

Is Paul an Apostle?

Defining an Apostle

The Greek word for apostle, “*apostolos*” is defined as a “delegate, person sent by another, a messenger, envoy.” “He that is sent” is the most common definition. There are two instances where the Greek word *apostolos* is not translated as “apostle,” but rather as “messenger” or “representative” (2 Cor. 8:23 and Phil. 2:25).

There are two specific listings of the Apostles (Matthew 10:2-4 and Luke 6:14 (Mark 3:16 and Acts 1:13 list the disciples without naming them as Apostles).

What are the biblical qualifications for an Apostle?

First, the individual must have seen the resurrected Christ. (John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22; 4:33; 22:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:1). All of the original Apostles saw the resurrected Christ (John 20:19-29) except of course Judas.

Second, they must have personally been called to that office by Jesus (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2; Galatians 1:1). For example we have the recorded calling of only Peter, Andrew, James, John and Levi of the original twelve. The other seven are not recorded.

Third, they must exhibit the power of working miracles (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:33, 43; 5:2; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Jesus gave the twelve Apostles the power to perform miracles when He sent them forth (Matthew 10:1-4).

After Jesus was taken to heaven, the remaining Apostles and disciples decided to fill the vacancy by Judas. They added one other requirement:

Acts 1:21-22 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

They felt that the replacement should be a true replacement, must have accompanied “*with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.*”

How many Apostles are there anyway?

If you answered 12 or maybe 13, you might be in for a little surprise. The following names are specifically mentioned in the Bible as being Apostles. For this exercise, I will be using the King James Version.

1. We have the original 12: Matthew 10:2-4 Simon, Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew; Thomas, Matthew, James, Lebbeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot - Matthew 10:2-4.
2. Matthias, Judas' replacement, - Acts 1:26
3. Jesus' half-brother James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem - Galatians 1:19
4. Barnabas, who accompanied Paul on his missionary journey - Acts 4:36; 14:14
5. Apollos – 1 Corinthians 4:6-9
6. Timothy and Silvanus – 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6
7. Epaphroditus – Philippians 2:25
8. Jesus Christ – Hebrews 3:1

For the purpose of this study I left out Paul, as that is the central question “Is Paul an Apostle?”

Should Paul be included in the list of Apostles?

First and foremost, if the Bible is true, and it is the Word of God, then by Paul proclaiming he was an Apostle of Jesus Christ ought to be enough for us to automatically include him in the list of Apostles.

But, is there more? Well the book of Acts records the calling and conversion of Saul of Tarsus, to Paul. Saul was a zealous persecutor of those early believers that have faith that Jesus was the Messiah. It was Jesus who chose Paul, in much the same fashion as the selection of James, John, Peter, Andrew and Levi. The only difference is that Saul was chosen by the resurrected Christ. His instructions from Jesus was to proclaim the Gospel to his people, the Jews, but his real ministry focused on proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Witnesses proclaim that Paul was an Apostle

Barnabas witnessed that Paul had seen the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:27)

Luke, the author of the Gospel and the book of Acts declares that Barnabas and Paul were Apostles (Acts 14:14)

Paul proclaims himself to be an Apostle: (Romans 1:1; 11:13; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 9:1-2; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:1; 11.

Let's take the requirements listed above and see if Paul fits.

Did Paul see the resurrected Christ? The conversion of Saul is recorded in the ninth chapter of the book of Acts takes place as the resurrected Christ confronts him on the way to Damascus; “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*” *5* And he said, “*Who are you, Lord?*” And he said, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.* *6* But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”

1 Corinthians 9:1 ¶ Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

Was Paul personally called to that office by Jesus? Since the definition of an Apostle is “one who is sent” it is clear that Jesus sent him, “...*rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.*”

Did Paul perform miracles? The answer is yes! Look at the following list.

Blinded Elymus - Acts 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Healed a cripple man - Acts 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Exorcised a demon - Acts 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Miracles in Ephesus - Acts 19:11-12 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Restored life to Eutychus - Acts 20:10-12 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Not affected by a deadly viper - Acts 28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Healed a mon on Melita - Acts 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Paul's testimony to the church at Corinth - 2 Corinthians 12:11-12 ¶ I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Did Paul Accompany Jesus from His baptism until the day He was taken from heaven. No. This was a requirement that Peter and the other Apostles applied to fill the spot vacated by Judas. But, Galatians 1:17-18 and 2 Corinthians 12:1-5 declare that Jesus taught Paul for 3 ½ years in Arabia.

Additional thoughts

Paul declared that his calling was "*not of men, neither by man*" (Galatians 1:1), unlike Matthias, his calling was not by man but by the Resurrected Christ. Paul states that he had no interaction with the other Apostles until many years later (Galatians 1:16).

Should Paul be included in the list of Apostles?

I believe it that Paul should be included in the list of Apostles. The canon of scripture includes it. Christ's testimony and calling are sure. Paul did many miracles. Paul preached the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul saw the resurrected Christ. The only area where he did not meet the requirement was following Jesus for those 3 ½ years from His baptism to His ascension. But, Jesus spent the same amount of time with Paul as He spent with the original 12.

Bob Crowder