

3. Christ Led the Apostles to Replace Judas

In our last topic, we saw that Christ returned to heaven and the disciples returned to the upper room where they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. We saw that they spent that time waiting in prayer and supplication. We mentioned that “supplication” speaks of prayer that is based on a need. The early church leaders realized their need for the Holy Spirit to guide them moment by moment in the development of the church. We still have that same need today as we serve the Lord.

Acts 1:15-17 says, “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, ‘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; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.’” Here, we see that a total of 120 followers of Christ were gathered in the upper room as they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. As we might expect from a study of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Peter was the one who took the leadership now that Christ was gone. His first concern was to see that they were obedient to Christ and fulfilled what was written in the Word of God. As a result, he knew that a man must be chosen to replace Judas as an apostle.

A key thing that we notice in these verses is that there were twelve who were chosen to be apostles but the number of disciples in Jerusalem was 120. Luke 6:12-13 says, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” Here, we see that the twelve who were called apostles were chosen from a larger group of disciples.

The definition of a disciple is given in Matthew 13:52 where we read, “Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.’” The word translated “instructed” means *to be a disciple or to make a disciple*. As a result, this verse explains what it means to be a disciple. We see the following characteristics of a disciple. A person that has become a disciple:

Is instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven (is familiar with the Word of God)

Is the head of a spiritual household (has one or more spiritual children)

Has a treasure (the Word of God)

Is able to bring out of that treasure things new (has a learner’s attitude)

Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are old (the basics of Christianity)

The fact that there were 120 disciples was going to be very important when the church began in Acts 2 and the first day added an additional 3000 people. Since most of the teaching was done in homes, this meant that there were 120 disciples who were already equipped to be spiritual parents to help these new Christians grow. On that day, the 120 each became a spiritual parent to a small group of Christians to help them in their spiritual growth. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Since the temple was controlled by the religious leaders who

had killed Christ just seven weeks earlier, most of the teaching had to be done in homes in small groups.

As Peter spoke to the disciples, he reminded them that the Holy Spirit had spoken through David. The Holy Spirit led David to write about Judas and said that a replacement would need to be chosen for Judas. Acts 1:18-20 goes on to tell why the Holy Spirit had said a replacement would be needed for Judas, "(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. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) "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."'" The first quote comes from Psalm 69:25 which says, "Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents." The second quote is from Psalm 109:8 which says, "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Here, we see that the judgment of Judas was prophesied.

The Lord even used the chief priests to fulfill the first prophecy about Judas. Matthew 27:3-8 says, "Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day." Here in Acts, we see that the field that the chief priests purchased was the very field where Judas had hung himself.

Now we are going to see that the Lord used the apostles to fulfill the second prophecy about Judas. Acts 1:21-22 says, "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." Here, we see that Peter explained to all the disciples the qualifications for an apostle. That was due to the fact that the most important ministry of the apostles was to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection.

We see that an apostle had to be one who had accompanied Christ throughout His entire ministry beginning with the baptism of Christ by John. An apostle also had to see Christ during the forty days after His resurrection. These things were important because of the fact that the most important ministry of the apostles was to be witnesses of the resurrection. Even though he was chosen to be the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul recognized that he did not meet both qualifications for an apostle. 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 says, "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."

At a later time, Paul told the Corinthians that he had been given the signs of an apostle to verify his ministry. 2 Corinthians 12:11-12 says, "I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent

apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” The signs of an apostle are defined for us in Hebrews 2:3-4 where we read, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” Here, we see that God confirmed the message of the apostles with signs and wonders, with various miracles and with gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:23-26 goes on to say, “And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, ‘You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.’ And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” During His ministry, Christ had many other disciples in addition to the twelve who were called apostles. Luke 10:1 says, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” Here, we see that Christ had sent out 70 disciples at least once. A fourth century church historian, named Eusebius, said that Matthias was one of the seventy and it is very possible that both of these men were a part of the seventy.

The disciples prayed that the Lord who knows the hearts of all people would show which of the two the Lord wanted to take the apostleship of Judas. As we saw in verse 14, the 120 had spent this entire time in prayer as they waited for the Lord to send the Holy Spirit. Here, we see that they prayed for specific direction and guidance about who the Lord had chosen to take the place of Judas. The method that had been used throughout the Old Testament to determine the will of the Lord was the casting of lots. Proverbs 16:33 says, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.” Here, we see that the Lord determined the decision when lots were cast. Since the Holy Spirit had not yet come to give them guidance, the disciples cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias.

Christ gave a promise in John 16:13 which says, “‘However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.’” Once the Holy Spirit came, the church was able to receive His guidance and so this is the last time that we read that followers of Christ cast lots. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that they now have the Holy Spirit to guide them and that is why the casting of lots is no longer needed since this is the last time that the casting of lots is mentioned in the New Testament. We can now depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us and give us His peace in our decisions. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand how the Lord worked to guide in the replacement of Judas.