

Prayer List

Cyndie, Nichole & Lauren
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What reform priest was killed by the orders of King Joash, a pupil of his father?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jacob - Genesis 33:20

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Apostolic Succession

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

A number of religions practice so-called apostolic succession. Roman Catholics believe the man they call "Pope" is the successor of the apostle Peter. Mormons claim twelve to fifteen apostles at all times. Many Pentecostal congregations identify their preachers as apostles. Such claims are totally inconsistent with the scriptures.

The Apostles of Christ Were Not Replaced Upon Their Deaths

It is written, "*Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword*" (**Acts 12:1-2**). There is absolutely no record, not even the slightest implication, that a replacement apostle was named when James was murdered.

Judas Iscariot was succeeded, but it was not his death which prompted the vacancy. In the process of replacing him, the eleven prayed and spoke of the "*apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell*" (**Acts 1:25**). It was not his death, but his sin which removed Judas from office. Therefore, to

suggest a need for modern apostles is to incriminate all previous apostles.

The Qualifications of Apostleship are No Longer Attainable

When the eleven sought out Judas' successor, they identified the qualifications, saying, "*Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection*" (**Acts 1:21-22**). The criteria for an apostolic candidate were that the man was a companion of Jesus and the twelve from the days of John's ministry until the ascension of Christ, and that he was a witness of the Lord's resurrection. These conditions were so limiting that, even in those early days, just two men could be found who met them (**Acts 1:23**). Those who claim to be modern-day apostles ignore the severely limiting qualifications of the original.

Furthermore, apostles were chosen by Christ (**Luke 6:13**). Even Judas Iscariot's replacement was decided by the Lord. "*They cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles*" (**Acts 1:26**). Scripture affirms this was God's doing, for "*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord*" (**Proverbs 16:33**). None who claim modern apostleship can substantiate the notion that they were chosen by Jesus.

The Apostleship of Paul was Exceptional

He wrote, "*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was*

seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all he was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (**I Corinthians 15:3-10**).

Paul claimed to have been the last person to witness the resurrected Christ. Not even his detractors disputed this (**I Corinthians 9:1**). Certainly, none since him can accurately claim this most essential qualification.

Moreover, Paul identified his role as an apostle by describing himself as "*one born out of due time.*" He was the unique apostle, the only one exempt from the qualification to have accompanied the other apostles during Jesus' earthly ministry, although he was most definitely chosen by Christ (**Acts 9:15**), like the rest.

If dozens, scores, even hundreds of apostles have walked the earth since Paul, his claim to have been "born out of due time" is altogether meaningless. In fact, if the claims of the so-called modern-day apostles are true, then those "born out of due time" were the original twelve! Modern claimants must turn the scriptures upside-down or ignore them altogether to assert their contrived apostolic authority.

Beware of False Apostles!

Just as Satan, the master of deception and father of lies, can transform himself into an angel of light, so those who serve him can transform themselves into righteous ministers, even apostles of Christ (**I Corinthians 11:13-15**). "*Those who say they are apostles and are not*" will be found liars when tested (**Revelation 2:2**). - via Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, No. 14, Vegas Valley Church of Christ