

Was Junias an apostle or just helped the apostles in their work in Rom 16:7?

In the New International Version, Rom 16:7-8 reads: "7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."

The difficulty comes with the words *outstanding among*. The older versions translate this *of note among*. The difficulty comes from *among*, which may indicate one of a class as in the sentence: "One of his peers." This reading would make Andronicus and Junias apostles. However, the first two meanings of *among* from *Webster's Online Dictionary* are as follows:

1. in or through the midst of surrounded by (hidden among the trees)
2. in company or association with (living among artists)

The context shows that these men lived among the apostles before Paul was in Christ, indicating the apostles knew them as noteworthy or outstanding in Christ (Christians). That Paul did not directly name them as apostles adds to this view.

Further, the lists of the apostles in the gospels do not name Andronicus and Junias as apostles, nor is there any record that they met the qualifications of Acts 1:21-22:

21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

These qualifications were to identify the apostle to replace Judas, and when applied resulted in the selection of Matthias, where the concluding statement in Acts 1:23-26 indicated the twelve apostles were all the apostles that there were when Matthias joined the eleven:

23 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Paul's statement in 1 Cor 15:7-10, about his own selection as an apostle, shows that he himself was an addition of one apostle to the original apostles by the power of Jesus Christ appearance to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9):

7 Then he appeared to James, then to **all the apostles**, 8 and **last of all** he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of **the apostles** and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. [Emphasis added].

In conclusion, Junias was a relative of Paul, a fellow prisoner with Paul, a Christian of eminence and note among the apostles, but not an apostle himself.