

Twenty Five Apostles by Roger Sapp

Produced from a Book

This booklet was produced from the book entitled *The Last Apostles on Earth*. There was sufficient continuing interest in this book to produce several booklets containing updated information on the subject of apostles and apostolic ministry. This is the first of that series of booklets. It corresponds to the first two chapters of the out-of-print book.

Apostles Are Often Hidden

Apostles are often hidden. In the English versions of the New Testament, they are sometimes hidden by translation and by simple misunderstanding. In this day God is shining His light on the New Testament to reveal this ministry. Apostles are hidden to those who have been improperly taught about them and therefore do not accurately see them in the New Testament, in Church history, or in modern times. There are those today that either deny the existence of apostles or so improperly reduce the ministry that it is necessary to really see what the New Testament reveals about them. God's light is illuminating the New Testament to a new generation of teachers who are now revealing the ministry of the apostle to those who have "ears to hear" and "eyes to see."

In much the same way as Messiah was unrecognized among many of His own people as He was growing up, so apostles have been growing up in our midst, hidden and unrecognized by the Church. The Holy Spirit is preparing them in character and power for a special time to come. Apostles have been hidden by God until they are ready to be set by Him into their prominent end-time role.

All this previous hidden-ness demands a careful and deliberately simple approach to the subject of apostles, with openness to the instruction of the Word of God. Previously formed conceptions can be barriers to new understanding if they are held in too high esteem. "Old wineskins" will not hold the "new wine" that God will pour out on the Church in the last days. Only the Church of His creation and design will be able to contain the presence and power of His Spirit in the last days and be prepared to be the Bride of Christ.

The object of this booklet, therefore, is to shed some light on the ministry of the apostle as revealed in the New Testament, thereby helping the Church to make room once again for a proper modern expression of this ministry. Hopefully, by the end of this booklet you will have a definitive answer as to what an apostle is.

Dangers exist in this kind of information for those who are proud, self-willed, and immature. Anyone who would try to apply what is written here without the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit will themselves create more barriers for the restoration of this essential ministry. A carnal, untimely application of the things in this book will do more harm than good. Information devoid of wisdom, patience, and love will not set us free.

Twenty Five Apostles

The Holy Spirit must have full reign as restored truth is applied to our individual situations.

Defining the Word *Apostle*

The word *apostle* is a transliterated word, one that is taken directly or almost directly from another language with little change. In this case, *apostle* is taken from the common Greek word *apostolos*. This word literally means “one sent forth.” *Apo* literally means “from,” and *stolos* comes from *stello*, which means “I send”¹⁰. Within the New Testament and in other classical Greek literature, *apostolos* has the simple meaning of “one sent as representative of another,” the representative deriving his authority and power from the one sending him.² This simple definition is the root of the meaning of *apostle*. Although this is the root meaning, there must be much more written to reveal the strength and depth of the biblical use of the term. The New Testament provides an abundance of information to reveal this ministry fully.

Apostles Will Become Prominent Again

This ministry was exceedingly important to the establishing of the early Church, and it is exceedingly important in preparing the Church for the Second Coming of Christ. At the beginning of this age, apostles were the first ministry established. The apostle is the last ministry restored and reestablished at this end of the age. Apostles are returning to prominence in the Church just before the return of Christ. The emergence of apostles, true and false, into new prominence is a great sign of the nearness of the end of the age and Christ’s Second Coming.

The Church needs to be able to sort out the true apostle from the pretender. There has been a confusing movement since the original book was published in 1995. Many believe that this movement has done more harm than good through its promotion of the apostle as the ultimate ministry. It seemed to encourage thousands of individuals, men and women, to unwisely adopt the title apostle without any real function of apostolic ministry. Additionally, it seemed to promote the authoritarian Medieval mindset concerning spiritual authority and the structure of the Church rather than noting that New Testament apostles did things much differently. It seemed to fail to recognize that New Testament apostles successfully evangelized their world and planted numerous churches without ever possessing a church building. They functioned with a very different paradigm. They planted churches in believer’s homes.

A prophets’ movement has taken place throughout the Body of Christ in the last half of the 1980’s and early 1990’s in America. There were some mature prophets in this movement who predicted a future movement of the Holy Spirit to restore the apostle to his place of prominence and function. Unfortunately many less mature prophets have

¹⁰ pg. 35, The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

² pg. 348, Duffield, Guy P., Foundations of Pentecostal Theology.

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

adopted the title *apostle* since that time. They have also unwisely prophesied the ministry of the apostle over numerous leaders. Many today are under the impression that they are apostles when it is fairly clear to biblically knowledgeable observers that they are not. Therefore, there is a great need for clarity concerning the apostle. The importance of understanding apostles has increased dramatically as a result of immature ministry.

New Testament the Only Adequate Guide

There are those who create their own doctrines about the ministry of the apostle outside of what the New Testament reveals about this ministry. There are already books available on apostles that teach readers that the present-day apostle is not like the first apostles. The Church cannot afford for a less-than-scriptural apostle to be given prominence in the Church. Only that which the New Testament reveals about the apostle is adequate to measure apostolic claims. The Church cannot afford to receive “revelations” and teachings that proclaim an unscriptural message about present-day apostles. It is not our decision to choose what an apostle is; the ministry of the apostle is already abundantly revealed in the Scriptures.

Large Number of References to Apostles

The New Testament reveals in many ways how important this ministry is. The most obvious indication is the large number of references to it throughout the New Testament. In the New International version New Testament, there are 87 references to *apostle*, *apostles*, *apostolic*, or *apostleship*.

This large number of references becomes even more impressive when compared to the fact that the term *evangelist* is only mentioned three times. Surprisingly enough, even the use of the term *shepherd* comes in only a distant second to *apostle*. In all its forms, *shepherd* is only mentioned 24 times in the New Testament (this includes the one reference that has been traditionally and repeatedly mistranslated *pastor* found in Ephesians 4:11). Even these 24 references are somewhat misleading because a good number of them do not address the shepherd as a ministry, while all 87 references to *apostle* reveal a ministry to the Church through their context.

Some Apostles Are Hidden by Translation

In addition to the number of direct references to the ministry of the apostle, there are also some indirect references that translators have intentionally or unintentionally disguised through inconsistent translation of the Greek word for *apostle*. In many versions, such as the King James and the New International, the translators have occasionally chosen to use the word *messenger* in the place of *apostle*. These inconsistencies may be the reflections of a theology that finds difficulty in accepting the large number of men that the New Testament describes as apostles. Adding to the confusion, the phrase “one who is sent” has been used in several versions of John 13:16 instead of the word *apostle*. Two negative references to apostles are given in the New Testament as well. The first is a

Twenty Five Apostles

reference to “false apostles.”³ The second uses the phrase, “those who claim to be apostles but are not, and [you] have found them false.”⁴

The verb forms of this word (such as *apostello*) are normally translated “send” or sent.” Although they are not all used to describe apostolic ministry, they are still used over 100 times,⁵ thus making “being sent forth” a very prominent idea to all who read the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. It is only possible for English readers of the New Testament to ignore this massive number of references because they are hidden by the translation.

The Twelve Disciples Become Twelve Apostles

The initial sending of the Twelve disciples as apostles can instruct us as to what the Scriptures mean by the term *apostle*. Before the disciples were sent, Jesus conducted His preaching ministry with Kingdom power. The disciples accompanied Him as learners and observers.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:35-36

Jesus reacted in compassion to the needs of the crowds. They were “harassed and helpless” because they were “sheep without a shepherd.” The implication here is that a true shepherd should be able to do something about the wretched spiritual condition of the people. What then is the solution that Jesus offers His disciples for dealing with the spiritual condition of these people? He tells His disciples to pray for God to “send out” workers into His harvest field.

*Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to **send out** workers into His harvest field Matthew 9:37-38*

The chapter division sometimes hides the connection between these verses and those that follow. (Readers should note that chapter divisions were not in the original manuscripts.) Jesus then calls the Twelve disciples and gives them the same authority and supernatural power that He has been exercising. At this point the disciples are called *apostles* for the first time.

*He called His **twelve disciples** to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the **twelve apostles**: first,*

³ 2 Corinthians 11:13.

⁴ Revelation 2:2.

⁵ pg. 859, *Young’s Analytical Concordance*.

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Seabed, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son Alphas, and Thaddeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Escargot, who betrayed Him. Matthew 10:1-4

The meaning of *apostle* is clear in the next verse as Jesus gives them specific instructions when they are *sent out* to minister in the power of the Spirit.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Matthew 10:5-8

The commission of the Twelve disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons and their being sent forth is what made them apostles. This is expressed in chart form below.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Twelve Disciples Christ Sends Them to Preach, Heal, & Deliver from Demons They Become the Twelve Apostles</p>

God’s answer to the problem of the “harassed and helpless” sheep of this world is for the Lord of the Harvest to *send out apostles* who will be the *shepherds* to the flock. These sent-forth ones will be able to help the harassed and helpless by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in healing, miracles, and deliverance from evil spirits. The Twelve Apostles certainly demonstrated this power in their ministries as recorded in the Gospels and later accounts of their exploits supplied by other sources. Without this power, no man can truly be an apostle.

Apostles Are Shepherds

The term *shepherd* is very important in the Scriptures. In this age it is normally associated with the ministry of the pastor. However, in both the Old Testament and New Testament it is given a larger context; it is the picture of spiritual leadership given for the godly. Initially in God’s plan, Christ Himself and then His Twelve Apostles were the shepherds of God’s flock. Later God extended this ministry to others. All God’s servants, apostles, and otherwise, should be shepherds and should have the heart of the Good Shepherd. All apostles are shepherds, but not all shepherds are apostles.

The Twelve Apostles After the Ascension

The Gospels record a multitude of facts about the Twelve Apostles before the Ascension, but next to nothing afterward. The Book of Acts and the letters of Paul give us a little information about a few of them. The New Testament, however, does not mention most

Twenty Five Apostles

of them after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts chapter 2. This lack of information can give the false impression that they were unproductive for the Kingdom of God.

Part of this impression comes from the percentage of the New Testament comprised by Paul's letters. Additionally, Luke's documentation of Paul's travels in the last half of the Book of Acts makes it seem that Paul was doing most of the work of the gospel. Since we do not have clear documentation of the lives of the other apostles, we cannot properly compare between Paul and the other apostles.

Most of the information we have about the other apostles comes from individuals who were disciples of the apostles or disciples of their disciples. These individuals have been called the "Early Church Fathers." Many manuscripts and portions of the ancient manuscripts of their writings exist today, tens of thousands of copies. Their writings can be considered slightly more reliable than legend. More credibility can be given to those who lived closer to the first century, but even the writings of these persons do not have the reliability of the New Testament. However, where several of these sources agree independently from one another, this information may be considered seriously.

If we list the Twelve Apostles from the other accounts, we find a few variations in the names that are easily resolved through a comparison of the accounts. In that culture, it was possible for a person to have several names due to the various languages in the area. For instance, a Jew might have had Hebrew, Greek, and Latin names. Paul, for instance, also had the Hebrew name Saul.

Generally speaking, there are independent sources concerning the field or geographical location of the later ministry of each of the remaining apostles. This information reveals that they took seriously the command of Jesus to take the gospel to the whole world. Here is a list of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb with their respective areas of ministry in later life. Some of these fields are historically documented. Others are simply strongly suggested by the many legends from these areas about the particular apostles named. Two of the apostles listed did not have the opportunity to minister outside of Israel due to their early deaths.

Andrew - Greece & the region near Black Sea
Batholomew (Nathaniel) - Armenia (Iran)
James, the Younger- Spain & Britain
James, the Elder - Early Martyr
John - Asia Minor & later the City of Ephesus
Matthew (Levi) - Northern Africa
Peter (Simon, Cephas) - Jews in the Dispersion
Thaddeus (Lebbeus, Judas) - Syria
Thomas - India
Philip - Phrygia (Turkey)
Simon - SE of Caspian Sea
Judas Iscariot - Died by Suicide

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

Team Ministry Among the Apostles

Lest we think that the apostles were loners in some sense, we need to remind ourselves that among them there were at least four pairs of brothers: Peter and Andrew;⁶ James and John;⁷ Philip and Bartholomew (sometimes called Nathanael)⁸, James and Judas (not Iscariot), and perhaps Matthew⁹. This Judas is called Lebbeus and Thaddaeus as well. According to tradition, Simon the Zealot was the brother of James and Judas, but that is not found in the New Testament.

Some of the traditions have the apostles paired together in teams of two, three, and four. An apocryphal tradition from the second century assigns Peter, Andrew, Matthew, and Bartholomew to their field in the regions north and northwest of Palestine. This would include the regions of Syria, Galatia, Pontus, Scythia, and the coasts of the Black Sea. This tradition assigns to Thaddaeus, Thomas, and Simon the Canaanite Zealot the eastern countries of Mesopotamia, Parthia, Edessa, Babylon, and India. The tradition says the field of John and Philip was Asia Minor, including the cities of Ephesus and Heirapolis.¹⁰

The Twelve Apostles Immortalized

The Twelve Apostles, minus Judas, will be forever immortalized by their names being placed on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. These twelve are the foundational stones placed in line with the Cornerstone, Jesus.

The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 12:14

One of the Twelve Apostles was the traitor Judas Iscariot. It is unlikely that his name is on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. There is no real scriptural reason to undo what the remaining 11 apostles did shortly after the Ascension of the Lord. In Acts 1, the remaining 11 apostles prayerfully selected the disciple Matthias by lot to replace Judas. Matthias' name is surely on one of these foundation stones.

The Twelve Apostles in the Resurrection

Before His crucifixion and resurrection, the Lord Jesus told His apostles that their future ministry in the coming Kingdom would be kingly. He said they would sit upon thrones and would be doing the kingly work of judging.

⁶ Matthew 4:18.

⁷ Matthew 4:21.

⁸ John 1:43-51

⁹ Mark 2:14; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13.

¹⁰ pg. 200, Vol. 1, Schaff's History of the Christian Church

Twenty Five Apostles

*Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on **twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**” Matthew 19:28 (see also Luke 22:30)*

Summary

The ministry of the apostle is greatly misunderstood in our day. Since there are indications that God is beginning to restore the ministry of the apostle to its former prominence, it is important for the Church to fully understand this ministry. The New Testament is the only trustworthy guide to rediscovering the ministry of the apostle. The term *apostle* means “sent-forth one.” The original Twelve Apostles were “sent forth” by the Lord in the power of the Spirit to be shepherds of the flock. They were equipped to deal with the helpless and harassed sheep through healing, miracles, and deliverance from evil spirits. With a couple of notable exceptions, the Twelve Apostles were successful after Christ’s ascension in continuing to carry out this mission in the nations to which the Lord sent them. The Twelve Apostles also have an important future mission after the resurrection--as kings in the age to come.

The Other Apostles

Apostles are often hidden due to the widespread lack of understanding that there were other apostles in addition to the original Twelve. Although a few scholars have noted this, other expressions of modern theology have discounted them in various ways and continued to give the impression that the Twelve Apostles are the only true apostles. However, it is clear that the New Testament does not discount apostolic ministry at all. Each of these other apostles was valued by the Church and in some cases became more important in the history of the Church than the original Twelve Apostles.

Matthias, the “Replacement Apostle”

In examining the prominence of apostles in the New Testament, we find quite a number of individuals described as apostles. As mentioned in Chapter One, we must add *Matthias* to our list of apostles. The following passage relates that Matthias was chosen from among the disciples of Jesus to replace Judas.

*So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and **Matthias**. Then they prayed, “Lord, You know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two You have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to **Matthias**; so he was added to the eleven apostles. Acts 1:23-26*

What happened to Matthias is uncertain, and the sources are scanty and unreliable. However, what they do say is that Matthias ministered in Judea and in Cappadocia, where he was finally martyred. All testimony to him reveals that he was faithful unto his death,

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

which was thought to be somewhere about A.D. 61 or 64¹¹. If we continue to count Judas as an apostle, then Matthias becomes the thirteenth apostle we have discussed.

Paul and Barnabas, Apostles of the Antioch Church

Paul and Barnabas are the fourteenth and fifteenth apostles revealed in the New Testament. They were called while members of the church at Antioch. The passage reveals that they were either prophets and/or teachers prior to their call to be apostles.

*In the Church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: **Barnabas**, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and **Saul**. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me **Barnabas and Saul** for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and **sent** them off. The two of them, **sent** on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. Acts 13:1-4*

The tense of the verbs in this statement indicates that this call was already known to Paul (“Saul” in this passage) and Barnabas. The Holy Spirit was simply making it public to the other prophets and teachers who were praying and fasting together. It is not readily apparent from the passage how the Holy Spirit made it known. However, since the “Holy Spirit said”, it is not a large leap in logic to speculate that the spiritual gift of prophecy was manifested through one of the other three individuals present. This revelation of God’s living word came as a confirmation of what Paul and Barnabas already knew personally and it was revealed to these three other witnesses.

Paul (Saul) and Barnabas’ call as apostles may not be apparent from this passage until we discover that the word *sent* is used twice in the passage. This is a verb form of the word for “apostle.” They were *sent* by the Holy Spirit and *sent* by the Antioch church.

After the time of this commissioning Paul and Barnabas are referred to as apostles. The next chapter of Acts provides us with the first reference in which they are identified clearly as apostles. Acts 14:4 refers to both of them being apostles; however, since this verse doesn’t actually mention their names, Acts 14:14, which mentions their names, seems more substantial for this point.

*But when the **apostles Barnabas and Paul** heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crown, shouting. Acts 14:14*

In the last chapter, we looked at how the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples in His authority and power, making them apostles. The same pattern is revealed in this passage through the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, sending Paul and Barnabas. Based on this

¹¹ pg. 254, Lockyer, All the Apostles in the Bible.

Twenty Five Apostles

sending they become apostles. The chart here expressed this divine idea.

5 prophets & teachers in Antioch
The Spirit sends 2 by the other 3
Then they are “apostles” Barnabas & Paul

Sent by the Lord and the Church

This dual “sending” reveals the wisdom of God. No man is an apostle without both kinds of “sending.” No man is an apostle without the sending of God -- no matter what the Church may think. No man is an apostle without God first revealing his ministry to the Church and then the Church sending him. This does not mean that all churches will acknowledge the call. However, some portion of the Church must acknowledge the call eventually for it to be legitimate and authentic. Every apostolic calling is proven through independent human witnesses given to the Church. This divine balance protects the Church from immature or false apostles.

Barnabas’ Call to Apostleship

Paul’s call to apostleship is unquestioned by the Church. However, it may be surprising for the average Christian to discover that Barnabas was called as an apostle at the same time as Paul. This passage in Acts is not the only source we have to Barnabas’ apostleship. Paul places Barnabas on equal footing with himself in a significant passage in First Corinthians. Here he discusses the right of apostles to be supported by the giving of the Church and to take along a believing wife in the work. Paul says that he and Barnabas have as much right to do so as any *other apostles*.

*Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the **other apostles** and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas? Or is it only **I and Barnabas** who must work for a living? 1 Corinthians 9:5-6*

A great deal of extra-biblical information exists about Barnabas. Unfortunately, little can be said to be reliable. Some Traditions have Barnabas ministering in as far-flung locations as Alexandria, Egypt and Rome. Some have Barnabas returning to his native Cyprus and dying there. One thing is certain: There is strong testimony to Barnabas being faithful to his God-given ministry as an apostle.

Paul’s Call to Apostleship

Paul, in his introduction to the letter to the Galatian church, refers to his call to apostleship, which was made public to the Church in Acts 13. Some have suggested that Paul’s call to apostleship came during his conversion experience near Damascus or shortly thereafter while he was blind and helpless. This is possible, yet there is no specific mention of it in the conversion account in Acts 9. In Paul’s own description of his conversion in Acts 22:21, he uses a verb form of the word *apostle*. However, Paul is not described by Luke and an apostle until after his association with the church at

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

Antioch some years later. Acts 13 is the first place where a verb form of the word *apostolos* is used in relation to Paul, and he is not referred to as an apostle (noun form) until Acts 14. Finally, no apostolic work is performed by Paul until after Acts 13, which seems to settle the question decisively.

We can perhaps say with relative certainty that the call for apostleship came at conversion, but that its understanding and implications were not revealed at that time. Then sometime prior to the events of Acts chapter 13, the specifics of the call began to become clear. In other words, the seed of apostleship was planted at conversion but did not germinate until Acts 13. The fact that the five men in the Acts 13 passage (including Barnabas and Paul) are described as prophets and teachers and not as apostles until after the sending forth strengthens this further. Paul describes this apostolic “sending” in the first verse of Galatians

Paul, an apostle---sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. Galatians 1:1

In this passage Paul clearly interprets his call for us--he understood he was being sent divinely and not by the will of the Church. The Church only can recognize by ordination what God has done by the anointing of the Spirit. Unfortunately, some churches seem to believe that their religious ceremonies and schools produce the work of the Holy Spirit. This idea is certainly contrary to Scripture and experience. It leads to poorly prepared leaders in the Church. Further, the Church can confuse a natural giftedness, superior intellect, or organizational ability with evidence of the call of God. This was not the case with Paul. He knew that his natural ability was not the basis of his calling.

Paul as the Pattern Apostle

Paul’s deeds are well-documented in the Scriptures since Luke focused the last half of the Book of Acts on him. One might speculate that if Luke had chosen instead to record the travels and deeds of Peter, Barnabas, or any of the other apostles, the Church today might have a different image of Paul and perhaps elevate one of the other apostles. However, since the Holy Spirit, working through His servants in the first century and in the canonization process of the New Testament a few centuries later, has chosen Paul as the primary example of a functioning apostle, we cannot refuse to admire him.

In the Book of Acts Luke gives extensive information about Paul and his travels. Paul also gives us complementary fragments of historical information and personal information about himself through his letters. This information when gathered together enables us to have a fairly clear picture of this man and what he accomplished. However, it is still incomplete since it does not record his last days or death. The Book of Acts finishes with Paul imprisoned in Rome and still alive. We do know from other historical sources that he was martyred in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Nero at about A.D. 68. There is some evidence that Paul was released for another ministry trip after the

Twenty Five Apostles

end of the Book of Acts before he was imprisoned and then beheaded at 63 years of age. Much of what will be said of the apostle in subsequent chapters will be drawn from Scriptures both about and from Paul.

Silas and Timothy, the Companion Apostles

The sixteenth and seventeenth apostles are *Silas* and *Timothy*. These apostles are easy to miss in a cursory reading of the New Testament. Two verses, however, when carefully compared clearly demonstrate that Paul knew them to be apostles. Paul includes Silas and Timothy in the introductory verses of First Thessalonians where he writes:

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. 1 Thessalonians 1:1

A few verses later, Paul describes the three of them as “we,” indicating the continued inclusion of Silas and Timothy in his discourse. He refers to the three of them--Silas, Timothy, and himself--as apostles.

*We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As **apostles** of Christ we could have been a burden to you... 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7*

Silas, the Prophetic Apostle

Silas was one of the “chief men among the brethren.”¹² He was a man of some importance and a distinguished member of the council in Jerusalem. This means that he was probably an early disciple of Christ, not a novice trainee under Paul as some would suggest. We also find that in addition to apostleship he held the calling of a prophet as well.¹³ Like Paul, he was also a Roman citizen.¹⁴ His Roman name was *Silvanus*. Tradition tells us that Silas was often left behind to do follow-up ministry when Paul went on to the next site of ministry.¹⁵ This is strong testimony to his wisdom and maturity.

Timothy, Paul’s “Understudy Apostle”

Timothy was the “understudy apostle.” He was a convert of Paul, even though he had a godly mother and grandmother.¹⁶ There is a wealth of information related to Timothy in the New Testament, including two letters from Paul to him. The second of these letters was written while Paul was imprisoned in Nero’s dungeon near the end of his life. They instruct and encourage Timothy to continue the work that they had begun together. Many passages of the letter demonstrate the closeness of their relationship. For instance, in several passages Paul addresses Timothy as “my son.” It is possible that Paul saw

¹² Acts 15:22-27

¹³ Acts 15:30-32

¹⁴ Acts 16:35-40

¹⁵ pg. 231, Lockyer, All the Apostles in the Bible

¹⁶ Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

Timothy as his successor in ministry. Not every called man or woman is destined to become a successor. Most will have unique ministries and have many inputs from many people to help them mature in ministry.

As an additional confirmation of Timothy's apostleship, we see Paul giving him specific instructions in First and Second Timothy that include appointing leadership in the local churches, clearly an apostolic function. In First Timothy 3, we see Paul teaching Timothy about the qualifications of the overseer and deacon. This was to help Timothy in his apostolic function to select men in the local churches who were qualified for these roles. Additionally, we see in Second Timothy Paul's instructions to Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist." This is not to say that Timothy was an evangelist, but rather that the apostle must also evangelize the lost rather than only working in the midst of the Church.

James, the Apostle and the Lord's Brother

The eighteenth apostle is *James*, the brother of Jesus. This is the same apostle who later wrote the book of James in the New Testament and became the spokesman and leader of the church at Jerusalem. Once again Paul is our source regarding this man's apostleship. In describing his trip to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, Paul says he did not meet with any apostles other than Peter and *James*.

I say none of the other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother. Galatians 1:19

Apollos, the Eloquent Apostle

The apostle that we will list as the nineteenth is *Apollos*, the eloquent Alexandrian Jew. Paul, in his correction to the Corinthian church for their disunity, described Apollos as a apostle. Paul begins this passage with an inclusive statement about "myself and Apollos." Throughout the passage, Paul uses the pronoun "us," referring to himself and Apollos. He then says that the "us" is "us apostles," including himself and Apollos.

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit...You have become kings--and that without us! ...For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession... 1 Corinthians 4:6, 8-9

Again it seems apparent that Paul thought of Apollos as on a par with himself as an apostle. He makes no distinction between himself and Apollos as apostles. In this passage, Paul makes the kingly connection with the ministry of the apostle.

Andronicus and Junias, Outstanding Apostles

It doesn't take as careful a reading of the Book of Romans to discover two more apostles by the names of *Andronicus* and *Junias*.

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Romans 16:7

Twenty Five Apostles

These apostles were not only Paul's relatives, but were apparently prison mates as well. It is also significant to our discussion about apostles to discover that these nearly unknown apostles were Christians or even apostles before Paul. The language here inspires another thought: If these relatively unknown apostles were "outstanding" among the apostles, could there be quite a few more unknown apostles who were not as outstanding that the New Testament doesn't mention at all? These two apostles, Andronicus and Junias, bring the total to 21 apostles.

This passage is also the one place in the New Testament that allows for the possibility of a woman being an apostle. However, this possibility is weakened because there is a textual variant involved. Some of the ancient manuscripts use the female form of the name *Junias* and some have the male form. It could be argued that someone who didn't like the idea of female apostles corrupted the original text. However, the textual variant is more likely just an early copying error and there was no intention involved at all. There is little direct support elsewhere in the New Testament for a woman to be an apostle despite many popular arguments for women apostles in our day. The author of this booklet has written on this subject and will likely publish a detailed booklet in the near future.

Epaphroditus, the Apostle From Philippi

The twenty-second apostle is *Epaphroditus*, the apostle who was ill before Paul wrote about him. Paul describes this apostle in his letter to the church at Philippi. It is easy to miss this reference; it is hidden by translation. This passage is one of the places where the New International Version translators have been inconsistent. They translated the Greek word in this passage as "messenger" that they translated as "apostle" elsewhere.

*But I think it is necessary to send back to you **Epaphroditus**, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your **messenger** [apostle], whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Philippians 2:25-26*

At Least Two Unnamed Apostles

Another passage hides the twenty-third and twenty-fourth apostles behind the same sort of translation obscuration. It is found in 2 Corinthians 8:23. A further inconsistency in translation arises in this case because the translators have chosen the word *representatives* over *apostles* or *messengers* in translating the plural of *apostolos*.

*As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our **brothers**, they are **representatives** [apostles] of the churches and an honor to Christ. 2 Corinthians 8:23*

This problem of translation does not obscure the fact that Paul describes these "brothers" as apostles. While we are not sure about their names or how many apostles these "brothers" amount to, we must conclude that there were at least two.

The Last Apostles Booklet Series

At Least Twelve Post-Ascension Apostles

At this point, it is apparent that at least another Twelve apostles have been discovered, all of which were called as apostles after the ascension of Christ into Heaven. In other words, there are as many apostles revealed by the Scriptures to have been called through the work of the Holy Spirit after the Ascension of Christ as there were before who were called directly by Jesus.

Paul indicates to us that the ministry of the apostle, while begun by Christ before the Ascension, continues after the Ascension like the other ministries. Paul reveals in Ephesians that Christ gave ministry gifts to men *after His Ascension*. He starts his list with apostles:

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men." ...It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. Ephesians 4:7-8, 11

A logical conclusion based on this Scripture and others is that if other ministry functions or gifts have been apparent in the various centuries of the Church age, there is no reason to doubt that the ministry gift of the apostle has also been functioning. If there have been pastors and teachers throughout the Church age, then it is reasonable to expect that there have been apostles as well.

These ministries have not necessarily taken the title of apostle or even been clearly seen to be apostles by others, but have had the characteristics and anointing, and have done the work of the apostle. It may be that some of the great Christian leaders of the past, have been apostles in times when this ministry was misunderstood and unappreciated even by the apostles themselves.

Jesus, the Ultimate Apostle

This list of apostles must be concluded with the pattern for all ministries, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The first and last Apostle is the *Lord Jesus Christ*. All apostles are a gift ministry from Him and reflect Him. All apostles, past, present, and future, must fix their thoughts on Him as *the Apostle*.

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. Hebrews 3:1

Summary

In addition to the original Twelve Apostles, the New Testament describes at least twelve more apostles, although some of these are hidden by inconsistent translation in English versions of the New Testament. In the case of these post-Ascension apostles, the Holy Spirit sent them in the same way the Lord Jesus sent the original Twelve. The New

Twenty Five Apostles

Testament writings of Paul, one of these post-Ascension apostles, reveal most of these other apostles. Paul acknowledged these others to have the same ministry as himself and the original Twelve. Paul also becomes an important pattern (certainly not forgetting the Lord Jesus Himself) for all present-day apostles by virtue of the mass of New Testament information from him about himself and the other apostles. Paul's writings and Luke's account of Paul in the Book of Acts give us substantial information that reveals the work of apostolic ministry.

This booklet was obtained in the "Pray and Obey" download area of www.allnationsmin.org. There are many other books, articles, audio messages and other materials available in that area.