

The Importance of Being Sent

In the New Testament epistles and the Revelation of John, the arrival of the Messiah in the world is seen as a part of the *sending* motif in Scripture. Noted from John's first epistle, insight is given into the motivation for God's sending activity. John wrote, "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. Love consists in this: not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9–10).

The motivating force in God's mission and subsequent commission of the church is shown to be His love and desire to have people reconciled to Him. In Galatians 4:4–6, Paul wrote that God had sent the Son for the work of redemption and "sent the Spirit of His Son, into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father!'"

Consequently, the church is now a commissioned group in the world, having been sent so people can hear the witness of the Gospel (Rom 10:15). The mission of God and the commission of the church would appear to have love as one of the motivating factors. In 1 Cor 5:14–15, Paul wrote of the reason for ministry and mission, "For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all, then all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised."

Additionally, the final book of the Bible includes some the language of sending as well. John wrote that the revelation was sent to him and verified by an angel (Rev 1:1). The messages John received in the first three chapters were sent to the seven churches named in them (1:11). In the closing chapter of the book, John records that "These words are faithful and true," because the Lord "has sent His angel to show His slaves what must quickly take place" (22:6). The epistles and Revelation continue the teaching that God sends both the message of salvation and the power by which believers may live out their redemptive calling of mission and ministry.

From the banishment (sending out) of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden to the revelation of insight about the end of days, God is a sender. Throughout the Scriptures, God presents Himself as on mission for His glory and His redemptive purposes. In *Missional Church*, Darrell Guder wrote,

We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation. . . . God's mission unfolded in the history of God's people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God's work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified, and resurrected. God's mission continued then in the sending of the Spirit to call forth and empower the church as the witness to God's good news in Jesus Christ. . . . and it moves toward the promised

consummation of God's salvation in the *eschaton* ("last" or "final day").

The Scriptures are quite clear that God is on mission, and that He is sending His people out into the world to participate in that mission as well.

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