

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 344
Series: The Primal Church - Acts Chapters 1-8
Verses: Acts 1:15-26
Topic: Judas Is Replaced
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Please note – the following article and diagrams of the Ascension of Jesus Christ will be a big help as we study Acts 1-8 - <http://aibi.gospelcom.net/aibi/ascension.htm>

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Acts 1:15-26 MKJV And in those days Peter stood up in *the* midst of the disciples and said, (*the* number of names together *was* about a hundred and twenty,) (16) Men, brothers, this Scripture must have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas, who became guide to those who seized Jesus. (17) For he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry. (18) Indeed, then, this one purchased a field with the reward of unrighteousness. And falling headlong, he burst apart in *the* middle, and all his bowels gushed out. (19) And it was known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem, so much so that that field is called in their own dialect, Akeldama, that is to say, Field of Blood. (20) For it is written in *the* Book of Psalms, "Let his estate become forsaken, and he not be living in it." And, "Let another take his overseership." (21) Therefore, it is right that one of these men who have companied with us all *the* time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, (22) beginning from the baptism of John to that same day that He was taken up from us, to become a witness with us of His resurrection. (23) And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed and said, You, Lord, knower of all hearts, show which one You chose from these two, (25) to take the share of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell, to go to *his* own place. (26) And they gave forth their lots. And the lot fell upon Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

There were 120 "names" in the Upper Room, a small to middle sized church, and it changed the world because a) it had high quality leadership b) the congregation was united in prayer and supplication and c) because the Holy Spirit fell upon it in power.

No church is so small that it cannot be greatly used of God. The Haystack Prayer Meeting that began the Great Awakening was just four young men, small groups in prayer can change the world.

Peter recited the doom of Judas and the need for a replacement. This simple act shows that Peter was seeing Jesus in the Old Testament and applying the Scriptures to the current situation. This is something Peter does quite a few times, quoting both OT scriptures and the well-known sayings of Jesus at critical points in the life of the early Church. Acts 2:14-40, 3:12-26, 4:8-12, 5:29-32, 10:34-43, 11:4-17, 15:7-11

Scripture should be the basis of ALL church actions. Too many assemblies are organized around Robert's Rules of Order or various forms of church constitution. There is enough in Scripture to guide us – especially when an anointed Christian leader applies it to our current situations.

Peter looked at the gap in the ranks, then at the appropriate Psalm and knew what to do. The gap must be filled with someone who was of their group right from the start and who had seen the resurrected Christ. Some commentators suggest that Peter was hasty and should have waited and that God had Paul in mind for Judas's place. Yet even if Peter had waited to fill the gap the converted Paul could not have filled the twelfth spot, as he had not been with the band of brothers since "the baptism of John".

J.B. Lightfoot maintained that there were "no more apostles" on the basis of these verses - because an apostle must be someone who has seen the risen Jesus. However on one hand Timothy, Titus, and Apollos are clearly apostles and since they lived outside Jerusalem probably never saw the risen Christ. And on the other hand "at least 500" saw Christ after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) – but few of them were named as apostles! Thus Peter was not setting forth qualifications for being an apostle but rather the qualifications for someone to replace Judas among the Twelve. The argument about modern apostleship is too long and complex for this bible study but you can read an article on the topic at:

<http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/apostle.htm>

Matthias is selected by lot – the first and last time this procedure is used in the New Testament and it occurs before Pentecost. The use of the lot was neither gambling nor voting, rather it was a polite way to break a deadlocked decision, exactly equivalent to tossing a coin to decide who will bat first in a game of cricket. The word for lot is "klerous" which is also used for dice and implies chance in the outcome. Klerous is never used to imply a vote or show of hands. By the way, I have failed to find any place where majority voting is ever employed as a godly decision-making tool in the Bible, even though it was known in Greek culture, possibly because of the politicking and contention it is apt to arouse.

After Pentecost the personal voice of the Holy Spirit is the main source of guidance (e.g Acts 13:2, 21:11). The choice was down to two, and rather than have a possibly divisive argument over personal qualities they "tossed a coin". Prior to the use of the lot there were qualifications laid out, and considerable discussion. The use of the lot might be justified if there were two equal candidates for a senior pastor position and a deadlock had been reached. However, generally speaking, prayer, fasting, examination of the Scriptures and listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit should be the preferred methods of ecclesiastical decision-making.

"And the lot fell upon Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Very little is known about Matthias and this has led to many early heretical gospels and sects using his name in vain. We need to be very careful when obscure bible characters are used to back up theological positions.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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