

The Place and Work of the Apostles
Lesson 2 – God’s Authentication of the Apostles (Part 1)
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Introduction: Our God has made it clear as to how he speaks to us.

A. The blessings of Jesus’s death were prophesied to be spread to the whole world.

(Isa 42:4; 49:6; 52:15)

1. How was this going to occur?
2. God the Father clearly pointed all men to Jesus. **(Mt 17:5)**
3. Jesus chose to speak to men through the apostles He chose.

B. We have already seen the significance of the apostles during His ministry.

1. These men were chosen and placed in the center of His work.
2. Jesus acknowledged to the Father the plan for men to believe through these men. **(Jn 17:20)**
3. God the Father will now continue to demonstrate to all after the resurrection and ascension of Christ the place of the apostles.

I. Jesus personally appeared and spoke to the apostles after His resurrection

A. God the father declared Jesus to be the Son of God by raising Him from the dead.

(Rom 1:3-4)

1. This was the primary message in the spread of Christianity. **(Acts 13:27-31)**
2. Those who were selected witnesses were few in number. **(1 Cor 15:4-8)**
3. The apostles saw Jesus several times!

B. Jesus arranged to meet with the apostles before His death! **(Mt 26:31-32)**

1. Both an angel and Jesus Himself told two women to remind the apostles of this! **(Mt 28:6-10)**
2. These men would touch Jesus, eat with Him and receive further instruction from Him. The apostles had *no doubt* about the raised Lord. **(1 Jn 1:1-3)**
3. While there were other witnesses, the apostles’ experience was far greater.

C. The apostles witnessed the ascension of Christ. **(Acts 1:1-3, 9-11)**

1. Luke *names the apostles* as receiving His “commandments” and many “infallible proofs” as well as additional teach concerning the kingdom of God!
2. They then have one more eyewitness experience in the ascension.
3. The angel reminds them of His return in “like manner.”

D. When one was chosen to replace Judas as an apostle, he had to be a witness of the resurrection. **(Acts 1:22, 26)**

1. Later the apostle Paul would receive a special appearance of the Lord!
2. God would now support these men in this great work.

II. God promised to authenticate the apostles through signs and wonders

A. The great commission was given to the apostles.

(Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:44-48)

1. The apostles were witnesses that would go to all nations.
2. God would be with them as they went.

B. The full array of God's power would be used to confirm the word these men would speak. **(Mk 16:17-20; Heb 2:3-4)**

1. They had during the ministry of Christ a limited exposure to this power.
2. The Father would leave no doubt as to who was speaking His words.

C. God's power was obvious in these real signs.

1. Simon the sorcerer for years deceived men by *false signs*. He *immediately knew* when the power of God was displayed. **(Acts 8:8-13)**
2. No one needed to bear testimony of a real sign. It could be seen! It was never something unseen and only known through the words of one who had a "personal experience."

D. What is a sign?

1. σημεῖον, ου, τό (1) basically, as what serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight *sign, mark, distinguishing characteristic*; ... (3) as a miraculous event contrary to the usual course of nature and intended as a pointer or means of confirmation, often used with τέρας (*wonder*) sign (MK 13.22); as a miraculous event resulting from personal action *sign, miracle* (JN 2.11; RV 13.13)
2. A sign points to something! Have you ever seen a street sign that only says "sign?"
3. The signs of the New Testament never were wrought *to point to the sign itself!* People did not ask others to come and see a miracle, or to have a "miracle service."
4. The miracles of Jesus *pointed to Jesus!* **(Jn 5:36; 9:32-33)**

E. What is a wonder?

1. τέρας, ατος, τό wonder, marvel, portent, something so unusual it arouses close observation; only plural in the NT and combined with σημεῖα (*signs*)
2. This gives emphasis to the reaction of the one *who has seen* the powerful display of the Holy Spirit. **(Acts 5:12; 6:8; 14:3)**
3. All apostles had this powerful witness behind their teaching! **(2 Cor 12:12)**
4. The workers of Satan could fool some with a "lying" wonder. **(2 Thess 2:9)**

F. What is a miracle?

1. δύναμις, εως, ἡ (1) as able to produce a strong effect *power, might, strength* (AC 1.8), opposite ἀσθένεια (*weakness*); plural, as universal or supernatural rulers *powers* (MT 24.29); ... (4) as supernatural manifestations of power *miracle, wonder, powerful deed* (HE 2.4); ...
2. A miracle occurs when God supersedes natural law.

Questions

1. Why is it crucial that all apostles be eyewitnesses of the resurrection? How sure were the apostles that they saw the raised Jesus?
2. Who saw the ascension of Jesus? How does this give power to the apostles work?
3. Who was given the great commission? How would this appear to faithless men?
4. What did the Father promise to do for the apostles as they went into the world?
5. What is the purpose of signs and wonders? How are they different from what men do?