

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times  
"Signs of an Apostle"  
2 Cor. 12:11-12  
11-20-16 Sun AM

Paul continues in his defense of his apostleship and attack upon the false apostles who were deceiving the Corinthian believers. They taught Paul was inferior to the original twelve apostles.

The church has always been confused over the role of the 12 apostles and whether or not the office exists today.

**Rev. 2:2**, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (Since 1st century)

**TT-** In our text Paul presents irrefutable proof he was a genuine apostle. What is our apologetic response to those who claim to have the office of apostle? We note the qualifications of an apostle and the power of an apostle.

### **I. The Qualifications of an Apostle.**

1. Apostles were chosen and called personally by Jesus [Matt. 10:1-4; Gal. 1:11-12].
2. Apostle accompanied Jesus in his earthly ministry (Acts 1:21-22).
3. Apostles were eyewitnesses to the resurrected Lord [1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7-8;].
4. Apostles were authenticated by miracles [2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4].

### **I. The Qualifications of an Apostle.**

#### **II. The Power of an Apostle.**

1. The Signs (v. 12a).

"Apostle" means "to send" or "one who is sent." This word appears 80 times in the NT.

There was the twelve who were sent by Jesus but there were others sent by the church who chose them to serve as their official authorized representatives (missionary or church planter).

"The signs" were the benchmark of a true apostle of Jesus. "Wrought among you" means performed and emphasizes that it was God's power working through Paul.

## 2. The Power (v. 12c).

These three are not three types of miracles but miracles considered from three aspects.

A. Signs- Miracles authenticated the message.

B. Wonders- speaks of awe or the reaction to the miracle. These created amazement and astonishment, drawing onlookers attention to the message the apostles proclaimed.

C. Mighty deeds- or power.

These supernatural miracles were signs pointing to them as genuine messengers of God. They were all performed through a human agent.

There is a three-fold purpose for signs, wonders, and miracles:

1. Miracles introduced different eras of divine revelation. The miracles recorded in Scripture took place during three time periods-

- a. The time of Moses and Joshua- Law
- b. The time of Elijah and Elisha- Prophets
- c. The time of Christ and the apostles- Messiah

2. Miracles authenticated the message and messenger.

**Heb. 2:3-4**, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; (4) God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

**Acts 2:42-43**, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

3. Miracles revealed a truth about God. (Ex: Sign miracles in John)

**Ex. 34:10**, "And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee."

The gifts of an apostle slowly ceased in Scripture:

1. In the book of acts the sick were healed and at the end of Paul's life he told Timothy and Trophimus to consult other means.
2. There are no miracles recorded in Acts in the Jerusalem church after the stoning of Stephen.
3. The apostles were protected by God yet later died as martyrs.
4. Heb. 2:3-4 refers to the signs and wonders in the past tense. The apostles and their sign gifts were foundational.  
God still heals but no thru an apostle.