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Apostleship: Evidence from the New Testament and Early Christian Literature

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INTRODUCTION

There are several good reasons for beginning a study of the New Testament evidence with the Pauline literature.[1] The most obvious is that most if not all of Paul's epistles were written before the gospels. Other reasons cited by C K Barrett are as follows: (1) 'Paul is in any case the centre of theological thinking in the New Testament'; (2) 'We have his own words … No other Christian writer has left us an account of what it meant to him to be an apostle'; (3) 'Paul was deeply, thoughtfully, and passionately convinced of his call to be anapostle'; (4) 'Paul's conviction that he was an apostle of Christ Jesus was tested by the scepticism of his rivals and the indifference of his converts; this obliged him to work out what his apostleship meant, and on what grounds it rested.'[2]

One does not need to follow Barrett in seeing an irreconcilable conflict between Pauline and Lucan concepts of apostleship to appreciate the force of these considerations.

THE PAULINE LITERATURE

Various significant questions necessarily arise in any consideration of Paul's epistles.[3] What was his self-understanding as an apostle? Did he see himself as possessing a key eschatological role? Whom else did he recognise as apostles, and on what criteria? Did he make a clear distinction in his own mind between 'apostles of Jesus Christ' and 'apostles of the churches'? To these questions we now turn. P. 345

Paul's self-understanding

In recent years, many scholars have insisted that Paul's understanding of apostleship is to be set in the context of that eschatological way of thinking that forms the framework of New Testament theology. The first to do this in a systematic way[4] seems to have been A Fridrichsen in a seminal paper entitled *The Apostle and his Message*, first published in 1947. Fridrichsen stressed that one characteristic trait of this thought-pattern was belief in a 'predetermined series of eschatological events' which is 'bound up with certain elected persons who have a distinct and particular place in God's plan of salvation, and

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[1] This is the procedure adopted by Walter Schmithals and other recent writers.

[2] In *The Signs of an Apostle* (London 1970) 35f.

[3] Against most modern scholars, I regard Paul as the author of all the epistles attributed to him. Limitations of space preclude a defence of this position. Evidence from Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles will, however be treated separately.

[4] Earlier, in 1939, G Sass had argued that 'there are many apostles of Christ, but only one eschatological apostle to the peoples, to whom all other apostles are only helpers in his work'. *Apostolat und Kirche* (1939) 141.

who have been given to play a strictly definitive role in the great final drama, a role to which they and they alone are called—and for which they are specially equipped'.[5] Fridrichsen argued that Paul saw himself in these terms as 'an eschatologic person'. This line of argument was taken up by J Munck in his influential work *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, in which he maintained that 'it is above all on the shoulders of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, that the task is laid of bringing about the fulness of the Gentiles'.[6] This position has been accepted by B Gerhardsson[7] and many other scholars.[8] It has certainly not achieved universal recognition, however. W Schmithals, for example, believes that 'Paul places himself wholly within the one unified context of the primitive Christian apostolate.'[9] In the light of this debate we turn afresh to the evidence, beginning with Galatians, since it may well be the earliest of Paul's epistles that we possess,[10] and it contains an impassioned defence of his apostleship.

Galatians

It is clear from Galatians 1 that Paul's Galatian converts had been informed that his apostolic commission was derivative; that 'he had no commission apart from what he had received from men who had been p. 346 Christian leaders before him, whether the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church or the Christian leaders of Damascus or Antioch'.[11] This Paul passionately denies in 1:1 and 1:11–2:10. His apostolic commission did not come from men (ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων), nor did it come through a human intermediary (δι' ανθρώπου). J B Lightfoot comments that 'in the first clause he distinguishes himself from the false apostles, who did not derive their commission from God at all; in the second he ranks himself with the twelve, who were commissioned directly from God'.[12] He views the prepositions as retaining their proper sense, and this seems indisputable. In the light of such language it seems likely that Paul did make a distinction between 'apostles of Jesus Christ' and 'apostles of the churches' (cf 2 Cor 8:17).[13] In all of his letters except Romans, where equivalent words are used (Rom 1:1, 5), Philemon and Philipplans, where his relationship with the recipient church was exceptionally close, and 2 Thessalonians, where his authority does not seem to have been challenged, Paul refers to himself as art apostle of Jesus Christ/Christ Jesus. This title, implying a direct commission from Jesus Christ, clearly was seen by Paul as giving him authority over the churches.[14]

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[5] A Fridrichsen, 'The Apostle and his Message', *UVA* (Uppsala 1947:3) 3.

[6] J Munck, 'Paul and the Salvation of Mankind' (ET, London 1959) 277.

[7] B Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund 1961) 292.

[8] Most recently by P R Jones, 'I Corinthians 15:8: Paul the Last Apostle', *Tyndale Bulletin* 36 (1985) *passim*.

[9] W Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (ET, New York 1969) 59.

[10] Accepting the 'South Galatian' theory with early dating as argued by, eg F F Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Exeter 1982) 8f, 55f.

[11] Bruce, *Galatians*, 72.

[12] J B Lighffoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1876[2]) 71.

[13] This is denied by D Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* ed J Riches (ET, Edinburgh 1986) 35.

[14] Cf 1 Cor 14:37f, 2 Cor 2:9, 13:2f, 10; Phil 2:12. Compare C E B Cranfield's comment: 'The word points away from the apostle's person to Him whose apostle he is. It is thus both a very humble word and also at the

In 1:12, 16 Paul speaks of a special revelation[15] of Jesus Christ,[16] a clear reference to his Damascus Road experience (cf 1 Cor 9:1, 15:8; Phil 3:12). Even more significant are Paul's words in 1:15, which are strongly reminiscent of Jeremiah 1:5 and Isaiah 49:1–6. In the latter passage, both in verse 1, where we read in the Septuagint ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου ἐκαλεσεν; and in verse 5 where we read κύριος ὁπλάσας p. 347 με ἐκ κοιλίας δοῦλον ἐαυτῶ; the ideas of God's election and call from the womb are very similar to Paul's words. J Munck points out that 'these two ideas are, in fact, linked in the text with the call to be a light to the Gentiles, and this fits in well with Paul's next sentence (Gal 1:16): εύαγγελιξωμαι σύτὸν ἐν τοις ἐθνεσιν.'[17] Similarly Jeremiah was appointed as a prophet to the nations (είς ἔθνη) even before God formed him in the womb (ἐν κοιλίᾳ). We may compare Paul's application of Isaiah 49:6 to himself and Barnabas in Acts 13:47; Acts 26:12–18 with its further echoes of Jeremiah 1:7f and Isaiah 42:6f and 61:1 (also 'Ebed Yahweh texts); and Acts 9:15 with its echo of Jeremiah 1:10.[18] In the light of this evidence it seems clear that Paul saw his call as being on a par with that of an Old Testament prophet. Moreover, as F F Bruce comments, 'in Paul's view it was for others to take up the Servant's mission to Israel, but he knew himself called to fulfil that part of the Servant's vocation which involved the spreading of God's saving light among the Gentiles, near and far, as he indicates in the verses which follow'.[19]

In 1:16ff Paul is at pains to assert his independence of those who were apostles before him. In 1:17 προ έμου is certainly temporal; to whom then does he refer? Walter Schmithals argues that he cannot be referring to, or including in his thought, the twelve, on the grounds that all apostles are missionaries (and we have no record of any missionary work by the twelve except Peter), and that 'elsewhere he does not count the δώδεκα among the apostles'.[20] However, Paul's whole argument depends on his independence of those with authority in the church, those who beyond all dispute were apostles of Jesus Christ, and this must certainly mean primarily the twelve. Whether or not Paul regarded James as an apostle will be discussed below.

In 2:2, 6a, 9; Paul refers to James, Cephas and John as those reputed to be leaders/pillars. Bruce's verdict that δοκοῦντες 'carried no insinuation of sarcasm or irony, as though they only *seemed* to be p. 348 leaders but were not really so'[21] is surely to be

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same time expressive of the most august authority.' *The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh 1975) 1.52; also E Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London 1961) 242.

[15] p. Kim argues that 'Insofar as Paul describes his vision of the risen Christ exalted at the right hand of God in heaven as the ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, he indicates that his vision, like those in Jewish apocalyptic writings, was of the heavenly reality that will be revealed at the end of time and so it was an anticipation or prolepsis of the eschatological ἀποκάλυψις of Jesus Christ'. *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen 1981) 73.

[16] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should probably be taken as an objective genitive. ' "Call" and conversion are regarded as simultaneous.' E Best, 'The Revelation to Evangelise the Gentiles', *JTS* (1984) 35 n 16.

[17] Munck, *Paul*, 26. είς ἔθνη and είς τὴν μεριτομήν are intended racially and not geographically.

[18] Details in Munck, *Paul*, 127f. OT references are of course to the LXX. As regards Acts 26:16–18 and 9:15f Munck comments that 'it is justifiable to assume that the accounts in Acts go back to Paul, as they show a close connexion with the description in Galatians, not only in the narration of the previous history, but also in the explanatory words'. *Ibid.* 29.

[19] Bruce, *Galatians*, 92. Best denies that Paul gave his own position eschatological significance in the light of his reading of the OT, but his arguments are unconvincing. See 'Revelation', *JTS* 35, 21f.

[20] Schmithals, *Office*, 82.

[21] Bruce, *Galatians*, 109. *Pace* C K Barrett, 'Paul and the "Pillar" Apostles', in J N Sevenster and W C van Unnik (eds) *Studia Paulina* (Haarlem 1953) 5f.

accepted, in the light of Paul's words in verse 2b. 'His commission was not derived from Jerusalem, but it could not be executed effectively except in fellowship with Jerusalem.'[22] Moreover, as a former Pharisee, steeped in the scriptures, Paul would certainly see the Holy City as having a fundamental role in God's plan for the last days, as Gerhardsson äs argued[23] (compare eg Isa 2:2f, Rom 15:19). Thus an agreement with the leaders of the Jerusalem church was clearly vital to him. The somewhat 'dismissive' tone[24] he uses of them in verse 6 is explained by the fact that some were clearly appealing to their status and prestige to diminish his own.

The agreement which was arrived at (2:7–10) was clearly what Paul had hoped for: 'a remarkable parallel is drawn between Paul's divinely empowered mission to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews—a parallel discerned not only by Paul himself but also (it appears) by the "men of repute" '.[25] The prominent positions given to Peter[26] and Paul as leaders of the respective 'apostleships' is remarkable: note Paul's words 'the grace given to me'[27] in verse 9; Barnabas is merely associated with him in his apostleship to the Gentiles.[28] Fridrichsen's comment is thought provoking:

> 'Obviously Paul pictures to himself the eschatological situation of the world p. 349 in this way: in this world, soon disappearing, the centre is Jerusalem with the primitive community and the twelve, surrounded by the mission field divided between two apostolates: one sent by the Lord to the circumcised, the other to the Gentiles. Peter, and Paul himself, are the chosen bearers of the gospel, flanking the portals of the world to come.'[29]

Romans

The evidence of Romans confirms the impression gained from Galatians. In 1:5, 13f it becomes clear that Paul sees himself as an apostle as having responsibility for all the Gentiles, even for those Gentile churches that he did not personally plant (cf Col 2:1). Ernst Käsemann speaks of the 'tremendous claim' of verse 5, where 'stress falls on ἐν πᾶσιν,

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[22] *Galatians*, 111.

[23] Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 274ff: 'He too (ie as well as Luke) recognised the principle that the Word of God would proceed from Jerusalem in the last days. He too accepted the twelve Apostles and the first Christian congregation as guardians of that logos which proceeded from Jerusalem.' cf J Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London 1958) 36ff.

[24] Cf J D G Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London 1977) 408 n 49.

[25] Bruce, *Galatians* 119.

[26] Space precludes a discussion of why Paul uses 'Peter' rather than his usual 'Cephas' in 2:7f; H D Betz suggests the possibility of an 'underlying official statement', *Galatians* (Philadelphia 1979) 97.

[27] Clearly the 'grace' of apostleship is in view (cf Rom 1:5, which should be read as a hendiadys). Kim comments that 'Paul never connects χάρις as directly with the office of another Christian as with his own apostolic office', *Origin*, 292.

[28] Richard Bauckman in 'Barnabas in Galatians', *JSNT* 2 (1979) convincingly argues that 'Paul's language reflects his recent disappointment over Barnabas' behaviour in the crisis at Antioch (Gal 2:13)', 61; 'Paul's response to this crisis involved an intensification of his apostolic consciousness', 67; 'The agreement was not a commissioning but an agreement between equals. Barnabas is excluded from these claims', 66.

[29] Fridrichsen, 'Apostle', *UVA* (1947:3) 6. Barrett suggests that originally the term στῦλοι as applied to James, Cephas and John in Gal 2:9 was 'strictly eschatological' in meaning, marking them out as 'the basis' of the new people of God. 'Paul', *Studia Paulina*, 15ff. If Barrett is correct, Paul sees himself as sharing this eschatological role.

which indicates the cosmic scope' of his commission. He sees Paul's problem as being that 'the authority which he asserts does not accord with what is conceded to him in fact',[30] and hence his careful language in 1:11f. In verse 14 it is clearly his special apostolic obligation that is in view, and equally clear that it embraces the whole Gentile world.

Paul's awareness of his apostleship to the Gentiles comes out clearly in 11:13 in his words εἰμι ἐγώ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος. E Best comments that 'the absence of the articles in the phrase does not necessarily imply that Paul is suggesting he is *an* apostle (minister). The context alone can decide the meaning',[31] and in this case it clearly supports the restricted meaning '*the* apostle'. Käsemann comments that Paul 'magnifies his ministry when, as in v. 12, he speaks of the fullness for the world which is connected with it. There were before and alongside him other missionaries to the Gentiles who also called themselves apostles (2 Cor 11:13). But their commission did not have the universal scope of the task in virtue of which Paul calls himself the "apostle to the Gentiles" '.[32] Paul's role as 'apostle to the Gentiles' will, according to Romans 9–11, result not only in their salvation, but in that of 'all Israel' (11:26, cf 14).[33] 'Nowhere is the apostle's p. 350 unbounded sense of mission more apparent and nowhere is it more evident that apocalyptic is the driving force in Paul's theology and practice.... Paul is not content to be merely an apostle to the Gentile world. He has obviously learned from Deuteronomy 32:21 that God will convert his people by provoking it to jealousy of Gentile-Christians'. Hence it is 'that the apostle is trying with almost impossible speed to traverse the whole world in order to spread the "riches of the Gentiles" '.[34]

In the light of this evidence it seems likely that when Paul speaks of ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν in Romans 15:16, the reference is not to the self-offering of Christians which the apostle brings about, but rather the Gentile church as such. 'The notion is apocalyptic and corresponds to 11:11ff.'[35] J Knox correctly affirms that Paul 'clearly ascribed to his apostleship a special, perhaps even a unique character'. He suggests that Paul 'may well have believed that on him particularly God had laid the responsibility of *defending* the preaching to the gentiles, of establishing and protecting the *right* of the gentiles to the gospel'.[36]

1 Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians 3:10 Paul speaks of himself as 'laying a foundation' as a wise master-builder. Earlier in verse 6 he speaks of himself as 'planting'. Peter Jones has pointed out that in the Old Testament both of these expressions are used of God's creation of the world

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[30] E Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (ET, London 1964) 15, 19f.

[31] Best, 'Revelation', *JTS* (1984) 19. He quotes in support J M Moulton and N Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3.179f, and gives similar examples as 1 Cor 12:27, 3:9, 16; Rom 1:20, 2:5; Phil 2:16, 4:3; 1 Thess 5:8.

[32] Käsemann, *Romans*, 306.

[33] Cf J Munck, *Christ and Israel* (Philadelphia 1967) *passim*.

[34] Käsemann, *Romans*, 306.

[35] *Ibid*, 393. Cf Best, 'Revelation', *JTS* 35, 19. J Knox comments that 'it occurred to Paul to describe the territory already evangelised in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and Greece in circular terms because he is thinking of the whole evangelistic enterprise to which he is committed as lying within the circle of the nations around the Mediterranean Sea'. 'Romans 15:14–33 and Paul's Conception of his Apostolic Ministry', *JBL* 83 (1964) 11.

[36] Knox, *art cit*, 5f. The latter point comes out in Gal 2 rather than in Rom 15.

(Isa 51:16, Prov 3:19) and of the people (Isa 5:7, 14:32, 28:16). Moreover these notions both have an eschatological aspect. In the New Covenant passages (Jer 31:27–28 and Ezek 36:36) God says that he will watch over his people to build and to plant. The Qumran Community, which believed itself to be the community of the New Covenant, is also described as 'a foundation to the Building of Holiness, an eternal plantation' (IQS 11:8). Jones argues that 'on the basis of this Old Testament and Jewish background the statements of Paul in 1 Cor 3 about his apostolic task would indicate that he is claiming more than p. 351 simply the honor of being the first missionary at Corinth,[37] or a successful church-planter, as we moderns understand that term. Rather Paul is affirming his eschatological role in establishing the terms and content of the New Covenant'.[38] This position is supported by Paul's explicit references to himself as a minister of the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:5, and a further description of this New Covenant ministry in 2 Corinthians 16:10 with terms taken directly from the New Covenant prophecy referred to above (Jer 31:28).[39]

An eschatological note may also be seen in Paul's reference to 'us apostles', put on display by God 'as last in the show'[40] in 1 Corinthians 4:9. It seems likely that in speaking of the apostles as 'a spectacle to the whole world, angels and men alike', Paul is not merely using a vivid figure of speech but underlining that eschatological struggle characterises true apostolic ministry (cf 2 Cor 4:12, 11:29, [41] Gal 4:19, Col 1:24). The eschatological concept of 'the birth-pangs of the Messiah' is clearly relevant here.

Finally, in regard to Paul's record of the resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15:3–11, an eschatological element is clearly seen in his words, ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡστερει τῷ ἐκτρώματι[42] ὤφθη κάμοί, in verse 8. This verse must first be placed in its setting.[43]. Verses 3b–5 are almost uniformly regarded as comprising traditional material. Ralph Martin speaks of

> 'certain tell-tale marks of the passage' which 'stamp it as a credal formulary: i) the fourfold repeated "that" (hoti) introduces each line of the creed (vv 3, 4, 5); ii) the vocabulary is unusual, containing rare words … p. 352 and expressions that Paul never uses elsewhere …; iii) the parallelism of the lines; iv) the dependence on isaiah 53, which in other places betokens the presence of quoted material (eg Rom 4:24f); and v) the emphatic preface of

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[37] P R Jones, in 'The Apostle Paul: Second Moses to the New Covenant Community' in J W Montgomery (ed), *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis 1974) 235 n 18, notes that C K Barrett denies this in *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London 1973) 87. He argues that 'Barrett must admit that the Corinthians are not the foundation, but if this is the case, then Paul's claim as foundation-layer must be seen in other than missionary/evangelist terms'.

[38] Jones, 'Paul', in Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*, 221.

[39] He speaks of his authority (ἐξουσία) for building (εἰς οἰκοδομήν) and not for destroying (εἰς καθαίρεσιν).

[40] The translation is that of Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 109. *Pace*, eg F W Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London 1953) 106 n 12.

[41] Cf M L Barré, 'Paul as "Eschatological Person" ', *CBQ* 37 (1975) 517f, who sees the verse as summarising and climaxing the whole trials list, and referring to Paul's trial 'in the fires of the eschatological ordeal'.

[42] Understandings of ἔκτρωμα are too numerous to name: cf H Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia 1975) 259, nn 95, 97, 98.

[43] For this pericope, see also P Winter, '1 Cor. 15:3b–7', *Nov Test* 2 (1958) 145f.

verse 3, which indicates that Paul is drawing on precomposed tradition and utilising it as part of his appeal to accepted apostolic belief (v. 11)'.[44]

As regards verses 6ff, Bruce's verdict that 'Paul adds further information about resurrection appearances, culled from various sources, to what he has ascertained during those fifteen days in Jerusalem'[45] would seem to be unexceptionable. Verse 6 seems clearly to include Pauline additions. For our purposes, it is the sequence εἶτα (v 5) … ἔπειτα (v 6) … ἔπειτα (v 7) … εἶτα (v 7) … ἔσχατον (v 8) that is crucial. As Ernest Best comments, 'within the sequence then, then, then, ἔσχατον can only imply that there will never be another appearance of the risen Christ to anyone'.[46] Paul clearly regards his Damascus Road experience as being of the same order as the appearances he has just listed. Bruce wisely remarks that 'if Paul uses the same languages of his own experience as of the appearances to Peter and the others, it is to suggest not that their experience was as "visionary" as his, but that his was as objective as theirs'.[47]

The objectives of Paul's listing of the resurrection appearances would seem to be twofold.[48] First, they show the lines of continuity between the witnesses to the resurrection, so that their testimony is seen to comprise a unity—a fact used by Paul as a basis for his assertion in verse 11, 'whether I or they'. Second, the climax of the list in verse 8 (κάμοί is in an emphatic position) serves to link the resurrection appearance with Paul's apostleship. It should be carefully noted that Paul has ordered the list in such a way that the immediate antecedent of ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων is ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν in verse 7. Paul is clearly indicating that his apostleship is as valid as that of Peter, James and the rest because based on identical grounds.

It is necessary, therefore, to challenge the views of J M Schütz, who argues in his book *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* that 'Paul goes to the question of authority, not to the question of p. 353 legitimacy'.[49] On the contrary, legitimacy is central to his argument here. The echatological aspect is also dearly present, and has been brilliantly brought out by Peter Jones. Jones argues that in this passage 'Paul is making a definite, unambiguous and theological claim to be the final apostle'.[50] Against those who argue that Paul is merely putting himself in the last place as unworthy of the name apostle because he has persecuted the church, Jones argues that 'ἔσχατος is principal, not circumstantial … Paul uses the term ἔσχατος but six times, of which five occur in 1 Corinthians and four in the 15th chapter (4:9, 15:8, 26, 45, 52; 2 Tim 3:1) … The other occurrences in 1 Corinthians … refer to final, definitive events in the history of redemption, indicating we ought to expect as much of the ἔσχατος of v 8.'[51] He suggests that there is an implicit comparison with Peter, the first mentioned in the list (cf Matt 10:2 ὸ πρῶτος) and argues that Paul has the two apostolates, to Israel and to the Gentiles, at the back of his mind. This is suggested by the language of verse 10, ού κενὴ and ἐκοπίασα, which constitutes a

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[44] R P Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation* (Eerdmans 1984) 97f.

[45] F F Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London 1971) 141.

[46] Best, 'Revelation', *JTS* (1984) 20.

[47] Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 142.

[48] Cf Martin, *Spirit*, 98f.

[49] J M Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge 1975) 107 and *passim*.

[50] Jones, '1 Corinthians 15:8', *TB* (1985) 7.

[51] *Ibid*, 20.

direct allusion to Isaiah 49:4, part of the Servant-Song in which the two 'missions', to Israel and to the Gentiles, are clearly distinguished. Jones argues that 'this Isaianic eschatology clearly stands behind … Paul's view of apostolic history'.[52]

2 Corinthians

In 2 Corinthians 2:14–7:4 Paul defends his apostolic claims and outlines his understanding of the apostolic ministry. Space precludes a proper study of these chapters, but a few points may be made. Paul sees himself and his colleagues as 'commissioned by God' (2:17), 'ambassadors for Christ' (5:20), 'ministers of a new covenant' (3:6). The echatological significance of God's work seen in 'our gospels' (2 Cor 4:3) is brought out by Fridrichsen. 'What a work it is! Paul puts it on a par with the creation of light in the beginning.[53] He cannot find a stronger expression for his conviction that he has received a revelation of unique importance and of cosmic scope, a knowledge which is a main element in the development of the echatological situation.'[54] The apostolic ministry is clearly seen to involve intense p. 354 suffering (4:7–18; 6:3–10), a necessary prelude to the eternal glory which lies ahead (4:17).

Jones has argued that in 2 Corinthians 3 Paul not only compares himself with Moses, but also claims the ministry of the second Moses, a ministry characterized by eschatological glory. In the light of the expectation in apocalyptic Judaism of the appearance in the last days of a prophet like Moses,[55] seen especially in the portrayal in the Qumran Scrolls of the Teacher of Righteousness as a second Moses,[56] he argues that Paul consciously assumes the role of the second Moses. Since, however, 'Paul only once expressly compares himself with Moses and never explicitly uses the terms "second Moses" or "prophet like Moses" ',[57] it would be unwise to base too much on this possibility. The comparison with Moses is undeniable, however, and is certainly remarkable. 'The greatest man in the history of Israel is put beneath the travelling tentmaker.'[58] As Jones comments, 'this is not to imply some ontological superiority in Paul himself, only the superiority of the office and mission to which in grace he is called'.[59]

2 Corinthians 10–13 will be considered below. Reference may briefly be made, however, to Paul's clear conception of his apostolic authority (10:8, 13:2, 10). He is a true apostle of Christ, in contrast to the false apostles (11:13), a claim substantiated both by his signs and wonders (12:12) and by his weaknesses and sufferings (11:21ff). The

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[52] *Ibid*, 23.

[53] 2 Cor 4:6.

[54] Fridrichsen, 'Apostle', *UVA* (1947:3) 16.

[55] Cf Deut 18:15ff.

[56] Especially in the Damascus Document (CD) the Testimonia (4Q Test) and the Hodayoth (IQH). See P R Jones, *The Apostle Paul: a Second Moses according to II Corinthians 2:14–4:7* (Princeton Theological Seminary, PhD dissertation 1973) 187ff. Jones go so far as to state that 'it is the Teacher of Righteousness, the second Moses of Qumran who provides the essential model for Paul's apostolate'. *Ibid*, 376. This is certainly overstated.

[57] *Ibid*, 375.

[58] Munck, *Paul*, 100f.

[59] Jones, 'Paul', in Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*, 233.

essence of his apostolic task is to preach the gospel in virgin territory (10:14–16; cf Rom 15:20).[60]

Summary

It has become clear that Paul saw himself not only as an 'apostle of Christ', of equal standing with the twelve and James; but also as 'the p. 355 apostle of the Gentiles',[61] with a responsibility to reach them with the gospel and ground them in the faith. This task had eschatological significance.

PAUL'S RECOGNITION OF OTHER APOSTLES

Whom else did Paul recognise as valid apostles? Did he use the word in different senses? By what criteria did he recognise apostles? To these questions we now turn. As we do so, it will prove helpful to bear in mind the statements of Schmithals, that 'Paul knows only of a single apostolic circle, which means that early Christianity possessed only one apostolate'[62] and of J Andrew Kirk, who believes that 'the New Testament writers in fact present only one view of apostleship, in different forms according to different circumstances'.[63] Are these statements true? We begin with a consideration of those who have a claim to be named as apostles by Paul. Of these, Barnabas, Silas and Apollos are regarded by E E Ellis as occupying a distinctive position: 'None of these persons, at least in Paul's letters, is presented as being under Paul's authority, and it may be significant that all of them are termed apostles.'[64]

Barnabas

We have already seen that according to Galatians 2:9 Barnabas as well as Paul was given the right hand of fellowship by the 'pillars' of the Jerusalem church, with a view to going 'to the nations'. From 1 Corinthians 9:1–6 it seems clear that Paul was happy to give the title 'apostle' to Barnabas. In verses 1f, he speaks of his having seen Jesus (surely a reference to his Damascus Road experience) and of his church-planting work in Corinth as marks of his apostleship. In verse 5 he mentions 'the other apostles', who together with the brothers of the Lord and Cephas are accompanied by 'a sister as wife'[65] on their p. 356 travels. It is in this context of apostleship that he mentions Barnabas in verse 6 as one who, like himself, worked for a living during his travels. The reference to Barnabas is important insofar as the evidence suggests that they had not worked together for some

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[60] For a more detailed analysis of Paul's apostleship in 1 and 2 Corinthians, see C Kruse, *New Testament Foundations of Ministry* (London 1983) 106–114.

[61] Cf also 2 Tim 4:17, which according to Best is a particularly 'clear expression of the uniqueness of Paul's Gentile apostolate'. The phrase πάντα τᾶ ἔθνη should be understood in the sense that all are 'representatively present in Rome', 'Revelation', *JTS* (1984) 26. Space forbids a discussion of Eph 3:2–13. On Paul's role according to this passage see C C Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mysterion* (Lund 1977) 142f.

[62] Schmithals, *Office*, 88.

[63] J A Kirk, 'Apostleship since Rengstorf', *NTS* 21 (1974/5) 261.

[64] E Earle Ellis, 'Paul and his co-workers', *NTS* 17 (1970/1) 439; cf B Holmberg, *Paul and Power* (Lund 1978) 61f.

[65] Probably to be interpreted as 'a believing wife'.

time (cf Acts 15:39).[66] Clearly Barnabas was continuing to pursue his apostolic calling.[67] B Holmberg surmises that 'the reference to Barnabas, a person known and respected in Jerusalem, Antioch and also in the Pauline churches, is not made merely to gain esteem by association, but above all in order to connect Paul's abstention from his rights with a practice common to *all* apostles to the Gentiles'.[68] This is by no means certain.

Silvanus/Silas

Silvanus is mentioned by Paul together with Timothy in 2 Corinthians 1:19, and in the superscriptions of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. It is clear from these verses that Silvanus had preached to the Thessalonians and to the Corinthians in company with Paul. (There is common agreement that he is to be identified with the Silas of Acts 15–18.) He is always mentioned before Timothy, and thus would seem to be of superior status to him (cf Acts 15:22, 32). In 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul writes that 'we might have made demands as apostles of Christ'. The question arises as to whether or not he regarded Silvanus and Timothy as apostles of Christ. E M Askwith argues that 'there is a very good case for interpreting "we", when it occurs in the Pauline Epistles, as a proper plural'.[69] W F Lofthouse agrees with this,[70] but points out that in 1 Thessalonians 'he speaks of the trio as he could hardly have spoken of himself without ostentation. … There is nothing self-assertive, nothing that does not suit the little band of evangelists as a whole.'[71] Bruce translates ἀπόστολοι in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 as 'messengers', believing that ' the word is used in a rather general sense: Paul associates his companions with his apostolic ministry—in which p. 357 indeed they shared'.[72] Best persuasively argues that 'at this stage on the second journey he may not have formulated fully his own position as an apostle as he did later in 1 Cot 9:1, 15:5ff, 2 Cor 10:13, and therefore may have been able to consider Silas and Timothy as apostles alongside himself'.[73] The doubt concerning whether Paul later saw Silas and Timothy as full 'apostles of Christ' emerges, as J B Lightfoot argued long ago,[74] because Paul clearly distinguishes between himself as an 'apostle' and Timothy as a 'brother' in 2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1. Elsewhere, where Paul links Timothy's name with his own, he drops the title of 'apostle' eg Philippians 1:1 'Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ'. F F Bruce argues that the term 'apostle' 'can scarcely be stretched to include Timothy, his own "son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2), whatever

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[66] Barrett's conjecture that 1 Cor 9:6 is 'evidence that he (ie Barnabas) rejoined the Pauline mission' is unfounded (*1 Corinthians*, 204). If he had done so, there would surely have been other references to him in the Pauline corpus; (though cf Col 4:10).

[67] Barnabas is also called an apostle by Clement of Alexandria (Strom II 6:31; in 7.35 he is called an apostle and numbered among the seventy disciples). Lightfoot believed that 'the apostleship of Barnabas is beyond question', *Galatians*, 96.

[68] Holmberg, *Paul*, 65.

[69] E H Askwith, ' "I" and "We" in the Thessalonian Epistles', *Expositor* 8 (1911) 153.

[70] W F Lofthouse, ' "I" and "We" in the Pauline Epistles', *BT* 6 (1955) 80: 'It would appear that in Paul's use of the singular and plural there is neither caprice nor carelessness. When he says "I" he means "I".'

[71] *Ibid*, 74.

[72] F F Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Waco 1982) 31.

[73] E Best, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 100.

[74] Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96 n 2.

may be said of Silvanus'.[75] As regards Silvanus, it must be said that there is no evidence that he worked as an apostle independently. It is possible that he eventually became the co-worker of Peter and cooperated in the writing of 1 Peter,[76] but his identification with the Silvanus of 1 Peter 5:12 must remain uncertain.

Apollos

In 1 Corinthians 4:9, as we have seen, Paul speaks of 'us apostles'. It is possible to argue that Paul has Apollos in view, in the light of the reference to him in 4:6 and in 3:4ff, 22. This, however, seems unlikely. A study of the whole context, especially verses 14ff, shows that 'he is thinking specially of his own position'.[77] There is no evidence that Apollos experienced any of the suffering referred to in verses 10–13. If he has any particular individuals in mind, they are more likely to be Silvanus[78] and Timothy,[79] who had shared his sufferings in the church-planting work. Cephas might also qualify, as one known to the Corinthians. But on the whole, it seems likely that Paul has apostles as a class in mind rather than any particular individuals. That Apollos is regarded by him as an apostle seems unlikely in view of the clear distinction made in 1 Corinthians 3:6, 10 between his own work as a 'planter' and 'skilled master-builder' who has laid a foundation, and that of Apollos, who is a 'waterer', one who builds on the foundation. Paul is fully conscious that he has received a special commission from God for his work (1 Cor 3:10), but nothing similar is said of Apollos. J B Lightfoot notes that Apollos is distinctly excluded from the apostolate by Clement of Rome (I Clement 47), whom he describes as 'a contemporary' who 'probably knew him'.[80] That he knew him is far from certain, however. Earle Ellis notes that 'Paul and Apollos always appear to work independently'[81] (cf 1 Cor 16:11f, Titus 3:13).

Andronicus and Junta(s)

The reference in Romans 16:7 to these two is of the greatest importance. Although it is just possible to translate ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις as 'outstanding the eyes of the apostles' (NEB), it is much more natural to translate it as 'outstanding among the apostles'. Cranfield regards this latter translation as 'virtually certain' and notes that this was the way it was taken by all known patristic commentators.[82] In such a case, it must be recognized that Paul acknowledged a sizeable group as apostles, not merely the two mentioned by name in Romans 16:7.

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[75] Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 31.

[76] So E G Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London 1947) 9–17.

[77] Lofthouse, ' "I" and "We" ', *BT* (1955) 75.

[78] So Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96 n 2.

[79] So J Murphy-O'Connor, 'Tradition and Redaction in 1 Corinthians 15:3–7', *CBQ*, 43 (1981) 589.

[80] Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96 n 2.

[81] Ellis, 'Paul', *NTS* (1970/1) 439.

[82] Cranfield, *Romans* 2. 789.

Recent research has indicated that Andronicus' partner was almost certainly a woman. R R Schulz[83] and B Broston[84] have shown that all the Church Fathers who quote this text or comment on it at all give the name of either Junta, or Julia (a minority).[85] Moreover 'from the time accents were added to the text until the early decades of this century Greek New Testaments printed the acute accent indicating a word of the first declension which is predominantly the feminine declension'.[86] If taken as masculine with an acute accent, we would be left with Junias, a name otherwise entirely unknown, whereas Junta is a common Roman female name. The circumflex accent would require a p. 359 contracted masculine form of the first declension, a very rare form. Moreover, if taken as a familiar or endearing form of a longer Latin name, the problem arises that 'Latin names of endearment normally lengthen rather than shorten.'[87] Junta is therefore by far the most likely alternative. Cranfield's suggestion that 'most probably Andronicus and Junta were husband and wife'[88] is very likely to be correct. For a woman to work on her own as an apostle, given first century cultural attitudes, would have been virtually impossible.

The question remains as to the sense in which 'apostle' should be understood. J Murray suggests that if they are to be regarded as apostles at all, which he regards as improbable, the word 'apostle' is 'used in a more general sense of messenger (cf II Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25)'.[89] In the light of the fact that they have shared one of Paul's imprisonments (cf 2 Cor 11:23), however, it is more likely that they were itinerant missionaries.[90] Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of a class of 'messengers' among whom Andronicus and Junta were outstanding. The words συγγενεῖς μου are probably to be understood as 'fellow-countrymen', ie Jews, as in Romans 9:3.[91] That they were 'in Christ' before him leaves open the possibility that they may have seen the risen Christ. The almost casual way in which they are introduced in the middle of a greetings list, however, suggests that they did not possess great authority in the church.

'False apostles'

The existence of a class of missionary apostles is increased by Paul's reference to his opponents in Corinth as 'false apostles' in 2 Corinthians 11:13. From chapters 10 to 13 as

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[83] R R Shulz, 'Romans 16:7: Junia or Junias?', *ET*, 98 No 4 (Jan 1987) 108–110.

[84] B Broston, 'Junia … Outstanding among the Apostles' in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed L and A Swidler (New York 1977), 141–144.

[85] 'Ιουλίαν is found in the very early P46 manuscript, but is otherwise very poorly supported. This reading is probably due to a clerical error.

[86] Shulz, 'Romans 16:7', *ET*, (Jan 1987) 109.

[87] *Ibid*, 109.

[88] Cranfield, *Romans*, 2. 788.

[89] J Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids 1965) 2.230.

[90] For hypotheses connecting them with the foundation of the Ephesian or Roman churches, see B W Bacon, *ET* 42 (1930/1) 300ff, and G A Barton, *ET* 43 (1931/2) 359ff.

[91] In Rom 16:17–21 six persons are called συγγενεῖς. W M Ramsay, *The Cities of St Paul* (London 1907) 176 ff, infers membership of the same Tarstan civic tribe, but this is unlikely.

a whole[92] we learn that the intruders claimed an apostolic authority superior to Paul's, based on the following signs: their rhetorical eloquence and impressive personal bearing, their boldness and missionary achievements, their special p. 360 religious knowledge derived from extraordinary visions and revelations, and their ability to perform miracles.[93] In 2 Corinthians 11:13 they are described as μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους χριστοῦ. Barrett comments, 'They made themselves look like (and this must include, they claimed to be) apostles of Christ when they were no such thing.'[94] Almost certainly they were Jewish (cf 11:22), though not necessarily Judaisers. It is unlikely that they were Jewish-Christian Gnostics, 'since every reference to "knowledge" in 2 Cor is unqualifiedly affirmative'.[95] V P Furnish's verdict that 'the evidence as a whole strongly favors the view that Paul was confronting Christian missionaries whose background was, like his own, Hellenistic-Jewish'[96] seems eminently sensible. The relationship of these missionaries with the Jerusalem church is controversial, and need not detain us. In the light of Galatians 2:1–10 it is inconceivable that they were, or included, members of the twelve. The fact that they could plausibly claim to be apostles in Corinth proves that the number of apostles was not definitely restricted.

'The other apostles'

In the light of the foregoing conclusions, it is likely that Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 9:5 to 'other apostles' should be understood as a reference to a class of itinerant missionaries. They are distinguished both from 'the brothers of the Lord' (cf Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55) and from 'Cephas' ie Peter. The fact that they are associated with major figures in the church suggests that they have status and importance (cf 1 Cor 12:28). The fact that Cephas is distinguished from them makes it unlikely that they were, or included, the twelve.[97]

'Apostles of the churches'

In Philipplans 2:25 Epaphroditus is referred to as ὑμῶν … ἀπόστολον. From the context it is clear that this should be translated p. 361 'your messenger', and that Epaphroditus was an authorised agent of the Philippians, sent to minister to and to help Paul. There is no record of his doing any missionary work. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 8:23 the reference to ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν is clearly to two brethren who are agents of the churches. This is expressly stated of one of them in 8:19; although he is a famous preacher (8:18), his role in this case is clearly that of ensuring that the collection for the church at Jerusalem is rightly administered. The other brother (8:22), who has often been tested, is clearly chosen for the same task because of his proven faithfulness. Paul praises these two highly

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[92] We cannot here enter into the question of whether or not 2 Cor 10–13 originally constituted a separate letter. For a convincing argument denying this, but stressing their distinctiveness, see D A Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity: an Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13* (Grand Rapids 1984) 4ff.

[93] For convincing exegetical reasons for seeing them as identical with the 'superlative apostles' of 11:5, 12:11, see V P Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, (Garden City 1984) 503f, *pace*, eg, E Käsemann, C K Barrett.

[94] C K Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (London 1982) 93.

[95] Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 53.

[96] *Ibid*, 53.

[97] A Harnack, however, thinks that 'the collocation of λοιπων ἀποστολῶν with the Lod's brothers renders it very probable that Paul is thinking here of the twelve exclusively', *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (ET, London 1904), 1.404.

as 'the glory of Christ' (8:23), but there is no indication that he regards them as missionaries or apostles in their own right.

James

It was argued above that the reference to 'those who were apostles before me' in Galatians 1:17 must refer, at least primarily, to the twelve. Should the statement ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ ἴδον εἰ μη Ἰάκωβον, be translated 'the only other apostle I saw (apart from Cephas) was James', or 'I saw none of the other apostles, but I did see James', or 'Apart from the apostles, I saw no-one but James'?[98] The third possibility has been effectively removed by G F Howard, who has argued that if Paul had wished to say this, he would have expressed himself differently.[99] The second possibility is far less natural than the first, which should therefore be accepted. It should be noticed that James clearly held pre-eminence in the Jerusalem church after AD 44 (cf Acts 12:1 7, 21:18 and the order of the names in Gal 2:9). There is no evidence, apart from the reference in 1 Corinthians 9:5 to 'the brothers of the Lord', that he ever engaged in missionary work, and in the light of his responsibilities in Jerusalem this seems unlikely. He clearly sent out delegates to different churches, however (Gal 2:12).

'All the apostles'

The meaning of this phrase in 1 Corinthians 15:7 is difficult to determine. Bruce has argued that if in 1 Corinthians 15:5–7 Paul 'links the appearance to Cephas with a following appearance to "the twelve" (to whose number Cephas belonged), his linking of the appearance to James with a following appearance to "all the apostles" suggests that he included James among "all the apostles" '.[100] Barrett points out that p. 362 'the order of the words in Greek (τοις αποστόλοις πᾶσιν) lays stress on the noun', and thinks that 'this may have the effect of excluding James from their number'.[101] The stress on the noun is better explained, however, by Paul's desire to connect his own 'resurrection appearance', referred to in the previous verse, with apostleship.

The complexity of the issues here requires a careful form and redaction critical evaluation. The first necessary observation is that the syntactical structure of verses 5 and 7 is the same. Harnack argued that both sentences describe a relationship of authority, and what we have here are 'legitimation formulae'. James stands first in the circle of the apostles, as Peter does of the twelve.[102] Whether or not this is accepted, the question of the identity of 'all the apostles' still remains open, however. In a rigorous study Jerome Murphy-O'Connor has denied the claim that verse 7 is a Pauline composition modelled on verse 5. He points out that there is no evidence that Paul indulged in such imitations. Moreover, 'were v 7 a Pauline composition, one would expect him to begin with *eita* after the *epeita* in v 6, as he in fact does in vv 23[b]–24. If he did not do so, it must be because *eita* already existed as the link between "James" and the "apostles". Thus it seems more probable that *lakōbō eita tois apostolois* came to Paul as a fixed formula.'[103] If so, why did

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[98] So L P Trudinger, *Nov T* 17 (1975) 200–202.

[99] G F Howard, 'Was James an Apostle?', *Nov T* 19 (1977) 63f.

[100] Bruce, *Galatians*, 101.

[101] Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 343. He regards this conclusion as 'uncertain', however.

[102] A Harnack, *Dogma und Denkstrukturen, Festschrift for E. Schlink*, 1963, 63ff.

[103] Murphy-O'Connor, 'Tradition', *CBQ* (1981) 587.

Paul conserve the tradition, which adds nothing to what seems to be his purpose in verse 6, namely to exclude the likelihood of hallucination and to underline the availability of witnesses? As argued above, the answer would seem to be; because the words οἱ ἀπόστολοι suited his purpose, namely to associate himself with the apostles as one who had also experienced a resurrection theophany. Who, then, does Paul refer to in these words? Murphy-O'Connor points out that in verse 9 Paul refers to himself as ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων. He argues that

> 'it is inconceivable that he should here be using "apostle" in the very wide meaning well-attested in his letters. There would be no sense, particularly in this context, in a claim to be less than people like Silas … or Barnabas. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Paul would have introduced the clear contrasts in vv 10–11 … were he using "apostle" in a sense that included his own closest collaborators. Hence, Paul must be claiming to be an "apostle" in a special limited sense, and this forces us to think in terms of p. 363 the equality with Peter, James and the other apostles who were also called directly by Christ'.[104]

Further arguments may also be adduced in support of this conclusion. First, as F Godet argued, 'the expression "all the apostles" does not naturally express the idea of a circle larger than the twelve'.[105] The emphasis is on a strictly limited circle, whereas other Pauline references to apostles in the sense of itinerant missionaries (eg Rom 16:7) give the impression of an open, large group. Second, if it is accepted that here we are dealing with a piece of early tradition, it seems doubtful if the word 'apostle' in the sense of 'itinerant missionary' would have become embodied in a fundamental statement of beliefs at such an early stage in the church's life.

If the reference here is to the twelve and James, as seems likely,[106] it is necessary to ask whether or not Paul regarded it as a necessary condition of apostleship (including the sense of 'itinerant missionary') to have seen the risen Christ. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 15:7f and 1 Corinthians 9:1, this question is frequently answered in the affirmative.[107] Kirsopp Lake has argued, however, that the argument that Paul 'thought that an apostle need have seen the Lord is a rather rash conclusion from 1 Cor IX.1 … "Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" are three separate claims to distinction, and it is an exaggeration to say that Paul only regarded as "apostles" those who had seen Jesus'.[108] It is of course *possible* that Barnabas, whom Luke records as a member of the primitive community (Acts 4:36f), Silas, who likewise was one of the 'leading p. 364 men among the brethren' of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22) and Andronicus and Junia, who

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[104] *Ibid*, 589. He notes that such an understanding ties in with Paul's apologia in Gal 1–2. 'Precisely the same association of (1) birth-language (2) grace, and (3) time of apostolic call that we find in 1 Cor. 15:8–9 also appears in Gal. 1:15–17', 589, n 41.

[105] F Godet, *1 Corinthians*, 2, 336f.

[106] The assessment given here, though supported by some older scholars (eg Harnack) goes against the position held by most modern scholars. The explanation of the fact that in other places (eg, probably, 1 Cor 9:5) Paul uses the word in a wider sense, whereas here the sense is narrower, may be accounted for by the fact that Paul is dependent on tradition here.

[107] Eg by H von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (ET, London 1969) 23: 'The decisive factor is the encounter with the Risen Lord, which was frequently both experienced and understood as a special call or commission.'

[108] K Lake, *Beginnings* V. 50f. Similarly, Harnack argues that one cannot prove from 1 Cor 9:1 that one must have seen the risen Lord in order to be an apostle. 'The four statements are in an ascending series … It is clear that the third and fourth statements are meant to attest the second, but it is doubtful if they contain an attestation which is absolutely necessary.' *Expansion*, 402 n 1.

were 'in Christ' before Paul (Rom 16:7), had seen and been commissioned by the risen Lord.[109] It is dangerous, however, to build too much on arguments from silence.[110] It seems safer, then, to see a commissioning by the risen Lord as essential to those 'who had been constituted by him public witnesses to his resurrection'[111] and hence enjoyed substantial authority[112] in the church, a group seemingly confined to the twelve, James and Paul, but not to those itinerant missionaries who were also known as apostles.

Summary

Contrary to the views of Schmithals and Kirk (see above), it may be suggested that Paul did use the word 'apostle' in at least three different senses.[113] He spoke of those with special authority to witness of the risen Christ, of itinerant missionaries and church-planters such as Andronicus and Junia, and of church delegates who were not (at least, not primarily) missionaries. It may also be suggested that Paul saw Peter (Cephas) and himself as a bridge between the first two classes of 'apostle'. They were both specially commissioned representatives of the risen Lord with divinely given authority on the one hand, and leaders of the respective 'apostleships' or missions, to Israel and the Gentiles, on the other. Other readings of the evidence are possible, but this understanding has most to commend it.

PROBLEM PASSAGES

There are at least two verses where the sense in which Paul is using the P. 365 word 'apostle' is not immediately clear, but where the meaning is of vital importance given current Restorationist claims.

1 Corinthians 12:28

In this verse Paul states that God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then various charismata. The verse is important because of its statement that apostles enjoy primacy in the church, at least in some sense. J D G Dunn has argued that 'Paul refers to the particular apostles who established the church in question', in this case 'presumably Paul and Barnabas[114] (I Cor 9:6). As apostles they

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[109] cf Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 98.

[110] For a typical example of such an argument, cf von Campenhausen, 'The apostles are thus the plenipotentiaries of their heavenly Lord, and their authority … is based *in all probability* on a call by the risen Christ himself', *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 22.

[111] *Ibid*, 23.

[112] On Paul's view of his authority as an apostle, cf J Goldingay, *Authority and Ministry* (Btamcote 1976) 14, 17; D Cameron: 'Authority in the Church—New Testament Period', *Churchman* 95 (1981) 27.

[113] *Pace*, eg, J D G Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London 1975) 273f, who sees only two senses. Dunn is typical in this of many modern scholars. Compare, howewer, the wise comments of C K Barrett: 'Does Paul use the word "apostle" in a third sense, to denote a body of men who were more than church messengers but less than apostles such as himself and Peter? What were Andronicus and Junias?… When the whole Pauline evidence is reviewed, it is much easier to establish the two extremes—apostles of Christ Jesus, such as Paul himself and Peter, and envoys of the church—than to pick out a clearly defined intermediate category', *Signs*, 46f.

[114] Dunn, *Jesus*, 275; but better, Paul and Silas (2 Cor 1:19). Barnabas was probably known to them merely by repute.

provided a link not so much between the local church and other churches elsewhere (the universal church) as between the local church and the gospel'.[115] This interpretation has the merit of respecting the context, which speaks of the church in Corinth as 'a body of Christ' (1 Cor 12:27), (ie the emphasis is on particularity), and of stressing that the reason why apostles are first in the church is because of their key role as those who, having been commissioned by the risen Lord, are mediators of the gospel and of the authoritative tradition associated with it.[116] K p. Hemphill, however, suggests that Dunn seems 'to over-emphasise the local community to the detriment of the larger Christian community'. He draws attention to an article by H Schlier in which he shows that 'there are repeated attempts in this letter to link the individualistic Corinthians to the whole church (1:2, 4:17, 7:17, 11:16 and 14:33)'.[117] It may thus be suggested that it is at least arguable that the reference in 1 Corinthians 12:28 is to 'apostles of Christ', at least two of whom were involved in the planting and growth of the Corinthian church.

Further light is shed on the verse by consideration of the context. K p. Hemphill remarks that 'Paul has emphasised that God organised the body in order to provide for its unity. With particular emphasis on these functionaries, Paul seems quite clearly to be saying that there is a leadership structure which has been established in the church by God. To fail to recognize the work of these individuals is tantamount to p. 366 ignoring the will of God (cf 14:33ff)". Moreover, 'by bringing the apostles, prophets and teachers into close juxtaposition with manifestations such as gifts of healing and tongues, Paul is pointing out, much to the surprise of the spirituals, that these men too are charismatic'.[118] Their authority in the church is based, at least in part, on their supernatural gifting. This is the context in which the primacy of apostles must be seen. But whether or not Paul envisaged a continuing authoritative role for church-planting apostles who did not, as he did, enjoy a special commissioning and revelation, is not clear from this verse alone.[119]

Ephesians 4:11f

These verses are crucial for a Restorationist understanding of the need for a continuing apostolic ministry. Many commentators agree that Paul envisioned this. Markus Barth, for example, comments that 'in 4.11 it is assumed that the church at all times needs the witness of "apostles" and "prophets"…. Eph 4 does not contain the faintest hint that the charismatic character of all church ministries was restricted to a certain period of church history and was later to die out'.[120] It must be confessed that this is certainly the impression that the passage gives. The main exegetical problem with this interpretation

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[115] Dunn, *Jesus* 274f, cf K p. Hemphill: 'The listing of individuals almost certainly would have caused the Corinthians to think concretely of persons with whom they were acquainted who were carrying out these functions', *Pauline Concept*, 91.

[116] Cf Dunn, *ibid*, 275.

[117] Hemphill, *Pauline Concept*, 90 n 126, citing H Schlier, 'Uber das Hauptanliegen des 'Briefes an die Korinther' in *Die Zeit der Kirche* (Freiburg 1956) 155. He concludes that 'the local ecclesia is representative of the universal'.

[118] Hemphill, *Pauline Concept*, 92f.

[119] Cf D E Aune, *Prophecy in Earliest Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids 1983): 'As founders of Christian communities, apostles were accorded the prestige and respect associated with the founders of various Greco-Roman social and cultural institutions (1 Cor 3:4–10; Gal 4:12–20)'.

[120] M Barth, *Ephesians 4–6* (Garden City 1974) 437, cf 437 n 72, 'Ephesians distinctly presupposes that living apostles and prophets are essential to the church's life'.

is that early in the letter, in 2:20 and 3:5, apostles and prophets have been spoken of in a somewhat different way.

In 3:5 we read that the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's people has now been revealed to Christ's holy apostles and prophets. Wayne Grudem correctly points out that 'ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη and αὐτοῦ (referring to χριστοῦ in vs 4) make it certain that OT prophets are not referred to'.[121] Whether or not one should understand here and in 2:20 'apostles who are also prophets', as p. 367 Grudem argues,[122] is a question we need not go into. More important for our purpose is the use of the adjective ἁγίος. This is often taken as an indication against Pauline authorship. It may be argued, however, that it represents Paul's awareness that he, along with and as chief representative of other apostles and prophets (cf vv 3, 8ff), has been favoured with a special eschatological role[123] as recipients of divine revelation concerning the church. This suggests that such a role may not be a continuing one.

As for 2:20, Grudem rightly comments that its nearness and similarity in content to 3:5 mean that 'the reader is justified in thinking that the same people are spoken of in both verses'.[124] An important exegetical issues is whether one should understand in 2:20 a genitive of origin, giving the reading 'the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets' (NEB), or a genitive of apposition, giving the reading 'the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets'. The latter reading is by far the most natural;[125] the former is motivated by a desire to harmonise Ephesians 2:20 with 1 Corinthians 3:11, where the foundation is Christ himself. But Paul is quite capable of using metaphors in two different ways. Moreover, in Ephesians Christ is the corner-stone[126] distinct from the foundation, which strongly supports the latter reading.

In what sense, then, are apostles (and prophets) the foundation of the church? H Schlier convincingly argues that it is through their preaching of Christ: 'There is no access to Christ other than through the apostles and prophets, who have preached him and who themselves become and remain in their preaching the foundation.'[127] Martin similarly speaks of the 'unique role' of the apostles and prophets according to this verse, and argues that this foundational role should be understood 'to include both their oral witness and their literary p. 368 deposits in the New Testament'.[128] This understanding, though slanted to dogmatic considerations, is supported by the fact that in the context Paul is speaking of the universal, not the local, church. We conclude that in both 2:20 and 3:5 the

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[121] W A Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington DC 1982) 92. The grammatical construction used (one definite article governing two nouns joined by καί) can certainly bear this sense. It is accepted by R P Martin, *The Family and the Fellowship* (Exeter 1979) 74f, who mentions P Jouon, J Pfammatter and J Murphy-O'Connor as others who accept an order of 'apostle-prophets'.

[122] *Gift*, 97–105, esp 103. Bruce denies this on the grounds that 'in Eph 4:11 they are distinct orders of ministry', *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids 1984) 315 n 29.

[123] Cf. Kruse, *Foundations*, 'In Ephesians the scope of his (ie Paul's) apostolic influence is extended to cosmic dimensions … Further, Paul's apostolate is integrally related to God's plan for the ages', 175; Caragounis, *Mysterion*, 143: 'he has a central place in the declaration of the eternally-hidden *mysterion* of eschatological import'.

[124] *Gift*, 92.

[125] It is adopted by, eg, H Schlier, M Barth, C Masson.

[126] *Pace* J Jeremias, *TDNT* 4 (1967), sv λίθος, 275; this wording is to be preferred to 'keystone'.

[127] H Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf, 1957) 142; translation by R P Martin.

[128] Martin, *Family*, 74.

reference is to a unique role of apostles and prophets which by definition cannot be continuing. Revelation once clearly given need not be repeated. A foundation once laid need not be re-laid.

Given the restricted sense of 'apostles and prophets' in 2:20 and 3:5 it is *a priori* unlikely that a wider use is present in 4:11. Consideration should also be given to the insertion of the term 'evangelists' which suggests, as Armitage Robinson argues, that 'already the term "apostle" is becoming narrowed and confined to the Twelve and Paul'.[129] The difference in domain of meaning between 'itinerant church-planters' and 'evangelists' would not seem to be sufficient to warrant the introduction of a second term, if indeed apostles in the sense of 'itinerant church-planters' were in view here. The argument that Paul must have had in view a continuing ministry of living apostles in Ephesians 4:11 ff is by no means conclusive. Apostles and others are given πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων; in 2 Timothy 3:17 scripture is said to be given ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος. It would thus seem to be not inappropriate to Paul's thought to see the continuing ministry of apostles for the equipping of the saints as occurring through their writings which have been recognised as scripture.[130]

THE LUCAN CORPUS

There are some thirty-four uses of the word 'apostle' in Luke, and his writings therefore merit special treatment. More importantly, many scholars[131] have seen him as having a rigid view of apostleship, a view representing a late development in the use of the word, and incompatible with Paul's position. Recently Kevin Giles has argued[132] that while it is true that 'Luke develops the idea that the twelve are apostles in a special sense[133] … it is quite untenable to argue that all this is Lukan invention'.[134] The merits of the respective arguments must now be assessed.

The Gospel

References to apostles in the sense of the twelve appear in Luke 6:13, 9:10, 17:5, 22:14, 24:10. A reference in Luke 11:49 to a statement of Jesus which is part of a prophecy of judgement couched in wisdom terminology ('I will send them prophets and apostles') is not of primary importance. It may represent Lucan redaction of a Jewish saying whose Matthaean wording (Matt 23:34–36) is more original. Crucial is Luke 6:13 ('he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles'), since it is the only place

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[129] J Armitage Robinson, 'Christian Ministry' in H B Swele (ed), *Essays* (1918). A reference to 'apostles of Christ' would be more accurate than a reference to 'the twelve and Paul.' We cannot be sure of the limits of the number commissioned by the risen Lord.

[130] The reference in 2 Tim 3:17 is of course to Old Testament scripture, but from a theological perspective which stresses the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit on the church, the argument is valid.

[131] Eg Barrett, *Signs*, 52f.

[132] K Giles, 'Is Luke an Exponent of "Early Protestantism" …?', *EQ* 55 (January 1983) 8.

[133] So G Klein,*Die Zwölf Apostel* (Göttingen 1961). With Luke, 'For the first time the twelve are elevated to the status of apostles', 203. Luke, writing at the beginning of the second century, makes the twelve apostles, and hence the only legitimate bearers of the divine message, a part of his struggle against gnosticism.

[134] So I H Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Exeter 1970) 505.

in the gospels which states that Jesus used the term 'apostles' for the twelve.[135] J Roloff suggests that one should understand 'whom he (later) called apostles',[136] ie at the time of the sending of the twelve out on mission. In such a context (Luke 9:10, where Luke reproduces the substance of Mark 6:30 with his own stylistic variations), apostleship might be regarded as being a short-term affair, merely for the duration of the mission. In the light of the further references to the disciples as apostles, however, it is clear that for Luke, at least, their apostleship was not a temporary matter. It is worth noting that Luke, alone among the evangelists, also records a sending-out of seventy(-two) disciples in addition to the twelve. Especially noteworthy is the statement in Luke 10:3 ιδοὺ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων. Colin Kruse has argued that this statement 'suggests at least that he regarded their comission (sic) as applying to the troubled times that came with and immediately followed his death'.[137] It is interesting that this saying p. 370 is used in the context of a mission-charge to the twelve in Matthew 10:16. (In Matt 10:2 the 'twelve apostles' are named.)[138]

It should be noted that while Mark and Matthew generally restrict the word 'disciple' to the twelve, and never use it of a large group, Luke speaks explicitly of many disciples (eg Luke 6:17, 19:37). Commenting on Luke 6:12f, K Giles remarks that 'we thus have in Luke two separate groups who are followers of Jesus. The many "disciples" and the twelve "apostles".'[139] In some cases the title 'apostles' is clearly due to Lucan redaction.[140] The reason for this redaction becomes clear through a study of the Acts of the Apostles. It should be stressed, however, that the Lucan redaction was not arbitrary, but had a basis in the tradition.

The Acts of the Apostles

A brief survey of the use of the title 'apostle' in the Acts reveals that apart from Acts 14:4, 14 the title is restricted to the twelve. Indeed, in chapter one, it is shown that the number twelve is vital. Steps are taken as a result of which Matthias is 'enrolled with the eleven apostles' (1:26). The apostles emerge in the early chapters as leaders of the community

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[135] It is possible, however, that Luke is dependent on Mark 3:14 at this point, where there are many strong external witnesses for the reading οὓς και ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν. Thus 'neutral' text is often discounted as the *lectio faciliar*.

[136] J Roloff, *Apolstat-Verkündigung-Kirche* (Götersloh 1965) 179.

[137] Kruse, *Foundations*, 33 cf 27f.

[138] This is the only verse in Matthew where the word 'apostles' occurs. Elsewhere Jesus speaks of 'the Twelve' (26:14, 20, 47), of the disciples (*passim*), or of 'the twelve disciples' (10:1; 11:1; 20:17). The context is one of mission. Similarly, in Mark 6:30, the only occurrence in Mark of the term 'apostles' (if the variant reading in Mark 3:14 is rejected), there is in the context no thought of the creation at this time of a permanent office, but rather the fulfilment of a specific commission. V Taylor (*Mark*, 319) therefore suggests that ἀπόστολοι in this verse 'appears to mean "the missionaries"'. C E B Cranfield comments, however, that 'while it is probably right to see in the fact that Mark does not elsewhere refer to the Twelve as ἀπόστολοι an illustration of the primitive character of his gospel, it seems rather unlikely that on this one occasion when he does use the word he would use it of the Twelve without having in mind the technical sense which it commonly had by the time he was writing … The true significance of the official title is here being underlined: the significance of the Twelve lies in their being sent, commissioned by Jesus.' *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Cambridge 1972[4]) 214f. Similar comments apply equally well to Matthew's single use of the word 'apostles'.

[139] K Giles, 'Apostles before and after Paul', *Churchman* 99 (1985) 243.

[140] Eg in Luke 22:14 (cf Mark 14:17, Matt 26:20).

active in teaching (2:42), performing miracles (2:43, 5:12), witnessing (4:33), receiving gifts (4:35ff), suffering (15:18, 40), appointing other leaders (6:6 cf v 2 'the twelve'), praying that new converts might receive the Holy Spirit (8:14, 18). Apart from Peter, they remain in Jerusalem 18:1, 14, 9:27). A startling fact, however, is that after 11:1 they virtually disappear from the stage, being p. 371 mentioned after this point only in company with the elders of the Jerusalem church (15:2, 4, 5, 22, 23, 16:4).

How should we view the function of the twelve according to the Acts? Their main function seems to be that of being a bridge between Jesus' earthly ministry and the life of the early church.[141] They are proof that the risen Lord is one and the same as the earthly Jesus. Hence Luke's stress on their commission to be Jesus' witnesses (1:8); they are able to bear witness both to his earthly life (hence the qualification laid down in 1:21ff), and to his resurrection (1:23).[142] Witness to his earthly life is stressed in 2:22f, 5:6 and 10:37ff; witness to the reality of his resurrection in 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:15, 32, 10:41, 13:31f. The stress on the necessity for eye-witnesses fits in with Luke's introduction to his two-volume work (Luke 1:1–4), where he explicitly states his reliance on 'those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses' (1:2). Kevin Giles stresses that 'in Acts 4:20 (cf 26:16) we read, in terms of common Jewish legal usage, that the apostles, as reliable witnesses, only bear witness to what they have seen and heard … In this role they are the guarantors of the Word which brings the Christian community into existence.'[143]

Why is the number of apostles limited to twelve, at least in the early chapters of Acts? It seems clear that in addition to their authenticative function the apostles have a symbolic role. The significance of the number twelve is brought out in the gospel in 22:30, where the apostles (22:14) are promised that they will 'sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'.[144] This should not be understood as an indication that Luke portrays the twelve as founding fathers of a new Israel: rather, 'For Luke the twelve symbolise the fact that God in Christ p. 372 is restoring Israel to what it should be.'[145] The stress on the number twelve recurs in the narrative in Acts 1:21ff. 'The point of the story is not that twelve men are needed for the task, but that the apostles must number twelve. No attempt is made to fill the place of the martyred James (Acts 12:2). Death removes James from the work but not from the number.'[146] It is in the light of this symbolic number that one should consider Luke's restriction of the number of apostles.

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[141] The use of ἐξελέξατο in Acts 1:2 in the phrase 'the apostles whom he had chosen' reflects the use of the same verb in Luke 6:13. 'They serve as an important link between Jesus and the early church', J A Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (Garden City 1981) 253.

[142] Cf I H Marshall: 'The apostles had to be men who had been companions of Jesus…. This Lucan emphasis is no doubt to be explained by the necessity that those who bore testimony to the resurrection must be men who had already known Jesus and therefore were properly qualified to recognise that it was the same person who had risen from the dead', Luke: *Historian*, 43.

[143] Giles, 'Exponent', *EQ* (Jan 1983) 7.

[144] Giles (*ibid*, 5) claims that in leaving out the number 'twelve' before thrones in his version of the pericope, Luke 'implies that the promise is to all disciples'. But the omission is better explained on stylistic grounds (the repetition of 'twelve' being redundant—cf Matt 19:28).

[145] K Giles, 'Apostles', *Churchman* (1985) 245; cf J Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis 1982) 75f, 'Luke does not see the *church as the new Israel', cf 41–74*.

[146] Giles, 'Exponent', *EQ* (Jan 1983) 5; cf K H Rengstorf: 'the re-establishment of the apostolate of the twelve (sc. in the Matthias narrative) proves that the risen Lord, like the historical Jesus, has not given up his claim to incorporate the twelve tribes of Israel into his Kingdom', 'The Election of Matthias' in W Klassen and G F Snyder (eds) *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (New York 1962) 191f.

The disappearance of the apostles from the stage in the second half of Acts must not be considered. Giles comments that 'once Luke can show that the authenticity of the kerygma had been established, and that Israel had been reconstituted, the importance of the twelve apostles diminishes'.[147] Thomas Weiser suggests a reason for this: 'At the decisive turn of events, during the struggle for and the debate over the status of Gentile Christians, the principal actors are Paul on the one side and James … the fact that the twelve were followed by other Apostles, principally Paul, is for Luke evidence of the continuance of God's history of salvation … The institution of the twelve has no further role in the mission among the Gentiles. According to Acts this is Paul's role.'[148] Jervell has pointed out that the role of the twelve shifts after chapter 7, where Stephen's sermon signifies the end of the apostles' direct missionary activity to Israel. After this point their role is stressed on just three significant occasions. First, Acts 8:14ff connects them with Samaria (cf 1:8). Second, the twelve legitimize Paul (9:26ff). Third, 'the initial reference to "the nations", to the peoples outside Israel (chaps 10–11) is related to Peter, who throughout Luke-Acts is reckoned as one of the twelve'.[149] These observations tend to support Weiser's thesis. Giles also comments that 'indeed once the twelve apostles' basic role is exhausted the title "apostle" is not limited solely to the twelve'[150] (cf Acts 14:4, 14).
p. 373

It should be clearly understood that this assessment of the evidence is controversial. The consensus of German scholars[151] is that in Acts 14:4, 14 Luke is following a source, and that he understands Paul in these verses to be a missionary of the church of Antioch, not an apostle of equal standing with the twelve. Schmithals, for example, writes that 'when Luke in Acts 14:4, 14, following a source, also calls Barnabas and Paul apostles, he therewith reveals that the concept of apostle for Paul was not unknown to him, but at the same time he tendentiously makes it clear that Paul bears this title only as does Barnabas, i.e. not in the sense of a fundamental authority that authenticates all tradition and goes back to Christ himself, but in the general and relatively unimportant sense of a missionary sent out by the community at Antioch'.[152]

Against such an argument various points may be raised. As Ward Gasque puts it, 'it is obvious that Paul is Luke's hero and church-planting missionary par excellence'.[153] Similarly Stephen Wilson points out that Paul is equal to Peter when it comes to miracles, is called God's 'chosen vessel' (Acts 9:15) and is distinguished by his suffering.[154] It should be recognized that Luke places great emphasis on Paul's call and commissioning as an apostle to the Gentiles, recording it three times (9:1–19; 22:1–21; 26:2–18), and containing the verbs ἐξαπόστέλλω (22:21) and ἀποστέλλω (26:17) in his account of

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[147] Giles, 'Exponent', *EQ* (Jan 1983) 7.

[148] T Weiser, 'Notes on the Meaning of the Apostolate', *IRM* (April 1975) 131.

[149] Jervell, *Luke*, 77f; cf W Hendriksen's interesting comment: 'The Twelve, by recognising Paul as having been specifically called to minister to the Gentiles, were in effect carrying out through him their calling to the Gentiles', *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Edinburgh 1959) 50.

[150] Giles, 'Exponent', *EQ* (Jan 1983) 7.

[151] One thinks of Haenchen, Conzelmann and Vielhauer as especially influential scholars in this respect.

[152] Schmithals, *Office*, 277.

[153] W Ward Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids 1975) 241, n 118, criticising Haenchen.

[154] p. G Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge 1973) 116.

Paul's testimonies to it. Colin Brown's summary is sound: 'In encountering the risen Christ on the Damascus Road, Paul fulfilled a basic qualification for apostleship, that of being "a witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). He did not fulfil the other condition, that of being a follower of Jesus in his earthly ministry. In short the picture that Acts paints is not that Paul was not an apostle, but that he was an apostle extraordinary which is consonant with Paul's own account (1 Cor 9:1ff; 15:5–9; Gal 1:12–17).'[155] Finally, to quote Wilson p. 374 again, 'if it was imperative for Luke to restrict the title to the twelve, it is difficult to understand why he did not omit 14: If or at least erase the word "Apostle"'.[156]

Finally, it should be recognized that Luke's major concern is not ecclesiastical office. 'In reality Luke is much more concerned about tracing the growth of the church in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean world and with the spread of the Word of God through it to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) than in the details of church structure.'[157]

OTHER NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE

John's Gospel and Epistles

The word ἀπόστολος occurs in these writings only in John 13:16, where it is clearly used in the non-technical sense of messenger. The 'twelve' are referred to in John 6:67, 70 and 20:24, but they are not given the title 'apostle'. It is clear, however, that they are to play an important role in the community after Jesus' resurrection. The Holy Spirit will teach them all things and remind them of everything Jesus taught them (14:26). He will 'guide them into all truth' (16:12). They have been chosen and appointed to go and bear fruit (15:16). Not only will the Holy Spirit testify about Jesus; they too must testify as those who have been with Jesus from the beginning (15:26f). Others will believe in Jesus through their message (17.20). It is especially noteworthy that they are sent into the world by Jesus, just as Jesus was sent into the world by the Father (John 17:18, 20–21f). In the former verse, the verb ἀποστέλλω is used of the sending of the disciples as well as the sending of Jesus. In the latter passage, Jesus breathes on them that they may receive the Holy Spirit to equip them for their task. For Peter, this will include feeding Christ's sheep (21:15ff). Barrett summarises the significance of the twelve in John's gospel as follows: 'That they have seen is their true significance; their importance is that they are witnesses, those who have seen, and because they have seen declare what they have seen. They are not important as theologians or administrators, but only as bearers of a word of testimony.'[158] p. 375

The first few verses of 1 John (1:1–3) reflect an identical theme. Barrett speaks of 'a subtle interplay between the pronouns "I", "we" and "you"' in 1 John 1:1, 3, 2:1, 3, 3 John 12f and other similar verses. He suggests that 'between them the gospel and epistles raise in the acutest form the question of what authority is to be ascribed to the eyewitnesses of the work of Jesus, and the related but distinct question of how this authority, whatever it may have been, is transmitted within the life of the church.'[159] These questions are too

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[155] C Brown, *NIDNTT* I, 136, cf I H Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Leicester 1980) 35: Luke 'recognises that there was a group of apostles, commissioned by Jesus, wider than the twelve, and he does not deny that Paul and Barnabas belong to this group'.

[156] Wilson, *Gentiles*, 116.

[157] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 256.

[158] C K Barrett, *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament* (Exeter 1985) 48.

[159] Barrett, *Signs*, 62f.

large to pursue here. It may be noted in passing that the 'eye-witness' role of the twelve in John is very similar to the role they play in Luke's writings.

Finally, the role of itinerant missionaries in 2 and 3 John should be mentioned. In 2 John 7–11 the recipients are warned against 'many deceivers' who may come to them bringing false teaching. In 3 John 5–8 reference is made to brothers who have gone out 'for the sake of the Name', who are to be given hospitality.

Hebrews

No mention is made of the twelve or of apostles in this epistle (though cf 2:3f). Its distinctive feature is its reference in 3:1 to Jesus as 'the apostle and high priest whom we confess'. To speak of jesus as an apostle is reminiscent of the Johannine emphasis that Jesus was sent by the Father into the world (eg John 3:17, 34; 5:36ff, 6:29, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3; 1 John 4:10). In context, it seems that the author is indicating that in Jesus the functions of Moses and Aaron are combined. Giles comments that 'these ideas are a development on what is found in the synoptic Gospels, but here also emphasis is placed on the sending of the son by the Father and on his authoritative representory role'[160] (Luke 4:18, 43; Mark 12:1–11 and par; Matt 15:24). Justin in his First Apology (12:9; 63:5) also calls Jesus ἀπόστολος. The fact that the word could be used of Jesus by the author of Hebrews would tend to indicate that at the time of writing it had not yet acquired an exclusive technical meaning, but could be used in different senses.

1 and 2 Peter and Jude

In the first verse of 1 Peter, Peter introduces himself as 'an apostle of p. 376 Jesus Christ' in a manner reminiscent of the Pauline letters. Similarly, 2 Peter 1:1 speaks of 'Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ' (cf Rom 1:1; Tit 1:1). In 2 Peter 1:16, 18, Peter speaks as a representative of the apostles in general: 'we made known to you the power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ'; 'we were eye-witnesses of his majesty'. Richard Bauckham points out that the verb ἐγνωρίσαμεν is 'frequently used in the NT for imparting revelation. Here it is used of the apostles' preaching of the gospel, which included the expectation of the Parousia'.[161] The reference in 3:2 to 'the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles' is controversial. Bauckham remarks that 'the double possessive genitive in this expression is awkward. It must mean that the commandment is primarily Christ's, but also in a secondary sense the apostles' because they were the people who preached it to the readers.'[162] Michael Green argues that the reference here must be to apostles of Jesus Christ, not 'your missionaries', because 'it is they and they alone who are put on a level with the Old Testament prophets'[163] (cf v 2a). Bauckham convincingly insists, however, that 'the natural meaning of "your apostles" is *those* apostles who preached the gospel and founded the churches in the area to which 2 Peter is addressed, contrasted implicitly with the rest of the apostles (… cf … 1 Clem 44:1, where "our apostles" are the apostles who founded the Roman church)'. He remarks that

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[160] Giles, 'Apostles', *Churchman* (1985) 242.

[161] R J Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco 1983) 214.

[162] *Ibid*, 287.

[163] E M B Green, *2 Peter and Jude* (London 1968) 125.

'evidently the readers' apostles included Paul (3:15)',[164] a fact which removes the force of Green's objection to this interpretation.

Jude introduces himself as 'a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James'(1). In verse 17 he speaks of 'the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ' in a way that would seem to distinguish himself from them. Jude is almost certainly to be identified with Judas, brother of James and Jesus, and mentioned in Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3 and Hegessipus (ap Eusebius H E 3.19.1–206). Most scholars regard the letter as pseudonymous, partly on the basis of verse 17. J N D Kelly, for example, argues that 'the whole tone of the verse leaves the impression that "the apostles" constituted a revered group belonging to an earlier generation'.[165] It seems likely, however, that the brothers of Jesus were not known as 'apostles' in the early church (cf 1 Cot 9:5). p. 377 Bauckham states that 'early Christian literature never explicitly calls them "apostles"'.[166] He argues that in verse 17 'the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ' are not all the apostles, 'the apostolic college' seen through the reverent eyes of a later generation (Kelly), but, naturally in the context, those apostles who founded the church(es) to whom Jude writes'.[167] This is certainly a possible interpretation, but by no means the only one. Green points out that Jude 'is clearly not very early in the New Testament period. The faith has had time to be crystallised and to be corrupted. The warnings of the apostles have had time to be circulated and proved true (3, 4, 17, 18).' He regards a reference to 'the apostolic college' as likely, but argues that 'the fact that Jude refers to what the apostles *said* rather than *wrote* suggests that we are still moving within the oral period'.[168] Certainly Jude regards the apostles as having great authority, and it is a priori likely that he is referring to those directly commissioned by the risen Lord.

Revelation

Within this book, the word 'apostle' is used in very different ways. In 2:2 the church at Ephesus is commended because they 'have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not'. Barrett comments that 'the fact that it seems worthwhile to lay a false claim to be an apostle proves that there were real ones, and proves at the same time that the apostles in question were not the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whom it would have been easy to identify and to distinguish from the shams. It seems natural to suppose that the secondary apostles circulated among the churches; had they remained at one spot their false credentials would have been immediately exposed.'[169] We may compare them with the 'false apostles' of 2 Corinthians 11:13, and the itinerant preachers of 2 and 3 John.

Another reference to apostles comes in 18:20, where 'saints and apostles and prophets' are called to rejoice over the fall of Babylon. The collocation of apostles and prophets is reminiscent of Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5. R H Mounce suggests that 'if we interpret the verse in light of its parallel in 12:12 then the saints, apostles and prophets would be "you that dwell therein". It is the church glorified, not p. 378 believers on earth,

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[164] Bauckham, *Jude*, 287f.

[165] J N D Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 281. The question of pseudonymity and relationship to 2 Peter cannot be entered into here.

[166] Bauckham, *Jude*, 24.

[167] *Ibid*, 104.

[168] Green, 2 *Peter*, 46f.

[169] Barrett, *Church*, 44.

who are invited to rejoice.'[170] Apostles and prophets seem to represent the leaders of the church.

An altogether different sense is to be found in 21:14. The wall of the city rests on twelve foundations upon which are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The reference to the twelve as foundational is reminiscent of Luke's view of the twelve. As for the image of a foundation, Barrett has pointed out[171] how prevalent it is in the New Testament. He sees its roots in the expectation in Jewish eschatology of a new temple (cf 1 Pet 2:5). The image of a building being founded on a person, or persons, is already found in the Old Testament (Isa 51:1f—Abraham), and is found in the New Testament in connection with Peter (Matt 16:17f), James, Cephas and John as 'pillars' (Gal 2:9), apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20), and here of the twelve.

EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

References to 'apostles' in the Apostolic Fathers may be divided into two categories: those that indicate a wide application of the term, and those that restrict it to the twelve (plus Paul).

Wider use

The Didache

The full title of this composite work is 'The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles, through the Twelve Apostles'. J Draper's assessment that 'the core of 1–6 is Jewish and pre-Christian (c 100BC–50AD) and the work as a whole had probably received its present form by the end of the first century AD'[172] is typical of the modern consensus.[173] Draper also points out that the full text is available only in a manuscript (M54) from the eleventh century, so that the possibility of later changes and additions cannot be excluded.

The classic study is that of Harnack.[174] He points out that 'the very p. 379 addition of the number in this title is enough to show that the book knew of other apostles as well'.[175] More importantly, in 11:3–6 the book gives instructions on how to deal with itinerant apostles and prophets who visit them. Clearly 'apostles of Christ' with authority over the churches are not referred to, since they are not to be allowed to stay more than one or two days, and are not to be supported financially (cf 1 Cor 9:4ff). They are to be treated κατὰ τὸ δόγμα τοῦ ευαγγελίου, which seems in context to refer to Mark 6:7–13/Matthew 10:1–15. Harnack concludes that 'to be penniless, therefore, was considered absolutely essential for apostles and prophets'.[176] He compares 3 John 7, Origen (*Contra Celsum*, III.ix) and Eusebius (*HE* iii.37). He also argues that 'the second essential for apostles, laid

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[170] R H Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids 1977) 332.

[171] Barrett, *Church*, 16f.

[172] Jon Draper, 'The Jesus Tradition in the Didache' in D Wenham (ed) *Gospel Perspectives* 5 (Sheffield 1984) 271.

[173] Though J A T Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London 1976), 352, dates it c AD 40–60.

[174] See *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* 1 (ET, London 1904) 417–444, summarising an earlier (1884) and more detailed work.

[175] *Ibid*, 407.

[176] *Ibid*, 435f.

down by the *Didache* side by side with poverty, namely, indefatigable missionary activity (no settling down) is endorsed by Origen and Eusebius also'.[177]

It should be emphasized that though the *Didache* mentions apostles, 'it is clear that it is only interested in the prophet who played such an important part in the life of the community'.[178] G L Carey suggests that apostle may be just another name for prophet,[179] but this seems unlikely since the two are mentioned together. B M Streeter conjectures that the word 'apostle' may be a deliberate archaism, since the Didache purports to come from the hands of the apostles.[180] This is possible, but unlikely given other evidence (eg Rev 2:2). On the whole, it seems probable that the *Didache* does bear witness to a class of itinerant missionaries who, however, were treated by the end of the first century with great caution, at least in the (Syrian?) community represented by the *Didache*. Michael Green points out that these roving missionaries represented a real danger: 'Quite unsupervised in their teaching, they could go seriously astray doctrinally or ethically, and could involve whole churches in their weaknesses.'[181]

The 'Shepherd' of Hermas

This is a moralistic treatise, probably written at Rome in the early part *p. 380* of the second century AD. From a reference in his 'Vision of the Tower' (Vision 3:5), it seems clear that 'he sees the apostles as revered church officers of a past generation'.[182] He is certainly more interested in the figure of the prophet: 'Like the Didache there is considerable discussion on how to discern the true from the false prophet.'[183] References should be noted, however, to the number 'forty' used in connection with the apostles in Similitudes 9:15.4, and 9:16.5. In the former reference, the stones fitted into the building are referred to as follows: '"The first ones", said he "the ten that were put into the foundation, are the first generation, and the twenty-five are the second generation of upright men, and the thirty-five are the prophets of God and his servants, and the forty are apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God"'.[184] It would clearly be wrong to take the number 'forty' literally; but it does tend to suggest a fairly wide circle of apostles and teachers, or at least a circle distinguished from the 'foundational' few of 'the first generation'.

Other works

The *Epistle of Barnabas*, possibly to be dated about AD 130, speaks (in 5.9) of the Lord's choice of his own apostles (ἴδιοι ἀπόστολοι), and therefore seems to know of some other

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[177] *Ibid*, 437f.

[178] G L Carey, *The Ministry in the Apostolic Fathers* (MTh thesis, London University 1964) 56.

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] B H Streeter, *The Primitive Church* (London 1929) 143.

[181] E M B Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (London 1983) 167.

[182] G L Carey, *Ministry*, 70. He compares also Sire 25.2, 'Apostles and teachers who preached to all the world', cf also Sim 17.1.

[183] *Ibid*, 71, cf Mand 11.12.

[184] From the translation by Edgar J Goodspeed (London 1950).

apostles.[185] The *pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, which represent the opinions of believing Pharisees and their successors, speak (in 11.35) of 'apostles, teachers and prophets'. Not much can be made of this. The same must be said of the reference in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, which speaks of him as 'a teacher in our own day who combined both apostle and prophet in his own person'[186] (16.2). Origen (*Contra Celsum*, II.65) sees the reference in 1 Corinthians 15:7 to 'all the apostles' as referring to Christ's seventy disciples. *p. 381*

Narrow use

I Clement

This epistle by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, probably written about AD 96–100, clearly speaks of the apostles in terms of the twelve. In section 42:1f they are said to have been commissioned by Christ, and to have had their doubts set at rest by the resurrection. In section 47.4 Paul is said to be, together with Peter, an apostle of the highest repute, but the title is denied to Apollos. In section 44:1, the apostles are said to have appointed bishops and deacons.

Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius, though highly conscious of his authority and status, makes clear the fact that he does not regard himself as an apostle: 'I am not issuing orders to you, as though I were a Peter or Paul. They were Apostles and I am a condemned prisoner.'[187] In *Philadelphians* 5:3 he speaks of himself as clinging to 'the Apostles as the collective ministry of the church', an unclear reference. He has nothing to say about apostolic succession, though twelve times in his letters he speaks of the three orders of ministry (viz bishop, presbyters and deacons). The reference in *Smyrnaeans* 12:2 to 'Burrhus, whom you and brethren of Ephesus have jointly sent as a companion for me', reminds us of 'the apostles of the churches' in Philippians 2:25 and 2 Corinthians 8:23. But Burrhus is not given such a title by Ignatius.

Polycarp

The *Epistle of Polycarp*, bishop of Smyrna, to the Philippians, speaks of 'the Apostles who brought us the Gospel' (6:3). The reference seems to be a narrow one, since in 9:2 he speaks of 'Paul himself and the other Apostles' as men who are now with the Lord. Irenaeus tells us that the youthful Polycarp had been 'instructed by apostles and had had friendly intercourse with many who had seen Christ' (Haer 3:3, 4).

Didache

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[185] So Harnack, *Expansion*, 406. This may well be reading too much into the expression, however, especially since in 8.3 the epistle speaks of those to whom Christ gave authority to proclaim the Good News, as being a dozen, as a token of the tribes.

[186] Translation by M Staniforth, *Early Christian Writing* (Harmondsworth 1968) 161.

[187] *Romans* 4:3 (cf *Trallians* 3:4). Translation by M Staniforth, *Writings*, 104f. Harnack claims that the fact Ignatius disclaims apostolic dignity for himself is nevertheless 'a proof that there was a possibility of one who had not been an original apostle being nonetheless an apostle', *Expansion*, 408 n 1. This claim is unjustified.

The title bears witness to the concept of 'the twelve Apostles' as having a unique authority.[188] p. 382

Summary

W Bauer comments that in early Christian literature generally, 'the number twelve stands so fast that exceedingly often twelve disciples are spoken of where actually only eleven can be meant eg Gospel of Peter 5:9; Ascension of Isaiah 3:17; 4:3; 11:29; Kerygma Petrou'.[189] Much is said in the apocryphal Acts and Epistles of the various views and activities of the apostles after the ascension, especially of their missionary work throughout the world. Paul is not deliberately excluded from the number, but 'it was only when Marcion and later Jewish Christianity began to play Paul against the earliest apostles that thought was given to the circle of apostles, and the Early Catholic Church maintained that "the twelve and Paul" qualified as apostles'.[190] As regards the apostolic writings, it was probably the rise of Montanus, who advocated 'the new prophecy', that is the continuing revelation of the Holy Spirit as in apostolic times, that raised the hermeneutical question of the status of apostolic and post-apostolic writings respectively. Gerald Bray comments that 'Tertullian is the first Christian writer to regard the apostolic age as definitely over, and to quote the writings of the apostles on a par with the Old Testament Scriptures as a matter of course'. He points out, however, that 'the fact that he could do this without argument shows that the apostolic writings must have been regarded as Scripture even before his time'.[191]

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Journals referred to in this issue

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[188] Cf also *Epistle of Barnabas*, 8:3 (n 240).

[189] W Bauer in E Hennecke (ed), *N.T. Apocrypha* II. 35.

[190] L Goppelt, *Apostolic Times*, 181.

[191] G Bray, 'Authority in the Early Church', *Churchman* Vol 95 No 1 (1981), 45.