

WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

Apostle (Gk. *Apostolos*) Sent One

Envoy, ambassador, or messenger commissioned to carry out the instructions of the commissioning agent.

An apostle is a delegate, appointed, authorised and anointed by God

1. To testify as a witness to the risen Christ
2. To preach and to teach the Gospel
3. To make disciples, baptise and teach obedience to Christ
4. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and deliver the demonised.
5. Encourage, exhort, reform

APOSTLES ARE CALLED OUT/DESIGNATED/COMMISSIONED

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:” Lk 6:12-13

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.” Ro 1:1-2a

APOSTLES FUNCTION TO ADVANCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Apostles are a type of **spiritual entrepreneur** i.e. they are **ministerial pioneers**.
Apostles initiate new Kingdom enterprise that reaches people with the Gospel.

OUR MODEL – JESUS CHRIST OUR APOSTLE

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” Hebrews 3:1

APOSTLES ARE A GRACE GIFT JESUS GAVE TO THE CHURCH ON HIS ASCENSION (ONE OF THE FIVE FOLD GOVERNMENTAL OFFICES)

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”
⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ **It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,** ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ 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.”
Ephesians 4:7-13

APOSTLESHIP IS A GIFT OF GRACE TO REACH THE MULTITUDES

“Through him and for his namesake we received grace and apostleship to call people from among the gentiles to the obedience that comes by faith.” Romans 1:5

APOSTLES HAVE SIGNS AND SEALS OF THEIR APOSTLESHIP = FRUIT!

SIGNS – VALIDATE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

“The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.” 2 Corinthians 12:12

*“Everyone was filled with awe, and **many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.**” Acts 2:43*

SEALS - VALIDATE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

“Make room for us in your hearts.” 2 Corinthians 7:2

*“**You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts**, known and read by every body and you show that you are a letter from Christ, **the result of our ministry**, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tables of human hearts.” 2 Corinthians 3:2-3*

*“Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! **For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**” (1 Corinthians 9:2)*

GOVERNMENTAL ROLE OF APOSTLE

APOSTLES ARE APPOINTED BY GOD AS FIRST IN THE CHURCH

*“And in the church **God has appointed first of all apostles**, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different tongues.” 1 Corinthians 12:28*

The word “first” (Gr. *‘proton’*) means first in

TIME – someone must be “first” in time; Jesus is firstborn from among the dead and firstborn over all creation.

Jesus is described as FIRSBORN (PROTOTOKOS)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [prototokos] over all creation.”
Colossians 1:15

“He is the beginning and the firstborn [prototokos] from among the dead.”

Prototokos means **first-born** (usually as a noun, lit or fig):- firstbegotten (-born)

Jesus is also ascribed as FIRST AND LAST

“I am the First (protos) and the Last” Revelations 1:17

Adam is described as the FIRST MAN (PROTOS)

“The first man Adam” 1 Corinthians 15:45

Protos means **foremost** (in time, place, order of importance):- before, beginning, best, chief (-est), first (of all), former

God is the God of **“firstfruits”** prototokos) 1 Cor 15:20

PLACE – someone must be “first” in place – first to love, first to serve, first to suffer.
Jesus taught *“I am among you as one who serves.”*

Jesus was the first to suffer for our sakes.

“Disciples were first (proton) called Christians at Antioch.” (Acts 11:26)

ORDER – God is a God of order and governmental power and authority.

“But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.” 1 Corinthians 12:18 (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11)

God is omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful) and omnipresent (present everywhere at all time). He has authority, power, wisdom and knowledge and has created order.

The Gospel is “first [proton] for the Jew” (Romans 1:16; Ro 1:9, Ro 2:10).

The kingdom of darkness recognises Christ’s authority. We need His governmental power and authority for spiritual warfare. He is the Captain of the Host and the Commander of the armies of heaven.

IMPORTANCE – Jesus is our model

Before, at the beginning, chiefly (at, at the) first (of all) John baptised but pointed to the one whose sandals he felt unworthy to untie.

John "first" [proton] baptised. (John 10:40)

Proton is also closely connected with *PROTOTATES*, which means **ONE STANDING FIRST IN THE RANKS** i.e. **A CAPTAIN** (champion):- ringleader.

APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

Apostles function with high levels of spiritual authority. Where does this authority come from? It is not a religious hierarchy, but an authority given by Christ to serve God and people. Apostolic authority is given to build others up:

*“For even if I boast somewhat freely about **the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down**, I will not be ashamed of it.” 2 Corinthians 10:8*

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF DESIGNATION/CALL

*“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, **whom he also designated apostles**: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” Luke 6:12-16*

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF CALL/CALLED OUT TO ADVANCE GOD’S KINGDOM AND OVERCOME THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS

“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.” Matthew 10:1

“There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called ...” Ephesians 4:4

*“Therefore, **holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling**, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” Hebrews 3:1*

AUTHORITY BECAUSE THEY ARE COMMISSIONED AND SENT BY THE LORD JESUS

*“**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me” Matthew 28:18*

“Therefore go ... and make disciples of all nations ...” Matthew 28:19

“As the Father has sent me ...” John 20:21-33

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF APOSTLESHIP

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” Ephesians 4:7

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF SOVEREIGN APPOINTMENT BY GOD

*“**And in the church** God has appointed first of all apostles,” 1 Corinthians 12:28*

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF ASSIGNMENT

*“We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to **the field God has assigned to us**, a field that reaches even to you.” 2 Corinthians 10:13*

AUTHORITY BECAUSES OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

*“Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves, but our competence comes from God. **He has made us***

competent ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF REVELATION

Revelation is part of the foundation of apostolic authority. Those who have revelation have the keys of the Kingdom (Matthew 16:17-19)

Paul spoke of the mystery of the Gospel (Ephesians 3:1-5)

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF SCRIPTURE

Apostles have authority to **teach, preach and instruct the church in right doctrine** “guard what has been entrusted to your care.” 1 Timothy 6:20

They teach propriety and order in worship (1 Corinthians 14:26-39) including the **Sacraments** (baptism and the Lord’s Supper [1 Corinthians 11])

Apostles pray for believers to receive **the Holy Spirit** (Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6)

AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

“But so that you may know that **the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...** Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” M9 9:6-7

“Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” Acts 2:38

AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF GODLY CHARACTER/LIFESTYLE

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SEALS - VALIDATE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

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“Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! **For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**” (1 Corinthians 9:2)

(Acts 13) Barnabas and Paul meet Elymas the sorcerer in Paphos, Cyprus who was trying to turn the proconsul Sergius Paulus from the faith. Paul proclaims a spiritual blindness on Elymas. Sergius converted to Christianity. Governmental seat of power restored to the Kingdom

(Acts 16) Paul and Silas are in Philippi, Macedonia. They meet a slave girl who is possessed by spirit of divination. Eventually Paul prays and she is delivered. Financial stronghold released from evil grip.

(Acts 19) Paul reaches Ephesus, establishes himself in city, trains team, after two years miracle anointing released through their mission. Seven sons of Sceva incident reveals the authority of Christ recognised by spiritual realm. Occults practitioners repent.

AUTHORITY TO TOPPLE STRONGHOLDS (ARGUMENT THAT OPPOSES THE TRUTH)

(Acts 8) Philip preaches with signs and wonders following; Simon the Sorcerer (who was previously operating in sorcery and counterfeit miracles) was converted. Jerusalem council sends Peter and John. Simon rebuked for wanting to buy the anointing. Samaria - a key city.

FUNCTIONS OF AN APOSTLE

APOSTLES ARE MINISTERIAL PIONEERS (SPIRITUAL ENTREPRENEURS)

They have **panoramic vision and receive strategies** from God

APOSTLES ARE PATTERN MAKERS AND RECEIVE DIVINE BLUE PRINTS FOR CHURCHES, MINISTRIES AND MOVEMENTS

Paul taught with regard to lifestyle, “keep as the pattern of sound teaching.” 2 Timothy 1:13

but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow” v10

“For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example.” V7

Paul’s pattern for city taking – enter the city, establish a base, teach/preach the Kingdom, train up a team, minister and effect entire region (Acts 19).

APOSTLES PIONEER AND CARRY A BREAKTHROUGH ANOINTING

Their breakthrough comes from the authority in Christ that they carry. Breakthrough means a significant or sudden advance or development. Peter at Cornelius home (Acts 10) is an example of breakthrough (outpouring of Holy Spirit for the Gentiles)

APOSTLES ARE CHURCH DEVELOPERS

- They **father/mother and raise spiritual sons and daughters**. Paul was concerned as a father for his spiritual children and maintained communication and connection with them.
- **They plant and establish** new churches, ministries and movements. Apostles have an establishing gift – **they want to make disciples not just converts**.
- **Planting** is an aspect of apostolic ministry. In a missional context this allows gifts to flourish and leaders to emerge and grow (an aspect of shepherding).
- Apostles are **foundational ministries to equip others for ministry**; Apostles are not just concerned with evangelism but about discipleship.
- They initially do everything **“first”** in order to make room for others gifts.

AN APOSTLE IS A LEADER OF LEADERS (SHEPHERD OF SHEPHERDS)

- **Apostles develop other leaders** and they “superintend”. i.e. oversee, direct, watch over, manage, and supervise. They encourage, exhort and bring reformation.
- Apostles **build paternal relationships with pastors**. This is essential to overcome the problems that every church will eventually encounter. Relationships build trust.
- **Apostles nurture others; they serve to mature the saints**

APOSTLES BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST

They build teams and raise leaders. They make disciples *“Now the apostles and elders came together to consider the matter.” Acts 15:16*

Apostles operate to bring Bride of Christ to full **Unity; Intimacy; Maturity**
Apostles plant and nurture (2 Corinthians 3)

AN APOSTLE IS A CAPABLE MOBILISER

The apostolic anointing is a “gathering “anointing.

- Mobilisation causes increased momentum. To mobilize is to gather troops and equip them for military operation
- Mobilisers have **strong organization skills** and are **visionary leaders** who are able to **inspire others** to partnership.
- **Apostles have trans-local ministries.** They are anointed **networkers.** They **encourage unity, prayer, fellowship, intimacy with God and connect the Body of Christ.**

APOSTLES HAVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO IMPART TO OTHER

“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 1 Corinthians 12:29

*“I long to see you **so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong – that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” Romans 1:11-12***

APOSTLES HAVE AN ASSIGNMENT OR A CALL WITH AN ASSIGNED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God, works all of them in all men.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

*“We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to **the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to .you.” 2 Corinthians 10:13***

*“as the Lord **has assigned to each his task.” 1 Corinthians 3:5***

Only Jesus is the APOSTLE to the whole world, the rest are apostles to movements, churches, or territories.

APOSTLES MAY BE DESCRIBED AS GOD'S ARCHITECTS, OR HIS “EXPERT BUILDERS”

*“¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, **I laid a foundation as an expert builder**, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:10-11*

APOSTLES ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONS (they are God’s BUILDERS)

“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.” Ephesians 2:20

Nehemiah is an example of an apostolic builder (OT); Paul is an example of an apostolic builder (NT) Apostles receive blue prints; a blue print is given so that future generations have a pattern to follow (see 1 Tim 1:16)

King David is an example of an OT blue print receiver. (1 Ch 28:12)

APOSTLES BRING REFORMATION

Josiah was an OT reformer (see 2 Kings 22, 23 and 2 Chronicles 34:1-2, 8:28). Reformation is necessary when the church is out of alignment with the will of God.

APOSTLES HAVE POWER MINISTRIES (YET THEY KNOW WEAKNESS!)

*“For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we **are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him to serve you.**” 2 Corinthians 13:4*

*“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, **for my power is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. “ 2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

APOSTLES RAISE UP TEAMS/APOSTLES APPOINT ELDERS

*“Paul and Barnabas **appointed elders for them in each church**, and with prayer and fasting committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust” Acts 14:23*

Apostles prepare God’s people for works of service and bring believers to maturity. (Eph 4:12)

They stir up gifts, train, equip and impart (1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14)

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APOSTLE

REVEALS THE FATHER HEART OF GOD

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." Ephesians 3:14

RAISES SPIRITUAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS

"Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel." 1 Corinthians 4:15

"Therefore I urge you to imitate me." V16

2 Timothy 2:1; 1 Timothy 1:18); Thessalonians 2:6b-9

SHOWS GREAT LOVE AND COMPASSION TO ALL, ESPECIALLY THE POOR

*"All they asked was that we should **continue to remember the poor**, the very things I was eager to do." Galatians 3:10*

ENCOURAGES PRAYER

"Devote yourselves to prayer, be watchful and thankful. And pray for us too, that we ..." Colossians 4:2-5

"The joy we have in the presence of our God because of you. Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith." 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10

ENCOURAGES GIVING/GOOD STEWARDSHIP (2 Corinthians 8 and 9)

ENCOURAGES UNITY/FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-37)

SERVANT HOOD

HUMILITY

WISDOM

APOSTLES MOVE IN A HIGH DEGREE OF REVELATION

"I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord." 2 Corinthians 12:1

"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11-12

APOSTLES HAVE VISIONS/DREAMS & EXPERIENCE OPEN HEAVEN

Peter fell into a trance/vision (Acts 10:9-23)

Paul fell into a trance (Acts 22:17)

Paul had a face to face encounter with Christ (Acts 9)

Paul heard the voice of the Lord Acts 22:6-16

Paul was called to Macedonia in a vision in the night (Acts 16:9)

They operate in word of knowledge, word of wisdom; (Paul/slave girl)[Peter/Ananias)

They have encounters with angels

An angel released the apostles from jail in Jerusalem (Acts 5:19)

Peter was released from jail by an angel (Acts 12)

Supernatural phenomenon

Paul was bitten by a snake and not harmed (Acts 28:3-6)

Paul and Silas experienced earthquake in jail (Acts 16)

APOSTLES EXPERIENCE GREAT PERSECUTION/SUFFERING

Paul was rejected by the apostles and took 14 years before he was able to return and receive the right hand of fellowship, yet Barnabas was there for him. (Galatians 2).

(2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 2 Corinthians 6:3-13; 2 Corinthians 12)

APOSTLES FACE WARFARE

The ministry of the apostle is greatly opposed. (Paul was "in danger" 2 Corinthians 11)

APOSTLES HAVE "RIGHTS"

"If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?" 1 Corinthians 9:11

"In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" v14

APOSTOLIC MINDSET V PASTORAL MINDSET

An apostle should demonstrate character traits that are consistent with apostolic ministry and exhibit thought patterns that distinguish them from other five-fold ministries. They should also produce fruit that affirms their apostleship (see signs and seals).

Here is a quotation that describes the mindset of an apostle viz a viz that of a pastor.

“It is not that one gift is more important than the others; it only helps prove how much we really do need each other. This is why Jesus gave us five – to emphasise that all the gifts must honour each other and work together. Here is what Jim Hodges concluded:

- The pastoral mindset focuses primarily on individual believers, the “sheep.” The apostolic mindset focuses on the corporate vision of the local church.
- The pastoral mindset wants to take the congregation to its next level. The apostolic mindset urges city and regional transformation.
- The pastoral mindset wants to maintain harmony, balance, peace and stability. The apostolic mindset desires to push out to new frontiers – with all the risks involved. Apostles are trailblazers and they develop strategies for breakthrough; this becomes important when they lead.
- The pastoral mindset regards the church as the family of God. Socialisation becomes important. The apostolic mindset regards the church as the army of God. Training and equipping become necessary for battle.
- Pastors want their people in communion (connoting intimacy with God) while apostles want them on the battlefield (connoting warfare against the devil).
- Pastors are very comfortable with teachers. Apostles are very comfortable with prophets.
- The pastoral mindset seeks to avoid controversy so that everything remains settled. The apostolic mindset welcomes and confronts controversy – with the goal of resolution.

As we consider these distinctions, we can see that it is possible to discern identifying characteristics of a particular mindset in a person’s ministry. While these characteristics are not conclusive in and of themselves, if a person exhibits a majority of them and aligns with other qualities, functions and character traits, it is very possible that he or she is an anointed and called as an apostle.”

This not a conclusive list in respect to apostolic mindset, nor does it mean that the two mindsets do not overlap from time to time.

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