

The Place and Work of the Apostles
Lesson 6 – Defending the Place of Apostles
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Introduction: The foundation of God withstand the attacks of Satan.

- A. It is vital for every Christian to know where God has built His foundations.
 - 1. A foundation built by God will never be moved! We must choose it! **(1 Cor 3:10-11; 2 Tim 2:19)**
 - 2. Satan will seek to first create doubt and then turn you from God's foundation.
 - 3. Many in an unreasonable, emotional mindset have accepted a view of the work of the Apostles (the New Testament) that *make it without meaning*.
- B. Our God wishes to give us a *clear, understandable and definite path* in which to walk. We can find answers to questions and give a reason for our hope. **(1 Pt 3:15)**
 - 1. Certainty can be found. It is *not to be feared or condemned*.
 - 2. Those who follow the spirit of this age claim they have a better way. They view certainty as "harsh and legalistic." Their way is a broad way.
 - 3. Where are the promises and blessings of God found? **(Eph 2:20; Eph 5:17)**

I. The Defense of Paul's Apostleship

- A. Some attacked the genuineness of Paul's apostleship. **(Gal 1:1, 11-12)**
 - 1. One can know if someone was an apostle or not. **(Rev 2:2; 2 Cor 11:12-13)**
 - 2. Paul's defense will help us to have confidence in the New Testament. Many attack the place of the apostle Paul because they do not like what he taught!
- B. An apostle was chosen by God and not by or through men.
 - 1. Jesus personally chose the apostles in His ministry.
 - 2. After His ascension men were instructed to gather men from a certain background but the choice was made by God! **(Acts 1:21-26)**
 - 3. At Paul's conversion Ananias by inspiration told Paul that he was chosen to be an apostle. **(Acts 9:15; 22:14-15)**
 - 4. Paul boldly stated this truth. It was *by the will of God!* We can know His will. **(1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1)**
- C. An apostle was given God's will directly from heaven through the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Paul immediately began boldly preaching Jesus Christ. **(Acts 9:19-20)**
 - 2. He preached for over 3 years before meeting other apostles. **(Gal 1:15-18)**
 - 3. An apostle will not contradict another apostle or other scripture! A false apostle could easily be exposed here.
- D. An apostle could work mighty signs through the Holy Spirit. **(2 Cor 12:11-12)**
 - 1. Paul appealed to what the Corinthians knew to be true!
 - 2. Their personal conversion was a result of Paul's teaching. **(2 Cor 10:13-14)**
- E. An apostle would be recognized by other apostles.
 - 1. Peter and James recognized Paul's apostleship. **(Gal 1:18; 2:7-9)**
 - 2. The apostles in the presence of the church in Jerusalem recognized Paul's teaching. **(Acts 15:2)**
 - 3. Peter in his writings recognized Paul as writing scripture! **(2 Pt 3:15-16)**

II. Defending the place of the apostles today

- A. We must reject false apostles. Consider how some directly claim the apostles' place.
1. How would we test a specific individual?
 2. The Mormon church claims living apostles.
 3. The Catholic church claims that the Pope has authority from a line of men going back to Peter. A few other churches make similar claims.
- B. We must reject men who teach that the apostles have no authority over us today.
1. This rejection can come in varying degrees.
 2. After most of the apostles had died the gnostic movement came within the church. The Gnostics wrote their own "gospels" in later centuries.
 3. The key then as well as now would be determined if brethren would continue listening to the apostles instead of the world. **(1 Jn 4:1, 4-6)**
 4. Those who deny that authority is needed for all teachings and practice have rejected the place and work of the apostles. **(Acts 15:24; Col 3:17)**
- C. We must fight those who in secret teach "destructive heresies." **(2 Pt 2:1)**
1. The foundation of the apostles and prophets is based upon an honest heart humbly seeking truth through the New Testament. **(Lk 8:15)**
 2. Those that stand upon this foundation will openly teach and defend their teaching. **(2 Cor 4:2; 3:2; Jn 1:47)**
 3. Those that follow Jesus will be honest and open. **(Lk 20:4-7, Jn 18:20)**
- D. We must fight those who would plant bitterness and pride. When the heart is poisoned then doctrine no longer matters!
1. How do people suddenly rebel against an eldership and destroy relationships that have been built for years? They have help. **(1 Jn 2:9-11)**
 2. They use emotion to separate them from others. They can become "captives" with closed hearts except to their "masters." **(Gal 4:16-17; 2 Pt 2:18-19)**
 3. I have been shocked to see the ridicule of brethren publicly. It is hard for those exposed to this over time to overcome it. Ex. Korah **(Num 16:41)**
 4. Pride and bitterness are common partners. **(Lk 18:9, Jas 3:14; 1 Jn 2:16)**
 5. Pride is often employed by those who have no foundation so they seek to artificially build themselves up. They look down on brethren. **(1 Cor 8:1-3)**
 6. Pride rejoices in the faults of others. You live in the land of "throw-away" people. You write them off with no attempt to work with them.

Questions

1. Why does God want us to clearly know the foundations He has built for us?
2. Why did Paul claim that he was chosen to be an apostle "by the will of God?"
3. Why do the records of Paul's miracles confirm to us that he is an apostle?
4. What is "apostolic succession?" How can we prove or disprove this teaching?
5. Make a list of the evidence for Paul's apostleship.
6. How can men undermine and deny the place and work of the apostles today?
7. Why should Christians be honest and open about what they believe and teach?
8. How can pride and bitterness destroy the work of the apostles in the life of a Christian?