

Doctrine of Apostleship Revisited

1. The word “*apostle*” refers to a person sent forth on an important and special mission. The disciples of Christ were officially sent out to preach the gospel of redeeming grace.
2. The four Biblical lists of disciples credit the following men with being the original apostles of Christ (Matthew 10:25; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13):
 - Andrew
 - Bartholomew
 - James the younger and the son of Alphaeus
 - James the elder
 - John, a son of Zebedee
 - Jude who bore the name Lebbeus or Thaddeus
 - Philip
 - Simon the Canaanite
 - Simon, also called Peter
 - Judas Iscariot
 - Matthew who is also known as Levi
 - Thomas the Twin called Didymus
3. Following the ascension of the Lord into heaven, the disciples of Christ made an attempt elect Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot.
 - *Acts 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

Special Note.

However, it is probable that God never honored the selection of Matthias. It was His will that Paul would be appointed to take the place of Judas as the *Apostle to the Gentiles*.

4. There were at least three specific qualifications that had to be met in order to be an apostle.
 - **An apostle had to have been with Christ from the beginning of His ministry.** When Joseph and Matthias were being considered as a replacement for Judas Iscariot the other apostles noted that both of these men had been with them from the beginning of the Lord's public ministry. *Acts 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.*
 - **An apostle had to have seen the resurrected Christ.** When the people of Corinth were challenging his apostolic authority Paul reminded the Church that he was an apostle and had seen the resurrected Lord. *1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?*
 - **An apostle had to have been personal appointment by Jesus Christ.** Jesus said to the disciples in John 15:16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."*

Paul qualified to be an apostle for Jesus Christ personally appointed him. The Lord told Ananias to go and minister to Paul because was a chosen vessel. *Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.*
5. Following the Day of Pentecost, the Apostles were new men in that they received unusual power from on high as Jesus had promised.
 - Prior to His ascension Jesus said to the disciples *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (*Acts 1:8*).
 - A few days later the power was given. *Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*
6. There is a wider usage of the word apostle in the *New Testament*. The term was sometimes applied to those sent on a special commission as in the case of Barnabas in Acts 14:14. But for the most part an "*apostle*" has reference to the original twelve disciples plus Paul.

- *Acts 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,*
7. Jesus is called an Apostle in Hebrews 3:1. *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”*
 8. From the moment of his conversion Paul was destined to be an Apostle for sovereign grace had separated him unto the gospel of God.