

Week 40
271/94

Transforming Daily
“... the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ...”
Jude 17

What is an apostle? How many apostles were there? What are their names? Are there any apostles around today? These are good questions and many people have asked and are asking them?

Oversimplified, an apostle is a disciple that was chosen by Jesus Christ to spread the gospel. He lived during the time that Jesus Christ lived and walked with Him, ministered with Him, and served alongside of Him. They also embraced and expressed the attitude of a missionary. Along with all of this they also possessed certain spiritual gifts that have long since ceased to exist (not all scholars agree with me on this view that the gifts have ceased to exist). Suffice it to say that the apostles were a special group of men, for a special time, in a special place, to do the special work of God.

By my count there were 14 apostles. There were originally 12. Judas betrayed Christ and was removed from the group. The disciples waiting in the upper room for the Holy Spirit at Pentecost took it upon themselves to vote in one named Matthias to take Judas' place thinking that they were fulfilling the prophecy of Scripture that says one would take Judas' place. Their choice for replacement brought the count of apostles to 13. The man of God's choosing to fulfill the prophecy of Scripture regarding the one who would take Judas' place, according to 1 Corinthians 15: 8, was "born out of due time." His name was Saul which was subsequently changed after his conversion to Paul. So all together there were 14 apostles.

According to Matthew 10:2 the original 12 apostles were: Simon Peter, his brother Andrew, James and John sons of Zebedee, Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Lebbaeus known as Thaddeus, Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot. Added to these names to make 14 apostles was Matthias and Paul. To my knowledge, no others are mentioned as apostles in Scripture.

There are many people claiming to be apostles today. Some claim their status as apostles out of ignorance. Some claim their rank out of pride. Some claim to be modern day apostles in order to share, from their perspective, the authority of the New Testament apostles. Some claim apostleship in "spirit," meaning they are missionaries at heart. (I believe the gift for apostleship ceased after the original apostles died.)

One doesn't need to be an apostle to do the work of an apostle. All believers are called to do the work of an evangelist. All believers are called to testify to the witness of Christ. All believers are called and commissioned to work with, minister for, and walk in Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The real question for the modern day believer to be concerned with regarding apostles is, "Are you serving God like the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ?"