

Apostolic Studies Series- Apostolic Sending

Elder Harry L. Jackson

Acts 13:1-6-

1: Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2: As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3: And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4: So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5: And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

- Verse 1 implies that there was a multiplicity of ministry gifts (“prophets and teachers”) in the church at Antioch. Also, it indicates that every five-fold minister is first a preacher and teacher of the word of God.
- These gifts were of various nationalities. This corresponds with the initial birthing of the Church on the Day of Pentecost, when “devout men, out of every nation under heaven” were drawn together by the Spirit of God. Wherever there is a true anointing, it will make it possible for people of different backgrounds to come together for the work of the ministry.
- They “ministered to the Lord.” These believers understood the necessity of the priestly function. They were *worshippers* first and foremost.
- They acknowledged the Holy Spirit as director- no committees or boards; no one man or woman (“pastor”) as primary decision-maker.

By order of the Holy Ghost, two of their number (Paul and Barnabas) were called out (“separated”) for a work of God’s designation. Whereupon the church:

1. Fasted and prayed for direction
2. Laid their hands on them (impartation of spiritual gifts, anointing for divine service, and acknowledgement of the call of God upon their lives).
3. “Sent them away...”

It is interesting that vs. 3 states that the church “sent them away,” whereas vs. 4 says that they were “sent forth by the Holy Ghost.” There is the possibility that it may have been unlikely that the other believers were even aware of Paul and Silas’ destination. Yet the next verse tells us that once they had departed in obedience to the word of the Lord, the Holy Spirit directed them first to Selucia, and then to Cyprus.

A few years ago, as I was seeking the Lord for direction concerning a major decision (college), I believe that His response was “make the move, and if you are right, I’ll *direct*

you, and if you are wrong, I'll *correct* you." Many times, in seeking God's will for our lives and ministries, we need to be willing to move on His first command out of obedience and faith, trusting Him for guidance to lead us to our goal or destination.

"That which is not sent of God cannot accomplish the purposes of God, and that which He sends, He empowers..."

Arthur Katz, "Apostolic Foundations"

In any case, vs 3 and 4 inform us that in order for there to be "apostolos" (a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders), there must be a dual sending:

1. first by the Holy Ghost,
2. and then by the church.

In 1 Corinthians 9:1-2, Paul states:

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."

This indicates that these "apostles" only had authority over the people and areas to which they were sent, and of whom they were received. It also implies that apostolic authority is not based on position, office, or title, but upon relationship. It is not organizational, but *relational*. This corresponds with Jesus' teaching to His disciples in Matthew 10:14-

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

Therefore, they were not to demand that anyone hear them or acknowledge them as authorities sent from God. But to preach and to serve *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..."*

Also, nowhere in this passage do we see the hand or action of man in the sending of Paul and Barnabas, except in obedience to the will of God.

Therefore, apostolic "sending" is not man's idea, but God's (*see Psalm 127:1*).

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" – John 20:21 (see also Mk:3:14, Mk:1:2, Mk:6:7, Lk:10:2, Lk:11:49, Jn:13:20, Acts:22:21, Acts:26:17, 1Cor:1:17).

"Merely because we see something that deserves to be rectified is not a justification necessarily to perform it. We cannot act in response to need. Moses is not sent because he sees the need, but because it says that "the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me." God saw their affliction and we are not to go on the basis of our seeing, but on the basis of His sending."

Arthur Katz- "Apostolic Foundations"