


Who Is An Apostle?

A Proposal In Understanding
Paul's Apostleship

Pastor Eric Douma
April 4, 2010



Paul: Apostle of Christ

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,


O.T. Shaluach: One sent by the king represented the king. Abuse of the "sent one" was abuse of the king himself!

1. With Jesus from beginning: John 15:26-27; Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 15:6-8; Gal 1:15-18

2. Did miraculous deeds: Acts 5:12-16; Hebrews 2:3-4

3. Saw the resurrected Jesus: 1 Cor 9:1; 1 Cor 15:5-8

4. They were called: Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1




Qualifications of an Apostle

John 14:25-26 These things I have spoken to **you while abiding with you**. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and **bring to remembrance** all that I said to you.


l el al hka = perfect tense
epon = aorist indicative

1 John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us;


ewr akarren = perfect tense
akhkoarren = perfect tense

 **Qualifications of an Apostle:**
John 15:26-27 When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and **you will testify also**, because you have been with Me from the beginning. (6:64; 8:25; 16:4 – from the beginning = start of Jesus’ ministry)

“They (the apostles) cannot simply relax and leave it all to the Spirit. They have a particular function in bearing witness in that they were with Jesus from the very beginning.” (ap ar chVpoints to the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. This was the decisive thing.” (Leon Morris, NICNT)

 **Qualifications of an Apostle:**
Hebrews 2:3b After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

“Our author, unlike Paul, does not claim any direct revelation from Christ for himself or assert his independence of the apostles; in this respect he puts himself on the same level as his fellow-Christians who heard the gospel from those “who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (Luke 1:2)” (F.F. Bruce, NICNT).

 **Qualifications of an Apostle:**
Luke 1:1-2 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word...

Acts 1:21-22 Therefore **it is necessary** that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us – beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us – **one of these** must become a witness with us of His resurrection.

vs 25 ...to occupy this ministry and apostleship
 vs 26 ...and he was added to the eleven apostles

Qualifications of an Apostle:

“The essential qualifications of an acceptable successor to Judas are then set forth: he must have been an associate of the Lord and his apostles from the time of John the Baptist’s activity to the day of the Lord’s ascension; he must in particular be a witness to the resurrection, as the other apostles were” (F.F. Bruce, NICNT).

“Peter laid down the qualifications for Judas’s replacement. He had to be one who had witnessed the entire ministry of Jesus from the time of His baptism by John to the ascension” (John Polhill, NAC).

Qualifications of an Apostle

“With the exceptions of Luke 11:49, Acts 14:14, Luke applies apostolos expressly to the Twelve. They had been called by the historical Jesus to their office (Lk. 6:13; cf. 1:17). They had been with him throughout his ministry from the time of John’s baptism” (Colin Brown, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 1:128).

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger...and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, when they had fasted and prayed and **laid their hands on them**, they sent them away.

Harold Hoehner’s Threefold Division

“In the NT the term “apostle” is used in three different ways. First, there are the Twelve that Jesus named “apostles” ...This seems to refer to the office of apostle. Acts 1:21-22 indicates that to qualify as an apostle one must have been with the Lord in his earthly ministry and must have witnessed His resurrection body (...1 John 1:1). Second, there were apostles in addition to the Twelve. There were Barnabas (Acts 14:14), James, the Lord’s brother (1 Cor 15:7), and Apollos (1 Cor 4:6, 9), probably Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1; 2:6), Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), and possibly Andronicus and Junias (Rom 16:7)...

...These are most likely those who were endowed with the gift of apostleship because they did not meet the above mentioned qualifications for the office. Third, there was Paul who was an apostle (1 Cor 9:1; 15:9) and yet had not been with Jesus in His earthly ministry but did, however, see the Lord in His resurrection body. Hence, he claimed that he was born out of due season (1 Cor 15:8). Rather than trying to include him in either of the two categories above, it is best to see Paul as an exception to the rule and make a third category" (Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 134-135).

My Concern
 Why I think being with Christ from the beginning is an important criteria:
 1. How do we answer those who, today, claim to have seen the resurrected Christ?
 > 1 Cor 15:5-8 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now...then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.
 2. How do we answer those who claim that Paul presents a contradiction to the apostolic credentials listed in the previous passages?

My Concern
 3. Not all who saw the resurrection were apostles: (Commenting on 1 Cor 15:8) "But since others who saw the Risen Lord did not become apostles, what most likely legitimized his apostleship was the accompanying commissioning" (Fee, NICNT).
 My Two Categories:
 1. **Office:** The Twelve + James + Paul
 2. **Spiritual gift to the body:** Barnabas, Titus, Silvanus etc. (Ephesians 4:11).
John 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing."

Evidence That Paul Met The Standard
Galatians 1:11-12 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I **neither received it from man, nor was I taught it,** (but) through revelation of Jesus Christ.
Singular or Plural?
2 Cor 12:1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.
Subjective or Objective Genitive?
Eph 1:17 ...the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and a revelation in the knowledge of Him. (cf. Eph 3:5)

Evidence That Paul Met The Standard
Galatians 1:15-18 But when God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.
 "The three-year ministry has good bases from both the Synoptics and the Gospel of John." (Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects Of The Life Of Christ*, 60).

Paul Is An Apostle: Your Not!

| | The Twelve | Paul |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Instructed by Christ? | Yes | Yes |
| How Long? | 3 yrs | 3 yrs |
| Seen Resurrection? | Yes | Yes |
| Do Miracles? | Yes | Yes |
| Preach Same Gospel? | Yes | Yes |
| Calling Verified? | Yes | Yes |

2 Peter 3:15-16... Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as also the rest of the Scriptures...
