

Commonly Misunderstood Words – Holy, Set Apart (seperate), Apostle, Called

The Words Holy or Set Apart.

We are to be God's set apart holy people. Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways." The Bible says that to be God's holy people, we must keep God's commandments. We are to keep God's commandments and should continue to learn and grow spiritually in life. Theology tends to replace the truth of the Bible by substituting holiness with man-made ideas such as righteousness without being a holy person. The book of Hebrews says something to the contrary. Hebrews 12:14 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." Those who do not pursue holiness will not be in God's future kingdom. So, we need to talk about this in more detail.

Shaul (Paul) says there are conditions for inheriting the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." These sins that Shaul talks about are in the Old Testament portion. There are more commandments than these that we need to follow. We should want to do everything that God commands us.

The scripture we just shared in 1 Corinthians 6 is a short list of some of the major offensive sins. Short lists were used back at the time this was written to represent longer lists. Complete lists could be tedious to give all the time. So, short lists were a common way to represent God's commandments and other things. For example, God's commandments are sometimes summarized as love God and your neighbor. Matthew 22:37-40 NKJV says, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." In other words, these two commandments summarize God's commandments, but they do not replace God's commandments. If we just say we are to love God and others then we make up how we should live instead of following God's commandments. God knows all, knows what is best for us, and has our best interests at heart. So, all of His commandments are to help us live right.

Therefore, when we keep God's commandments we respect and love God and also love others. First, Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says tells us how to love God: "You shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." We show God that we love Him by keeping His commandments. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says about loving others: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." There is no better way to love others than by keeping God's statutes because God knows what is best. Loving is not just a feeling we have but requires action. Ask anyone who has a good marriage. They understand the principle of treating those you love with kindness and respect.

We are to learn and keep all of God's commandments. Why should we do that? Like we said, God wants what is best for us, so when we do not keep God's commandments we bring pain

and evil into the world. That is why God must punish those who sin. In several places in the Bible, it talks about the punishment in store for those who do not keep God's commandments. Hebrews 10:29 NKJV says, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" Yes, we have grace, but not grace to sin as some believe.

There is another part to being a holy person in this Messianic age. We are to also believe in the Messiah Yeshua and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are supposed to listen to the Messiah. Acts 3:22-23 NKJV says, "For Moses truly said to the fathers, The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." That prophet is the Messiah Yeshua who will some day return and be our God and King (see Jeremiah 23:5-6). To be destroyed from among the people must refer to being part of God's future kingdom.

Yeshua went away temporarily and sent the Holy Spirit as another helper; the first helper was the law. We are to keep God's Old Testament commandments and we are also to receive the Holy Spirit. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth." Acts 2:38-39 NKJV talks about receiving the Holy Spirit: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." You can receive God's Holy Spirit when you believe in Yeshua, even those who are "afar off."

We must keep God's commandments and receive the other helper, the Holy Spirit. We are to strive to do what is "right and good" and we do that by keeping God's commandments and also listening to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not tell you to sin. God does not want us to sin. Doing good in biblical and Jewish thought is to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall **do what is right and good** in the sight of the LORD." We are to both keep God's commandments and receive the Holy Spirit in this era. Some people say it is enough to receive the Holy Spirit, but that is incorrect.

We need to also understand the idea of being separate holy people. We are to separate ourselves from doing evil by doing what is "right and good." Being righteous means that we do what is "right." When we do not keep God's commandments, we separate ourselves from God. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God." Holiness carries with it the idea that we separate ourselves from sin so we bring good into the world and not evil. We do not want to bring evil into the world and separate ourselves from God. Leviticus 20:26 NKJV says, "And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine." We keep God's commandments and separate ourselves; we become distinct in thought, attitude, and behavior.

Sometimes the Bible uses the word saints for God's holy people. It is translated that way at

times both in the Old Testament portion and the New Testament portion. Saints in the Old Testament portion were led by God's commandments. In our era, the saints are those who are led in life by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit.

As believers, we are to live holy separate lives. If we live that way, we will not be separated from God. Shaul talks about us not being separated from God in Romans Chapter 8. We should understand that if we are living holy lives, we will not be separated from God. Some say that we are not separated from God no matter what we do. But as we just read, sin separates us from God. Shaul agrees with that concept in several places in the Bible. Shaul quotes this verse in Psalms 118:6 NKJV which says, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" It does not matter what man can do to us, if we do not separate ourselves from God through sin. But if we do not live holy lives, we have turned our back on God. Then we must repent, confess our sins to God, and turn towards God and keep His commandments if we want to be God's holy ones.

When we make full repentance, we are then restored in relationship to God. God is a good God and wants what is best for us. Therefore, He wants us to fear Him, to have a deep respect for who He is and what He has done for us. We fear God by doing what He tells us to do, namely, keep His commandments. If we turn our life around, then God will forgive us. Psalms 103:10-12 NKJV says, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Be assured that a sincere confession with a deep desire to keep God's commandments will release you from the punishment due you for your wrongdoing. When someone does what is wrong in society, they are punished because of the problems and pain they have caused society. God is no different, He is a just God who helps those who do good but must punish evil.

We have talked some about how in this Messianic era, we are also to receive the Holy Spirit to be holy. I should note that some people do not like the Holy Spirit because of some people who have misused the Holy Spirit or because of those who have the Holy Spirit but continue to live in sin. Those that misuse the Holy Spirit or are living in sin are not living as holy people and they are separated from God. We should do what is right no matter what others do. Remember, Isaiah 59:2 NKJV says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

Also, Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV in the context about the things of the Holy Spirit, "The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." In the same context in 1 Corinthians 14:40 NKJV Shaul says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." We are not to misuse the Holy Spirit. He also writes in 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." We are not to misuse the Holy Spirit but we are also to desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those who are not using the Holy Spirit in an honoring fashion or not pursuing the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit are therefore sinning.

The Holy Spirit is our helper just like God's written commandments are our helper. Also, I think we established that we must act holy in order to be holy. Being holy is actually behaving like God's holy people. People may cite different reasons for believing we do not have to act like God's holy people, but they are delusional. We are to be holy as God is holy the Bible says, and

a person is holy by keeping God's commandments. Again, Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways." We are only God's holy people if we keep His commandments.

The Bible says we are to consecrate ourselves holy. The word for consecrate means to become holy. Leviticus 11:44 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy." We are to become holy and be holy, for God is holy.

Without holiness, no one will see the Lord according to Hebrews 12:14. The Bible says that those who bring evil and pain into the world through living a life of sin will end up in the lake of fire for eternity (see Revelation 21:8). So, be a holy person and bring good into the world and not evil. The Bible says it is not hard to keep God's commandments! Deuteronomy 30:10-11 NIV says, "Obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." Do not make it harder than it needs to be. God wants you to succeed. 2 Peter 3:9 NKJV says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Begin your commitment today to be a holy person. Understanding **holiness** and being a separate **set apart** person is important for understanding your spiritual condition. We can be in God's future amazing and good kingdom for doing what is "right and good." It sounds like a win-win opportunity. The streets will look like gold and that is only part of it, I am not kidding! Taking about the future kingdom in Revelation 21:21 NKJV says, "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." God is a good God both now and forever.

The Word Apostle.

First, the word apostle means a sent one. There were many sent ones in the Old Testament portion for example, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Most of the prophets in the Old Testament acted as sent ones at times. Sent ones, that is apostles, is listed as a common gift in the New Testament portion of the Bible, and all the New Testament gifts of the Holy Spirit were present to some extent in the Old Testament except for speaking in tongues. For example, Noah received revelation from God, Abraham heard from God, and many others. We also see many ordinary people prophesying. For example, Elizabeth prophesied in Luke 1:41-45, Zacharius in Luke 1 67-79, and Anna in Luke 2:36-38.

We should understand that in the New Testament era, there are perhaps millions of sent ones over the last 2,000 years because apostles are listed among other common gifts such as teachers or pastors. Therefore, Shaul (Paul) intends us to understand that **an apostle, a sent one, is a common ministry**. Ephesians 4:11 NKJV says, "And He Himself gave **some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.**"

So, it is not true that there are only 12 apostles. Again, being an apostle is a common ministry

according to the Bible. Shaul says in Romans 16:7 NKJV. "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles." Junia is a woman's name. Yeshua had 12 apostles that were closest to him but there were many more. One of the things Yeshua's 12 apostles did was to be trained witnesses of what Yeshua did and to spread the message of the Messiah. Those sent by God can have different functions. One person may be sent to serve in the inner city, someone else may be sent to another city or country, or someone may be sent to do some specific kind of service like service to the poor or to families and so forth. A person may only serve as a sent one for a short time such as Jonah's brief service to the people of Nineveh. They may be sent as apostles at different times in life or for different periods of time.

A problem has developed because of the wrong understanding of the word apostle. Not only is it being used for pride, but it is being used by people, congregations, and denominations to control others. There are some denominations that say they their beliefs are legitimate based on their descendance from the 12 Apostles. The believers who are legitimate keep God's commandments, believe in the Messiah Yeshua, and receive the Holy Spirit that is promised to believers in the Messiah Yeshua. Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV says, "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." True sent ones tell people to keep God's commandments. For example, Shaul says that people who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

True believers keep God's law, the Torah, and receive the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua. The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, and its laws are doctrine for life. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." We also have inspired histories, messages from the prophets, messages of encouragement and correction, inspired songs, and inspired letters from which we can learn and grow.

Because of the wrong understanding of the word apostle, it is now improper to use the word apostle at this time because of the improper stigma that has been attached to this word. If God sends you to do something, use literal terms instead of the word "apostle." For example, God wanted me to serve in the Amazon Jungle for a short time. In that way you avoid the deceitful pride of some denominations or people. Remember, it is a common ministry.

We should also note, that since there were apostles and prophets in the Old Testament portion, the community of early believers in the New Testament portion was based on the apostles and prophets of the Old Testament that were sent to call people back to God and not just the 12 Apostles. Without the apostles and prophets of the Old Testament portion, no one would have returned to God at crucial times in history. The early believers in the Messiah would have understood this. There was no New Testament portion at the time. We need to understand the scriptures with their original understanding, how people back then would have understood them.

We Are Called.

We are called to do something. I thought I was called to be a Christian. The Bible explains being called in an active sense. Ephesians 4:1 NKJV says, "Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." The Old Testament believers were supposed to follow God's commandments and walk in them and so are the New Testament believers. New Testament believers also believe on the Messiah Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit and walk by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit. That is how we become part of the family; we do what our Father God wants us to do and behave like His children. That is what we are called to do, so live out what you have been called to do.

Some people are also called to do specific things. Shaul was called to be a messenger or sent one (an apostle), others are called to be teachers, etcetera. In addition to being led by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit, God may call us to do specific things during different stages of our life. For example, I was also called to be a person who serves others through prayer.