

Discipleship 401 Chapter 01

This study is a look at the apostolic authority of the church. Some of the areas looked at before will now be viewed with a perspective of apostolic authority. This chapter is an introduction.

Open in prayer, then one by one give your view on what an Apostle is. This study is about the broader view of the apostolic authority of the church, but will look at and give an understanding of the role of the Apostle.

Revelation 1:12-16, I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,^[a] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Revelation 1:20, The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels^[a] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation 2:1-7, To the angel^[a] of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,

Luke 9:1-2, When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

When Jesus walked the earth he was given an anointing at the baptism in the Jordan river by John the Baptist. This anointing was the Apostolic Mantle with the authority and gifts needed to do the Father's work here on earth. While here he gave some authority to the disciples to do these works as well. This was under his personal authority and supervision, but they were receiving under that mantle of authority. Later, after his death and resurrection, he brought his mantle on the believers again at Pentecost. The full structure of how this authority is given out will be looked at later.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

It was stated that the lampstand in the Revelation chapter 1 was the church. Now in Revelation chapter 2 there is a warning about removal of the lampstand. The lampstand in heaven is the anointing over a group of people that makes it the church with the empowerment to do God's work. If the lampstand is removed the anointing that makes it a church of Christ is taken. That doesn't mean believers who are a part of that group are not saved. It means they are no longer under his mantle of authority to carry out his purposes. The apostolic mantle over his sevenfold church is what enables his people to carry out his work. Without it, they are just a religious group meeting. Discuss these concepts.

Ephesians 4:7-13, But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it^[a] says:

"When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people."^[b]

⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions^[c]? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Discuss this chain of authority. Pray as a group that he gives you understanding of his authority as it is passed down from on high by the Holy spirit (sevenfold Spirit), from Jesus to the church.