

accredited by special signs (Eph. 2:20). Since this was a gift that belonged to the earliest period of the history of the church when her foundation was being laid, the need for the gift has ceased and apparently the giving of it has too. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:20)

Sanders (pp. 116-117) writes:

First in order of importance are apostles. This term is not confined to the Twelve, but it would seem that to be an apostle one must have seen Jesus, and have been a witness of the resurrection. He must also have been called by Christ or by the Holy Spirit, as was Barnabas. Apostles were endued with miraculous powers as credentials of their office. James, our Lord's brother, was an apostle, and so were Andronicus and Junia, Silvanus and others. These qualifications for apostleship meant that they were an order bound to die out. The Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

The apostle was, literally, "a delegate, a messenger, one sent forth with orders." (Thayer). According to J. C. Lambert, "The apostolate was not a limited circle of officials holding a well-defined position of authority in the Church, but a large class of man who discharged one -- and that the highest -- of the functions of the prophetic ministry."

The more generally accepted view, however, is that the word is used in the New Testament in a twofold sense. First in a restricted sense as the official name of Christ's twelve chosen disciples, who saw Him after the resurrection and laid the foundations of His Church. Second, in a broader, unofficial sense as designating accredited Christian messengers, commissioned by a church community, as was Barnabas.

The apostles did not serve a merely local church, but their authority ran throughout the whole Church.

Edgar (pp.63-64), following a study of the New Testament, concludes:

The Twelve, Paul and Barnabas were called apostles. The Twelve were called the apostles and seemed to enjoy a special place (see Revelation 21:14). Paul called himself an apostle and was recognized as an apostle by the church in Jerusalem (see Galatians 2). The apostleship of Barnabas is not as certain as that of the twelve and Paul, since he was not included in the recognition of apostleship granted to Paul in Galatians 2:7-9.

There are verses that may imply that James, Andronicus, and Junia were apostles. This is improbable regarding Andronicus and Junia and is subject to dispute regarding James. If James (the brother of the Lord) was an apostle, then this is additional evidence that an apostle could remain in and have authority in a local church.