

## The Acts of the Apostles

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Jim Gunn  
Vineland Park Baptist Church  
Hueytown, Alabama

### Section: Acts 1:9-26

Title: “Let another take his office...”

#### Acts 1:15-26

It has been five weeks since our last study in the Acts of the Apostles. We have worked through Chapter One, verses 1-14. A review of that section would be helpful; however, I will spare you a lengthy summary of what we have already covered in the first chapter.

The Book of Acts is an historical record written by Luke as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Luke closed his gospel with the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven and he opens this historical record with the ascension.

We looked at nine important benefits to the church that were made possible by the ascension of Jesus Christ. Just to recall two of these benefits:

1) It was necessary that Jesus return to the heavenly realms in order that He could intercede for His people:

Rom 8:31-34

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

And 2) so that He, Jesus, could send the Holy Spirit:

John 16:5-7

<sup>5</sup> "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

With that as an introduction we will take up our exposition where we left off.

In our last study we find Jesus' closest disciples in the Upper Room {1:12-14}.

Acts 1:15-26

<sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> "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; <sup>17</sup> for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

<sup>18</sup> (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. <sup>19</sup> 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.)

<sup>20</sup> "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.'*

<sup>21</sup> "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> 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."

<sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. NKJV

### Replacing a Traitor {1:15-20}

Judas had proved to be the ultimate traitor and according to the OT Scripture he needed to be replaced by another man in his apostolic office.

Notice that verse 20 quotes from two different Psalms; it was common for the NT writers to quote short phrases from the OT Scriptures with the assumption that the readers in those times would know how to apply the quotes.

However, with that being the case, it would be highly unlikely that anyone living before the betrayal of Jesus by Judas would have understood that these psalms were prophetic of Messiah's betrayal.

It was necessary for the event to take place and only then could an inspired writer take two rather obscure phrases and infallibly apply them to Judas and to Jesus.

That is why in Luke 24, where Jesus reveals Himself from the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms, is so very important. The two on the road to Emmaus, who were following the Jewish rabbi's interpretation of prophecy, did not understand the nature of the Kingdom of God and a suffering Messiah.

Many people today are following the same Jewish rabbi's interpretation of OT prophecy regarding the Kingdom of God and of Christ and long for an earthly king on a literal throne in Jerusalem.

Therefore with the information given by Luke in the gospel record Peter is able to correctly interpret the OT Scriptures. That is why it is essential for a correct interpretation of prophecy that you allow the New Testament to interpret the Old Testament and not allow the Old Testament to override the New Testament. To some in our day the NT need not have been written at all when it comes to OT prophecy. They ignore the NT interpretation of OT prophecy.

First Peter quotes:

Psalm 69:25  
Let their dwelling place be desolate;  
Let no one live in their tents.

Jesus had a commentary on Psalm 69:25:

Cf. Matt 21:42-46

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

*'The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
This was the LORD 's doing,  
And it is marvelous in our eyes?'*

<sup>43</sup> "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. <sup>44</sup> And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

<sup>45</sup> Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. <sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Jesus is speaking to the leaders of the Jewish nation. Can Jesus mean anything other than the utter failure of the Jewish nation and the establishment of a nation of believers; a spiritual kingdom?

“Let no one live in their tents” means they will never get their nation back!

Then Peter quotes Psalm 109:8  
Let his days be few,  
*And* let another take his office.

Now Peter understands what the psalmist meant because the Holy Spirit gave Peter the correct interpretation; Judas Iscariot was its fulfillment.

**“In the Old Testament God meant what He said; in the New Testament God says what He meant.”** John Wilmot

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Now go back to verse 15 where the Greek word ***adelphos*** is variously translated ‘disciples’ or ‘believers’ but is more correctly translated ‘brothers.’

KJV, NKJV translates ***adelphos*** as “disciples;”

NIV translates ***adelphos*** as “believers;”

NASB, AMP, ASV, ESV correctly translates ***adelphos*** as “brothers”.

“Brothers” was the earliest term that Christians used for one another. Brother Gables made mention of this on Wednesday night; that this form of address is scriptural.

My practice has long been to call you brother and sister, because in Christ Jesus you are closer relatives to me than any of my unsaved blood-related kinfolk.

At my request Brother Barnes called for Number 246 in our hymnal, “The Family of God,” which expresses the idea of Christian brotherhood very well.

Now notice that the English translators make a parenthetical comment in verse 15, “(altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)” noting that there were about 120 “brothers” in the Upper Room, and that number probably does not include the women.

The reason that the number 120 is significant is because according to the Jewish law it required a minimum of 120 men in a given community to establish a council, or a body of government. This will be important because one of “The Twelve,” Judas, had to be replaced and it must be done in a proper manner.

Keep in mind that what happens in the book of Acts is a transition from Jewish law and worship to the Christian church. In fact, the church as a corporate body won’t happen until Pentecost in chapter two.

Peter must have had many troubled thoughts about Judas. Judas was a “brother” and was accepted by the others. They did not know that Judas was the “son of perdition.” All of them were deceived except the Lord Jesus who knew all about Judas.

John 17:9-13

<sup>9</sup>“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup>And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Judas was a despicable character but Peter had also denied his Lord, even with cursing. But Peter was granted repentance while Judas, on the other hand, had a very different response to his betrayal. Peter had godly repentance and Judas would not repent.

2 Cor 7:9-11

<sup>9</sup>Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. <sup>10</sup>For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

In the matter of repentance, there is a poem that I copied out of “Christianity Today” at least 35 years ago and I still carry it in my billfold.

**REMORSE: by Sue Fife**

**To have been the cup  
His lips touched and blessed,  
To have been the bread  
Which He broke;  
To have been the cloth  
He held as He served,  
Or water He poured  
As He spoke;  
To have been the road  
He walked on the Way,  
To have been His print  
In the sand;  
To have been the door  
That opened the tomb,  
But I was a nail  
In His hand.**

That poem expresses the heart of a believer who knows what sin is and what Jesus has done for him or her.

Yes, Judas betrayed Jesus, and the Jewish leaders put Him through an illegal trial, and the Romans put Him on the cross; but it was my sin that made the entire drama necessary. And that is what each person who claims to be a Christian should understand.

Peter, referring to Judas, says, “He was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

Most preachers who have been in the ministry very long will have the sad experience of seeing a fellow minister bring shame to the gospel and to the church. In my 42 plus years as a Christian I have personal knowledge of at least five preachers who failed to maintain their integrity; and no, I won’t tell you who they were.

Perhaps my greatest fear is that I too might bring shame to my Lord Jesus. So I offer a word of caution to all my preacher brethren; that we not presume to be above such a failure of character. The great apostle Paul did not so presume.

1 Cor 9:23-27

<sup>23</sup> And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

<sup>24</sup> Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

<sup>25</sup> And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

<sup>26</sup> I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

<sup>27</sup> But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

KJV

The word translated “castaway” or “disqualified” is ἀδόκιμος **adokimos** (ad-ok'-ee-mos); unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication, worthless (literally or morally):

**KJV** - castaway, rejected, **reprobate**.

Judas was a reprobate! And it is only the mercy and grace of God that keeps any of us from sin and shame.

Jude 24-25

<sup>24</sup> Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,  
And to present *you* faultless  
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,  
<sup>25</sup> To God our Savior,  
Who alone is wise,  
*Be* glory and majesty,  
Dominion and power,  
Both now and forever.  
Amen.

Acts 1:15-20

### **Why must Judas be replaced?**

Since Peter is still following Jewish law it was necessary to keep the number of apostles at twelve. The twelve apostles correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matt 19:27-28

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that 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.

Luke 22:24-30

<sup>24</sup> Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' <sup>26</sup> But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

<sup>28</sup> "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. <sup>29</sup> And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Rev 21:14

Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And so Peter felt that it was essential that the "one who was numbered with us" be replaced in order to keep the number of apostles at twelve.

Jesus had instructed the apostles from the prophecies about Judas' betrayal and subsequent suicide.

Luke 24:44-49

<sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Matthew gives a full account of the betrayal of Judas

Matt 27:3-10

<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

And they said, "*What is that to us? You see to it!*"

<sup>5</sup> Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

<sup>6</sup> 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." <sup>7</sup> And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. <sup>8</sup> Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

<sup>9</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "*And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, <sup>10</sup> and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.*"

Acts 1:21-22

### **Who is qualified to be an apostle?**

An apostle is one who is divinely commissioned by God.

We have the Great Apostle who is Jesus Christ:

Heb 3:1

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, ....

The man who was to replace Judas must have been associated with Jesus and the brothers from the time of Jesus' baptism to the ascension and he must have been a witness of the resurrection; the resurrection being the essential truth of the Gospel [Acts 1:22].

So when you see an ad in the newspaper that says that Apostle So-and-So is in town you can know he is a fraud.

Acts 1:23-26

### **How was the apostle to be chosen?**

First, the brothers, proposed two men:

**Joseph** called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus. Joseph is a Hebrew name and Barsabas means "son of the Sabbath. His Gentile name, Justus, means righteous.

**Matthias** was thought to be one of the 70 sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1.

The second step was prayer.

This is important because in their custom they are going to cast lots. When we "roll the dice" we usually think the outcome is pure chance. But when they prayed they acknowledged that God is in control of the outcome.

Of course God is always in control of what we call "chance."

Prov 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap,  
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.

In the theology of God's decrees, by that is meant the foreordaining of all that comes to pass either through first or second causes, God is ultimately in control of whatever comes to pass.

As Brother Gables has so aptly explained in the recent lesson on The Life and Ministry of Elijah: Ahab's lying prophets and God's lying spirit {See 1 Kings 22:1-28} how God uses evil to overcome evil. That does not make God the one who commits the evil but He allows those who would commit evil to do so for His own purpose in justice and for His glory.

Then last Wednesday Brother Gables covered the death of Ahab. Ahab died in fulfillment of prophecy in a way that can only be explained by God's sovereign providence. Some of the translations of 1 Kings 22:34:

1 Kings 22:34

Now a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. NKJV

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: KJV

Now a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. NASB

But a certain man drew his bow and unknowingly struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate; NRSV

In the theology of God's Decrees there are First and Second causes; some things are directed by God and we are so informed in the Scriptures. But some things seemingly happen without a direct reference to God.

As I have mentioned I grade correspondence Bible courses for Mount Zion Bible Institute. About 90 percent of the students are in prison somewhere. One of the prisoner's in response to a question on Divine Providence: Explain the relationship between first and second causes, wrote "The first ensures that the second cannot happen by chance."

Nothing "just happens."

“God knows because He predestinates!” thunders Luther.

The third step was to cast the lots and look to God for the choice.

The lot fell on Matthias and he was numbered with the apostles.

It is curious to me that except for this mention of Matthias there is no other record of him in the Bible. It is pure speculation on my part but it may be that something happened to Matthias which opened the way for the Apostle Paul to be apostle number twelve. Paul tells us that he did not receive his commission as an apostle from men but directly from God.

In nine of Paul’s letters he states that his apostleship is by the will of God and not from men.

Gal 1:1

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), ....

The stage is now set for Pentecost which we read about in Acts 2.

The Acts of the Apostles is about the church and I want you to see how important the matters of the church are to our Lord Jesus Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for her.

The church is a collection of sinners who have been called and convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit. They repent and call on the name of the Lord to be saved and they are born again.

How is it with you?

Are you at peace with God?

The elders of this local body are available to counsel with you; our invitation is to repent and believe in the Gospel.

If you have never professed your faith in Jesus Christ in public believers’ baptism and you are a believer it is important that you obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism is not something that you do “in order to be saved” but it is a command of the Lord that is to be obeyed.