

By Whose Authority?

THE GOSPEL REVEALED • BIBLE STUDY

Galatians 1:1-2 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | August 26th, 2026

The Big Question (from Sunday's sermon)

The Question: *When the Bible tells you something you don't want to hear... who says you have to listen?*

The Answer (the three points): God does. The Apostle Paul and the Gospel he preached was **SENT** by God (not from men), **SIGNED** by the risen Christ, and **SETTLED**, the united, public witness of the church, binding on everyone who hears it.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this study, you will be able to...

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| 1 | Correct a common mistake: explain that God never changed Saul's name to Paul, and say what Acts 13:9 actually shows. |
| 2 | Explain what Paul means by "apostle," a sent one who carries the authority of the One who sent him, and why he leads with it. |
| 3 | Distinguish the two denials "not from men" and "nor through man" (ultimate source vs. human go-between), and say why Paul is so emphatic. |
| 4 | Show how the resurrection functions as God's "signature," authenticating both the gospel and its messenger. |
| 5 | Articulate the Assemblies of God position on apostles and prophets today: the ministry function continues, the title does not. |
| 6 | Defend, from verses 1 and 2, why Scripture carries divine (not merely human) authority, and describe how that shapes the way we submit to it. |
| 7 | Explain why a settled word is good news as well as hard news, and name one promise you can rest on because it is settled. |

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The Text

Galatians 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:*

1. Sent

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objectives 1-3 — Explain the Saul/Paul question, what Paul means by “apostle,” and the difference between “not from men” (the ultimate source) and “nor through man” (the human go-between).*

Galatians 1:1a

¹ *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man...)*

Before you can weigh anything Paul says, you have to know that he was sent. So start with the very first word on the page. It is his name.

The Name — Saul and Paul

We have to fix something right out of the gate, because a lot of us were taught this wrong. God never changed Paul's name. There is no place in your Bible where the Lord says, you used to be Saul, and now you will be Paul. He had both names his entire life. Saul was his Hebrew name. Paul was his Roman name. He was born a Roman citizen in a city called Tarsus, and he had both names the very day he was born.

Here is what is interesting. Luke calls him Saul while he is persecuting the church, because at that point he is operating inside Israel. Saul on the Damascus road. Saul after he gets saved. Saul for several chapters. And then Luke comes to the day this man takes the gospel out to the Gentiles, and look what he does.

Acts 13:9

⁹ *Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him*

Both names, right there in one verse. God did not rename him. God sent him. Saul is what the Jewish world called him. Paul is what the Roman world called him. And from here on Luke calls him Paul, because from here on he is going to the nations. So when you open this letter, written to Gentile churches out in Galatia, and the first word on the page is Paul, that is the name those churches would know.

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The scholars — the name was never a conversion story

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Osborne — Galatians <i>on vv. 1-2</i>	“As in each of Paul’s letters, he begins by identifying himself as ‘Paul,’ the Hellenized form of his Jewish name, Saul (Acts 7:58). He always calls himself Paul in his letters, probably to stress that God has called him to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17-18).”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 1</i>	“The Jewish name Saul, given to a man born in the tribe of Benjamin, evoked memories of the tribe’s days of glory... The Roman name Paul (Paulus) was a common surname... In Acts, Luke wrote, ‘Then Saul, who also is called Paul’ (Acts 13:9 NKJV), then used only the name Paul throughout the rest of the book. When Paul accepted the Christian faith and began his mission to the Gentiles, part of his effort to identify with his listeners included using his Roman name.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“Paul’s ‘Hebrew’ name, Σαῦλος (Saulos, Saul), used in the early narratives about Paul in Acts, is never used by Paul himself in his letters... But it is much more likely that ‘Paul’ was the apostle’s Latin cognomen.”

Word Study — “Apostle” ἁ ὁστολος (apostolos)

Notice the next phrase. An apostle. In the first century the word meant a sent one, an agent, somebody sent out with a commission, carrying orders on behalf of somebody else. In Paul’s world it was a heavy, almost legal word. Behind it stands the Jewish principle of the shaliach: a man’s representative is like the man himself. When you sent your agent, he did not show up speaking for himself. He showed up as if it were you. Your authority. Your word. Whatever he agreed to, you agreed to. To welcome him was to welcome you. To insult him was to insult you.

The scholars — backing the shaliach principle

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 1</i>	“Noting that the cognate verb apostellō (“send”) often translates the Hebrew šālāḥ in the Greek Scriptures, many scholars cite as a (limited) analogy the Jewish conception of the commissioned agent (a šālīḥ) who accurately represents the sender. Sometimes Jewish sources treat as agents Moses, Aaron, or biblical prophets, since they spoke on God’s authority rather than their own.”

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AG Position Paper*"The New Testament Apostles"*

"The word apostle comes from the Greek apostolos and may be translated by such terms as delegate, envoy, messenger, or agent... The rabbis of Jesus' day regarded it as an important legal principle: "A man's agent (shaliach) is like unto himself." This meant if a man's agent made a deal, it was the same as the man himself making the deal. The modern concept of power of attorney is very similar. When it comes to apostles... it is of crucial importance whom the agent represents."

Bruce — NIGTC*on v. 1*

"If the NT apostolos bears some relation to Heb. šālîaḥ (which seems probable), then... "a man's delegate is like himself," i.e. the authority of the person commissioned is that of the person who commissions him. So, when Paul speaks or acts as an apostle of Christ, he does so with Christ's authority."

Osborne — Galatians*on v. 1*

"The Greek word apostolos, indicating that he has been "sent" by God and given divine authority to speak for the Lord. Behind this is the Old Testament idea of the shaliach sent with the authority of God as his official spokesman... There is the air of a prophet behind the concept."

"From" vs. "Through"

The second he says apostle, he tells you where that sending did not come from, and he uses two different prepositions on purpose. (apo, "from") points to ultimate source, where a thing originates. It did not begin with a group of men deciding to promote him. No committee dreamed him up. No council voted him in. He did not appoint himself. διά (dia, "through") points to agency, the channel, the go-between. And that is exactly where his opponents were working. They were not necessarily saying Paul made it up. Their line was trickier: sure, maybe his message traces back to Christ in a roundabout way, but it came to him secondhand, handed down through other people. Paul says no. Not Peter. Not James. Not Ananias, who baptized him. No human relay at all.

The scholars — source vs. agency ("not from men... nor through man")

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	"Paul therefore is probably making two slightly different points in these phrases: the ultimate source of his apostleship was not human; nor did he receive it from, or through, any human being — "source" vs. "agency," "fountainhead" versus "channel.""
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 1</i>	"Paul's apostolic commission was not derived "from men." It was not even derived through a human intermediary; it was received immediately "through Jesus Christ.""

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The scholars — Paul's authority under attack

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 1</i>	“His rivals apparently suggest that Paul's apostleship or commission was merely from mere human beings or through them... likeliest of all that they view him as having gotten his message from the Jerusalem apostles. In other words, they charge that he has at best a derivative, rather than foundational, apostolic authority. Paul responds that, by contrast, he was authorized through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from among the dead.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“The denial of any human involvement in Paul's apostolic status is echoed in his later claim that his gospel was not of human origin (1:11-12). The most likely reason for this concern is that the agitators were attempting to undermine Paul's authority... by arguing that his status and teaching depended on the Jerusalem apostles... Paul's point, rather, is that his apostolic status and authority do not depend on human beings in any essential way.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 1</i>	“We should probably be right in inferring from Paul's emphatic language that his Galatian converts had been given a different account of his apostleship — an account which maintained that he had no commission apart from what he had received from men... Paul denies this: his commission was received directly, without mediation, from the risen Christ.”
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“He emphasizes his direct authorization by God to act as an apostle of the gospel, denying that he relies on any human authorization... therefore an envoy of God rather than of some human authority or body.”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 1</i>	“The apostles' mission was to be God's representatives; they were envoys, messengers, and delegates who were directly under the authority of Jesus Christ... Paul presented his credentials as an apostle at the beginning of this letter because his authority was being undermined in the churches in Galatia.”

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The Irony — the man who once was sent by men

Here is what amazes me. Of all the people in the world to say “not from men,” it is this man. Because there was a day when Saul of Tarsus was sent from man. Look at who he used to be.

Acts 9:1-2

¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

He carried letters. Official paperwork. Human authorization from the high priest, the highest human authority he knew. And he used it to drag believers out of their homes. Saul knew all about the authority of man. He had built his life on it. He had the credentials, the paperwork, the backing of the whole religious establishment, and it made him a persecutor of the church of God. So when Paul now says “not from men, nor through man,” he knows exactly what he is turning his back on. He traded the letters of the high priest for a commission from the risen Christ, and he will give his life for that gospel message.

Goes Deeper — Paul’s Openings Compared

Everywhere else, Paul roots his apostleship gently in “the will of God.” Only in Galatians does he throw up the sharp double denial, because only here is his authority under direct attack.

SCRIPTURE	HOW PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF
Romans 1:1	<i>Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God</i>
1 Corinthians 1:1	<i>Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God</i>
2 Corinthians 1:1	<i>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God</i>
Ephesians 1:1	<i>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God</i>
Colossians 1:1	<i>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God</i>
Galatians 1:1	<i>Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)</i>

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2. Signed

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objective 4 — Show how the resurrection functions as God's "signature," authenticating both the gospel and its messenger.*

Galatians 1:1b

¹...but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)

The whole sentence turns on one word. But. Everything before it was “not.” Not men, not man. And now the sentence turns: but through Jesus Christ. There is the signature starting to appear at the bottom of the page. Notice that Paul uses that same little word “through” again, the word for a go-between. A minute ago he refused to let any man be the go-between of his gospel. But he will gladly say his commission came through Jesus Christ, because Jesus is no ordinary go-between. And Paul tells the story himself a few verses down.

Galatians 1:15-16

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

God was pleased to reveal His Son in Paul, and to send him. No man handed him that. The living Christ met him on the road, knocked him off his horse, and turned a persecutor into a preacher.

The scholars — “through Jesus Christ” (the risen Lord's direct commission)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“Paul is already thinking of the revelation of Jesus Christ to him as the point of his apostolic calling: he was chosen as an apostle “through” Jesus Christ as he was manifested to him on the road to Damascus.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 1</i>	“His commission was received directly, without mediation, from the risen Christ. The occasion of his receiving it was his Damascus-road experience in which... “God ... saw fit to reveal his Son in me.””
Stott — BST <i>on v. 1</i>	“God the Father chose Paul to be an apostle... and appointed him to this office through Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead. It was the risen Lord who commissioned him on the Damascus road.”

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“And God the Father” — the Son named alongside the Father

Now catch what Paul just did, because it is easy to miss and it is huge. He puts Jesus Christ and God the Father on the same level, as the joint source of his sending. A moment ago Paul was talking about “man.” No man sent me. And now, in the next breath, Jesus Christ is standing on the God side of the line, named right alongside the Father. Paul cannot even get his opening verse out without treating the Son and the Father as one authority. That is not an accident. That is the whole Christian faith packed into a greeting.

SCRIPTURE	THE SON AND THE FATHER, ONE AUTHORITY
John 10:30	<i>I and My Father are one.</i>
John 14:9	<i>He who has seen Me has seen the Father</i>

The scholars — “and God the Father”

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 1</i>	“In distinguishing “Jesus Christ and God the Father” from human authority or agency Paul sets Christ in a category apart from ordinary men... The unselfconscious way in which Paul repeatedly couples God and Christ together bears eloquent witness to his understanding of the person and status of Christ.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“The introduction of a second and different preposition... would detract from Paul’s obvious concern to associate the Father and the Son as closely as possible. In such verses we find the building blocks of an incipient trinitarian theology.”
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 1</i>	“[God the Father and Jesus Christ appear] twice in this greeting — as joint agents of Paul’s apostolic commission (1:1) and as the true greeters of the Galatians (v. 3).”

“Who Raised Him From the Dead” — the signature

Then Paul adds one more phrase he did not have to add. Of all the things he could say about God, look at the one he chooses: who raised Him from the dead. Why bring up the resurrection here, in the opening line, before he has argued anything? Because the resurrection is God’s signature. Think about what a signature does. A check for a million dollars is just a piece of paper until somebody signs it. A will means nothing. A deed means nothing. A contract means nothing until there is a name at the bottom. The signature is where all the authority lives. It is the proof that a real person with real power stands behind the paper. And God signed off on Jesus by raising Him from the dead.

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Romans 1:4

⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

That is the Father's declaration over His Son: this is My Son, everything He said is true, and he has My power behind Him. Every other religious teacher who ever lived is still in a grave. God reached into the tomb of Jesus and after three days signed His name in resurrection power. Jesus is not dead. He is the living Lord.

The scholars — “who raised Him from the dead”

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 1</i>	“Like other Jews who believed in the resurrection, Paul had been brought up to acclaim God as “the raiser of the dead” (as he is called in the second of the Eighteen Benedictions; cf. Rom. 4:17... and 2 Cor. 1:9...). But now he had learned that the first stage in the expected resurrection had already come with the raising of Christ. The raising of Christ, moreover, was specially relevant to Paul's commissioning, for it was his Damascus-road experience that simultaneously confronted him with the risen Christ.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 1</i>	“Paul alludes here to what will become the key theological argument of the letter: in Christ, God has inaugurated a new age in salvation history, a situation that “changes everything.””
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on vv. 1-5</i>	“The new age of salvation has broken into time by Christ's death and resurrection, which has delivered believers from this present evil age (1:1, 4).”

3. Settled

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objectives 6-7 — Defend why Scripture carries divine (not merely human) authority, and explain why a settled word is good news as well as hard news.*

Galatians 1:2

² and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

Now Paul turns from himself to the people standing with him. Normally when Paul brings a co-worker into his greeting, he names them: Timothy, Silas, Sosthenes. Here he does something he does nowhere else. He brings in a whole crowd. All the brethren. Everybody here with me. Why? Because he is under attack as the lone voice, and he wants these churches to know this is not Paul off on his own thinking up some strange new idea. The gospel he is about to defend is not his private opinion. All of God's people around him stand behind it. It is the united witness of the church.

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Goes Deeper — Paul the Name-Dropper

This is out of character for him, and that is the point. Paul is a warm, relentlessly social writer. Across his letters he names roughly seventy different people, sending greetings back and forth to this one and that one. So a greeting with no names in it is not Paul being efficient. It is Paul closing ranks. He wants a crowd standing behind him, not a list of friends.

The scholars — “all the brethren with me” (the shared witness)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 2</i>	“He undoubtedly includes this wider group to lend strength to his appeal: the views he is teaching in the letter are not his alone but are widely shared.”
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 2</i>	“So the Galatians will understand that, though he was not commissioned by other mortals, many others stand with him.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 2</i>	“In the initial salutation of several of his letters Paul associates with himself by name one or more of his companions who are with him at the time of writing... Here he mentions no one by name, but associates with himself ‘all the brothers who are with me.’”

“To the Churches of Galatia” — public, official, and cold

Two things hide in that little phrase. First, churches is plural. This is a circular letter, meant to be carried town to town across a whole region and read out loud when the people of God gathered. It is public. It is official. It is binding on all of them. Second, notice what is missing. Everywhere else Paul warms up the address: to the saints, to the beloved, grace to the faithful. Here? Nothing. Just the churches of Galatia. No saints. No warmth. And that short, cold address is itself a message. Paul is so alarmed, so grieved at how fast they are slipping, that he cannot bring himself to sugarcoat it. He just says: read this. All of you.

The scholars — “to the churches of Galatia”

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 2</i>	“Missing is any further description of his readers, such as ‘saints.’ The abruptness of the address probably signals Paul’s displeasure with the Galatians.”
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 2</i>	“It appears that Paul hesitated to designate them as God’s churches. Paul might still regard most of the Galatians as in Christ... but they have begun the process of apostasy.”
Stott — BST <i>on v. 2</i>	“It is recognized in the New Testament that what is called ‘the church of God’, the universal church, is divided into local ‘churches’. Not, of course, into denominations, but into congregations.”

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So What Does “Settled” Mean For Us?

Put the whole greeting together. This word was sent, not from men. It was signed by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. And it comes as the united, public, official witness of the church, binding on everyone who hears it. That can only mean one thing. It is not up for debate. It is not up for a vote. It is settled.

We live in a world, and even in a church world, that treats the Bible like a suggestion, like it is secondary, an afterthought. And people have gotten clever about how to get around it. Some say, that was just Paul’s opinion, I disagree with him, I stick with the words in red, as if you and I get to sit up in the judge’s seat and rule on what the apostles wrote. Others say the church put this book together, so the church can change it, as if the mailman gets to rewrite the letter. But listen to what the Bible says about itself.

2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

All Scripture. Not the parts you like. Not the parts you don’t. All of it, breathed out by God. Which means we don’t open this Book like we are standing in line at Baskin-Robbins, taking a little sample here and a little sample there. That is not how we treat the Word of God.

Isaiah 40:8

⁸ *The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.*

Matthew 24:35

³⁵ *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

Heaven and earth will pass away. The mountains, the oceans, the ground under your feet, this whole present age. But not one word God has spoken will ever fall. It is settled. Forever.

The scholars — submitting to the apostolic word

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
MacArthur <i>on vv. 1-5</i>	“I hope you realize that the message of the apostles is the inspired Word of God as we have it in the New Testament, and that we are to be subject and submissive to the word of the apostles. They are the authority that speak in the behalf of Jesus Christ.”

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A Settled Word Cuts Two Ways

Now hear this closely, because it is not bad news. It is some of the best news you will hear all week. A settled word from God cuts two ways, and the second way is pure grace. The same authority that means you cannot wiggle your way out when the Bible corrects you also means it is settled when the Bible comforts you.

SCRIPTURE	AND THIS IS SETTLED TOO
John 6:37	<i>All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.</i>
Romans 8:1	<i>There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.</i>
Romans 8:38-39	<i>For I am persuaded that neither death nor life... nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i>

The same Bible that speaks to your sin is the same Bible that speaks about your redemption. And grace, for those who are in Christ, is not up for discussion either. So who says you have to listen? Not me. God does. And it is settled.

Assemblies of God — Are There Apostles and Prophets Today?

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objective 5 — Articulate the AG position: the foundational apostolic office is unique and has no successors, while the ministry function continues.*

An apostle was not a word you could use to describe just anybody in the New Testament sense. It is not like “believer” or “brother” or “saint,” words that belong to every Christian in the room. To be one of these, a man had to meet two marks nobody today can meet: he had to have seen the risen Lord Jesus with his own eyes, and he had to have been personally commissioned by Christ Himself. That is a very small circle. The Twelve, and a handful of others the risen Christ appeared to. Paul was one of them.

Ephesians 2:20

²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

Out of that circle, and only that circle, came Scripture-making authority: the Bible you and I have today. The church stands on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. And you do not lay a foundation twice. So when somebody today takes up the title Apostle, or Prophet for that matter, and starts claiming that kind of authority over people’s lives, you as a Bible-believing Christian should reject it.

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Hear the distinction carefully, because our Fellowship makes it carefully. Can somebody minister in the prophetic stream? Of course. The pioneering, church-planting work an apostle did still goes on, and God still speaks through His people. But we do not, as the Assemblies of God, recognize an official title of apostle or prophet. The function continues. The office does not. Please note that many Assembly of God churches and even various Network Representatives ignore this official stance.

From our Fellowship — “Apostles and Prophets” (AG Position Paper, 2001)

SOURCE	KEY CONTRIBUTION
AG Position Paper <i>Conclusions, §3</i>	“personally called and commissioned by the risen Lord, are often referred to in Scripture as ‘apostles of Jesus Christ’ and are foundational apostles (Ephesians 2:20) with unique revelatory and authoritative roles in establishing the church and producing the New Testament.”
AG Position Paper <i>Conclusions, §3</i>	“Contemporary apostles, of course, will not have seen or been commissioned by the risen Lord in the manner of the ‘apostles of Jesus Christ,’ nor will they be adding their teachings to the canon of Scripture.”
AG Position Paper <i>Marks of an Apostle, §1</i>	“The first and most important mark of true apostles of Christ was that they had seen the risen Lord and been personally commissioned by Him as witnesses to His resurrection.”
AG Position Paper <i>Practical Questions, §1</i>	“Within the Assemblies of God, persons are not recognized by the title of apostle or prophet. However, many within the church exercise the ministry function of apostles and prophets.”

The scholars — why the foundation is not poured twice

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on vv. 1-2</i>	“The word ‘apostle’ was not a general word which could be applied to every Christian like the words ‘believer’, ‘saint’ or ‘brother’. It was a special term reserved for the Twelve and for one or two others whom the risen Christ had personally appointed. There can, therefore, be no apostolic succession... The apostles had no successors. In the nature of the case no-one could succeed them. They were unique.”
MacArthur <i>on vv. 1-5</i>	“God wanted to get His New Testament revelation through, so He chose them to be the vehicle. Once the revelation was done, you didn’t need them anymore... They were given the ability to pronounce inspired truth and write the books of the New Testament.”

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Pastoral Takeaways

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| 1 | The Bible is not a flyer. It is certified mail. When Scripture says something you don't want to hear, "says who?" has already been answered: not men, but God. You cannot toss it like junk mail. |
| 2 | You don't sit over the Bible. It sits over you. We don't get to circle the verses we like and cross out the ones that step on our toes. When this Book speaks, God speaks. |
| 3 | A living Lord signed it. Every human authority ends at a grave. This word is backed by the one grave that could not hold its man. |
| 4 | God did not rename Saul. God sent him. Grace did not give him a new label. It gave him a new commission, and it took the church's worst enemy and made him its greatest missionary. |
| 5 | There are no Apostles today. Beware anyone who takes up the title to claim authority over your life. The foundation was laid once by men who saw the risen Christ, and it does not get poured twice. |
| 6 | A settled word is good news. The same authority that means you can't escape its correction means you cannot lose its comfort. Grace, for the one in Christ, is not up for a vote either. |

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Discussion Questions — At Home or in a Group

- 1** Observation: In verse 1, underline the two phrases “not from men” and “nor through man,” and circle the word “but.” What is Paul denying, and what is he affirming?
- 2** Observation: Mark every reference to God in verses 1-2 (Jesus Christ, God the Father, “who raised Him from the dead”). Why might Paul load his greeting with all of this?
- 3** Interpretation: Many of us were taught that God changed Saul’s name to Paul. What does Acts 13:9 actually say, and why does the difference matter?
- 4** Interpretation: What does the word “apostle” mean, and why does that make Paul’s words carry more weight than his personal opinion?
- 5** Interpretation: Why does Paul mention the resurrection in his opening line? How does a living Lord change the way we treat this Book?
- 6** Interpretation: Why does Paul say “all the brethren who are with me,” and why does he leave out his usual warm words for the churches?
- 7** Application: Where in your life are you most tempted to treat the Bible like a flyer, glancing at it and tossing the part you don’t like (money, speech, forgiveness, relationships)?
- 8** Application: Our Fellowship says there are no Apostles today, though the ministry function continues. How should that shape the way we respond to leaders who claim special authority over people’s lives?
- 9** Application: A settled word cuts two ways. Which promise from the last section (John 6:37, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:38-39) do you most need to rest on as settled this week?

By Whose Authority? • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | August 2026

Quick Review — You Know More Than You Think

This isn't a test. It's a chance to see how much of tonight's truth is already yours. The answers are at the bottom. Take it as encouragement.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | The word "apostle" means:
(a) a scholar
(b) a sent one who carries the sender's authority
(c) a temple priest |
| 2 | True or False: On the Damascus road, God changed Saul's name to Paul. |
| 3 | Fill in the blanks: Paul says his call was "not from _____ nor through _____." |
| 4 | True or False: Paul received his gospel secondhand, passed down from the apostles in Jerusalem. |
| 5 | Paul points to one event as God's "signature" on Jesus. What is it? |
| 6 | According to our Fellowship (the AG), are there capital-A Apostles today like Paul and the Twelve? (Yes / No) |
| 7 | Finish the verse: "All _____ is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). |
| 8 | In your own words: when the Bible tells you something hard, who says you have to listen? |

Answer Key: 1) b · 2) False. He carried both names his whole life; Acts 13:9 shows them together as he turns to the Gentiles · 3) men / man · 4) False. It came directly from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:1, 11-12) · 5) the resurrection ("who raised Him from the dead") · 6) No. · 7) Scripture · 8) God does, and it is settled.

If these came easily, you've grasped the very heart of Galatians 1:1-2. Well done. Now go live like it's settled.