
"And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction." (Matthew 10:1)

I. First Followers

- a. A disciple is a "learner", one who follows the teacher and learns his wisdom. Jesus had many disciples, some were merely "hanging around" and some were truly committed.
- b. From this large group, Jesus selected a smaller group of twelve men, and these He called *apostles*.
- c. The Greek word *apostello*, means "to send forth with a commission." (Read Mark 3:14)
- d. *He... gave them authority (exousia, means actual power to do something) over.*
- e. These Apostles were given special power and authority to perform miracles. These miracles were part of their "official credentials." The specific mission is revealed in verses 7-8.
- f. All the names except *Andrew* and *Philip* are Jewish in form, suggesting that Jesus' disciples were mainly from the Jewish part of the mixed population in Galilee.
- g. Peter's name is listed first because of the foundational and important role he would play in the story of the early church.
- h. These Apostles were the first gifts from Jesus to the New Testament church (Eph. 4:11). They were ordinary people used by Jesus to do extraordinary things.
- i. Were Mark and Luke apostles?

II. Next Followers

- a. Jesus prayed and called His twelve. Jesus prayed and has also called you.
- b. We were not the first followers but we are called to be the next followers with purpose, authority and power.
- c. The *Apostles* were given authority to exorcise and to heal. The design of the gospel was to conquer the devil and cure the world.
- d. Note: in the Great Commission the exorcising and healing authority are not explicitly given to disciples.
- e. There are still gifts of healing in the church, but the Great Commission directs disciples to (1) disciple; 2) baptize; and 3) teach.
- f. The disciples are to be the extension of Christ, which is "the body of Christ."

III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action

- a. The question is, "Are disciples today given the authority to heal?"
 1. The answer is, "Yes, *some* are." (1 Cor 12:9; 28-29; James 5:14-16)
- b. We must remember that God is not a *respector* of man, but God *specifically* calls and gives to whoever He wills.
- c. The Holy Spirit is the administrator of those gifts. Remember the text says, *He gave them.*
- d. We are not ordinarily/commonly armed with the authority to raise the dead, but every Christian has an *exousia* to do something for God's glory.
- e. We dare operate only with what Jesus *gives* us. To pretend to operate in a gift that God did not give is deceitful as well as detrimental.
- f. The Church, and our *church*, must pray for the full assortment of the spiritual gifts, the ability both to discern and to use them.