

Ask The Rabbi – May 18, 2021

Question:

Based on the way Paul was called - i.e. after Yeshua had ascended into heaven, could there be apostles today?

Response:

I have been challenged by this term for some time. What exactly is an apostle?

The word is from the Greek:

ἀπόστολος

apostolos

ap-os'-tol-os

From [G649](#); a *delegate*; specifically an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a *commissioner* of Christ (“apostle”), (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

Some time ago I was taught that an Apostle was a direct, first hand eyewitness of Yeshua. The teaching goes something like this...

An apostle as defined strictly by the New Covenant writings, no longer exists today, since these three conditions had to be met:

1. The person had to have been an eyewitness to Yeshua after his resurrection:

1Co 9:1 Am I not a free man? Am I not an emissary of the Messiah? Haven't I seen Yeshua our Lord? And aren't you yourselves the result of my work for the Lord?

2. Had to have been chosen by the Ruach Ha Kodesh:

Act 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name to the Goyim, even to their kings, and to the sons of Isra'el as well.

3. Had to have ministered with miraculous signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

Act 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many miracles and signs took place through the emissaries.

The only stipulation that is not applicable for today is the first, whereby one is a eyewitness to Yeshua after His resurrection. Being chosen or thus identified by the Ruach Ha Kodesh or the potential to minister with signs and wonders are still possible, if not necessary when one is called to go out on a specific mission. (I will share more about this later.)

I believe it was for this reason that Sha'ul identified himself as being least among the Apostles because he was not a direct witness to Yeshua after His resurrection. Yet, Yeshua made Himself known to Sha'ul in a very distinct manner.

1Co 15:1 Now, brothers, I must remind you of the Good News which I proclaimed to you, and which you received, and on which you have taken your stand,

1Co 15:2 and by which you are being saved—provided you keep holding fast to the message I proclaimed to you. For if you don't, your trust will have been in vain.

1Co 15:3 For among the first things I passed on to you was what I also received, namely this: the Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the Tanakh says;

1Co 15:4 and he was buried; and he was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the Tanakh says;

1Co 15:5 and he was seen by Kefa, then by the Twelve;

1Co 15:6 and afterwards he was seen by more than five hundred brothers at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, though some have died.

1Co 15:7 Later he was seen by Ya`akov, then by all the emissaries;

1Co 15:8 and last of all he was seen by me, even though I was born at the wrong time.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of all the emissaries, unfit to be called an emissary, because I persecuted the Messianic Community of God.

1Co 15:10 But by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain; on the contrary, I have worked harder than all of them, although it was not I but the grace of God with me.

1Co 15:11 Anyhow, whether I or they, this is what we proclaim, and this is what you believed.

And yet if the teaching I had received were to remain true, then upon the death of Yeshua's Apostles, first hand eyewitnesses would cease to exist thus Sha'ul's instruction to believers in Ephesus would now be obsolete.

Eph 4:11 Furthermore, he gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers.

The Complete Jewish Bible translation uses the term emissary for which the definition is “An agent sent on a mission to represent or advance the interests of another.” Delegate and Ambassador further convey the responsibility of one who is identified as an Apostle in that they are representatives to, of or from something.

The United States Ambassador to the United Nations is this country's representative to a body of nations. The Ambassador conveys the positions of the leadership for the nation they represent. This is considered an Executive Branch position so they are representing the President of the United States who is the Top Executive of the country. They do not represent other branches of government, but that of their elected executive.

Technically, we have all been sent out and thus in some way, by the definition provided we are to function as an Apostle.

Mat 28:19 Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

Act 1:7 He answered, "You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority.

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!"

A message that was not to remain in Yerushalayim was to go forth. In order for the message of Messiah to go out, people were required to go out.

Yet, I believe there is more than just functioning as an Apostle by going out. I believe there is a specified mission of one who is identified as an Apostle.

Kefa was sent out on a very specific mission that would break new ground. He was called to go to the home of Cornelius, where the Good News of Messiah would be presented to Goyim for the first time.

Act 10:1 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a Roman army officer in what was called the Italian Regiment.

Act 10:2 He was a devout man, a "God-fearer," as was his whole household; he gave generously to help the Jewish poor and prayed regularly to God.

Act 10:3 One afternoon around three o'clock he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

Act 10:4 Cornelius stared at the angel, terrified. "What is it, sir?" he asked. "Your prayers," replied the angel, "and your acts of charity have gone up into God's presence, so that he has you on his mind.

Act 10:5 Now send some men to Yafo to bring back a man named Shim'on, also called Kefa.

Kefa is documented as the first to break down the middle wall. Yet this middle wall is not a one and done breaking but requires a persistent and methodical approach. Once one would break it down, others would reconstruct it. The middle wall has taken on many different configurations. There is the Jewish middle wall and now there is even a Gentile middle wall that has been constructed to separate Jew and Gentile.

Even before Kefa went to the home of Cornelius, Adonai was preparing Sha'ul for a mission to bring the Good News of the Jewish Messiah to the nations.

Act 9:1 Meanwhile, Sha'ul, still breathing murderous threats against the Lord's talmidim, went to the cohen hagadol

Act 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Dammesek, authorizing him to arrest any people he might find, whether men or women, who belonged to "the Way," and bring them back to Yerushalayim.

Act 9:3 He was on the road and nearing Dammesek, when suddenly a light from heaven flashed all around him.

Act 9:4 Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Sha'ul! Sha'ul! Why do you keep persecuting me?"

Act 9:5 "Sir, who are you?" he asked. "I am Yeshua, and you are persecuting me.

Act 9:6 But get up, and go into the city, and you will be told what you have to do."

Act 9:11 The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to Straight Street, to Y'hudah's house; and ask for a man from Tarsus named Sha'ul; for he is praying,

Act 9:12 and in a vision he has seen a man named Hananyah coming in and placing his hands on him to restore his sight."

Act 9:13 But Hananyah answered, "Lord, many have told me about this man, how much harm he has done to your people in Yerushalayim;

Act 9:14 and here he has a warrant from the head cohanim to arrest everyone who calls on your name."

Act 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name to the Goyim, even to their kings, and to the sons of Isra'el as well.

Act 9:16 For I myself will show him how much he will have to suffer on account of my name."

The middle wall which separates is identified by Sha'ul in his letter to believers in Ephesus, where he states...

Eph 2:11 Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth—called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised—

Eph 2:12 at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God.

Eph 2:13 But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood.

Eph 2:14 For he himself is our shalom—he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us

Eph 2:15 by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom,

Eph 2:16 and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity.

And thus Sha'ul was given a specific mission that would lead to the Good News of the Jewish Messiah being spread well beyond the city boundaries of Yerushalayim, where we read of numerous Messianic communities of believers, comprising both Jew and Gentile. Sha'ul functioned within an existing framework, utilizing the local synagogue, yet also established a framework that was conducive to the Messianic community, that being the home. It was not just Shabbat when the Messianic Community of believers would gather together and convey or learn about Messiah, but rather a lifestyle within the framework of Biblical Judaism would develop.

An Apostle is one who has been sent out. They are to go somewhere, that is assigned to travel. It could be as simple as next door to a neighbor or half way around the world.

The role and function of an Apostle seems to have been redefined as a title, rather than the function.

You might say that Jeri and I are Apostles because we were sent out to Maine for the purpose of establishing a Messianic Synagogue for which one did not exist in the entire state prior to 2011.

We were not sent out be a denomination to “plant” a congregation but I believe Adonai had placed upon our hearts to establish a congregation, that is to break ground in a place where the ground had not yet been tilled.

How did we know?

When ever we would travel from Western New York to Maine to visit Jeri's parents there was a tugging that would occur. For years we would bypass downtown Portland and take exit 11 in order to get back on the Turnpike. When we started in ministry at Brith Hadoshah in 2008, and would travel to Maine to visit Jeri's family, on one occasion as we were praying about where we would go, rather than take exit 11, I continued along I295 through Portland. After that first time, I never took exit 11 again.

This pursuit for Adonai's wisdom seeking His guidance, lead to confirmation after confirmation. Consider again Sha'ul's journey for which is one I can certainly relate to. He did not go immediately to Yerushalayim but “the other way” in order to “figure things out”

Gal 1:15 But when God, who picked me out before I was born and called me by his grace, chose

Gal 1:16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might announce him to the Gentiles, I did not consult anyone;

Gal 1:17 and I did not go up to Yerushalayim to see those who were emissaries before me. Instead, I immediately went off to Arabia and afterwards returned to Dammesek.

Gal 1:18 Not until three years later did I go up to Yerushalayim to make Kefa's acquaintance, and I stayed with him for two weeks,

Gal 1:19 but I did not see any of the other emissaries except Ya'akov the Lord's brother.

On his own, with the Ruach Ha Kodesh, Sha'ul went out.

One can even say today that the Jewish Apostle has reemerged onto the scene. We are witness to a miracle, one of the requirements as stipulated previously, of the Messianic Jewish Synagogue. Each was planted by a Jewish believer who was called by the Ruach Ha Kodesh to go out. Today there are over 250 Messianic Jewish Synagogues across five different organizations in North America alone. Worldwide, it is close to 500.

Hence the call of the Jewish Apostle aka Sha'ul is being witnessed today.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

Rom 1:17 For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust—as the Tanakh puts it, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust."

A mission is that which has been defined. Specifics are essential to any mission. Without clear and concise instructions from that whom you are being sent will only lead to failure. You may not have all the information at one time or even in advance, yet if you are truly called by Adonai, He will provide you with what you need to know and will do so before you need to know it.

Adonai has most certainly established and thus defined one who is called to go out on a mission for His purpose. Thus with the rise of Messianic Judaism we are seeing a parallel to the Messianic Community of the first century. Prominent was the Jewish influence, the Jewish leadership, the Jewish identity in the proximity of Yeshua. As doors open and acceptance broadens the Messianic Jew will once again lead the nations on the narrow and true way, thus ushering the return of Messiah, for His ascension left a dominant Jewish identity and thus His return will be ushered in by a restored Jewish identity.

Zec 8:20 "Adonai-Tzva'ot says, 'In the future, peoples and inhabitants of many cities will come;

Zec 8:21 the inhabitants of one city will travel to another and say, "We must go to ask Adonai's favor and consult Adonai-Tzva'ot. I'll go too."

Zec 8:22 Yes, many peoples and powerful nations will come to consult Adonai-Tzva'ot in Yerushalayim and to ask Adonai's favor.'

Zec 8:23 Adonai-Tzva'ot says, 'When that time comes, ten men will take hold—speaking all the languages of the nations—will grab hold of the cloak of a Jew and say, "We want to go with you, because we have heard that God is with you." ' ' "

And who will the nations grab hold of, but none other than the Messianic Jew for not only do we know Adonai but we know His Son. This is what they will be seeking. There is no greater favor Adonai can bestow upon the nations than that of Yeshua and all that He has done.

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Question:

What exactly is “The fallen tent of David”?

Response:

The question pertaining to Apostles of today leads us in the direction of the fallen tent of David. We read of it through the Prophet Amos:

Amo 9:11 "When that day comes, I will raise up the fallen sukkah of David. I will close up its gaps, raise up its ruins and rebuild it as it used to be,

Amo 9:12 so that Isra'el can possess what is left of Edom and of all the nations bearing my name," says Adonai, who is doing this.

It would appear that these verses are referring to the return from exile, yet the following verses speak to a restoration beyond a mere return to the land.

Amo 9:13 "The days will come," says Adonai, "when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the one treading grapes the one sowing seed. Sweet wine will drip down the mountains, and all the hills will flow with it.

Amo 9:14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Isra'el; they will rebuild and inhabit the ruined cities; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, cultivate gardens and eat their fruit.

Amo 9:15 I will plant them on their own soil, no more to be uprooted from their land, which I gave them," says Adonai your God.

We see that the nation will be uprooted from the land after their return from Babylonian exile, thus Amos is not speaking merely of a return to the land.

What has fallen but the once united Kingdom of David and Shlomo to where Adonai, through His covenant that is irrevocable...

Rom 11:28 With respect to the Good News they are hated for your sake. But with respect to being chosen they are loved for the Patriarchs' sake,

Rom 11:29 for God's free gifts and his calling are irrevocable.

Thus Adonai is bound by His Word to restore a nation divided, a nation judged and expelled from the very land Adonai had given them.

Lev 23:41 You are to observe it as a feast to Adonai seven days in the year; it is a permanent regulation, generation after generation; keep it in the seventh month.

Lev 23:42 You are to live in sukkot for seven days; every citizen of Isra'el is to live in a sukkah,

Lev 23:43 so that generation after generation of you will know that I made the people of Isra'el live in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Adonai your God.' "

The Sukkah represents the temporary dwelling used to remember the exodus of Isra'el from Egypt and the provisions of Adonai while the nation journeyed through the desert. Further, the moadim, the appointed time

known as Sukkot conveys Adonai being with them.

Thus restoring the fallen sukkah of David will restore the nation in two ways.

- Reestablishing a Unified Kingdom
- Restoring the direct relationship between Adonai and the nation.

We see this very subject addressed during the council of Yerushalayim in Acts 15:

Act 15:14 Shim'on has told in detail what God did when he first began to show his concern for taking from among the Goyim a people to bear his name.

Act 15:15 And the words of the Prophets are in complete harmony with this for it is written,

Act 15:16 ' "After this, I will return; and I will rebuild the fallen tent of David. I will rebuild its ruins, I will restore it,

Act 15:17 so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, that is, all the Goyim who have been called by my name,"

Act 15:18 says Adonai, who is doing these things.' All this has been known for ages.

The complete fulfillment of Amos's prophecy will take place when the undivided realm of King David's time is restored. In addition to this undivided realm we will also witness the presence of Adonai not truly seen since the time of Shlomo. We are in the midst of Adonai restoration project.

How will this happen?

Next week I will answer several questions pertaining to the timeline of events that are to transpire before Yeshua's return. This will include addressing the church teaching of the Rapture.