WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XIX NUMBER XII

Recognizing Apostolic Christianity IV

WEDNESDAY, December 1
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:7-18

Several years after Paul founded the Corinthian church, Judaizers with their legalistic attempt to bring the church back to the law, came discrediting Paul, his ministry, his call, and his apostolic credentials. Paul sent Titus to deal with the situation and the majority of the congregation repented. There was, however, a small band of hardcore legalists who remained creating continual confusion and some problems for the church. Paul's first letter helped bring repentance to the majority of the congregation. The second letter is divided, with the first nine chapters encouraging those who had turned; while the last four chapters confront the unrepentant with the error of their ways. Because Paul set the standard for the church, in order to move them off that standard it was necessary to discredit Paul and his ministry. This background serves to help us understand New Testament conception of apostolic ministry. Second Corinthians 12:12 is a statement demanding research to understand the panorama of what Paul considered to be the true signs of an apostle. If God is truly restoring apostolic ministry in order to bring divine authority to the Church, then we can expect to see manifestations which Paul spoke. Whatever the signs might be, they should appear somewhere in the accounts of his ministry as recorded in Acts and the Epistles. We can certainly ask ourselves – what are the signs of an apostle? We can certainly demand an answer from Scripture!

THRUSDAY, December 2
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12

In verse 12, which seems to be a key in the last four chapters, Paul says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." The Greek word for "signs" here is **say-mi-on. Say-mi-on** is used twice. The word for "wonders" is **ter-as-in**. And "mighty deeds" is the Greek word **doo-nam-a-sin**. Paul makes it very clear the one thing you can expect from the apostolic ministry is the full spectrum of the power of the Holy Spirit at work to accomplish His purposes in the life of the Church. Paul does not leave us hanging over the definition of what signs really are. The context makes it clear as to what Paul had in mind and should demystify the spiritual misconception so common around the apostolic office. Does God call people to pastor? Why not apostles?

FRIDAY, December 3
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12, Ezekiel 9:1-11

What are the **say-mi-on** signs of an apostle? This concept is so important it demands a complete vertical (etymological) word study. The Greek word **say-mi-on** has a long and distinguished history. Ezekiel 9:4-6 show us the root of **say-mi-on** is **say-ma** meaning a warning signal that can't be missed (unless a person is dense and spiritually dumber than a post). It was used at times for the trumpet which would call the nation or

city to battle. It was used for a ship's flag. And in Ezekiel it was used for a distinguishing mark to be placed on the foreheads of those who had a heart after God's purpose. No destruction came to the city until all of God's people who sighed and cried over the sin of the land had been marked in order to be spared. Does God still mark His people today? He certainly does and is! Have you been engraved?

SATURDAY, December 4
Scripture: Numbers 14:1-28

In Numbers 14 God's people are preparing to go into the Promised Land. The problem is they have been greatly discouraged by the spies and have rejected the counsel of Joshua and Caleb. The first ten verses record the sparring between the spies and Joshua and Caleb. Moses and Aaron have to fall on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation and Moses begins to intercede in order that God will not destroy the people for their rebellion. In verse 11, we're told, "And the Lord said to Moses: 'How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?'" This speaks volumes to us about understanding the Hebrew mindset concerning the **say-mi-on** and it's purpose in God's plan for the Church. While we tend to think of signs being mighty deeds that only God can do -–the Hebrews were a bit more simplistic. ***Faith*** in the Old Testament Hebrew concept was related to perception based on the knowledge of God. In the Hebrew mindset only those who **knew** God could believe Him. So the purpose of a sign was to settle in the heart that God was really involved in speaking so they could **trust** Him, rely on Him, and act on His word.

SUNDAY, December 5
Scripture: Exodus 4:1-17

In God's attempt to persuade Moses concerning his election to go to Egypt to deliver the nation of Israel, Moses brings up a significant point. He tells God he has not seen the Israelites for forty years and he does not think they will believe him, or even listen to his voice. God's response in verses 2 and 3 to Moses is, "What is that in your hand?" Moses replies it's a simple rod. God then says, "Throw it on the ground." In the process it becomes a serpent and Moses flees from it. The Lord speaks to him again and says, "Reach out and grab it by the tail." Once he touched the tail it became a rod again in his hand. Moses still was not absolutely convinced because, I'm sure, he thought the sorcerers might be able to duplicate this sign. So God gave him another. "Put your hand in your bosom." When he withdrew his hand it was "…leprous, white as snow." After putting it back in again at God's instruction, he withdrew it and it was completely whole! God even told Moses what to do if they didn't believe the first two signs and gave him a third one. God committed Himself to do whatever necessary through **say-mi-on** to persuade the people Moses was heaven's messenger from God. Has God changed? Do we have a better covenant based on better promises? Did God not promise the end of the Church age would double the displays released at the beginning (former and latter rain – same month)? So we understand in its original intent, the sign validates or authenticates the source of ministry as from God, empowering people to hear and believe the messenger.

MONDAY, December 6
Scripture: Isaiah 8:1-10, 18

In the prophets God also uses the concept of the sign but often in a little different way. For the prophets, God doesn't necessarily produce the miraculous, but, in fact, through normal means brings forth a prophetic picture which is to be a ***sign*** concerning the future of the city or nation. Isaiah is told to take a large scroll and write a name on it with a man's pen. The name is of child about to be conceived, as God sends the prophet to the prophetess. It is a prophecy of judgment that is to come through the king of Assyria in the days ahead because of a lack of national repentance. Following verse 18 Isaiah says, "Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the Lord of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion." The unique thing about the development of this word "sign" is that even in normal activity what we

ordinarily do in obedience can, in fact, be designated by God as a sign to those to whom we are sent. The word **say-mi-on** does not necessarily mean sovereign miraculous divine intervention. It is much more the issue of an unusual event giving perception or insight. A sign can be disclosure that becomes the presupposition for knowledge. It doesn't necessarily have anything to do with spiritual revelation. For the prophets, a sign did not necessarily mean the miraculous but became a mini-message.

TUESDAY, December 7
Scripture: Isaiah 20:1-6

Isaiah received some incredible assignments that qualified as signs! Here in Isaiah 20, he was told to go naked and barefoot three years as "..a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia…." Anyone walking naked and barefoot today would probably end up incarcerated for public exposure. But in this process God ordained Isaiah's action and without anything supernatural it qualifies as a sign of impending judgment against Egypt and Ethiopia. For those who have never been asked to do a demonstration to a congregation as a sign – you really don't know what you have missed! Isaiah was not popular or received but his obedience to go naked paved the way for faith to give Hezekiah a choice. Isaiah cried out and had reversed earth's orbit for a short period! What are we qualifying for – signs or potlucks?

WEDNESDAY, December 8
Scripture: Ezekiel 4:1-8

Ezekiel is now told to do something very unusual. It does not in any way reveal the miraculous but it is called a **say-mi-on** by the Septuagint. He had to lay on his left side for 390 days of Israel's sin, then switch over and lay on his right side as a sign 40 days for the iniquity of Judah. Each day represented a year. The final part was interesting in that he was to set his face toward the siege of Jerusalem, his arm would be uncovered and he would prophesy against it and God said a divine paralysis would fall on him so he could not turn from one side to the other until the days of the siege were over. So we see ultimately his actions, not the miraculous, are the sign. Is your church preparing you to act with Ezekiel's courage or enter bake sales?

THURSDAY, December 9
Scripture: First Kings 13:1-6

In First Kings 13:1-6 a prophet is sent to rebuke the altar which Jeroboam has built to compete with the worship in Jerusalem. The prophet says God will raise up a king who will destroy the altar and speaks judgment against it. The altar splits apart and the ashes are poured out. In addition the king, in a rage, extends his hand and commands his guards to arrest the prophet but his hand immediately withers away. He repents, asks the prophet to entreat the Lord that his hand may be healed, the prophet does and the king is healed. **Say-mi-on** also includes judgments that were called signs. Do we really want to ask God for signs? We have to remember the apostle Paul demonstrated some judgment both in his absence and in Acts when he was present. Will the true apostolic ministry restore a measure of the **did-akh-ay** of the Lord?

FRIDAY, December 10
Scripture: First Kings 13:7-33

The young prophet was disobedient to the word of the Lord. God told him he could not in any way shape or form eat bread or drink water or participate within the region where the altar was. Do we understand the ramifications of participation in our church? That was the defiling nature of the altar. An old prophet found him, took him back home, lied to him, through total deceit gave him a counterfeit word and the young prophet decided to believe the old prophet, violated God's command and then the old prophet prophesied and spoke a word that because of disobedience he would not come to the tomb of his fathers. Immediately when he left, on his way home a lion met him and killed him and continued to stand by the body. When the old prophet heard it

he saddled his donkey and left to get the body of the young prophet to bring it back and bury it because he bore responsibility for his death. This is a picture, or another sign, which comes out of the life of the young prophet. One thing we need to realize is the believing prophet was judged more severely than the unbelieving king. Bringing God's signs to cities, churches, or nations can certainly have a high price tag. Are we really sure we want to be people of signs and wonders for the last days?

SATURDAY, December 11
Scripture: Second Kings 20:1-11

In this passage we have the introduction of a phrase that appears numerous times in the New Testament. That phrase is **say-mi-on pi kai ter-as-ti-on.** The prophet Isaiah comes to Hezekiah and tells him, "Set your house in order, for you shall die…." Hezekiah turns his face toward the wall, and prays to the Lord, crying and weeping bitterly until God says, "Ok, I'll give you 15 more years, plus I will deliver you in this city from the king of Assyria." In verse 8 Hezekiah says, "What is the sign that the Lord will heal me,…." And Isaiah gives Hezekiah a choice. **Say-mi-on pi kai ter-as-ti-on** means a confirmational phenomenon. It shows us the depth and dimension which God is willing to go to validate the words of His ministers who are really speaking for Him. There is a place for God's validating phenomenon in the life of His ministers. If the Church required it – perhaps we would see more of it. Isaiah qualified by obedience to speak this word. What are we qualifying for – people pleasing or God pleasing?

SUNDAY, December 12
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12

In Second Corinthians 12:12 the apostle Paul appeals to the **say-mi-on** that have been done but he also adds two other concepts in verse 12. The second one is translated "wonders" from the Greek word **ter-as**. Kittle says **ter-as** occurs only in the New Testament in combination with **say-mi-on** and only in the plural, hence the phrase **say-mi-a kai ter-a-ta** or the reverse is sometimes mentioned as **ter-a-ta kai say-mi-a**. **Ter-a-ta** means a work that inspires awe or a work of terror. Did the apostle Paul do any works that inspired awe or terror? Peter certainly did in Acts 5 and we have to admit Paul did in Acts 13 and First Corinthians 5. Where are the **say-mi-on kai ter-a-ta** that marked the ministry of the early apostles? Church barbecues won't produce them unless God kindles the fire!

MONDAY, December 13
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12

One of the questions we have to ask ourselves, based on Second Corinthians 12:12, is what part do we play in producing the **say-mi-on** when we put a demand on God's covenant for signs and wonders. In Vol VII of Kittle's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, on page 230 the following statement is made concerning our part in these miraculous signs. It comes under number 3 entitled, "Preliminary remarks on New Testament usage.": "When one attempts to find angles for arranging the use of **say-mi-on** in the New Testament there is seen with an intention whose explanation is not immediately apparent. On the one side the word is used as the object of a whole group of verbs which emphasize human activity, e.g., **poy-eh-n** in John 4:54 etc., **did-o-nai** in Matthew 26:48, **dike-noo-ny** in John 2:28, or **kat-er-gad-zes-thi** in Second Corinthians 12, or which objectify what is meant by **say-mi-on** so that one can ask for or demand it…." According to Kittle there are four examples where different verbs are used all demonstrating our part in the **say-mi-on** of God. Can we ask for or demand it? It certainly appears that the Greek text gives us plenty of room to believe we can, we should, we must – unless of course we believe church bake sales will stop partial birth abortions or the radical homosexual agenda of sodomizing every child in America before age 6! What do ***you believe***?

TUESDAY, December 14
Scripture: John 4:46-54

Kittle's very first passage uses the verb **poy-eh-n** translated "did" in verse 54. It comes from the root word **poy-eh-o** meaning to make a path or execute judgment. Jesus was making a path in Galilee and executing the covenant of God as a sign to all who saw and experienced the ministry. **Poy-eh-o** has in it then the choice to become a pioneer and the willingness to step out and attempt to make a path where few have walked. Is there definite human agency in this process? There certainly is! We must choose to put a demand on God's covenant. Are we preparing for life in the last days? Are we gearing up to be the Church? Have we settled on our lees?

WEDNESDAY, December 15
Scripture: Matthew 26:47-56

The second example Kittle uses is the verb **did-o-mai**. Here we find the word **say-mi-on** used for the sign of Judas' kiss. The word **did-o-mai** comes from **did-o-mee** which means to give or furnish through personal choice. It may be hard to see how this example fits unless you realize **say-mi-on** is not always, and certainly hardly ever in its primary application a direct demonstration of the miraculous. When we defined it initially we said it was a warning signal that could not be missed, often the trumpet for battle, or a ship's flag, or in Ezekiel 4 a mark on the forehead, because the primary issue was "disclosure as the presupposition of knowledge" or "information becoming a platform for a decision." When we think of "sign" today we think of simply the miraculous, but that is a far cry from the New Testament meaning of the word. There is nothing miraculous in what Judas did. It's a simple decision on his part, the foundation of which enabled action – the taking of Jesus. This is the classic foundational definition of the word **say-mi-on**. The prophets were continually asked to demonstrate a **say-mi-on**. They did – will we?

THRUSDAY, December 16
Scripture: John 2:13-18

When Jesus finished cleaning house in the temple at the beginning of His ministry, the Jews answered and said to Him "What **say-mi-on** do You show to us, since You do these things?" The word "show" there is the word **dike-noo-ny** from **dike-noo-o** which means to teach by demonstration or to make visual. The Hebrew concept is very simply, "what you proclaim to be God," we have a right to demand demonstration or the making visual – a visual attestation to the fact you really are speaking from God. Jesus did not tell them they were off-base, crazy, and had no right to demand a **say-mi-on.** He spoke to them about the ultimate **say-mi-on** for which He came – the resurrection! Can we not see a pattern developing here?

FRIDAY, December 17
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:11-18

In verse 12 the verb used when Paul says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you…" is **kat-er-gad-zes-thi**. It means to do that from which something results or to accomplish through every struggle of the fight and thus perpetutate. This verb perhaps more than the other three shows us clearly that in Paul's mind the apostolic ministry must manifest signs, wonders and mighty deeds. If we expect to have permanent results, we must have the authority and divine authentication.

SATURDAY, December 18
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12-13

There is a conclusion we can draw from how Paul specifically states what God did through him in the church at Corinth. When he says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all

perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" the word for "mighty deeds" comes from the word **doo-nam-is**. When the New Testament speaks of the miracles Jesus performed, such as raising the dead, healing the sick, etc. the word **say-mi-on** is never used. The root word **doo-nam-is** always appears. Our conclusion then has to be when Paul speaks about the "…signs of an apostle were accomplished among you…" he includes three different categories of works. The **say-mi-on** signs, of which turning over the table of the money-changers could certainly qualify, the **ter-as-os**, terrifying works which the disciples saw numerous times, such as Jesus stilling the storm and their exclamation is, "Who is this that even the winds and the seas obey Him?" And finally the third category being the **doo-nam-is** dynamite works of God such as healing, deliverance, and miracles of restorations. We have to conclude in the Old Testament signs identified the prophets. In the transition, they were also done by Jesus. And in the book of Acts they were done by those who believed in His name. Therefore, the purpose of New Testament ministry, one of the five-fold ministry gifts, should be teaching the Church to walk in covenant and empowering them to bring forth signs, wonders and mighty deeds to a lost and dying world.

SUNDAY, December 19
Scripture: Second Corinthians 10-13

The history of the Corinthian church provided the perfect opportunity for Paul to speak to the issue of recognizing true apostolic ministry. This happened as a result of false teachers coming to the Corinthians exalting the law over grace, disparaging the apostle Paul and doing everything possible to damage his credibility as a true apostolic ministry. The situation forced Paul to outline for the church at Corinth what characterized the true as opposed to the counterfeit. After Titus visits the church at Corinth the majority repent, but a small group remain who hold to the leaven of the Judaizers. The last four chapters of Second Corinthians is written to specifically address the complaints they bring against Paul and his calling as an apostle. In Second Corinthians 10-13 Paul tells us what he did to bring results. These four chapters give us the best yardstick in the New Testament by which to measure the true apostolic ministry. God sends apostolic ministry – only the most arrogant of churches can proclaim, "we will not go this way" meaning we don't recognize apostolic anointing.

MONDAY, December 20
Scripture: Second Corinthians 10:1-9

The key phrase in the first nine verses of chapter 10 is in verse 8, "For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed – lest I seem to terrify you by letters." The first thing we see about the apostolic anointing is that is has divine authority for edification and also for judgment. In this sense apostolic ministry identifies very much with the Abrahamic covenant. Because of the **covenant**, Abraham became a dividing line everywhere he went. The way people treated Abraham was the way God treated the people. Those who rejected Abraham – God rejected. Because of American cultural independence, its very hard for many in church to believe this principle still operates in the lives of God's messengers, and yet it very much was operational in the life of Paul. Perhaps the first major mark we should look for in the apostolic ministry is it can be said of them as it was said of Jesus – "How is it You teach not like the other ministries but You teach as one with authority!" Where is this level of authority in the Body of Christ? It is coming!

TUESDAY, December 21
Scripture: Acts 18:1-6

Perhaps the place we can find some answers to our questions about Paul and his relationship with the Corinthian church concerning authority, comes from the book of Acts which gives us the account of the founding of the church. We find in the first four verses that Paul when he came to Corinth ministered in the synagogue continually reasoning every Sabbath with the Jews and the Greeks. After a considerable amount of time testifying in the synagogue, finally he declares the Lordship of Christ. In verse 6 there was a significant

number of both Jews and Greeks who opposed him openly and blasphemed. Paul was so grieved in his spirit that he shook his garments and said to the crowd, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Corinth marked a major transition in Paul's ministry. He moved from ministering to both Jews and Gentiles to ministering strictly to Gentiles. Such was the opposition that came against him in Corinth that God used it to turn his path completely and totally in the direction God wanted him to go. It's amazing how God uses opposition to solidify our course in the right direction.

WEDNESDAY, December 22
Scripture: Matthew 27:21-25

In the process of the Lord leading the apostle Paul by opposition to the course of his ultimate calling, we see he identified with the steps of Jesus. Jesus when He spoke to the original twelve and sent them forth in Matthew 10 said they were "…not to go into the way of the Gentiles, and not to enter a city of the Samaritans but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This changed after the resurrection. But there was a significant number of people in the Jerusalem church who were absolutely convinced salvation belonged to the Jews and not to the Gentiles, so much so God had to give Peter a dream of him eating pork and standing there saying when it was served, "No, I have never had anything unclean. And the angel said to him, 'Do not call unclean what the Lord has sanctified.'" On the basis of this vision Peter went to the house of Cornelius and the Holy Spirit came saving his whole house and baptizing him completing the package with their prayer language. This event became the central focus of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. God used the opposition of Corinth to set Paul's feet away from the Jewish nation he loved and move toward the Gentiles. The people had already said in verse 25 of Matthew 27, "His blood be on us and on our children." Paul came to the same conclusion and stated it.

THURSDAY, December 23
Scripture: Isaiah 66:7-8

We need to realize the fruit of the statement "His blood be on us and on our children" was fully manifested through the Holocaust of WWII. But God is a God of redemption and He spoke about the redemption of the Holocaust in Isaiah 66. In verses 7 and 8, "Before she travailed, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, She gave birth to her children." God looked ahead through history and saw what it would take to bring the nation of Israel back into existence so they might receive prophetic fulfillment. God redeemed the Holocaust when He used it to give Israel a nation. Never in the history of the world was a nation born in a single day – but it happened with Israel. God began the redemption of the pain of the Holocaust and it continues to this day.

FRIDAY, December 24
Scripture: Acts 18:7-11

To understand the ways of God in the life of Paul as he is sent for a specific purpose, we look at the opposition he received at Corinth and begin to understand the ways of God. When he is thrown out of the synagogue the Lord begins to use Paul in the house right next door and since the people of the synagogue would have nothing to do with the truth, the Lord not only chooses to send Paul right next door but he begins to touch the leadership of the synagogue and move them to the adjacent property for worship. You can just imagine steadily weekly the crowd next door growing until its greater than the crowd in the synagogue. God not only has a sense of humor – He can bring judgment in the process.

SATURDAY, December 25 **MERRY CHRISTMAS**
Scripture: Acts 18:12-18

The old guard still stuck in the synagogue became so indiginant month after month at the success Paul was having next door that they hatch a plot to incarcerate Paul. They charge him and bring him before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia. But Gallio will not hear it and totally dismisses the Jews and drives them from the judgment seat. Some of the members of the synagogue are so upset they take their frustration out on Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue. It's a perfect manifestation of God turning the persecution of the enemy toward each other and they end up fighting against themselves thus releasing Paul to continue and fulfill his ministry in the city of Corinth.

SUNDAY, December 26
Scripture: Second Corinthians 10:10-18; First Corinthians 5:4-5; Acts 13:9-12

When we look at what qualifies as **say-mi-on** in the New Testament we have to conclude Paul's claim categorically accurate. He stated he had done the signs of an apostle at the church at Corinth. Perhaps we should start with his specific declaration in 10:8 of him personally speaking about his authority for edification and hopefully not for destruction. The apostolic ministry carries with it the authority to either (1) be a dividing line so the personal and corporate choices made by people and ministries determine how God treats them or (2) actively speaking the purpose of God that an unrepentant people have to receive as judgment. Paul did not hesitate to use his authority even when he was not there on the premises as in First Corinthians 5:4-5. He did not hesitate to turn an individual over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. The thing we have to recognize about the apostolic authority for judgment is it usually shows a **redemptive** side. Judgment is never done for judgment's sake – it is always done to accomplish a purpose usually of salvation. We can only conclude that a ministry which claims to be apostolic and does not move in this dimension is only walking in the infancy of apostolic anointing and can therefore not yet restore to the Church what is so desperately needed to establish foundational purity which only comes from "the fear of the Lord." Will there be Ananias and Sapphira's again? Absolutely! You can bet on it. Don't look for them to come from the congregation – look for them to come from the pulpits. Probably based on gross violation of the next principle in discerning the true from the counterfeit.

MONDAY, December 27
Scripture: Second Corinthians 11:5-13

The very next issue Paul brings up in discerning the true from the counterfeit is one of integrity in how he operated financially. When Paul came he did not put a demand on the congregation. He did not ask them for ten percent a month because he was their "apostle." He did not sell them any of his teaching. He even harkens back to Second Corinthians 2:17 where he said, "For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ." The Greek word for "peddling" in verse 17 means to put a price tag on that which God gives and consequently profit from it. Ministry today is full of promotion and profit for the manipulators leaving those with integrity to walk on the edge of survival! We understand the necessity of financial obligation. But can you imagine the apostle Paul hawking his latest series. Can you imagine him recruiting partners at $30 a month? He says in verse 9, "When I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one,…And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself." Do we see that heart in ministry today or do we see a growing promotion, manipulation, and profit?

TUESDAY, December 28
Scripture: Second Corinthians 11:16-33

Paul very clearly outlines the next element of proof he has been given an apostolic ministry. Supernatural persecution aimed at stopping the ministry – is a sign. Paul says, "From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches." Does supernatural adversity go with the apostolic call? It certainly does. The theology which says if we were walking in faith everything would be alright and none of this adversity would be upon us is not really true concerning apostolic ministry.

WEDNESDAY, December 29
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:1-4

The fourth test Paul applies to apostleship is the issue of revelation. God gives revelation to set apart the apostolic ministry. Perhaps that is why the adversity comes so that the revelation does not exalt above functional usefulness. That certainly is Paul's conclusion as he interacts with the Lord for deliverance from the adversity. Grace kept him and it must keep us during the growing qualifying process by which this anointing is released.

THURSDAY, December 30
Scripture: Second Corinthians 12:12

The fifth mark of apostolic ministry comes with **say-mi-on ter-a-ta** and **doo-nam-is.** God actually does signs, wonders and works of power to authenticate the apostolic ministry. We have every right to expect those, but mostly that they once again be imparted to the Church for the work of the ministry. ***This*** is the true issue of the restoration of apostolic ministry, not that the individual can walk in it but that the ministry can impart it to the Body and the Body can walk in this level of authority.

FRIDAY, December 31
Scripture: Second Corinthians 13:10

Finally the test of apostolic ministry is God performs on the people what they preach to a congregation. It can range anywhere on the scale from being a good word of edification to a word of correction which if not heeded and acted on can bring an end to the church! Perhaps the saddest thing about apostolic ministry is the individuals have to deliver messages, which at times, they sense require a measure of response the church is not willing to give and therefore suspect that within a year or two the church will no longer be in existence. You didn't ask for the message and you certainly did not ask that God would hold a whole group of people accountable to do it and their future existence as a church hinged on their response. But God does it anyway, and we, like Paul, have to say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The answer: Nobody! But God still gives the anointing and still sends His vessels – even when they don't want the responsibility. God does what you preach and it becomes the sign upon the people. A sign which all to often is hardly ever discerned. Is God restoring the apostolic ministry? He certainly is and in the process bringing the Church into a new dimension attempting to get it ready for a great end-time harvest!

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ITINERARY
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Oh Holy Spirit

Oh fruits of the Spirit,
Please grow on my tree!!
May delights of Your sweetness
Now ripen in me.

To be more like Jesus,
Is my wholehearted aim.
My actions to mold
And my tongue now to tame.

My attitude needs
Your influence so much
So my thoughts and motives
Come and sovereignly touch.

The flesh now must die,
For the fruits to mature.
An exchange for my good
Now begins to occur.

Without Your own character
I cannot express
A life fully pleasing
Clothed with Christ's righteousness.

Now blessed Holy Spirit
Please reign in my heart!
A deep work come do,
I invite You to start!!

Jayne Houghton