

“THE TRAITS OF AN APOSTLE”
2 Corinthians 12:11-19

INTRODUCTION

In Christ we have all that we need. We have the truth, second chances, etc. The Corinthians had all they needed but didn't know it. The false teachers came in and told them otherwise. They denigrated Paul and tried to set themselves up as apostles. So what is a true apostle? Paul let them know.

SELF-APPOINTED APOSTLES

Today there are some self-appointed apostles. However, Scripture encourages us to test to determine if they are apostles or not. In **Revelation 2:2** the Ephesians were commended for testing those who claimed to be apostles. They, in fact, found them to be liars! Not apostles at all! Even in the Old Testament, there was a test for false prophets in **Deuteronomy 13** and **18**.

Some traits of apostles, however, should be in each of us. Paul said to follow him as he follows Christ! What are the traits an apostle produces? Paul labored in prayer for them. He studied the Word. He brought the gospel. He was an apostle to them. **1 Corinthians 9:2**. He was given the title of apostle by Jesus, but considered himself a nobody. **1 Corinthians 15:9**, **1 Timothy 1:15**.

Signs and wonders separate real apostles from the fake ones. Some churches have "apostles" speak, such as in the Bethel Movement. Founder of the New Apostolic Reformation Peter Wagner referred to himself as a super apostle. He claimed that the 21st century church would be ruled by prophets and apostles equal to the original apostles.

BIBLICAL APOSTLES

What is a Biblical apostle? An apostle is one who is sent or a messenger. Apostle is used in 2 ways in the New Testament, "major league" and "minor league". "Minor league" apostles are messengers who include Titus, **2 Corinthians 8:23**. Another in this category would be Epaphroditus in **Philippians 2:25**. For "major league" apostles, there is the exclusive club of 12 plus 2. That is the original 12 plus Matthias and Paul and no more.

Here is why there are no more apostles today:

1)The church is built on the foundation of the *original* apostles - **Ephesians 2:20**; 2)They were personally chosen by Jesus- see **Acts 9**; 3)Apostles had to have seen the risen Christ - **1 John 1**; 4) They performed signs and wonders; and 5) They demonstrated great perseverance. (Think of all that Paul went through!)

Paul sacrificed for the Corinthians as an earthly father sacrificed for his kids. The Corinthians didn't appreciate this, however. They were just unthankful! What a great example set by Jesus who left the glory of Heaven and went to the first century Middle East to sacrifice Himself. **2 Corinthians 8:9**. Paul had the same mindset, but was disrespected for it. Paul's ministry was filled with integrity. He didn't take advantage of anyone

CONSIDER

Remember, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:10**. The return of Jesus should motivate us to purity. **1 John 3:1-3**. We are doing all things in the sight of God! In a sense, we are all sent as "minor league" apostles or messengers. Think of this as your call as you go through this life!

PRAY

- * That we would live in such a way as to attract others to Jesus.
- * That we would not be swayed by the latest "movements" in Christianity. Let's stick with the Word of God!