



THE APOSTOLIC CALL

Understanding What It Means to Be Sent

by Matt German

Moses was many things, but first and foremost he was an apostle ('sent-one') and a prophet; he was also an evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

Author David Canistracci, in his book The Gift of Apostle, defines an apostle as "one who is called and sent by (Messiah) to have the spiritual authority, character, gifts, and abilities to successfully reach and establish people in Kingdom truth and order, especially through founding and overseeing local churches." Apostles, at core, are 'sent ones'.

Yahshua's 12 apostles weren't perfect when they were sent – they were just sent. And they were sent because they had first been called. No man calls himself to this or any other ministry office. Paul, in identifying himself as an apostle, clearly stated that his calling to this office was not of his own doing:

1 Cor. 1:1 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Yahshua the Messiah through the will of Yahweh"

Gal. 1:1 "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Yahshua Messiah and Yahweh the Father, who raised Him from the dead;)"

Obviously, Paul felt it necessary to declare that his gifting and calling was not based on the will of men and did not come from man, but from Yahshua and Yahweh. Lest we come away with the notion that Paul was being egotistical or presumption, we should note that he also said "I am the least of the apostles, who is not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the assembly of Yahweh. But by the grace of Yahweh I am what I am..." (1 Cor. 15:9-10a). Peter also clearly identified himself as an apostle in the introduction to each of his epistles.

The Hebrew word for apostle is *shaliach*. It means a delegate or emissary; "an agent sent with the full authority of the person doing the sending". It comes from *shalách*, "to send away, for, or out". It can also mean to reach forth, set, shoot (forth, out), sow, spread, stretch forth (out). There is another closely

related word in Hebrew: *shelách*, a missile of attack, spear, a shoot of growth, branch; a dart, plant, sword, or weapon.

Apostles might be thought of as missiles launched by Yahweh into the kingdom of darkness, sowing the Word of life, planting ministries, and establishing people in Kingdom truth. They push back the underbrush of idolatry and false teaching, exposing the bedrock foundation of Yahshua Messiah.

The apostle is the "point man" of the ekklesia. To be the point man, one must have singleness of purpose, total commitment to the mission, a willingness to endure hardship, and the daring to test uncharted waters and unfamiliar terrain, 'to boldly go where no one has gone before'.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul asks rhetorically "how shall they preach, except they should be sent [*apostéllō*]?" (Rom. 10:15). If someone hasn't been sent, he shouldn't go. If he has been sent, he MUST go in the authority of the One sending him. An emissary sent to a foreign nation knows that the entire Kingdom is behind him in his mission; all that he has need of will be provided.

Ambassadors don't apologize for having been sent. Nor do they look for affirmation from those to whom they've been sent; they simply go and do what they've been commissioned to do, no more and no less. They only speak what they've been authorized to speak. If you've been sent, you better know why – you better know your mission! You also better know the boundaries of your authority.

The Marks of a True Apostle

There are several distinguishing marks of the apostle. One such mark is that he sets things in order, especially that which is lacking:

Titus 1:5 "For this cause I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you."

In fact, Paul's epistles to the various congregations were written for just that purpose – to set in order the things that were lacking. There was obviously a lot that was lacking.

Another mark of a true apostle is the fruit of his ministry:

1 Cor. 9:2 "If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for you are the seal [signet, stamp] of my apostleship in the Master."

Paul recognized that he wasn't necessarily an apostle to everyone. Those to whom he was an apostle bore the seal of his apostleship in their lives: he had made an indelible impression on them; his ministry had changed their lives. He could also point to the signs and wonders that had been wrought by his hand.

2 Cor. 12:12 "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds"

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul identified the heart attitude of a true apostle:

1 Thess. 2:3-12 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in deception. ⁴ But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵For neither were we at any time found using words of flattery, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness (God is witness), ⁶nor seeking glory from men (neither from you nor from others), when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Messiah. ⁷ But we were gentle among of you, as when a nurse cherishes her own children. ⁸ Even so, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail; for working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses with God, how holy, righteously, and blamelessly we behaved ourselves toward you who believe. ¹¹ As you know how we exhorted, comforted, and implored every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹² to the end that you should walk worthily of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

One area that seems lacking within the Body – especially within the "Hebrew Roots" movement – is an understanding of and appreciation for honoring the man of Yahweh. Yet Yahshua Himself said that one who receives a prophet or righteous man, for their own sake or the sake of the one sending them, would receive their reward:

Matt. 10:40-42 He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ⁴¹ He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward: and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. ⁴² Whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, most assuredly I tell you he will in no way lose his reward.

The bottom line is that it is important to receive the one sent by Yahweh! If they have truly been sent by Yahweh, then they

are coming in His Name, not their own; they are coming in His power, not their own; they are coming in His glory, not their own. According to Yahshua's own words, by receiving them we are receiving Him, and we will receive their reward, their blessing.

The Importance of Hearing

It is critical as an apostolic people (sent by Yahweh) to be able to hear His voice. How can we know where we've been sent or what are specific mission is if we cannot hear His voice? Yet too few of Yahweh's people believe that He actually speaks today by the Spirit. Do you believe that He is still speaking? If so, do you hear Him on a regular basis? Or are you like many that don't hear because they think He's not speaking to them?

There are several reasons that believers today don't hear His voice:

- 1) Many do not recognize His voice when He speaks. This, in turn, is usually because:
- 2) They are not taking time to listen consistently and develop their spiritual ears; or,
- 3) Their ears have become dull of hearing, due to inattentiveness, disobedience, sin, worldliness, etc.

We as Yahweh's people must "turn our ears" to the words of His mouth:

Psa 78:1 "Hear My law, My people. Turn your ears to the words of My mouth."

This Scripture brings to my mind a certain picture. One of our dogs is a German shepherd. He can be lying in the yard, in a deep sleep, yet if there is a sound, his ears will stand straight up. Sometimes one ear will even rotate in the direction of the sound, like a radar dish, while the other doesn't move. The noise might not have been loud enough to rouse him from his sleep, but his ears still responded to it. We must train our spiritual ears to function in the same way – to turn in the direction of Yahweh's voice immediately when He speaks. But then we must act upon it.

Job 33:14-17 "For Elohim speaks once, Yes twice, though man pays no attention. In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, In slumbering on the bed; Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, That He may withdraw man from his purpose, And hide pride from man."

What a tragedy that most people pay no attention when Yahweh is speaking! May we be a part of the generation of

which Jeremiah spoke: "Nevertheless hear you now this word that I speak in your ears, and in the ears of all the people" (Jer. 28:7). Yahweh, gives us ears to hear!

A HEART TO WORK

Yahweh has bestowed upon each believer certain spiritual gifts. And while there are diversities of gifts, diversities of administrations, and diversities of workings, it is the same Spirit that distributes the gifts, according to Yahweh's own will (1 Cor. 12:4-7). These gifts are important – otherwise, Yahweh wouldn't have given them – and they are to be used. They're not given so that the recipient can put them on a shelf somewhere, to be admired from afar; rather, they're given for a specific purpose – for the building up of the Body of Messiah (Eph. 4:11-16, 1 Cor. 14:12).

Each and every one of us has a high calling upon our individual lives (Php. 3:14). We've got to press toward that goal and lay hold of the prize. We've got to walk worthy of that calling (Eph. 4:1).

You can't walk in Truth to which you haven't laid hold. In 1 Cor. 12:1 we are told explicitly, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not wish to have you ignorant." So we must – first and foremost – have a clear understanding of what the spiritual gifts are. Once we have that understanding, then we need to focus not only on identifying what our specific, personal spiritual gifts are; we must learn to appreciate ALL the gifts within the Body, striving to optimize through use the ones we have received and encouraging our brothers and sisters in Messiah to do the same.

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14). I believe that Yahweh is saying the same thing to each and every one of us today – don't neglect the spiritual gifts that you have been given. That brings to mind Yahshua's parable of the talents – he who is faithful over a little will be given more; he who is unfaithful over a little will lose even that which he has. We must be faithful stewards of the spiritual gifts that Yahweh has bestowed upon us, ministering them among ourselves (1 Pet. 4:7-11).

Each of us has a ministry in the world in which we live – in our daily lives. But each of us also has a ministry in Yahweh's House; that part of the Body to which we have been joined. Psa. 127:1a tells us "Unless Yahweh builds the house, they labor in vain that build it." It's Yahweh-Yahshua who is building His house (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 2:19-22), but we are His hands and feet in this earth. We are His workmanship (Eph.

2:10), but we are also His workmen (2 Tim. 2:15). We are instructed "Prepare your work without, and make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterwards build your house" (Pro. 24:27)

If you read through the description in Exodus 35-36 about the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness by the Israelites, you might be struck – as I was – by the incredible attitude of cooperation among the people... and the fact that their hearts were stirred to work and to give to the work. "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought Yahweh's offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the service of it..." (Exod. 35:21). Moses and the elders proceeded to take up the offering from the people, and the people gave so much that the elders had to tell Moses "the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Yahweh commanded to make" (Exod. 36:2-5). Because of this, Moses actually had to order a halt to these freewill offerings, "for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (v7).

Yes, these were material offerings to do a material work; yet the people were also freely offering of themselves for the work of service – and those gifted in different areas were contributing their gifts to the same work.

We find an interesting parallel in the book of Haggai, where Yahweh exhorts His people to consider their ways and to build His house (1:5, 7-9). Again, Yahweh stirs up the spirits "of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work on the house of Yahweh of hosts, their Elohim" (v14). In the following chapter, Yahweh speaks words of encouragement to Zerubbabel, Yahshua, and all the people of the land, saying, "be strong... and work; for I am with you" (Hagg. 2:4).

Just prior to His ascension to heaven, Yahshua Messiah exhorted His disciples to build His house by making disciples of all nations. He immediately followed that command with, "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:16-20). This is, of course, more than a little reminiscent of what Yahweh told the remnant of His people through the prophet Haggai. Yahweh also promised that same remnant that, though none of them might have seen His house in its former glory, yet the latter glory of the house that He is building will be greater than the former, and that – in that place – He will give peace (Hagg. 2:3, 7-9). That day is coming!

That's an awesome promise! The house that Yahshua is building in these last days will far exceed the former glory of that first temple. And Yahweh WILL give us peace. The question that we must ask ourselves is – do we truly have a heart to work? Yahweh is still telling us today, "Be strong and work, for I am with you. Don't neglect the gifts that I have given you."

Recent Sermons

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Yahweh's Feast Calendar – 2010

We understand that people have different understandings of Yahweh's calendar. These are the feast dates for 2010 as observed by Lion of Judah Family Worship Center:

Passover*	Apr. 28 th (Wed.)
Days of Unleavened Bread	Apr. 29 th – May 5 th (Thu. – Wed.)
Pentecost	June 20 th (Sun.)
Trumpets	Oct. 8 th (Fri.)
Day of Atonement	Oct. 17 th (Sun.)
Feast of Tabernacles	Oct. 22 nd – 28 th (Fri. – Thu.)
Last Great Day	October 29 th (Fri.)

* observed the evening before

Bear in mind that the Biblical day begins at sunset the night before.

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