

~ACTS~

Lesson 4- Let Another Take His Office (Replacing Judas)

We are in our fourth lesson continuing our study through the book of Acts, and we are looking at the remainder of chapter 1, with the main topic being the replacement of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. Let's begin reading these verses, **Acts 1:12-26**.

In the first part of chapter 1, we learned about the Kingdom of God, and how in these 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus, He was preparing His disciples to do the work of the Kingdom until He returns. And this is what He showed us in the parable of the Kingdom from Luke 19. Jesus has gone away into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom, and He has left His servants here to do the work of the Kingdom on His behalf. And He has equipped us with His Word and His Spirit; the power of the Kingdom to do His work. And we are instructed to continue all that Jesus began to do and to teach until He returns to catch away His Bride to be with Him forever.

And now, in these next verses in chapter 1, we see the disciples start to follow the orders of Jesus. Jesus had just ascended to go back to Heaven and the disciples are heading back to Jerusalem following His command to wait in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father. Let's read verse 12...

<p>12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.</p>	<p>¹² Τότε υπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἀπὸ ὄρους τοῦ καλουμένου Ἐλαιῶνος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐγγὺς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, σαββάτου ἔχον ὁδόν.</p>
--	--

The ascension took place somewhere on the outskirts of Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. And Luke says they are returning from the Mount of Olives which is **a Sabbath's day journey**. The description Luke gives of the Mount of Olives is evidence that Luke is writing to a Gentile, namely Theophilus. Luke is describing where the Mount of Olives is located, but if he were writing to a Jew, he wouldn't have needed to say this because every Jew knows that the Mount of Olives is just outside Jerusalem, but Theophilus is a gentile from Rome so he has to clarify this. A Sabbath's day journey is about 2,000 cubits, or 2/3 of a mile from the city. This distance isn't describing the exact place of the ascension, only that the disciples are heading back through the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. But we know Jesus ascended somewhere between the Mount of Olives and Bethany.

<p>13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas <i>the son</i> of James.</p>	<p>¹³ καὶ ὅτε εἰσῆλθον, ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸ ὑπερῶον οὗ ἦσαν καταμένοντες, ὃ τε Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἀνδρέας, Φίλιππος καὶ Θωμᾶς, Βαρθολομαῖος καὶ Ματθαῖος, Ἰάκωβος Ἀλφαίου καὶ Σίμων ὁ ζηλωτής, καὶ Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου.</p>
--	---

These 11 Apostles return to the upper room in Jerusalem. They were following Jesus' orders because in verse 4 Jesus said "*not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.*" So now in verse 13 Luke says, "**they went up into the upper room where they were staying...**" Many times, we see the disciples in an "upper room", because back in the 1st century, the upper story to a house was the only area big enough to hold a large group of people. The lower levels had smaller rooms to bear the weight of the upper level, so large groups had to gather in the upper room. And verse 15 tells us there were 120 people. We don't know for sure, but this may have been the same upper room that they had eaten the Last Supper with Jesus. It could also be the same upper room that Jesus appeared twice after His resurrection.

Luke lists the 11 Apostles, "**Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew** (Nathaniel, John 1:43-51; 21:2) **and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James** (Thaddeus, Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19)," This is the same list whom Jesus chose to be His Apostles during His ministry with the exception of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, Luke 6:12-16.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

¹⁴ οὗτοι πάντες ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει, σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ Μαρίᾳ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ.

The translation... **“continued with one accord”** doesn’t fully explain the Greek. *προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν* is really saying, “they continued enduring patiently with a similar strong passion of like-mindedness.” There is an intense unity among them, and they were all in prayer and supplication toward God.

The disciples now have a joyful boldness to proclaim the gospel and to be His witness on the earth and they are sharing in this strong passion of like-mindedness together. And we are going to see this passion get even stronger once they are filled with the Holy Spirit. And this wasn’t just the Apostles, this fervent passion was also **“with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brothers...”**

There was a group of women who continually followed Jesus in His ministry. Luke tells us that these women gave to Him from their substance, Luke 8:1-3. Mary Magdalene continually followed Jesus. We know the two sisters, Mary and Martha (the sisters of Lazarus) were friends this Jesus. Plus, at the crucifixion Matthew 27:55 says there were **“many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar.”** And in addition to these women was also Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the last time we hear of Mary the mother of Jesus, and notice that in this upper room, she is also praying to God, not being prayed to.

And finally, Luke mentions the half-brothers of Jesus who were also with them, **“and with His brothers.”** These were the biological sons of Mary and Joseph and there are four half-brothers of Jesus named in Matthew’s gospel, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Jude), Matt 13:55. Remember, John tells us that His brothers did not believe in Him before He was risen from the dead, John 7:5. But afterward, at least two of them believed, James and Jude. Jesus personally appeared to James after His resurrection, 1 Cor 15:7. James becomes a very prominent figure in the book of Acts because he was the head of the Jerusalem church, Acts 15:13; 21:18; Gal 2:9, and he also wrote an epistle in the New Testament. We know His other half-brother Jude also believed because he wrote the small epistle of Jude. Between the Apostles, the women and His brothers, Luke names roughly 20 people, but we know there were a total of 120 people in this upper room. Let’s read verse 15...

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said,

¹⁵ Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἀναστὰς Πέτρος ἐν μέσῳ τῶν μαθητῶν εἶπεν (ἦν τε ὄχλος ὀνομάτων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ὡς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσιν,)

“in those days...”- this is sometime in the 10 days after His ascension and before the Day of Pentecost.

“Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples...”- Peter was a natural leader, he is always named first in the lists of Apostles, so it is undeniable that Peter was the leader of the Apostles, but this doesn’t mean he was the first pope as the Catholic church suggests. The Catholic Church wasn’t even formed until after the Council of Nicene in 325AD.

Peter stands up in the midst of 120 people and gives them direction. This is an amazing act of confidence when you remember that about 40 days earlier, Peter had rejected Jesus and wasn’t even numbered with the 12. Remember the words of the man in the empty tomb after the Resurrection. He told the women, **“Go tell the disciples- and Peter- that He is going before you into Galilee...”** Mark 16:7. Peter had rejected Jesus and forfeited his Apostolic position, but then he was reinstated by Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, John 21:15-19. And now Peter has the confidence to lead them again. What an example of forgiveness and mercy, and Peter being cleansed from a guilty conscience

Think about the difference between Peter and Judas. Both rejected Jesus, but one had a humble heart of repentance, and the other was full of resentment, shame, and guilt. Peter was reinstated as the leader of the Apostles and Judas hung himself in shame. One chose the path of Everlasting Life with Jesus, and the other, everlasting death in hell.

Peter stands up in the midst of the assembly and says...

16 “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus;

17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

16 Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην, ἣν προεῖπε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαβὶδ περὶ Ἰούδα, τοῦ γενομένου ὁδηγοῦ τοῖς συλλαβοῦσι τὸν Ἰησοῦν,

17 ὅτι κατηριθμημένος ἦν σὺν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἔλαχε τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης.

Notice what Peter is doing while they are waiting for the Holy Spirit. He is quoting Scripture and acting out the commands of Jesus. Very different than when they met Jesus in Galilee. Jesus had just spent 40 days expounding the Scriptures to them, and He opened up their understanding to the Old Testament concerning Him, Luke 24:27, 44-45. Now Peter has clear direction as the first matter of business, and that is to replace Judas. And I believe this came as a direct command from Jesus. Peter says, **“this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David...”**- This had to be exciting to the disciples. Everything they experienced for the past three years and all they had learned in the Scriptures their whole life is now making sense, John 12:16. It is all pointing to Jesus as the Christ sent from Heaven.

Peter continues... **“concerning Judas who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus...”** Judas was not made or predestined to be the betrayer. It was his own free will decision that led him to be the betrayer and it was through God’s foreknowledge that He wrote it in Scripture. There is a difference between predestination and foreknowledge. Predestination means you don’t have a choice. Foreknowledge means you do have a choice and God knows what choice you are going to make. Jesus knew Judas was a thief and yet he let him carry the money bag. Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, but He chose Him anyway because God will use dishonorable vessels to carry out His plan. Just as He used the Jews who cried out, “crucify Him.” These are vessels of dishonor that God chooses to fulfill His plan. He doesn’t make the vessel dishonorable, but He has the right to use these dishonorable vessels in His plan of Redemption. We see this all through the Scriptures with Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, unbelieving Jews, and in this case, even one of His own Apostles. The story of Judas is an example that nothing can disrupt God’s plan of redemption. In fact, God is so powerful that He can use people’s free will, even the will of betrayal, and weave it into the good of His plan of redemption, Acts 2:23; Luke 22:21–22.

“17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” Judas was chosen as one of the 12 Apostles. Notice the wording of Peter... **he was numbered**, Judas was one who **obtained a part in this ministry**. The Apostolic ministry is one unit, one mission in which the 12 each have their individual share or their individual lot that makes up this whole unit of ministry. And there are only 14 men ever, who God chose to make up this unit of Apostolic ministry. A person today can function and perform the duties of an apostle, as in the 5- fold ministry. Like being sent out to be a witness of the risen Christ. That’s what the word apostle means, “one who is sent.” But the office of the Apostle, one who has been numbered in this unit of Apostolic ministry as a foundation of the Church, this office has only been allotted to 14 men. And we will be talking about these 14 men later in the lesson. Peter goes on to explain the falling away of Judas in verses 18 and 19...

18 Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.

19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.

18 οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἐκτήσατο χωρίον ἐκ τοῦ μισθοῦ τῆς ἀδικίας, καὶ πρηνῆς γενόμενος ἐλάκησε μέσος, καὶ ἐξεχύθη πάντα τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ.

19 καὶ γνωστὸν ἐγένετο πᾶσι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὥστε κληθῆναι τὸ χωρίον ἐκεῖνο τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν Ἀκeldαμά, τοῦτ’ ἔστι, Χωρίον αἵματος.

“This man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity...” This is the thirty pieces of silver Judas received as the payment for the betrayal. Matthew adds some more detail, Matthew 27:3-8. There is no contradiction between these two accounts. Even though Judas gave the money back to the chief priests, it was still Judas’ money because they could not receive it back into the treasury on account of it being blood money. Therefore, they used Judas’ money to buy the potter’s field.

“...and falling headlong, he burst open...” Again, Luke is adding some extra graphic details. Evidently when Judas hung himself, he was hanging over a ravine, but the branch or rope must have broken, and he fell.

Peter continues in verse 20 to explain that this was a fulfillment of Scripture...

20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it’; and, ‘Let another take his office.’”

20 γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν βίβλῳ Ψαλμῶν, Γενηθήτω ἡ ἔπαυλις αὐτοῦ ἔρημος, καὶ μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ· καὶ, Τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λάβοι ἕτερος.

Peter is quoting from Psalm 69:25 LXX. The Apostles are now beginning to gain a clear understanding of the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures and I believe it is because Jesus opened up their understanding to the Scriptures. When you read the context of Psalm 69, specifically Psalm 69:23-36, David is speaking of Righteous judgement on those who hate God. That haters of God cannot come into His Righteousness and they are blotted out of the book of the living and are not written with the Righteous. But when we read this Psalm, that context alone does not give us enough detail to know that this was a prophecy foretelling of Judas. So I believe this was one of the Scriptures Jesus expounded to them, and He told them they needed to replace Judas and his Apostolic position.

Peter, speaking of Judas says, “**Let his dwelling place be desolate...**” He deserted his dwelling place of Righteousness and he forsook his Apostolic portion by his own free will and then killed himself in this state of apostasy. According to Jn 17:12, Jesus says Judas is the son of perdition. Therefore, Judas does not have a place among the Righteous nor does anyone who hates God.

Peter continues, “**and let no one live in it.**” I don’t really like this translation because it makes it seem like no one can fill this void. “Let no one live in it.” Judas abandoned his dwelling place, he deserted his office as an Apostle, but does this mean that this void cannot be filled? That’s what this translation seems to be saying, but that’s not the case because the Apostles are about to choose a replacement for Judas to fill this void. In fact Jesus told the Apostles to fill this void. But when you look at the original Greek, it actually says, “μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ.” So a better translation would be, “let him not be dwelling in it.” The one who has rejected and betrayed God, let not “him” be dwelling with God and in His Righteousness. Judas cannot dwell in Righteousness; he deserted his Apostolic office. It is not that “no one” can’t live in it, just not Judas because he deserted his office. Therefore, Peter quotes another Psalm and says, “**Let another take his office.**”

This is another prophecy of David quoted from Psalm 109:8 also in the LXX. Again, the context of Psalm 109 is David speaking of the judgement of false accusers in general, but Peter was shown by Jesus that this was a prophecy speaking of Judas the betrayer specifically. The Apostolic ministry is one unit of 12 and this “office” that must be filled was the individual lot given to Judas. The word “office” is episkopos, ἐπισκοπος meaning Bishop or Overseer in the Church. So this could be translated as, “**Let another take his office as overseer in the Church.**”

This unit of Apostolic ministry is a key element in the foundation of the Church. Ephesians 2:19–20-¹⁹ *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.* The Church is built on the foundation of the Old Testament, which is identified as “the Prophets”; and the teachings of the Apostles, or this specific unit of “Apostolic ministry.” And all this is being stood on Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone.

The Apostolic Ministry is made up of 12 seats. Jesus tells us in Matthew 19:28, “*...in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” It is interesting to note that the twelve tribes of Israel are actually made up of 14 men. If you remember, Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted as Jacob’s sons. And many times, when the 12 tribes of Israel are listed, Ephraim and Manasseh are named in place of one of Jacob’s direct sons. An example of this is Revelation 7 when the 144,000 are listed from the 12 tribes of Israel. Dan is missing in this list, but Manasseh takes his place. One conjecture why Dan is missing is because of their falling away into gross idolatry in Judges 18. And again Dan is not listed in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 4-7. And that is significant because 1-2 Chronicles were the last books of

the Old Testament written and that list doesn't include Dan. So likewise, we have something similar with the Apostles. 14 men have been selected for the office of the Apostolic Ministry. There were the original 12, but Judas deserted his place, Matthias steps in, and in addition, Jesus chooses Paul as one of His Apostles within this unit of Apostolic Ministry. Some people think that the choosing of Mathias was premature and Paul should have been the replacement. But I disagree because Paul was called as the Apostle to the Gentiles, not to the Jews, Rom 11:13.

Peter continues with the criteria for selecting the replacement...

21 “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,
22 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.”

21 δεῖ οὖν τῶν συνελθόντων ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ ἐν ᾧ εἰσῆλθε καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς,
22 ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου, ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήφθη ἀφ’ ἡμῶν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι σὺν ἡμῖν ἕνα τούτων.

The criteria for selecting Judas' replacement was very strict. They had to be around since John the Baptist's ministry until the day of Jesus' ascension. And out of the hundreds that followed Jesus, only two met this requirement, Barsabbas and Matthias. Notice the responsibility of the Apostolic ministry, “**one of these must become witness with us of His Resurrection.**” This is the commission of Jesus, to be witnesses of the Resurrected Christ, Acts 1:8.

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. **24** And they prayed and said, “**You, O Lord**, who know the hearts of all, (**You**) show which of these two **You** have chosen **25** to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”

23 καὶ ἔστησαν δύο, Ἰωσήφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαβᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰουστὸς, καὶ Ματθίαν.
24 καὶ προσευξάμενοι εἶπον, Σὺ Κύριε, καρδιογνώστα πάντων, ἀνάδειξον ἐκ τούτων τῶν δύο ὃν ἕνα, ἐξελέξω,
25 λαβεῖν τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης καὶ ἀποστολῆς, ἐξ ἧς παρέβη Ἰούδας, πορευθῆναι εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον.

The Apostolic office can only be chosen by the Lord, not man. All 12 Apostles were chosen by Jesus, and even Paul was personally chosen by Jesus on the road to Damascus. And now the Apostles are leaving the choice for Judas' replacement to Jesus as well. The wording of the Apostles is very emphatic. Three times in verse 24 the word “you” referring to Jesus is said. And in addition, they call Jesus kardiognosta, καρδιογνώστα, “the knower of hearts.” This word is only used by Luke. (we will see this a lot in Luke's writings. He often makes up his own words to fit exactly what the Holy Spirit is inspiring him to say.) Some people suggest that they narrowed the choosing down to Barsabbas and Matthias on their own choosing, but I believe these were the only two men who met the requirements. The Apostles are not taking any of this responsibility for choosing the replacement. They are leaving it completely to God even to the point of casting lots.

26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

26 καὶ ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Ματθίαν, καὶ συγκατεψηφίσθη μετὰ τῶν ἑνδεκα ἀποστόλων.

Casting lots was a common method in the Old Testament of allowing God to express His will. Some scholars say this was the purpose of the Urim and the Thummim, but we also see in 1 Chronicles chapters 24-26, lots being cast to choose the duties within the 24 divisions of the Levitical priesthood. Also lots were cast to determine the dividing of the land in Joshua 18. Even with Jonah, the sailors cast lots to determine who was causing the storm and it says the lot fell on Jonah, Jonah 1:7. And now the Apostles may be casting lots in a similar fashion. I personally do not think the Apostles were doing anything wrong here. Some people are bothered by the fact that the disciples cast lots for the choosing of Matthias and they think that they should have just waited a few more days after Pentecost to be led of the Spirit. But I tend to disagree. They had no idea when the Holy Spirit would come, and they had a command to

replace Judas. So instead of waiting around, they knew they couldn't choose him on their own, so they were acting in faith and leaving it to God the best they knew how.

I also have another conjecture to think about. The translation says the Apostles “**cast their lots...**” But I'm not convinced that Luke is referring to a game of chance. Now it may still include rolling dice or drawing straws, but I think it goes a little deeper than just a game of chance. Earlier in verses 17 and 25, Luke uses this same word for lot, *κληρος*, and he uses this word two different times to describe a portion of the Apostolic ministry. In verse 17 he says speaking of Judas, “...for he was numbered with us and obtained a part (a *κληρος*, a lot, a portion) in this ministry.” And in verse 25 he says, “Lord, You show which of these two you have chosen to take part (to receive a portion, *κληρος*) in this ministry and apostleship...” And in verse 26, Luke says, “and they cast their lots (*κληρος*, a lot, a portion) and the lot (*κληρος*, a lot, a portion) fell on Matthias. In this context, Luke is using this word in the sense of a part or portion of the Apostolic ministry and not necessarily a game of dice.

Another difference is everywhere “casting lots” is used in the Bible, it is written, *ἔβαλον κληρον*. Literally to throw lots as in Luke 23:34, the soldiers “cast lots” for Jesus' garments. But here in Acts, Luke doesn't use the word cast, *βάλλω*, as in throwing, but instead, he says they gave, *δίδωμι*, their lots, or they gave their portion of Apostolic ministry for the Lord to choose. They may have still been giving straws or something that symbolized their portion, but the idea is they humbled themselves and their hearts to God and allowed the Lord, “the knower of all hearts” to choose the replacement for Judas, Proverbs 16:1.

Luke continues, “...**and the lot (this portion of the ministry) fell on Matthias, and he was counted together with the eleven Apostles.**” I am convinced that the Lord chose Matthias. The method may have been a little different, but you have to remember, the Apostles weren't filled with the Holy Spirit yet. But if this bothers some of you, the good news is this is the last time we have to talk about casting lots because shortly after this, the Holy Spirit is given and there is no more mention of casting lots from this point forward. Now we have the complete Word of God and we have the Holy Spirit living within us, leading and guiding us into all Truth.

Matthias is chosen, but we don't hear anything else about Matthias in the Bible, but that doesn't mean he wasn't productive for the Kingdom. I am certain the Lord chose Matthias and he was the one ordained by God as Judas' replacement. According to church history, Matthias was one of the seventy, and after becoming an Apostle, some traditions say he preached the gospel in Ethiopia. Others say he went to Cappadocia, but in all instances, it is agreed that he was martyred for his testimony of Jesus Christ. And that is the call for an Apostle, and even the call for us... to be witnesses of the risen Christ even unto death.