

WHO ARE QUALIFIED AS MINISTERS OF GOD?

Note to the speaker:

Contrast the example of Jesus and his disciples with that of Christendom's clergy, who claim to be ministers of God. Show what the Scriptural qualifications for God's ministers are and how God's true ministers today are trained for the Christian ministry

JESUS CHRIST QUALIFIED AS GOD'S CHIEF MINISTER (6 min.)

Baptized in Jordan at age 30, Jesus commenced his ministry (Lu 3:21-23)

At synagogue in Nazareth, he proclaimed his commission (Lu 4:17-21)

Went into all the towns and cities of Israel, preaching, healing, and carrying out his assigned ministry (Mt 9:35, 36)

He came to earth 'not to be ministered to, but to minister' and serve as a lowly house servant, *diakonos* (Mt 20:28)

Set marvelous pattern in this for all who would be his followers

INVITATION EXTENDED TO OTHERS TO SHARE IN GOD-GIVEN MINISTRY (10 min.)

From beginning of his ministry Jesus invited others to join with him and become "fishers of men" (Mt 4:18, 19)

He bypassed the Jewish religious leaders, although these were well educated in the Law (Mt 23:2, 3, 6, 7)

Instead of approving these religious leaders, Jesus actually denounced them (Mt 23:33)

Jesus established no seminaries or schools but took his disciples with him for training in the 'field' (Mt 9:35-38)

Within three years men such as James, John, and Peter were thoroughly trained and sent out as qualified ministers, 'preachers of God's Kingdom' (Mt 10:5-7)

Their teaching and speaking resembled their Master's (Ac 4:13)

How different Christendom's religious leaders are today!

They boast of seminary training, love high-sounding titles, and claim to have divine ordination

Their criticism of God's Word has led to Bible ignorance among their flocks, as surveys show (*w91* 1/15 7; *w89* 7/1 4-5)

Many have become involved in politics, sexual misconduct, and financial scandals

Cannot even agree on what following Jesus' example means

SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOD'S MINISTERS (15 min.)

Who truly qualify to serve as ministers of God? Paul gives the direct answer at 2 Corinthians 2:16b, 17

Scriptures clearly set out necessary steps in order to be adequately qualified as God's minister

One must first take in *accurate knowledge* from God's Word, as apostles and first-century Christians did (Joh 17:3)

Along with such knowledge, *faith* is required (Joh 3:16; Heb 11:6)

To give evidence that one has faith, there must be works of *repentance* over past wrongful course (Ro 2:4)

Then one must turn around or take step of *conversion*, so as to progress in right way leading to God's favor (Ac 3:19)

Must reach point of *dedication*, offering oneself to God to do his will as footstep follower of Jesus Christ (Mt 16:24-26)

To symbolize dedication next step is to undergo water *baptism* in obedience to command by Jesus (Mt 28:19, 20)

All who have taken above steps are qualified from God's standpoint to be ministers of the good news

Baptism constitutes ordination by God as one of his ministers, not college diplomas or letters of recommendation from men

Those who respond to their message and become ministers themselves are their letter of recommendation (2Co 3:1-3)

Having to do secular work to maintain themselves and their families does not nullify their claim to be God's ministers

Apostle Paul made tents; worked with his own hands to provide material necessities but proved himself to be zealous minister of Jehovah (Ac 18:1-4; 20:34)

Jehovah's Witnesses today follow this same Biblical precedent, even those engaging in full-time ministry

PRESENT-DAY TRAINING FOR QUALIFICATION AS MINISTERS (9 min.)

All ministers of Jehovah receive extensive training for the ministry

Five congregation meetings are provided each week for training in skilled use of God's Word (Heb 10:23-25)

Theocratic Ministry School in each congregation provides thorough instruction in effective study methods, public reading and speaking, teaching, and the field ministry. Available to all (2Ti 3:14-16; *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook* can be used to illustrate the extensive scope of subjects covered)

Pioneer Service School has provided valuable training for thousands of full-time ministers earth wide to shine as illuminators (Php 2:15)

Kingdom Ministry School provides advanced training for elders in overseeing and shepherding the congregation of God (Ac 20:28)

Bible School of Gilead in past 50 years has trained thousands of zealous missionaries serving earth wide (Mt 28:19, 20)

Ministerial Training School provides specialized instruction to help qualified brothers expand their service

All these provisions are a part of the Biblical training that qualifies Jehovah's servants to be effective ministers

Paul acknowledged that the 'qualification comes from God' (2Co 3:1-5)

QUALIFIED MINISTERS NOW BEING USED BY JEHOVAH GOD (5 min.)

Fact that the good news is being preached in all nations is evidence of God's approval on their efforts (Mt 24:14)

In keeping with example of Ezekiel, who served as a "watchman" to a rebellious nation by warning of God's judgments, Jehovah's ministers today sound divine warning (Eze 3:17-21; 33:2-7; w91 3/15 15)

Jehovah's approved ministers are humble and obedient coworkers with God. One plants, another waters, but God makes it grow (1Co 3:5-9)

God's Word encourages all of us to keep improving as hardworking ministers (2Ti 2:15)

Can then be used to glorify God, save our own lives and the lives of all who listen to the Word of life as proclaimed by the true and approved ministers of God

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)