

The Place and Work of the Apostles
Lesson 1 - Learning How God Works
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Introduction: Our God has a clear plan to teach and lead us.

- A. Man must be taught because he could never come up with God's way on his own.
 - 1. God knows this and plainly tells us to listen!
 - 2. Men in rebellion seek other subjective ways other than relying on God.
(Isa 50:10-11; Prov 3:5-7)
- B. If Satan cannot prevent men from believing in God then he will seek to block and confuse men as to how God speaks.
 - 1. In the Old Testament there was a great challenge in knowing who spoke for God. (Jer 23:21-22; 14; 26:4-6; Deut 18:20-22)
 - 2. Moses was one who was unique in how God confirmed his work and teaching.
 - 3. God through Jesus has made the work of the apostles as a confirmed foundation of His plan to teach and lead us.

I. God has revealed Jesus as His spokesman

- A. God has placed Jesus before us as the spokesman of God for all men. (Heb 1:1-2)
 - 1. God wanted men to do much more than recognize the identity of Jesus.
 - 2. In a very rare occasion God spoke directly from heaven both identifying His Son and His desired response from men. (Mt 17:4-5)
 - 3. We also begin to learn of a new covenant that would come from His son that would be different from the previous one (Elijah and Moses). (Jn 1:14, 17)
- B. God proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God through His resurrection. (Rom 1:3-4)
 - 1. We need to first identify who Jesus is.
 - 2. The resurrection now shows us that all things Jesus has said will come to pass. (Acts 17:30-31)
 - 3. What does Jesus teach us about the place and work of His apostles?

II. Jesus placed the apostles in the center of His ministry

A. What is an apostle?

- 1. This is a name Jesus chose for them. (Lk 6:13)

Apostle - ἀπόστολος - 1. a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders 2. Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitude of his adherents, to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God: - **Thayer's Lexicon**

- 2. The word apostle can also be used in a general way. (Acts 14:14)

B. Jesus interacted with these men before He chose them. He prayed all night before He made His final choice. (Lk 6:12; Mt 4:19-22)

- 1. He then let His choices be known! He is going to work through these men.
- 2. When Matthias was selected in Acts 1, God made the choice through preset qualifications and then making the final choice. (Acts 1:21-26)

- C. He trained them for over 3 years. Imagine men who are trained personally by the creator of the universe! **(Jn 15:27)**
1. While still under the Old Law Jesus sent them out to work with “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” **(Mt 10:5-6)**
 2. They were able to work signs and miracles through the Holy Spirit. **(Mt 10:8)**

III. Jesus placed the apostles in the center of God’s Plan

- A. Jesus was following the plan the Father gave. **(Jn 17:6-9)**
1. Jesus acknowledged that God gave the apostles to Him.
 2. The details of Jesus prayer show a purposed priority. First Jesus relationship with the Father, second the work and preparation of the Apostles, and thirdly the apostles work to all future believers. **(Jn 17:18-20)**
 3. Choosing 12 apostles is likened to the 12 tribes of Israel. This was an eternal plan that linked as one the Old and New Testaments.
- B. God’s directions of “binding and loosing” would come through the apostles. **(Mt 16:19; 18:18)**
1. Any implementation of Jesus as Lord would include their work! (Lk 6:46)
 2. One’s attitude towards the apostles would also be the attitude you take towards Christ Himself. **(Jn 15:19-20)**
 3. Jesus wrote nothing instead he chose these men to work through!
- C. The conditional promises of God would be revealed through these men.
1. No sins would be forgiven without their revelation! **(Jn 20:21-23)**
 2. Peter was given the “keys” to first reveal this to both Jew and Gentile!

Questions

1. Why is it important to know how God speaks? How does Satan work to defeat God’s word?
2. What is the root meaning of an “apostle?” In what ways is this word used in the N.T.?
3. What efforts did Jesus make in choosing His apostles?
4. What efforts did Jesus make in training His apostles? Why did He reveal His work with the apostles in His ministry to us?
5. What does Jesus’ prayer in John 17 teach us about the importance of the apostles?
6. What would be the consequences if Jesus did not reveal His will to us? Can we be forgiven of sins without the conditional promises given through the apostles?