets and evangelists. The better translation would have been pastors who taught or teaching pastors. Therefore, the work of apostles was different from the work of the prophets, which

was different from the work of evangelists, which was different from the work of pastors and teachers. However, all can proclaim Christ in their work.

Apostles

Christ gave “some to be apostles.” Apostles comes from the Greek word *apostólous* - one sent forth with orders, a messenger, one set apart, to send out. According to Acts 1:21- 22 an apostle of Jesus was *“one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”*

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.” (1 John 1)

The word *apóstolos* is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God, Hebrews 3:1 *“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.”*

“Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.” (Acts 5:12-19)

“It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had

James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So, Peter was kept in prison.” (Acts 12:1-5)

The appointing of apostles appears to have ceased following the selection of Mathias except for Paul who was appointed by Christ as an apostle out of season.

Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul is first encountered as Saul who *“approved of his (Stephen) execution.”* (Acts 8:1)

“But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.” (Acts 9:1-9)

"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' And the Lord said to him, 'Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So, Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened." (Acts 9:10-19)

"I know a man (apparently Paul) in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter." (2 Cor 12:2-4)

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 9:1-2)

"Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles." (Romans

11:13) Paul's work and results

"For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." (Galatians 1:11-17)

"Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews." (Acts 11:19)

The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, of Syria. "When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians." (Acts 11:22-26)

In Antioch, "while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." (Acts 13:2-3)

"Then some Jews came from Antioch (of Pisidia) and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead." (Acts 14:19)

"They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, 'These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.' The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks." (Acts 16:19-24)

In Philippi *"they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, 'These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.' The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks."* (Acts 16:19-24)

As a devout Jew, Saul (Paul) believing Christians were blaspheming God, persecuted them. But, now, as Christ's apostle to the Gentiles, the Jews begin persecuting him. Thinking Paul had defiled their Temple, *"The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul."* (Acts 21:30-32)

After the routing crowd called down Paul spoke to them stating *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way (Christians) to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished."* (Acts 22:3-5)

"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me." (Acts 22:6-11)

"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.'" (Acts 22:12-16)

"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and

guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:17-20)

"The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, 'Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!' As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" (Acts 22:22-25)

The Centurion in Jerusalem sent him to Caesarea to stand trial. Paul answered the charges against him before Felix, Festus, King Agrippa and finally the Emperor.

Prophets

"Some to be prophets" from Greek word *profeétas* – one through whom God speaks, a foreteller, an inspired speaker. The "prophet" proclaimed the message given to him, as the "seer" beheld the vision of God. (See Numbers 12:6, 8) Thus, a prophet was a spokesman for God; he spoke in God's name and by his authority. (Exodus 7:1) He is the mouth by which God spoke to men. (Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 51:16) 1 Corinthians 13:8 states that the need for prophecies, thus prophets, would cease: *"Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they would cease."*

Comment: "Cease" is from the Greek word *katargeo* meaning to render entirely idle, useless. (P C Bible Study, Biblesoft)

Evangelists

"Some to be evangelists" from the Greek word *euangelistás* - one who proclaims good tidings, good news, the gospel. Only Philip and Timothy were specifically called evangelists. Philip taught the gospel and Timothy assisted Paul in teaching the Gospel. One who goes forth to proclaim may go far or near and he could stay for a longer period of time in one location than another, as in the case of Paul. No doubt the receptivity of hearers was a criterion to determine whether to stay or go. One may also feel compelled to remain in one area, perhaps even longer than originally intended, until they have completed the task(s) they set out to accomplish.

On Pentecost Day those who accepted God's message delivered by Peter and the other apostles were immersed and *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* (Acts 2:42-43)

Paul evangelized, taught the gospel: *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7) The seed is the Word which Paul taught to those who did not know Christ - the Non-Christian. Apollos taught Christians the way of the Lord, perhaps like Priscilla and Aquila who explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:26) *"Then Philip, the evangelist, opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told, him, the Ethiopian eunuch, the good news, Jesus - the Christ."* (Acts 8:35)

Comment: "Watered," is from the Greek word *epótisen*, – the source for growth.

Comment: "Told" is from the Greek word *eueangelísato* meaning to proclaim, evangelize.

Evangelists and preachers generally proclaim the Good News. Mature Christians and elders/watchmen/sentinels/shepherds/overseers skilled in instructing, taught them how to live sacrificial lives pleasing to God helping them to mature into the nature of God.

Questions

1. A Biblical apostle must have had an intimate knowledge of Jesus and His actions
☐ True
☐ False
2. A prophet is one to whom God gave His message until the Gospel fully revealed.
☐ True
☐ False
3. Evangelists are proclaimers of God's message of forgiveness and salvation to those not in Christ. Thus, not today's pulpit preachers who deliver a message of their choosing to a body of assembled Christians.
☐ True
☐ False

Answers to Questions

1. True
2. True
3. False

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