

APOSTLESHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The word "apostle" simply means "a sent one with a mission or message." It is used in both a strict and a loose sense in the New Testament. The term is even used of Christ in Hebrews 3:1.

STRICT SENSE

The 12 + Paul
(Acts 1:13, 26; 2:14; 6:2)

1. Peter (Cephas, Simon)
2. Andrew
3. James
4. John
5. James (of Alphaeus)
6. Judas (Thaddeus, Bro. of James)
7. Thomas (Didymas)
8. Matthew (Levi)
9. Philip
10. Nathaniel (Bartholomew)
11. Simon (the Zealot)
12. Matthias
13. Paul, Galatians 1:1; 2:8
Apostle to Gentiles

LOOSE SENSE

1. Barnabas – Acts 14:4
2. Junias – Romans 16:7
3. Andronicus – Romans 16:7
4. Epaphroditus – Philippians 2:25
5. Silas – 1 Thessalonians 2:6
6. Timothy – 1 Thessalonians 2:6
7. False Prophets – 2 Corinthians 1:13

2. The Apostles (strict) were not given to the Church, the Body of Christ, until the Ascension of Christ, Ephesians 4:8-11.
3. Apostleship (strict) was spiritual gift in the Body of Christ, I Corinthians 12:28: all gifts including this one were sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 12:11 – THERE WAS NO HUMAN MERIT INVOLVED.
4. The Apostles (strict) were also endowed with sign or miraculous gifts (healings, tongues, prophecy, etc.) that confirmed their spoken ministry and authority (Acts 2; 5:12-16; 28:8,9).

(OVER)

5. An indispensable qualification of an apostle (strict) was his eyewitness of the resurrected Christ, 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:5-9.

6. Apostles (strict) exercised absolute doctrinal authority over the early churches until the completion of the canon of the New Testament. The Canon of Scripture is now the absolute authority in the church.

7. There is no such thing as Apostolic Succession: no one takes the Apostles (strict) place: the gift ended with the 12 and Paul. This gift was foundational to the church, Ephesians 2:20.

8. Five reasons why Paul should not be seen as one of the Twelve Apostles (that is, why Matthias and not Paul should be viewed as the correct successor of Judas Iscariot).
 - a. God the Holy Spirit led Luke to include Matthias as one of the Twelve in Acts 2:14 (“Peter standing up with the eleven,” which, of course, included Matthias).

 - b. God the Holy Spirit led Luke to include Matthias in “The Twelve” in Acts 6:2. Both “a” and “b” of these reasons occur before Paul was saved (Acts 9).

 - c. Did Luke in Acts 2:14 and 6:2 reflect Divine Viewpoint of who the Twelve were? Or Human Viewpoint? If you say the latter, you are saying that the Holy Spirit adapted to human error, hence you cast a pale on the inspiration and the reliability of Scripture: you open a door that destroys the factuality of Scripture. The best answer to this question is: Luke included Matthias among the Twelve because he was so led by the Holy Spirit from whose viewpoint (God’s) it is true.

 - d. Moreover, Paul himself writing under the inspiration calls them “The Twelve”, 1 Cor. 15:5!

 - e. This view is compatible with Paul’s special calling as an Apostle (strict sense) to the Gentiles, Galatians 2:8. He never repudiates their choice of Matthias: he simply maintains that his apostleship is unique and not of any lesser quality than that of the Twelve, 1 Corinthians 15:7-10; Galatians 1:1, 11-17.