

Fellowship Of The First Christians

Acts 2:42-47

Part 6a

Four-fold Devotion Of First Christians

2:42 And they [those baptized] were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- The Greek has “proskartero” [prahs kahr **teh** roh] meaning to “to persist in, adherence to a thing, attend constantly to.” See Acts 1:14; 2:42; Rom. 13:6.
- “continually devoting themselves” - NASB
- “devoted themselves” - NIV
- “They steadfastly persevered, devoting themselves constantly..” Amp.

1. Here is some important information about the apostles.

- This information is vital because believers were devoted to their teachings.
 - It is vital because we must follow the teachings of Christ’s true apostles who spoke the words of God and not their own words.
- a. The word “apostle” is from “apostolos” [ah **pah** stah lahs] meaning “one sent forth, one sent, a messenger, one sent with delegated authority.”

1) It is used of Christ who was sent by the Father to die for mankind. (Heb. 3:1).

Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

2) It is used to refer to a messenger of the church. (Phil. 2:25). Here the word, translated “messenger,” is used of Epaphroditus. He was a “messenger” [a missionary] of the church.

3) The word is used with the meaning of “messenger” [one with delegated authority] in 2 Corinthians 8:23.

2 Cor 8:23 As for Titus, {he is} my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, {they are} messengers [apostles] of the churches, a glory to Christ.

4) It is also used in an official sense referring to the twelve apostles and others who became an apostle, such as, Paul and perhaps James the Lord’s brother. The apostleship of James the Lord’s brother will be examined later in these notes.

b. The apostles were chosen by the Lord. (Lk. 6:13; Acts 1:2; 9:6; 24:14-16; Gal. 1:10).

c. Matthias, the replacement of Judas, was also chosen by the Lord. (Acts 1:20-26). See Prov. 16:33.

Acts 1:20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'

Acts 1:21 "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us--

Acts 1:22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us--one of these {must} become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Acts 1:23 So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.

Acts 1:24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen

Acts 1:25 to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."

Acts 1:26 And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Prov 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

- 1) There was no chance to the selection of Matthias because the Lord was really the One who selected him. (Acts 1:24).
 - 2) Nothing is known about the personal life of Matthias before or after his appointment. He is never again mentioned by name, but only generically when the Bible speaks of the apostles on or after Pentecost.
 - 3) Some speculate he was one of the seventy mentioned in Luke 10:1.
 - 4) The seventy were with Christ during His ministry and probably witnessed the resurrected Christ, but there is zero evidence that Matthias was one of the seventy.
 - 5) We do know he was an outstanding man who had a big part in the early growth of the church.
- d. The twelve apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised. (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:2,5, 8; Acts 2:4).
- e. They were guided "into all truth" by the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
- f. The twelve were required to meet certain qualifications. (Acts 1:21-22).
- g. Matthias met these qualifications and became one of twelve.
- h. Paul later became an apostle and he was a witness of Christ's resurrection. (Acts 22:17, 18; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9).
- 1) Paul did not meet the qualification of Acts 1:21.
 - 2) It is possible this qualification applied only to the replacement of Judas to become one of the twelve. It is certain the Lord made an exception when He appointed Paul an apostle.
 - 3) Since Paul was not inferior to the other apostles and had miraculous power and could impart it to others, it can be logically assumed he was baptized with the Holy Spirit as was the twelve. See 2 Cor. 12:11,12.
- 2 Cor 12:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.
- 2 Cor 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.
- 4) Paul had a special and unique task assigned him by the Lord. (Acts 9:15; 22:14-15; 26:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:8, 9; Gal. 1:11-12, 15-16).

5) He was especially chosen to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. (Rom 11:13; 15:16; Gal. 2:8; Eph. 3:8).

6) Paul emphasized his Divine appointment. (Rom. 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1,16).

Rom 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about {the} obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

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

Gal 1:1 Paul, an apostle not {sent} from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Gal 1:16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

i. The Bible indicates that James the Lord's brother may have been an apostle. (Gal. 1:18,19).

Gal 1:18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

Gal 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles [besides Cephas] except James, the Lord's brother.

1) James was the half-brother of Jesus. (Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).

Matt 13:55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

Mark 6:3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

2) Some believe he was not an apostle in an official sense, but a man of great influence.

3) The NIV and GW give these possible translations.

"I saw none of the other apostles-only James the Lord's brother." NIV

"I didn't see any other apostle. I only saw James, the Lord's brother." GW

4) If either of these translations are accurate, James may not have been an apostle. Paul visited him after seeing Peter.

5) If the NASB is the proper rendering of this verse, it would appear that James was an apostle.

6) Assuming he was an apostle, the Bible is silent about when he became an apostle.

7) The Bible does reveal he and his brothers had become believers. (Acts 1:14).

8) He is one who had witnessed the ministry and resurrection of Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:7).

1 Cor 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

9) He was not a believer in Jesus as Deity or the Messiah during His ministry. (Jn. 7:5).

- 10) The Bible does not record James being baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- 11) Neither does it record him having miraculous power or imparting miraculous power to others.
- 12) This causes one to wonder if he was an apostle chosen by the Lord or a godly man who had great influence in the church.
- 13) The Bible does indicate he was a pillar in the Lord's church. (Gal. 2:9; 1:19). See Acts 15:13; 21:18.
- 14) James the Lord's brother wrote the book of James, but does not call himself an apostle. This alone does not settle the question about his apostleship.

j. Luke speaks of Barnabas as an apostle. (Acts 14:14).

Acts 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

1) Barnabas was an outstanding man of great character. (Acts 4:36-37).

Acts 4:36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement),

Acts 4:37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- 2) The Bible is silent about if Barnabas was an eyewitness of Christ's ministry and resurrection.
- 3) There is no evidence he met the qualifications of Acts 1:21-22.
- 4) Some believe it means he was a "messenger" [missionary] of the church, and he was not an apostle like the twelve and Paul.
- 5) The Bible is clear that he was a outstanding missionary of the church, but unclear in what sense he was an apostle.
- 6) It is possible he is to be viewed as an apostle of the church of Antioch that had sent he and Paul under the directions of the Holy Spirit on the 1st missionary journey. (Acts 13:2,3).

Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

7) Paul was likely an apostle in two ways, that is, an apostle of the church of Antioch and a special apostle called by the Lord.

k. A careful reading of 1 Thessalonians reveals that in some sense that Timothy and Silas were apostles. (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6-8).

- 1) The word "apostle" may mean they were missionaries of the church that we know to be true.
- 2) They did not meet the qualifications of Acts 1:21-22.

l. Andronius and Junias are also called "apostles" [messengers, missionaries] in Romans 16:7.

Rom 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

2. Since today there are no eye witnesses of Jesus' ministry and no one has seen the risen Lord, no one can qualify today to be an apostle of the Lord.

a The apostles were a part of the foundation of the church. (Eph. 2:20).

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone,}

b. Only the apostles could impart miraculous spiritual gifts. (Acts 8:16-20; 19:1-6; Rom. 1:11).

c. No man today can perform miracles nor impart miraculous power to others as the twelve and Paul.

d. No one today receives divine revelation from the Lord. The gospel was once for all delivered to God's people and men must not add or take away from it. (Jude 3).

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

e. One claiming to receive revelation that differed from what Paul and the other apostles received should be rejected. (Gal. 1:6-8). They were guided into "all truth" leaving no place for latter day revelations.

f. There were false apostles in Paul's day (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

2 Cor 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

2 Cor 11:14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

1) Those who claim to be apostles today are false.

2) We must not be duped by them.

g. Those who claim to be apostles today, when tested, are false like those in the church of Ephesus. (Rev. 2:2).

Rev 2:2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them {to be} false

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)