

# The Apostles Ran Once

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. Making a mistake can be a good thing long term; the apostles ran away once; they never did it again.
- B. Follows the first lesson on the apostles presented January 2, 2005; contains material not used in that lesson, plus recent conclusions drawn from examining the texts that speak of them.
- C. Apostolos (Greek for apostle) is a compound word made up of 'apo,' from, and 'stellous,' to send; one sent forth" (Vine's Expository Dictionary).
  - 1. Apostle is used specifically for the fourteen - Matt. 10:2-4
  - 2. Generally designates one sent with a commission; Heb. 3:1; Acts 14:14

## I. THE FOURTEEN APOSTLES

- A. The four lists of the twelve apostles are in: Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13.
  - 1. John does not have a list of the apostles.
  - 2. Note that the lists of the apostles are grouped by fours into three sets.
  - 3. Peter heads all the lists and Judas Iscariot is last in the Gospel lists.
  - 4. Philip heads the list of the second set in all four lists
  - 5. James the less heads the list of the last group in all four lists.
  - 6. Matthias (replacement for Judas who fell) was the 13<sup>th</sup> apostle
    - a. Acts 1:15-26
  - 7. Paul was the 14<sup>th</sup> apostle - Gal. 1:1, 1Cor. 15:8
- B. They differed in age, leadership ability, occupation, political affiliations, income, and cultural background
  - 1. Most of the apostles were married - 1Cor. 9:5
  - 2. They accepted no special recognition - Acts 10:25-26
  - 3. They were untrained, uneducated, and unlikely - Acts 4:13

## II. APOSTOLIC CRITERIA

- A. Acts 1:21-22 - "...men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us..."
  - 1. Companions of the Lord on His preaching journeys
  - 2. Witness of all of the events beginning with His baptism and ending with His ascension; it would include His resurrection
  - 3. We have heard it taught that witnessing the resurrection was one of the qualifications based on Acts 1:22. That is a result of ambiguous word choice in the King James Version. It actually states that he was chosen to be a witness, not that he was chosen because he was a witness. To single this out when the scriptures do not, says both more and less than what is written. Witnessing the resurrection was only part of the greater whole of what he was a witness.
    - a. Acts 4:33 - It is a job description, not an exclusive qualification
  - 4. For this reason, there are no apostles today

5. Paul was "one born out of due time" - 1Cor. 15:8
  - a. However, Paul saw the resurrected Lord - Acts 26:14-18
  - b. Unfortunately for those who see this as the most important qualification, Paul spent three years being personally instructed by the Lord; not coincidentally, the same amount of time the other apostles spent with Him.
  - c. Acts 26:16-20 - At His appearance to Saul, Jesus spoke of things He would yet reveal to him, and sent him away from the Jews.
  - d. Gal. 1:11-17 - Paul said that Jesus revealed the whole of the Gospel to him while he spent three years in Arabia and Damascus before going to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles
- B. The capacity to perform miracles as promised by Jesus - Luke 24:49
  1. The miraculous signs unique to an apostle - 2Cor. 12:11-12
  2. Began as early as the Limited Commission - Matt. 10:8
    - a. Inspired teaching - Matt. 10:19
  3. The fullness of miraculous power was conferred by the Holy Spirit
    - a. Acts 1:5, 8
  4. It included the capacity to impart miraculous gifts to others
    - a. Acts 8:18; Rom. 1:11
  5. With the death of the apostles, the imparting of miraculous gifts ceased
    - a. 1Cor. 13:8-10
  6. Until Acts 6, only the apostles are said to have performed miracles
    - a. Acts 2:43, 3:6-10, 4:16, 33, 5:12

### **III. THE APOSTLES WERE VITAL IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE CHURCH**

- A. 1Cor. 12:28 - "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles..."
- B. John 16:13 - All truth was to be revealed through the apostles
  1. 1Cor. 2:13; Acts 20:27
- C. Eph. 2:20 - The church was built on the work and teaching of the apostles
- D. Acts 15; Phil. 1:17 - The apostles protected the early, vulnerable church from enemies and doctrines that tried to destroy it
- E. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Phil. 1:1 - The apostles arranged for local churches to be organized by appointing elders to oversee them
- F. 2Peter 1:12-15 - The apostles ensured that the church would have a record of the doctrine of Christ to ensure its soundness until His return
- G. Phil. 3:17; 1Cor. 11:1 - The apostles were examples to the early church

### **IV. THE APOSTLES WERE NOT PERFECT**

- A. While the teaching and writings of the apostles were inspired and infallible, their conduct was not.
  1. They had to be rebuked by Jesus, frequently - Matt. 18:1-3
  2. They all forsook Jesus when He was taken to be crucified - Matt. 26:56
  3. Peter denied the Lord - Matt. 26:74
  4. Peter had to be publicly rebuked because of his sin - Gal. 2:11-14
  5. In the first century there were false apostles - 2Cor. 11:12-15; Rev. 2:2

## **V. DIVERSE MATTERS REGARDING THE APOSTLES**

- A. Peter appears to be the eldest, and is always mentioned first.
- B. John's gospel focuses on Andrew more than the other apostles. Andrew began as a disciple of John the Baptist - John 1:35-41
- C. James and John were brothers, and were also cousins of Jesus, and were known for their aggressive dispositions - Mark 3:17
- D. James, John, and Peter had been partners in a commercial fishing business Luke 5:10
- E. Peter and John (who was believed to have been the youngest) worked closely during the early stages of their ministries - Acts 4, 5
- F. Peter, James, and John constituted the "inner circle" of Jesus companions - Matt. 17:1-8
- G. John was especially loved by Jesus - John 13:22
- H. James (John's brother) was the first apostolic martyr - Acts 12:44 (44 AD).
- I. Peter and Andrew were brothers - Matt. 4:18
- J. Thomas had a twin brother, of whom nothing is known - John 11:16
- K. One of the Judases had two other names: Thaddeus and Lebbaeus
- L. Matthew was a Roman collaborator and tax collector - Matt. 9:9
- M. Simon the Zealot engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Romans
- N. Peter was the most active among the apostles in the first 12 years of the church - Acts 2-13
- O. Paul was the most active during the next 17 years of the church - Acts 14-28
- P. Paul was the most productive of all of the apostles - 1Cor. 15:10 & history
- Q. Judas, the only non-Galilean apostle, committed self-murder - Matt. 27:5, 10:4

## **VI. THE END OF THE APOSTLES**

- A. Tradition (Fox's Book of Martyrs) states that all but one of the apostles experienced a violent death directly linked to their apostleship.
  - 1. Peter was crucified in 67 AD at 75 years old
  - 2. Andrew was crucified
  - 3. Philip was beaten and crucified in AD 54
  - 4. Bartholomew was beaten and crucified
  - 5. Thomas was thrust through with a sword
  - 6. Matthew was martyred in AD 60 in India
  - 7. James the less (James the Just, the brother of the Lord) was stoned and beaten to death with a fuller's club (used to wring out laundry) when he was 39
  - 8. Thaddeus was crucified in AD 72
  - 9. Simon the Zealot was crucified in AD 74
  - 10. John was exiled to Patmos and later released to live a long life and die of old age.
- B. Jesus indicated His apostles would experience unpleasant and untimely deaths - Matt. 10:22; John 16:2
- C. These were the men who ran when Jesus was crucified. They ran once; they never ran again.

Conclusion:

A. The apostles were instruments through whom God revealed the soul saving gospel and established His Kingdom. They were not the kind of men we would choose to change the world by means of the most important message it would ever hear.

However, these men, transformed and empowered by Christ, launched the greatest movement in the history of this universe and beyond.

B. If the power of Christ and His Gospel transformed these ordinary men into heroes who changed the world, what can the Lord do to your life with the same Gospel?