

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 10- Luke 10:1-4**

### 192- The Characteristics of Biblical Evangelism- Part 1 The Unique Office of the Apostles

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#### **Luke 10:1-4**

**1** Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

**2** And He was saying to them, "**The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.**

**3** "**Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.**

**4** "**Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.**

To the Glory of God

Now ever since our Lord Jesus walked on the earth- there have *always* been people attracted to Jesus- for a variety of reasons. There have *always* been people who have been curious about Jesus. There have *always* been people who wanted to show respect and honor to Jesus. And there have *always* been people who believed that Jesus was the Savior.

But while that is true- it is also true that the overwhelming majority of those very same people are categorically unwilling to follow Jesus on His terms. These people always have stipulations; they always have circumstances; and they always have reasons- but the bottom line is that while they may indeed be attracted and be curious and show respect and honor to a point and who believe that Jesus is the Savior- they *will not* and they *do not* serve Him or follow Him. And in 100% of those cases- this is because when you strip everything away- they really do not love Jesus; they have not been born again; they have

not been regenerate; they are not saved; they have not experienced the miracle of the New Birth; they have not had new eyes and new ears and a new heart given to them and they are still lost and in their sins.

And so we must understand that everybody in the crowd who follows behind Jesus is not saved; everybody who comes and sits on the pews is not saved; everybody who names the Name of Jesus is not saved; everybody who sings in the choir and who preaches the Gospel and who stands in leadership positions in the Church is not saved.

Saved people act like saved people; they talk like saved people; they walk like saved people and they bear godly fruit; they hunger and thirst after Righteousness; they deny that there is any good thing in themselves; they pick up whatever cross that Jesus has Sovereignly brought into their lives without murmuring and without complaining and they carry it; and they follow Jesus.

So I pray that you remember what Jesus' terms were. Go back up to Chapter 9:23 and read that with me:

### **Luke 9:23**

**And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

This is the dividing line between those who follow Jesus at a distance but will not walk close to Him; those who attend Church but who are not saved; those who speak His Name but will not obey His Words. That is the difference between the goats and the sheep; between the children of the devil and the children of God; between the fish on the right side and the fish on the left; between those who will hear Jesus say, "*Well done...*" and those who will hear Jesus say, "*Depart from me, I never knew you*"; and that is the difference between the tares and the wheat.

Jesus was saying to them all- that is all of the people who were in the crowd that trailed around and heard Him preach and saw Him do His miracles and all of us here today- He was saying to them all,

*"If anyone wishes to come after Me, if you want to really be My disciple, if you want to follow Me seriously, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."*

That is the deal. There is only one deal and there is no negotiation; there is no compromise; and nobody on earth works out a separate deal. You come to Jesus on His terms or you don't come at all. You come in unconditional surrender over every area of your life- lock stock, and barrel and you come broken- without one ounce of any self-sufficiency or self-righteousness; and you come confessing your complete lostness; your complete inability to obtain either forgiveness or righteousness; and you come pleading for a Divine Mercy that you do not deserve and that you cannot earn and that is not owed to you; and you come to Jesus fully aware that as you come- that is the end of your life as you know it- all your dreams and all your ambition all of your plans are swallowed up in Jesus and His Will and His Plans and you live every moment of your life thereafter in full abandonment of "self" and you live to the Glory of God- with no regard of what that will cost you. That is the deal. Or you can stay in your sins and you can spend all of eternity in a devil's hell.

And those who pause at this deal; those who begin to back up at this point; those who begin to think it over; those who begin to debate within themselves about the cost- those are the people that God is not dealing with; those are the people who have not been drawn by God the Holy Spirit; those are the people who have not been regenerate by a Sovereign Act of God to know just how evil they really are and how much they deserve the damnation of God; and those are the people who do not understand just how magnificent Grace is and how marvelous Mercy really is and how good it is that God would even consider them.

The people that balk at the one single deal that Jesus makes with the entire world are those who- as of yet- have not become convinced that they are really as bad and as wicked and as evil and as fallen as the Bible says that they are and they are really not convinced yet that God is as Sovereign as the Bible says that He is; and they really are not sure that sin is as offensive to God as the Bible says that it is and as of yet- the people who begin to pull back from Jesus are not convinced that that Salvation is as glorious as the Bible says that it is.

And those people will become offended at Jesus and they will become insulted at Jesus and they will turn around and they will walk away from Jesus. They hear these Words from Jesus and they will look into His eyes and they will categorically reject what He says and they will denounce what He says and they will call it "mean" and "hard" and

“cruel” and “demanding” and in one form or another they will say *“Just Who does this Jesus think He is to demand so much from me? Why I have my whole life in front of me and I have my own plans for my life and I have my own dreams and I don’t mind following Jesus from a distance- on my own terms- but this is way too close; this path is way too straight; this gate is way too narrow; and these words are way too demanding.”* And they will leave Jesus standing in the middle of the road.

But to those who have been chosen by God from before the foundation of the world to see and to hear and to believe- this statement by Jesus- that is so insulting and so offensive to so many- is music to their ears; it is the most merciful statement they have ever heard; it is the most gracious and loving statement that they could ever imagine. These are the ones who are “poor in spirit” and are blessed by God to be able to see the spiritual bankruptcy of their own lives; these are the ones who are blessed by God to “hunger and thirst” for a Righteousness that they know they do not have and cannot obtain. These are the ones who are blessed by God to yearn to have peace with God; these are the ones who tried as hard as they could to fit in with the world but God blessed them with a “holy discontentment” and they just never fit in. These are the ones who are blessed by God to understand just how lost they really are and how infinitely holy God is and how infinitely offensive their sins are to God and so they make no bargains; they seek no negotiation. And they come- eager to receive Mercy and eager to receive Grace. And they come broken and they come contrite and they come repenting and they come trembling.

To think that God would forgive them; to just imagine that the one true living God of the Universe would pardon all of their transgressions and rescue them from the fierce Wrath of God that is bearing down on them- humbles them and they beat their breast in agony over their wicked hearts and they bow and they cry out and they are forgiven and they are forever redeemed.

Jesus said to the attracted and the curious and the interested and even the believing, *“If you want the Salvation that I offer, if you want to be forgiven; if you want to enter into the Kingdom of God, if you want eternal life- then you must deny yourself; you must take up your cross without complaining and without murmuring and you must follow Me.”*

And this is called “The Offense of the Cross”. This is the part of the Biblical Gospel that the leaders of the modern church have worked so hard to minimize or outright eliminate. There is no offense in the silly impotent slogan that is so popular today, “*Jesus loves you and has a plan for your life*”. That doesn’t offend anyone. That hasn’t killed a single Missionary. But this Statement by Jesus, right here- this is highly offensive; it is highly insulting. And it angers people to this day. And make no mistake about it- it was given through the very lips of the Incarnate God- on purpose- to divide.

This Divine Demand of Jesus here in **Luke 9:23** is why they kill Missionaries all over the world. This is why people who compromise with this Truth are called, “courageous” and “forward thinking” while Biblical Christianity is described by the pagan world as “autocratic” and “harsh” and “mean”.

And we learned that what Jesus meant was that you refuse to associate any longer with the person that you are. You say, “*I am done with all my hopes and dreams and ambitions, I am weary of my failures and my sins, I am tired of trying to gain my way into heaven. I abandon everything to follow You and take up the cross daily.*” That is to say with such resolve and such commitment that if it means death, you're willing to face death on a daily basis and that's the way you follow Him.

Now clearly not everybody was willing to do that- even back then. Many of the curious, many of the attracted, many of those enthralled by Jesus, many of those who believed in Jesus were not willing to abandon everything. To say it's the end of me and the beginning of You, to confess Him as Lord and follow Him wherever He went whatever it cost, not everyone was willing to do that. John 6 tells us about some disciples who walked no more with Jesus because the stakes were too high, the price was more than they wanted to pay.

So at the end of Chapter 9- we saw three would-be disciples. The first one in verse 57 said,

**“I'll follow wherever You go”**

... which sounds great on the surface- but then the Lord then said to him,

**"The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."**

In other words, Jesus was saying, *"I'll tell you this, don't follow Me if you expect it's going to be easy. Don't follow Me at all if you expect it's going to be comfortable"*. So from that we know that following Jesus is not about our own self-fulfillment. Jesus is not going to guarantee us anything in this life- except trouble. He will not guarantee us health, wealth or prosperity- nothing is guaranteed in the material world. But He will guarantee the forgiveness of all your sins and eternal life with Him forever. And that man quickly disappeared.

Jesus said then to another in verse 59,

**"Follow Me."**

... but the man said,

**'Permit me first to go first and bury my father.'**

... and remember, we learned that that phrase meant that his father wasn't even dead yet. But this man loved the security that money brought to him and he wanted to go home and wait till he got his inheritance so he'd be able to live the way he wanted to live while following Jesus. So he wasn't really willing to pay the price. And that is why Jesus said to him,

**"Allow the dead to bury their own dead. As for you, go and proclaim everywhere the Kingdom of God."**

In other words- *"When I've called you, you follow. You come with Me, you proclaim the Kingdom of God, you drop the kingdom of men."* And we never hear any more about this guy either.

And then the third would be disciple said in verse 61,

**"I'll follow You, Lord. But first permit to say goodbye to those at home."**

So this guy wanted to go back and make sure he had sorted out all his relationships and drawn out of all of those everything he needed for the future. But Jesus said to him,

**"No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."**

... and this guy vanishes from the scene quickly as well. So here were three men who were classified as "disciples", who were to one degree or another fascinated by Jesus, and interested in Him, and drawn to Him. They were attracted to who He was, curious about Him, even to the point where they believed in Him to some degree and wanted to affirm that belief- but they were not willing to follow Jesus on His terms. And so they walked away like those disciples in **John 6:66**.

So when the stakes became real and higher and more costly than they were willing to pay- they all disappeared into the background.

But, on the other hand- there were some real true disciples in the crowd as well. In fact, in chapter 10 verse 1 we meet 70 of them. So the numbers here, at least, favor the genuine disciples. We meet 70 who were sent by the Lord to prepare the way for His Coming. These are those who were eager to deny themselves. These are those who were willing to take up the cross daily and follow Jesus without complaint and without murmuring and without delay. These are those who were the genuine and the true disciples who said we are refusing to deal with the person we are any longer, we abandon everything in our own lives, we submit to Your Lordship, whatever it is You want us to do we gladly do, whatever the price, we gladly pay, even if it means death, we will follow You. So these are genuine followers. There are no excuses with the 70; no bargaining; and no negotiation.

So from among the large group of disciples, learners, students, followers of Jesus, He picks these 70. He has already picked Twelve- and this is 70 more. The Twelve were chosen uniquely to be the Apostles. And there were only Twelve. Judas fell out and Mathias was added to take his place, and then there was that Apostle who was born out of due season by the name Paul. But apart from the Twelve, and the addition of Mathias and Paul- the Apostles were a very unique group. This is in addition to them. This is the 70. Genuine followers...yes, sent by our Lord to be missionaries. And while you

might not see yourself as an Apostle, and rightly so since theirs was a unique calling and a unique responsibility to proclaim the gospel to do signs and wonders that attested to the truth of that gospel, also to be responsible to write or to instruct those who did write the New Testament, they are unique. They will in the Kingdom reign over the twelve tribes of Israel, they'll have their names imbedded on the foundations of the holy city, the New Jerusalem in the eternal state. So they are unique.

Now we live in a time when the Office of Apostle is greatly misunderstood and greatly abused. It seems almost daily- you hear about some other man calling himself an Apostle and now even women are doing the same. So it is very appropriate for us to take a little time in our Journey through Luke and examine just how unique and how special and how important the Calling and Office of an Apostle really was and how those who go by that title today are at best misinformed and are at worst are imposters.

Now the most common definition of the word “Apostle” is

“one who is sent.”

So by that general definition- this word can have the meaning of anyone who is sent by others on a special mission such as in the case of Titus in **2Corinthians 8:23** that says:

### **2Corinthians 8:23**

**As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.**

The word, “**messenger**” here is the same Greek word that was translated elsewhere as, “Apostle”. Another use is found in **Philippians 2:25** that says:

### **Philippians 2:25**

**But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;**

... again- the English word, “**messenger**” in this verse comes from that same word. But the *reason* these two examples were translated



differently than the other usages of the word, “Apostle” is because no Divine Authority is implied in either case because the sender- who in both cases is the Apostle Paul- is not himself Deity and did not impart these messengers with any authority or power that they don’t already possess simply by being saved. And that is entirely different than with the men that Jesus personally chose and empowered and sent out.

So the issue in determining the uniqueness in the men that Jesus chose and empowered and sent out and the other people who may follow in their footsteps is Who is doing the choosing and Who is doing the empowering and Who is doing the sending.

The original Twelve Apostles- along with Matthias and Paul were men who were personally chosen by the Lord Himself; trained and empowered by Jesus Himself; who all physically saw Jesus; and Who were commissioned and sent out by Jesus personally. All the other messengers” who are listed in the Scriptures and throughout the 2,000 years of Church history- have all been saved by Jesus absolutely- but they have all been trained and equipped and sent out by the Church- the entity which has been established on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets- on which Jesus Himself is the Cornerstone- in obedience to the Command of Jesus. Please turn with me to read **Ephesians 2:19-22:**

**19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

**20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

**21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

**22** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Now notice two things about verse 20:

1. The word, “Apostle” comes before “Prophet” showing the Divine Order.
2. The Christian Church is *not* built on Jesus as the Foundation- but on the “**foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,**”

Now the “foundation of the Apostles and Prophets” on which the Church is built is not Man. Christ didn’t build His Church on frail and sinful Man- but what the “foundation” means is the Divine Revelation that Jesus is the Christ- the Son of the living God- that the Old Testament Prophets alluded to in signs and symbols and types and shadows and the New Testament Apostles expanded on in fullness.

And the “**Cornerstone**” here is the underlying support of the Foundation- which would be in our terms down here in the South- the “footings” or the “footers” that go *underneath* a foundation that gives the foundation its stability.

Back in Roman culture- a “Corner stone” was also called the “chief stone” or the “support stone”. Back then- it was a large rock that was placed *under* the foundation to give that foundation strength and support. So there are two questions that we need to ask today:

- A. What authority does the sender have who sends the modern day messenger (apostle) as his authorized spokesman?
- B. How much of that authority did the sender give to his representative?

And when we ask those two questions- we see that Jesus personally chose Twelve Apostles for a very unique and unrepeatable role in the history of Redemption that no messenger or so-called “apostle” since that time can honestly lay claim to. Therefore- those who lay claim to being an apostle today are either dramatically misinformed or they are purposefully deceptive- both of which are real bad.

So the first unique Characteristic of a true Apostle of Jesus Christ lays in the fact that Jesus personally chose that person; personally equipped that person and personally trained that person. And this can be proven in the following five passages of Scripture.

### **Luke 6:13**

**And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:**

No human can honestly lay claim to being saved by listening to Jesus Himself preach the Gospel. But the Apostles could. Nobody on

earth today can honestly lay claim to being personally “sent out” by Jesus. They are sent out by the Church. But the Apostles were personally sent out by Jesus Himself.

### **Matthew 19:28**

**And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

If Apostles were still in operation today- then those new apostles would also sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But notice that there are only twelve thrones for the Apostles to sit on. If everybody who lays claim to being an apostle truly was one- there would have to be literally tens of thousands of thrones.

### **The Acts 1:21&22**

**21 "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—**

**22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection."**

The only person who was qualified to replace Judas among the genuine Apostles was somebody who was “in the company” of the men who followed Jesus from the very beginning when Jesus Himself was baptized by John and someone who actually witnessed Jesus’ teaching and performing miracles and someone who was in the crowd as Jesus was physically taken up into Heaven. Not a single human on earth today can honestly make that claim.

### **2Corinthians 12:10-12**

**10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.**

**12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.**

Now while it is very common today for people to lay claim to perform great miracles and signs and wonders- and while that in itself is very doubtful- what is even more interesting is that those who lay claim to being an Apostle in our day never seem to be persecuted to the extent that the Apostles were persecuted.

The degree of physical persecution among all the Apostles was so severe- that if God had not Sovereignly sustained them- they would have all died way before they penned down any of the Revelation that God Sovereignly gave them. Eventually all of the Apostles but John were martyred.

### **The Revelation 21:14**

**And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

Here John describes the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God. John says here that the foundations of that City are the twelve apostles. Again if there were to be many, many more- then there would have to be more foundations to the city.

Now it is true that in a sense- all missionaries, truly called by God, are “sent out” by Christ as His representatives and should be able to say,

### **2Corinthians 5:20**

**Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

So in order to be an authentic missionary- one needs to be “sent.”

### **Romans 10:15**

**How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"**

So these missionaries are authorized by the risen Christ. However- even though that is true- we *cannot* say that Jesus personally imparts to them the same degree of Divine Authority that He gave to the original Apostles- whose Teaching now makes up the New Testament- which brings us to perhaps the most unique and powerful

and important part of the Ministry of the Apostles that makes what they did unique and unrepeatable and it is the twofold Ministry of:

1. Receiving Divine Revelation directly from God and articulating that Revelation into 20 New Testament Epistles and 1 Book of Prophecy (The Revelation) and the diary of the first 30 years of Church History (The Book of the Acts of the Apostles) which along with the four Gospel Accounts make up the New Testament.
2. Correctly interpreting the Scriptures of the Old Testament

### **1Corinthians 11:23a**

**For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you...**

### **Galatians 1:15-19**

**15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,**

**16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:**

**17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.**

**18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.**

**19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.**

### **Ephesians 3:2&3**

**2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;**

**3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.**

Here Paul makes the claim that he got what he got directly from Jesus Himself by Divine Revelation. And in the Passage in 1Corinthians- Paul quotes Jesus's comments to his Disciples on the "night in which he was betrayed" even though Paul was not present with Jesus that night.

And just in case you get the idea that maybe Peter or John told Paul what happened that night- Paul wrote in Galatians that he did not confer with flesh and blood but got what he got directly from God and in Ephesians he restates that what he has from the Lord- he received by way of Divine Revelation.

So God Sovereignly revealed Divine Revelation directly to the Apostles through various revelatory gifts- such as the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom and prophecy and tongues and interpretation- which they wrote down and which became part of the infallible and inerrant and inspired and authoritative Scripture.

Therefore anyone laying claim to being an Apostle in our day- must by definition- receive perfect and infallible Divine Revelation directly from God and they must write that Revelation down and it must be called Scripture. Yet as we all know- the Scriptures are complete and finished- so much so- that there is a Divine Warning against anyone who would add to or take away from the Scriptures that are already written.

But to be consistent- if Apostles were still in operation today- they should write down what they say God tells them- because it supposedly true and without flaw and they should add that information to the back of the Bible to be the 67<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Book- or they would be found to be false apostles and be rejected and denounced.

Now what is interesting is that this is precisely what all of the leaders of all the false religions and major cults have said and done. The Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science people and Muslims and all the rest never agree on anything. But the one thing they all seem to agree on is that the 66 Books of the Bible are all wrong and that they alone have the right book. And what do they all say? That they got their new book directly from God.

In fact the leaders of the Watch Tower Tract Society- the Jehovah's Witnesses say that they receive about 127 pages of new revelation directly from God every week. So the only people who lay claim to actually receiving new Revelation from God are the leaders of the major cults.

We must know dear friends- that nobody receives Scripture today- nobody. And yet that was one of the main functions of the Apostles- who were sent out- not to simply preach and not to simply establish various individual churches but to establish the Church of Jesus Christ

on the earth- not by constructing buildings- but by and through what these men taught. Please turn with me to **The Acts 2:42** and read about the four Characteristics of the true Church:

### **The Acts 2:42**

**They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

What “Teaching” did the early church engage in if the Revelation from God was still ongoing and had not been completed until recently? How did the early Church know what to teach if God had not completed His Revelation to Man?

The second major Ministry of the Apostles was to correctly interpret the Old Testament Scriptures- and perhaps the best example of this is found in **The Acts 2**- so let's go there.

### **The Acts 2:14-36**

**14** But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

**15** For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day;

**16** but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

**17** 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;

**18** EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

**19** 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

**20** 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

**21** 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

**22** "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

**23** this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

**24** But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

**25** For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.

**26** 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;

**27** BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.

**28** 'YOU HAVE HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'

**29** "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

**30** And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE,

**31** he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

**32** This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

**33** Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

**34** For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

**35** UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"

**36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

Here the Apostle Peter steps out on the balcony of the Upper Room and begins to preach the first sermon in the Christian Church



and in that sermon- God supernaturally gives Peter the correct understanding of several Old Testament Passages- which Peter correctly links to Jesus.

For example- in verses 17-21 Peter correctly interprets **Isaiah 44:3** and much of **Joel 2**. In verses 25-28 of **The Acts 2**- Peter correctly interprets **Psalms 16** and **Daniel 9:24**. In verses 30&31- Peter was given an unction to correctly interpret another part of **Psalms 16** and also **2Samuel 7:13**. And in verses 34&35- Peter gave the correct interpretation to **Psalms 110**.

Now keep in mind that these Old Testament verses had been in the Scriptures for many centuries. They had been studied and discussed and taught and examined at length by many Jewish scholars. And yet it was not until that day on that balcony from the lips of the Simon Peter- who was never trained as a priest- who was freshly endowed with Power from on High and who was operating in his role as an Apostle of Jesus Christ did anyone know what those verses meant.

And what is even more important- is that as an Apostle- Peter was given the ability to be right about this- so much so- that as soon as Peter assigned this meaning on these Old Testament verses- they have always mean what he said they meant and they cannot ever mean anything else- to this day. That is the Authority of a true Apostle of Jesus Christ.

And so we would probably do well to avoid using the term, “apostle” today to describe missionaries and church planters and other Church leaders because using this term creates confusion that serves to lessen the unique Authority of original Apostolic Ministry and Teaching.

So we see that the Apostles were men who were specially chosen; specially equipped; specially empowered; and specially trained by the Lord Jesus Himself to go out and to establish the Christian Church on the earth. And they did this through the supernatural ability that they had to correctly interpret the Old Testament Scriptures and through the Divine Revelation that they received directly from God and they wrote that Revelation down for us today and they confirmed that Revelation with signs and wonders and miracles and various gifts of the Holy Spirit to give Divine Credibility to the Revelation that we now call The New Testament.

And that is the Apostolic succession that we have today. Not in the way that Rome teaches it- but that we teach and we preach and we study and we believe and we love and we seek to obey and to put into practice the very same Divine Revelation that God Sovereignly gave to the Old Testament Prophets and the new Testament Apostles that is the foundation of the Church with Jesus Christ as the Cornerstone.

And that is why the Church is eternal- because it is not the invention of man but is a creation of God and that is why the Church must be built by Jesus Himself and that is why the very gates of Hades will not prevail against the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and that is why the Church will be presented to Jesus as a glorious Church- having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing when our Lord returns.

Let's pray.