

Question: Do you believe that God “calls” preachers to their work today as He did in New Testament times?

There are two senses in which the Bible speaks of being “called” to preach. We will deal with this topic for the next two weeks. This article deals with one way the term is used.

The Bible speaks of some men who were directly called by God to preach. Jeremiah speaks of his call to the prophetic office. God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” ... “For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (Jer 1:5,7). God spoke directly and miraculously to the Old Testament prophets. They were called not only to speak, but also to write down the message they were given directly from God.

Jesus “called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” (Mk 3:13-14). Notice that from the group of disciples, Jesus chose or called the twelve apostles (Mt 10:2). These men were also to be given miraculous powers (Mk 3:15). They were told, “what ever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt 18:18). The apostles were the ambassadors of Christ (2 Co 5:20). On the eve of His death, Jesus prayed, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18). To equip the apostles in this work, the Father would send them the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would remind the apostles of Jesus’ words, and ultimately guide them into all truth (Jn 14:23; 16:12-13).

The apostles and prophets (other inspired men who were not apostles) both are under consideration in Eph. 3:3-5: “how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.”

This direct, personal calling and appointment was extraordinary and unique. God never intended for inspiration and revelation to be continuous down through the centuries. No person today can make a scriptural claim to divine miraculous inspiration. No person living today has God’s authority and approval to bind or loose like the apostles did. Nor can anyone living today truthfully claim to be a witness of the resurrected Christ with the power to perform miracles to confirm his word and power as being from God (2Co 12:11-12).

These facts ought to remind us of the importance of personal Bible study. God has provided us, in the Scripture, “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2Pe 1:3). We must not allow anyone today – no matter how much admiration we have for them, to teach and to lead us in ways that cannot be confirmed by New Testament teaching. Paul warned centuries ago, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you that what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Ga 1:8). This statement of Paul’s is an inspired exhortation of truth. The gospel of which he speaks is not limited to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but also the content of all New Testament scripture. Honestly, my friend, religious division exists today because people refuse to be restricted to the content of the inspired writings given through men whom Jesus personally called.

We will complete our study of this subject next week. Thanks for reading! Study your Bible and search the Truth.