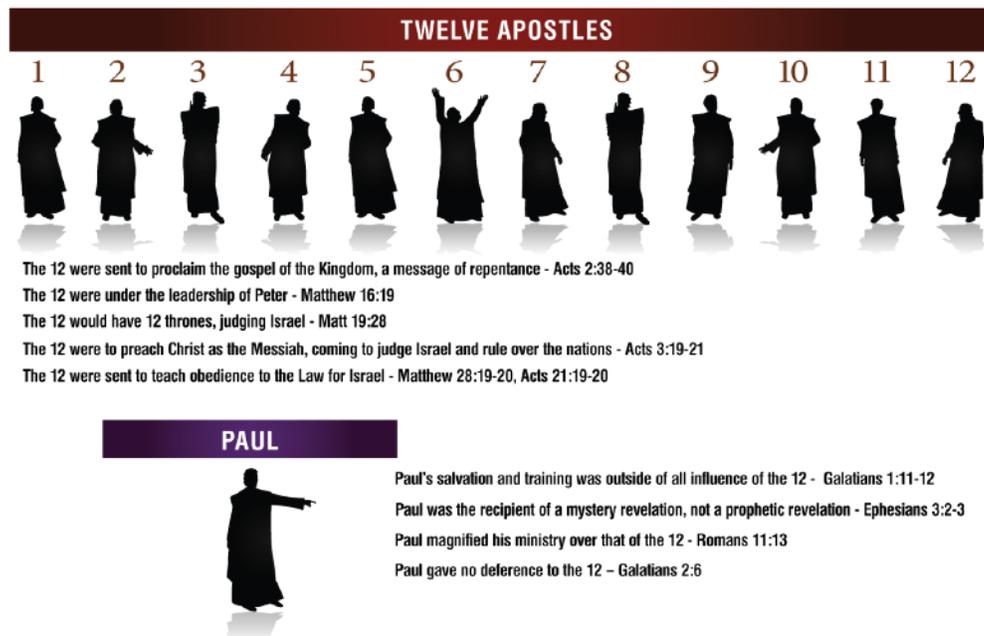


Session 3 | Paul and the 12 Apostles

Who is our Apostle?

We have discovered the mystery in Ephesians 3 that the Body of Christ is in the Dispensation of Grace which was hidden in God (see Covenants graphic above). Who then, is our Apostle? Who are we to follow? If we are going to build a correct ecclesiology we need to know the answer because where is our instruction going to come from?

There are two clear distinctions in the works of the Apostles. The twelve are the Apostles of the Covenant, and then we have Paul, who is the Apostle of Christ.



The twelve are serving the matters of the Covenant to the people of Israel. Their role is completely different than the Apostle Paul. Even by a cursory reading the New Testament, and especially the book of Acts, this becomes evident. We certainly get some theology from the twelve, but is it going to be our daily living and practical theology?

The twelve were sent to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom—God is going to send our *Davidic King, He is going to fulfill the Davidic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, put Israel in the Land, He is going to overthrow our enemies, etc, etc.* And, He will do all of that *when the nation of Israel repents.* Remember, John the Baptist's message: Repent *for* the Kingdom of God is *at hand!* That is why Israel had to repent—because of the Kingdom being at hand. All twelve came with that very same message.

In the dispensation of grace, is our salvation dependent upon our *repentance*? The clear answer is “no.” But, the gospel of the Kingdom *is* a message of repentance. The entire aspect of their message was Kingdom (**see chart above**).

Paul's gospel, however, is so different it has even caused a lot of theologians over the years to say, “Paul is an imposter and doesn't even belong in the Bible.” Why would theologians say

something like this? Because they were reading Paul's writings in such a way that caused them to say "That's a very different message." And, as we are discovering, it is.

Rather than "rightly dividing the word of truth" and looking at God's Word with a dispensational eye, they simply say, *one of these is not like the other* so they don't accept Paul. But the truth is, one of these in the chart above is not like the other. From that aspect the critics are absolutely correct.

One of the reasons for the rejection of Paul by liberal theologians is that if God had intended for him to be an apostle, he would have been chosen rather than Mathias (Acts 1:15-26). Or, others say, the apostles got ahead of themselves and chose the wrong man—these want to include Paul with the eleven.

And yet, Paul stands in stark contrast to the others (**see graphic**).

Therefore, the error in evangelicalism today is to run all of this together and not recognize the differences. Yet, when we separate Paul from the twelve, things finally begin to make more sense as we read the Bible. The contradictions begin to go away, and the understanding of our liberty, or freedom in Christ comes together!

In our next session we will continue to build our understanding of <i>Ecclesiology</i> as we talk about the Prophetic Plan.
