

## **The 'Apostolic Age' is STILL in Process** **The Modern Fact of Apostles**

By Rich Vermillion

These notes are formatted as an outline and are meant to accompany the video teaching, [\*\*\*Spirit-Filled Theology 4: Ending Cessationism Pt. 3\*\*\*](#). All of the Scriptures quoted herein come from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible, and are used with permission. Feel free to look them up in your favorite translation too.

### **Introduction**

There are two main arguments used by Cessationists (i.e., those that believe that miracles and supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit have “ceased” or ended). The first one, upon which their entire thesis fully depends, is the false assertion that these interventions by God were rendered to be no longer necessary after the Bible was completed. Their additional supporting argument (which is the least supportive of the two) is that “once the last apostle died,” i.e., when the so-called “apostolic age ended,” the supernatural flow of God’s Spirit ended because the Bible was complete by then.

Stated another way: This second argument depends entirely upon the first, which I have thoroughly refuted in the two videos, “The End of Cessationism” [\*\*part 1\*\*](#) and [\*\*part 2\*\*](#). Therefore, this second argument is irrelevant if the first one upon which it depends is debunked (and it is).

Nevertheless, it is important to utterly refute this second argument because people falsely believe it to be true in and of itself and this can cause other problems with their theology and walk with Christ. Assuming that when the last of the original twelve apostles (John) died, and that there were none to follow, people miss the fact that apostles are still existent today because the general office has not yet been

rendered obsolete. We know this fact because the Bible says the end of the five ministries, Gifts of the Spirit, etc., will not happen until Jesus Christ returns. However, if people continue to believe falsely that the office of apostle has "ceased," then one or more of the following problems could occur:

- Some people may still "keep one foot in" to the false doctrine of Cessationism, despite its utter lack of biblical support, merely because a secondary fallacy-based false doctrine still has hold of their thinking. In other words, if this second error continues to seem plausible to their minds, then they may slide back into [the "ditch" of Cessationists' error](#) over time, despite it having been proven to be logically and biblically absurd.
- People in one ditch (e.g., Cessationism) are always in danger of overcorrecting into the other ditch (e.g., "Charismania," which is what I call Charismatic and Pentecostal extremism, i.e., unbiblical beliefs, practices, and manifestations, which can be either fleshly or demonic in origin). If a person jumps out of the "there are no apostles" ditch without the correct balanced doctrine to guide them, they may slip into the "everyone who claims that they are an apostle must surely be one" ditch of fruitcake false spirituality.
- And again, people who falsely believe there are no apostles today cannot fully benefit from the unique role that office plays in the Body of Christ today since they wouldn't recognize it. This ministry is needed, and thus, it should be acknowledged and respected along with all of the REAL ministers who walk in the other offices, i.e., modern prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. All are necessary (Eph. 4:11-16), and thus, all should be understood.

The following outline provides the biblical foundation upon which my latest video of The End of Cessationism (i.e., part 3) is based. It refutes the false narrative regarding the end of the so-called "apostolic age" completely, for this office will not

"cease" until ALL of the five ministry offices have likewise done so. While the video covers things that this outline does NOT, it is also true that this supplement contains granular details (e.g., more Scripture references, related side topics, etc.) that were omitted from the video. Thus, when taken together, they present a fuller picture.

## Teaching Outline and Notes

### I. WE ARE IN THE SAME 'AGE' AS THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES

The age of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, is still continuing today.

**A.** These five ministry gifts were GIVEN to the entire Church, i.e., Body of Christ, for the express purpose of edifying and equipping believers, helping them to mature in Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

**B.** ALL five offices will be eliminated at the same time, i.e., when EVERY Christian reaches the status of "...the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" at the same time (Eph. 4:13).

**1.** It is currently impossible for EVERY Christian to reach that level of maturity at the same time because:

**a.** New believers are added daily to our number;

**b.** Spiritual growth takes time;

**c.** And not everyone has the same enthusiasm/diligence/time to study so that they can mature more quickly. Some simply grow in Christ faster than others. Etc.

**2.** However, EVERY Christian will suddenly "mature" into the "fullness of the stature of Christ" simultaneously when Jesus Christ returns for His church because we will become "like Him" in the "twinkling of an eye." **Cf.**

(which abbreviation comes from a Latin term that means “compare”) 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:46-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18.

3. Therefore, NONE of these five offices will “cease” to exist until they ALL become obsolete AT THE SAME TIME due to our glorification via the Resurrection of the saints and quickly-subsequent transformation of the living members of the Body of Christ. Stated another way: If even one office exists (e.g., pastors), then they ALL exist because their obsolescence will occur at the same time at some point in the future, i.e., when Jesus Christ returns.

4. So we are ALL still in the very same “Church Age” as the original apostles. NOTHING that the Lord instituted after His resurrection has “ceased” to exist. The fact that God gave us the New Testament didn’t change what God was doing through His Church. Rather, the Bible DOCUMENTS what God did for us through His Son! In other words, the Scriptures provide us a written record of instructions to follow:

**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

(2 Tim. 3:16-17)

5. The above-stated PURPOSE of the Scripture does NOT imply in the least bit that the Bible’s completion makes supernatural manifestations or ministry offices obsolete. Rather, it supports a Spirit-filled theology, i.e., the one demonstrated throughout the New Testament, because we cannot be “equipped” or “instructed” by the Bible to do something DIFFERENT than the early church saints were taught BY THOSE SAME WRITINGS to do. Stated another way: The apostles/prophets who wrote the New Testament were explaining to the believers the many facets of Spirit-filled theology and practice in their epistles (letters), and demonstrating the same in person (e.g., as is recorded in the Book of Acts, etc.). So the first Christians

that read the New Testament (NT) writings understood these instructions to apply to THEM TOO because they were explicitly instructed to do so. Thus, so should we since we are instructed in the same way as they by the very same NT.

## II. THERE ARE TWO CATEGORIES OF APOSTLES REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Only ONE type of these TWO “ceased to exist” once the “last apostle died.”

**A.** The general office of “apostle” was instituted by Jesus Christ after His resurrection (Eph. 4:7-16). We will examine this class shortly in more detail in section C below.

**B.** The original “Twelve” apostles were a finite (i.e., limited in quantity or number) subclass of the general office of apostle, and are explicitly called “The Apostles of the Lamb” in the Book of Revelation:

**Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

(Revelation 21:14)

**1.** The original group included the traitor, Judas Iscariot. This finite set of people were also called “The Twelve” (for short) throughout the Gospel narratives while Judas was still numbered among them. Cf. **Mt. 10:1-5**; 20:17; 26:14, 20, & 47; **Mk. 3:13-19**; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, & 43; **Lk. 6:12-16**; 8:1; 9:1, & 12; 18:31; 22:3, 14, & 47; **Jn. 6:67-71**; 20:24. (Note: The bolded references here simply mark the beginning of the list of passages for each of the four Gospels, and are not intended to imply that they are more important than the others listed here.)

**2.** After Judas' death, this group was after that called “The Eleven” for a short while. Cf. Mt. 28:16; Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:9 & 33; Acts 1:16.

3. Matthias was chosen – not by man, but by God – to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26).

a. The use of lots (also "Urim") was commanded by God in the Old Testament to discern the will of God in some matters (e.g., Lev. 16:8; Num. 27:21; Josh. 18:6-10, etc.). The apostles had not received any instruction from Jesus to do otherwise. It is AFTER they had been given the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) does it appear that this practice ceased because it is never mentioned again, nor encouraged.

b. The Holy Spirit, through His prophetic writer, Luke (who wrote the Gospel that bears his name and the Book of Acts also), EXPLICITLY stated that Matthias "...was numbered with [i.e., added to] the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26).

c. Luke also referred to this original group of apostles as "The Twelve" again regarding an event that happened some years AFTER Matthias was added to their number:

**Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.**  
(Acts 6:2)

d. The theological argument that Paul was "actually God's choice," and not Matthias, falls apart quickly when one considers the fact that Paul's faithful companion, Luke, did not believe him to be counted among them.

i. *Logically*, we can infer from this fact that Paul didn't consider himself to be one of the Twelve either, for if he did, his view would have likely influenced Luke. (Of course, again, the latter certainly wrote by the Holy Spirit, i.e. see 2 Tim. 3:16 & 2 Pet. 1:21. Thus, it is most important to understand the fact that Luke was Spirit-inspired in writing the passage above, for it means that God never classified

Paul as among The Twelve. Nevertheless, I'm pointing out that Luke must not have agreed with the false idea that Paul was one of The Twelve if he wrote otherwise, by the Spirit.)

ii. MOREOVER, Paul also STATED OPENLY that The Twelve was a separate group from him when he likewise wrote by the Holy Spirit:

**For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.**

(1 Cor. 15:3-8, emphasis mine)

d. Thus, if the Spirit of God, Paul, and Luke, are all in agreement that Paul was NOT one of The Twelve, then it's absurd to claim otherwise. The false argument regarding Paul allegedly being "one of The Twelve" is also refuted by the next subsection where we examine the general office of apostle more fully and see the several people named as being in this broader classification.

4. Thus, the "Twelve Apostles of the Lamb" include eleven of the original number, PLUS Matthias, and are indeed a finite subcategory of "apostles" that ceased to walk the earth after the last one of them (John) physically died.

5. NOTE: The Twelve were the ONLY type of "apostles" before the general office was given by Jesus Christ to His Church AFTER His resurrection (Eph. 4:7-16). Again, they are best understood to be a subcategory of the latter, i.e., the small set that preceded, and then later coexisted, with the larger class of apostles that would follow.

C. Numerous people – including Paul – are called “apostles” in the New Testament, although they are certainly NOT counted among of “The Twelve.”

**1. Paul and Barnabas** are SIMULTANEOUSLY called “apostles” for the very first time here:

**But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out...**

(Acts 14:14, emphasis mine)

**2. James**, the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., the first natural-born son of Joseph and Mary, Jesus alone being virgin-born) is also called an “apostle” by Paul (Gal. 1:19; Cf. 1 Cor. 15:7). In fact, it is THIS James that wrote the epistle that bears his name in the New Testament.

**a. NOTE:** For more about the fact that Jesus was Mary's "firstborn," but that she and Joseph had NORMAL conjugal marriage relations thereafter that produced children, study the following passages in this recommended order: Mt. 1:25; Lk 2:7; then Mt. 13:55 (wherein Jesus' half-brothers are named) and v. 56 (wherein His half-sisters are mentioned); then the note about His mother and half-brothers moving with Him to Capernaum in Jn. 2:12; then the other passages mentioning Jesus' half-brothers, i.e., Mat. 12:46-49; Mk. 3:31; Lk. 8:19; Jn. 7:3-5; Acts 1:14; and 1 Cor. 9:5.

**b.** Being the next oldest to Jesus (Mt. 13:55 is likely listed in birth order), and following the biblical tradition of ordered birthright and inheritance (e.g., Cf. Ex. 28:9-10; Gen. 43:29-34; Deut. 25:5; 2 Chron. 31:12; etc.), it appears that sometime after Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor. 15:7), His half-brother, James, was born again and eventually became the recognized leader among the apostles in Jerusalem. Cf. Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18

c. NOTE: Jude, the author of the epistle that bears his name, was also a half-brother of Jesus and full brother of James. Cf. Jude v. 1 and Mt. 13:55.

d. NOTE: Being her oldest son, before His death, Jesus conveyed the responsibility of caring for His mother, Mary, to His disciple, John (Jn. 19:26-27). This action was probably due to the fact that His brothers didn't yet believe in Him (Jn. 7:5). It was perhaps also because John was so loyal and beloved (Jn. 13:23; Cf. Jn 21:20-25). Another reason may be that John was perhaps older than Jesus' younger half-brother, James.

**3. Epaphroditus** is called "your apostle" in the literal Greek of Paul's writing to the Philippian church (Phil. 2:25). The Greek word "apostolos" (ἀπόστολος, Strong's #652) is the one Paul chose to describe the man, although many translations substitute "messenger" (or some similar) word instead of "apostle." This fact is partially due to the literal meaning of the word (i.e., a "sent one"), but primarily because of the translators' theological assumptions. Nearly everywhere else the word is translated as "apostle" because THAT was how the Greek-speaking believers mainly used the term.

**4.** Paul added **Silas** (the long-form of his name is Silvanus) and **Timothy** to the list of apostles when writing to the Thessalonian church:

**Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers...**

**For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.**

**But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a**

**cloak for covetousness—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.**

(1 Thess. 1:1-2; 2:1-6, emphasis mine)

The inclusion of Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy within all of the “we” and “our” statements when describing their combined team ministry in the city of Thessalonica (see Acts 17:1-9) is apparent in the context of everything that Paul wrote above by the Spirit of God. Thus, the inclusion of these two men within the statement “as apostles of Christ” is logically necessary, as well. The structure of Paul’s letter (in both the Greek and our English translations) emphatically includes Silas and Timothy as apostle-level members of his ministry team. While Silas is initially identified as a prophet (Acts 15:32), it's reasonable to believe that he, along with Timothy, developed into full apostles via Paul's mentorship over time. Of course, only God calls people to specific roles of ministry (implied clearly in Eph. 4:7-11; Cf. Acts 13:2-3; Rom. 11:29; 2 Tim. 1:1). Nevertheless, one of the purposes of each of the five ministry gifts is to "equip" people for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-16; Cf. 2 Tim. 1:6).

5. Titus is mentioned along with a group that is categorized as "apostles of the churches" in the Greek of 2 Cor. 8:23, using the same word “apostolos.” It’s likely that Titus was an apostle too, given Paul’s practice of sending him to establish churches (Cf. 2 Cor. chapters 7-8; 12:28 and the Epistle of Titus), just as he did Timothy (e.g., read 1 Timothy & 2 Timothy), who Paul specifically named as an apostle. Nevertheless, the unnamed group of brethren that was traveling with him was marked as "apostles” in the Greek of 2 Cor. 8:23, regardless of one’s opinion about Titus.

6. So the FACT that multiple people NOT listed among The Twelve are called “apostles” is explicit evidence what Eph. 4:7-11 says happened: That after His resurrection and ascension to Heaven, Jesus Christ gave apostles (i.e., as a general class other than The Twelve), prophets, evangelists,

pastors, and teachers, as gifts to the Body of Christ for the purposes stated in Ephesians.

### III. THE FACT OF FALSE-APOSTLES MEANS THAT THERE ARE LEGITIMATE ONES TOO

A. The Bible contrasts FALSE apostles with those that are truly called by God:

For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.... But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

(2 Cor. 11:5, 12-15)

B. It is logically impossible to have a "false" anything unless a REAL version of that same thing exists. There's no such thing as a counterfeit \$33 bill because no REAL ones exist. There's no such thing as "false leprechauns" because there are NO real ones. Etc. The ORIGINAL identity is the true one. The counterfeit is the false version. Thus, the false is DEFINED by that which is true.

C. Moreover, the fact that "false" apostles, along with "false" prophets, etc., existed in Bible days simultaneously with the TRUE ones in both the OT and NT, is proof positive that the counterfeits are dependent upon the true expressions of these ministries for their own identity. Without a LEGITIMATE office, there can be no BOGUS version thereof. Falsity is only known by its opposing relationship with the truth. Since real ministers work FOR Christ, false ones work AGAINST Him, which is why they are inherently anti-Christ ("anti" being a Greek prefix that means "against"). Thus, regardless of their intentions, false ministers work against the plan of God by imitating those people who truly work to advance God's Word and purposes in the earth.

1. Those that point at modern false apostles, false prophets, etc., as “proof” that those offices have “ceased” to exist are, thus, self-refuted.
  - a. By referencing the false, they IMPLY that the true exists, because the false always gains its identity from the true by imitating and opposing it.
  - b. Because the counterfeits existed simultaneously with true ministers in the Bible, a person claiming that the fakes are proof that the true no longer exist is pure absurdity. It is also a self-contradiction whenever the individuals who make such ludicrous claims also purport to derive their wrong ideas from the Scriptures. One cannot trust the Bible as God's Word (i.e., "Sola Scriptura") while also contradicting what it clearly states.

#### IV. THEREFORE, THE 'LAST APOSTLE' HASN'T DIED

Given the fact that the general office has not “ceased,” then God is still raising up TRUE apostles today (along with the other four ministry gifts). So there is no “last one” until ALL of these ministries cease with the return of Jesus.

##### IN SUMMARY:

- A. Paul, Barnabas, James, Silas, Timothy, Epaphroditus, along with some unknown group of brethren, perhaps Titus, etc., were all “apostles.” However, NONE of this group were counted among The Twelve. Thus, their presence in the New Testament provides specific examples of the GENERAL class of apostles that Eph. 4:7-16 states was given to the Church – along with the four other offices – until Jesus returns to the earth and our instantaneous transformation makes ALL of the five ministry offices obsolete.
- B. The FACT of false apostles, prophets, etc., is absolute logical proof of the existence of the right versions thereof, for the false derives its identity from

the true. Both the genuine and the counterfeit ministers co-existed at the same time in both the Old and New Testaments, and likewise, they still do today.

**C.** THEREFORE, we are still living in the so-called “age of the apostles” (a term that is intended to suggest a different dispensation than our own). We still live in a time of apostles, prophets, etc., because we are in the “Church Age,” which began at the time recorded in the New Testament. THIS “age” (epoch, era) will not cease until Jesus returns to transform us and establish His earthly Kingdom. THUS, this weak secondary argument of Cessationists against the active ministry of the Holy Spirit within the Church of Jesus Christ is just as false as the first one that I refuted from the Scriptures in the previous two videos of this multi-part teaching series on [\*Spirit-Filled Theology\*](#).

For more information on this subject, see the full video teaching by clicking on the following image and viewing it on its website page:

