

QUEST 52

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APOSTLES

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The Need for 12 Apostles

1. To judge the 12 tribes (Matt 19:28, Luke 22:30).
2. Their 12 names are written in heaven (Rev. 21:10, 12, 14).
3. The 13th Apostle was to the Gentiles (Romans 1:1; 11:13). This honor was bestowed upon Paul (1 Cor. 15:1-11; Rom. 11:13).

Standards for an Apostle:

1. Be a witness to Jesus from His baptism to the Ascension (Acts 1:21–22).
2. Witness to the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7–8).
3. Be chosen by the Lord (Acts 1:2; Luke 6:12–16; John 15:16).
4. Miraculous signs (2 Cor. 12:11–12).

In the *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (p. 9) by Lampe, six qualifications of an apostle are noted:

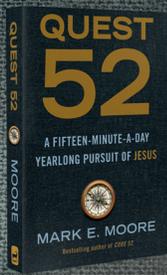
1. Commissioned directly by Christ
2. Being a witness of the resurrection
3. Special inspiration
4. Supreme authority
5. Accredited by miracles (NOTE: None of the other men in the Bible named as apostles ever worked miracles as far as the record goes, much less were they able to bestow these miraculous gifts as the apostles apparently could).
6. Unlimited commission to preach

Capital "A" or small "a"? (Or can we have Apostles today on the order of Peter and Paul?)

Most often when the N.T. uses the word *apostle* it means the 12 disciples Jesus chose to be his closest followers. And, to be technical, it would refer to the 12, minus Judas, plus Matthias, plus Paul. Obviously, that makes 13. But keep in mind that Paul was a special case. (Though, some scholars hold that the church was presumptuous in obtaining Matthias. God had prepared Paul to take Judas' slot. However, to hold this position is certainly to go beyond anything that Luke suggests).

What would help us is to see that the N.T. uses the word *apostle* in two senses. It mostly refers to the 12 disciples plus Paul, upon whom the church is built (Eph 2:20). In this sense there are no *modern-day* apostles. These men are unique. However, the N.T. also uses the word *apostle* in a secondary sense. Since the word itself means "one sent out" it can sometimes refer to anyone sent out on some mission. In this sense the word approximates our word missionary.

The count in the N.T. could be as large as 22 or as small as 12 or even 11. Think of it this way: If I were to ask how many preachers there were in Joplin, you might start to count the number of churches there are. But that number would really be way too small. You may arrive at the correct number of men with the title "preacher," but you would fall far short of the number of people who announce the good news of Jesus. In the same way, there were 14 men in the N.T. who held the office (and title), of Apostle. However, there are several others who are called apostle by virtue of the job they did. It was not an office they held but the function they



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performed. That is to say that they were sent out as "commissioned" men from the church which they represented.

The Successors of the Apostles

While we don't want to establish some kind of unwarranted apostolic succession, the foundational torch of leadership in the book of Acts clearly passes from the apostles to the local elders of churches. The farther one reads in Acts the less emphasis is placed on the apostles as a group and more prominence is given to the elders. Even Paul, the Apostle, receives advice from the Jerusalem elders in regard to how he (Paul) can be well received by Jewish Christians.

Fate of the Apostles

Apostle	Place	Event	Date
Peter	Rome	Crucified upside down by Nero	65 A.D.
Paul	Rome	Beheaded by Nero	65 A.D.
James	Jerusalem	Beheaded by Herod Agrippa I	44 A.D.
Andrew	Edessa, Turkey	Crucified	No Date
Thomas	India	Four soldiers ran him through with spears	No Date
Philip	Heliopolis	Put to death by a Roman proconsul	54 A.D.
Matthew	Nadabah, Ethiopia	Stabbed to death	60 A.D.
Bartholomew	India	Killed	No Date
James, son of Alpheus	Jerusalem	Stoned and then clubbed to death	61 A.D.
Simon the Zealot	Britain	Killed for refusing to worship the sun god	74 A.D.
Matthias	Syria	Burned to death	No Date
John	Ephesus	Died a natural death after his exile on Patmos	95 A.D.
Judas, (or Thaddaeus or Labbaeus)		Executed by the Apostate nephew of King of Adgor of Syria	No Date
Judas Iscariot	Jerusalem	Committed Suicide (Acts 1:25)	33 A.D.